

Appendix J:

Tips on Configuring and Analyzing Assessment Data

Drafting SLOs and gathering assessment results are only the beginning; the substance in assessing lies primarily in analyzing the data and crafting an action plan, should students fall below the benchmark established in the success criteria. Thus, to complete the assessment cycle, you'll need to work with your colleagues to analyze the data and draw conclusions from the findings.

- In which areas did students excel?
- What issues and needs were revealed?
- How do the results compare to any baseline or benchmark data previously collected?
- What insights can you gain from the results?
- Did the assessment work, and if not, what needs to be revised?

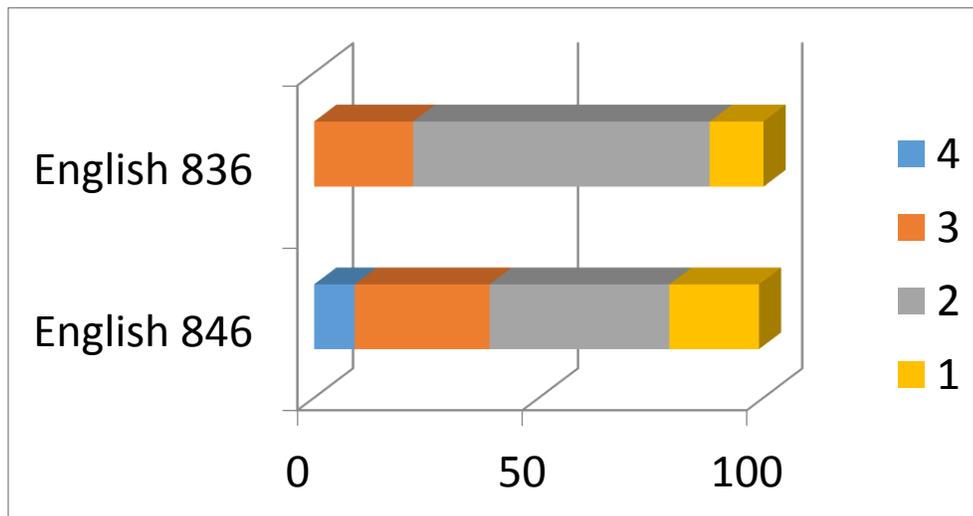
Below are some useful tips and examples that have emerged from current assessment practices.

RUBRICS

Assessing multiple SLOs with one major project or activity and evaluating it with a rubric that encompasses all of the SLOs is efficient use of time and resources. The rubric also articulates what distinguishes the different levels of competency, which is useful for consistent grading and can inform students how their work is being evaluated.

- Be mindful of the SLOs as you create the rubric. Indicate which parts of the rubric pertain to which SLOs in your assessment plan.
- Create an excel spreadsheet to enter the students' scores for each part of the rubric. The first column will be which student (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc.), and the subsequent columns will be each of the rubric's criteria (i.e., thesis).
- To analyze the data, you can do so in two ways:
 - Calculate the average by using the formula. Compare the average score with the success criterion (e.g. The class will average 2.5 or greater.).
 - Determine the percentage of students that scored 2,3, or 4 if those are passing scores, and then compare it against the success criterion (e.g., 75% of students will score at least 2, "adequate," on the thesis.)

- This way of analyzing data enables you to see which skills students most struggled with. For instance, you may find that 98% of students had at least a 2.2 average, and yet the vast majority only scored 2. The graphic function on Powerpoint really helps to differentiate how students fared. For instance, the graphic below shows how well the students' thesis was on an English assessment.



PRE/POST TESTS

Pre/post tests are a very useful means to measure how much students gained over the course of the semester since you document their starting and end point. The pre-test also helps students know what to anticipate and prioritize for the remainder of the semester.

- Be mindful of which test questions pertain to which SLOs in your assessment plan. Faculty using this strategy typically assign two to three questions per SLO, and all faculty teaching the course that semester include those common questions on their exam(s).
- If you assign multiple choice, matching, and/or true/false questions on these tests, use scantrons so as to tabulate students' results.
- Your success criteria may simply note that you are looking for an overall increase in the percentage of students who answer the designated questions correctly, such as a 10% increase. And/or you may want to decide which percentage of students overall answered the questions correctly, in addition to ensuring that the percentages from the post-test are higher than the pre-tests.
- The challenge that has emerged from using this assessment strategy is comparing the students who started the course with the students that persist until the end, when the post-test is typically

administered. To address this issue, you may want to consider using a scan-tron with students' names on both the pre and post-test so that you can remove the pre-tests from students who didn't persist.

SURVEYS

Surveys can be used to develop students' meta-cognitive awareness, as they're prompted to evaluate their competencies. The primary drawback is that students are assessing themselves, as opposed to a student demonstrating their competencies. In addition to home-grown surveys within a respective department, the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) may have college-wide surveys they administered (such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement) whose results are relevant to a particular instructional area.

Surveys also can be used to evaluate student services, such as which services they were aware of, which they used, how frequently, and how satisfied they were with each service. PRIE may have college-wide surveys they administered whose results are relevant to a particular service area.

- Be mindful of the SLOs as you create the survey. Indicate which questions from the survey pertain to which SLOs in your assessment plan.
- The PRIE can help you to design and administer your survey. Easiest is to administer it with a scantron or via the internet, such as through NoviSurvey, for which the PRIE has a license.
- To analyze responses to multiple choice questions, you may want to determine the percentage of students who marked 2, 3, or 4 if all those scores suggest a level of competency in the knowledge, skill, and/or attitude.
- To analyze responses to open-ended questions, which may have captured an insight that your multiple choice questions didn't, you'll need to identify the themes that emerge from students' responses.

FOCUS GROUPS OR STRUCTURED GROUP INTERVIEWS (FOR ASSESSING PSLOs OR STUDENT SERVICES SLOs)

Typically limited to six- to- ten participants, focus groups/ structured group interviews work especially well to gain insights about a program and/or service as a whole. Open-ended questions can address curriculum, such as how well the required coursework prepared students for higher level courses, a position in that field, and/or transfer. Or they can pertain to advising, such as characterizing their advising experiences in the program, what they found useful, and what—if anything, they suggest be changed.

In focus groups, the facilitator may be more flexible and depart from the script of questions so as to follow promising leads that emerge from the conversation. In contrast, the facilitator in a group interview poses only the pre-generated questions. A focus group tends to yield a more in-depth analysis than a structured group interview.

- Be mindful of the PSLOs as you create the questions, and indicate in your assessment plan which questions pertain to which PSLOs. Get feedback from the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) to design your questions since the quality of the questions will impact the validity of the responses, and also get feedback about whom to include in the focus group/ structured group interview.
- To analyze responses to open-ended questions, you'll need to identify the themes that emerge from students' responses.