

Using assessment results

You're gonna spend time on it,
might as well get something out of it

Boston University
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The Center of Inquiry

- Strengthen liberal arts education for *all* students
 - Liberal arts education is any form of education that promotes broad outcomes such as critical thinking, curiosity, moral reasoning, leadership, political engagement
- Work with faculty, staff, and students at colleges and universities to review, make sense of, and respond to evidence
- Not affiliated with state or federal government or accreditors
- Not-for-profit

Framing assessment

Good assessment =
Good faculty and staff development =
Good teaching

Assessment, done well

- Is useful
- Focuses on three basic questions
- Is grounded in conversations among colleagues
- Leads to experiments
- Is focused and persistent
- Is sustainable
- Helps faculty hone their craft

*Assessment, done well, is **useful***

- Energizes staff and faculty work by providing information they can use to advance their efforts to help students
- Is an intellectually engaging and challenging inquiry about how a range of students learn in real-world situations
 - Find something important and work on it for an extended period of time
- Employs engaging pedagogies and high-impact practices to work with colleagues on evidence
 - Learning communities
 - Peer-based discovery learning
 - Common intellectual experiences
- Improves faculty learning *and* student learning

*Assessment, done well, focuses
on three basic questions*

Where do
students start?

What happens
in my class?

Where do
they finish?

Do I lecture too much?

How much do my students study?

How much and what kind of effort are they expending?

Are my assignments effective?

Do I have the right readings?

Is my material aimed appropriately?

Are my students writing enough?

Is my class organized coherently?

Do I require too much memorization?

Are my assigned readings engaging?

Do my exams actually test my learning goals?

Assessment is grounded in conversations

- Overcomes “courseocentrism” and creates an atmosphere in which we feel safe openly sharing what goes on in our classrooms with our colleagues

“I believe that our experience of teaching in hermetically sealed classrooms makes us – to coin a word – “courseocentric.”

Courseocentrism – like its ethno-, ego-, and Euro- counterparts – is a kind of tunnel vision in which our little part of the world becomes the whole. We get so used to the restricted confines of our own courses that we became oblivious to the fact – or simply uninterested in it – that students are enrolled in other courses whose teachers at any moment may be undercutting our most cherished beliefs.”

– Gerald Graff (2009)

Assessment is grounded in conversations

- Overcomes “courseocentrism” and creates an atmosphere in which we feel safe openly sharing what goes on in our classrooms with our colleagues
- It is not the work of a solitary colleague who is assigned the task of writing the assessment report
- Uses conversations instead of extensive quantitative or qualitative analyses to make sense of evidence
- Leads to action, not just reports
- Includes self-conscious efforts to communicate what we have learned from our work with our colleagues



“But fixating on work hours has meant overlooking other issues, like lack of supervision or the failure to use more reliable computerized records. Worse still, the reforms may have created new, unexpected sources of mistakes. Shorter shifts mean doctors have less continuity with their patients. If one doctor leaves, another must take over. Work-hour reductions lead to more handoffs of patients, and the number of these handoffs is one of the strongest risk factors for error. As a result, many hospitalized patients are at the mercy of a real-life game of telephone, where a message is passed from doctor to doctor — and frequently garbled in the process.”

— August 5, 2011, NY Times

Assessment, done well, leads to experiments

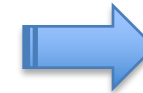
Data –

Values of qualitative or quantitative variables, belonging to a set of items



Evidence -

When you and your colleagues have made sense of and come to some agreement about what the data are telling you with regard to some element of student learning or student experience



Experiment -

Having moved beyond veto, but prior to consensus, you and your colleagues try something new, see what happens, and talk about what you learned with the community

*The answer is not in the data –
The answer will emerge when you change
something and see what happens*

*Assessment, done well, is **focused and persistent***

- Assesses only one or two student learning outcomes at a time
- Works on one or two pedagogical improvements at a time
- Studies and makes improvements in a few things rather than studying many things and changing nothing

*Assessment, done well, is **sustainable***

- It is part of your normal routine, not an add on, so you should work on something that matters
- Continuous, not episodic
- Includes asking periodically, “How do we revise this process so that we get more out of it?”

Active Learning Portfolios Flipped Classrooms
Interdisciplinary Courses Undergraduate Research
Group Work

*Don't just do the **SEXY** stuff*

Linked Classes Study Abroad Student Blogging
Journaling Hybrid Classrooms
Internships Learning Communities
Clickers

Hone your craft

Community-Based Learning
Problem-Based Learning Charrettes
Team Teaching

Wabash Study findings on Good Practices

- Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty and Staff
 - Faculty/staff interest in teaching and student development
 - Out-of-class student/staff & student/faculty interactions
 - Organization, preparation, clarity, prompt feedback
- Academic Challenge and High Expectations
 - Hard work, challenging assignments and interactions
 - Synthesis, judgment, integration, and reflection
- Interactional Diversity
 - Meaningful interactions

Group work on scenarios



Additional information about Starfleet Academy (S.A.) and the Worf Program of Peace and Conflict Studies

Starfleet Academy is a private research university with around 17,000 undergraduates and 14,000 graduate students.

The Worf Program of Peace and Conflict Studies graduates around 60 majors a year.

