Glossary

Assessment

Assessment is the ongoing process of:

1. Establishing clear, measureable expected outcomes of student learning outcomes of student learning
2. Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes.
3. Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations.
4. Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning.
(Suskie, 2004)

Benchmark

"An actual measurement of group performance against an established standard at defined points along the path toward the standard. Subsequent measurements of group performance use the benchmarks to measure progress toward achievement."
http://www.newhorizons.org/strategies/assess/terminology.htm (MSHE, 2007).

Capstone Experience

These holistic activities are designed to assess students' knowledge, acquired skill and problem solving ability using concepts learned as they approach the end of their program. For example, graduating seniors demonstrate comprehensive learning in a senior project or culminating activity that integrates what is learned throughout their program.

Competencies

"Specific 'skills' or "behaviors" that a learner can perform or demonstrate. (e.g. graduates must perform at expected level of practitioner.)" Shared power point presentation. (Gjerde, 2008).

Curriculum Map

Curriculum mapping is a process for documenting, identifying and recording course content and skills that are actually taught in a classroom, school, or district over a period of time. These longitudinal data provide an overview, rather than a daily classroom perspective, of what is actually happening over the course of the school year (Jacobs, 1997a).

Curriculum maps help to align the curricular topics (*what* is being taught) to the sequence of instructional tasks (*when* the concepts are taught). A wide range of important curricular activities are covered using curriculum mapping to

- address the total education of the students in a building
- create a "snapshot" of the educational activities within a course

- capture the content, skills, and assessments taught or administered
- develop a time line of instruction that contains course content that organized, visual and easily accessed and visual course content

Some important features of curriculum maps are that they emphasize interdisciplinary connections, promote of essential skills and link content information across different courses.

Direct assessment

Direct methods of evaluating student learning are those that provide evidence of whether or not a student has command of a specific subject or content area, can perform a task, exhibits a particular skill, demonstrates a certain quality in his or her work… (MSHE, 2007)

Embedded Assessment

A means of gathering information about student learning that is integrated into the teaching-learning process. Results can be used to assess individual student performance or they can be aggregated to provide information about the course or program. can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative. Example: as part of a course, expecting each senior to complete a research paper that is graded for content and style, but is also assessed for advanced ability to locate and evaluate Web-based information (as part of a college-wide outcome to demonstrate information literacy).

Evaluation

A judgment about the value of something.

Formative assessment

"A process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes." www.CCSSO.org

Formative assessment has the following characteristics:

- Frequent
- Used to plan next steps in instruction
- Descriptive feedback in student friendly language
- Involves students (Arter & Chappuis, 2006).

Goal

"Goals are broad outcome statements expressed as general aims or purposes of education." (Ball State University, 2008).

Goals describe how students will be different because of a learning experience. Effective goals refer to a destination rather than a path taken to get there – the ends rather than the means, the outcome rather than the process….[For example,] A faculty member's real goal is not that students will write a term paper but that they will become effective writers. (Suskie, 2004)

Indirect assessment

Indirect methods of evaluating student learning involve data that are *related to* the act of learning,

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such as factors that predict or mediate learning or perceptions about learning but do not reflect learning itself. (MSHE, 2007)

Learning Incomes

Learning incomes are the competencies and knowledge in place before new learning processes begin. Students whose learning inputs are properly aligned to a course have a high rate of successfully completing the course because they have the prerequisite knowledge to build upon in the course.

Measurement

Measurement is the assigning of a number to the results of a test or other kind of assessment according to a