There are 14 tenured and tenure-track faculty in the Peace and Conflict Studies program. Five adjunct faculty also teach courses in the program.

There are 12 required courses in the Peace and Conflict Studies major:

<u>Course</u>	<u>When students should take the course</u>
Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies (PEACN 100)	First year
Introduction to Ethics (PEACN 120)	Anytime before the senior seminar
Community Mediation (PEACN 230)	Anytime before the senior seminar
2 courses from the Regions of Peace and Conflict area	Anytime before the senior seminar
3 electives in Peace and Conflict Studies	Anytime before the senior seminar
Conceptions of Peace and Peace Theories (PEACN 315)	Junior year
The Conflict Triangle (PEACN 316)	Junior year
The Cost of Conflict (PEACN 317)	Junior year
Senior Seminar: Can Romulans Give Peace a Chance? (PEACN 490)	Senior year

PEACN 100 is a popular general education course at S.A., and several 250-350 student sections are offered every year in the fall and spring semesters. PEACN 100 is a lecture class that meets three times a week, with weekly discussion sections of 25 students run by graduate teaching assistants.

Adjunct faculty teach most of the PEACN 100 sections as well as some of the sections for Introduction to Ethics, Community Mediation, and courses in the Regions of Peace and Conflict area.

The three junior level courses, PEACN 315-317, are capped at 30 students each.

There are four senior seminars each year, all offered in the spring semester. All four senior seminars cover the same special topic, which the faculty identify each year. Enrollment in each seminar is capped at 16 students.

Worf Program of Peace and Conflict Studies

- 14 tenured and tenure-track and 5 adjunct faculty
- 12 course major
- Graduates about 60 students a year
- The three junior level courses (PEACN 315-317)
 - Capped at 30 students
- 4 sections of a senior seminar each year (PEACN 490)



S. A. Assessment Report

Program

BA in Peace and Conflict Studies

Program Contact and Title

Dr. B. L. Sisko, Worf-Son-of-Maug Chair of Peace and Conflict Studies (blsisko@ds9.edu)

Assessment Contact and Title

Dr. D. Troi, Peace and Conflict Studies Assessment Coordinator (dtroi@ds9.edu)

Date: -307212.6712328768

Learning outcomes for the program

1. Knowledge about theories, research, and controversies in Peace and Conflict Studies
 - a. Students in the Worf Program of Peace and Conflict Studies will demonstrate proficiency in knowledge of the theories and research in the three core areas of Peace and Conflict Studies:
 - i. Conceptions of Peace and Peace Theories (PEACN 315)
 - ii. The Conflict Triangle (PEACN 316)
 - iii. The Cost of Conflict (PEACN 317)
 - b. Students majoring in Peace and Conflict Studies take PEACN 315, PEACN 316, and PEACN 317 in their Junior year. These advanced level courses in the program are prerequisites for the senior seminar (PEACN 490), and they were implemented four years ago when the program revised its curriculum.
2. Critical thinking in Peace and Conflict Studies
 - a. Students in the Worf Program of Peace and Conflict Studies will demonstrate their capacity to engage in critical thinking in this field by completing a research paper in the capstone senior seminar, PEACN 490, in which they demonstrate proficiency in the following skills:
 - i. Clearly stating and comprehensively describing the key issues.
 - ii. Using information from an appropriate range of sources to develop a comprehensive analysis of the issues.
 - iii. Systematically evaluating their assumptions and those of key theorists and researchers who have worked on the issues they are addressing.
 - iv. Adopting a position on important issues that takes into account the complexities of those issues and acknowledges the limitations of their position on these issues.
 - v. Developing a conclusion that is logical, reflects an informed evaluation, and places the evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.

Instructions – Round 1

1. Review the program assessment report
2. Appoint a scribe
3. Discuss the following questions as a group
 - a. What were the most useful parts of the Peace and Conflict Studies program's assessment process and report?
 - b. What parts of the assessment process and/or report were less helpful, unclear, or confusing?
 - c. What other information would you like to have to get a better sense of student learning on the Peace and Conflict Studies program outcomes? How would you go about gathering this evidence?
 - d. If you were in the department of Peace and Conflict Studies at S.A., what next steps would you take based on the evidence in this report to improve student learning on the program outcomes?

Instructions – Round 2

1. Review the new version of the program assessment report
2. Appoint a scribe
3. Discuss the following questions as a group
 - a. Is this report and the program's assessment process more or less useful than in Round 1? Please describe how.
 - b. How would you revise the program's assessment process to make it more useful? Is there other information that would you gather to get a better sense of student learning? Is there some part of the process for how the program uses the evidence that you'd revise?
 - c. If you were in the department of Peace and Conflict Studies at S.A., what next steps would you take based on the evidence in this report to improve student learning on the program outcomes?

Taking stock

- On your own, take 5 minutes to write about
 - Did you hear or learn anything today that surprised you, or that's worth thinking about more for your work in your program or department?
 - How might you apply what you've learned or thought about today to your work in your program or department?

More information

- About the Center of Inquiry
 - www.centerofinquiry.org
- About Wabash Study findings
 - www.centerofinquiry.org/study-research/
- About the Teagle Assessment Scholar Program
 - www.centerofinquiry.org/assessment-scholars/
- About the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium
 - www.hedsconsortium.org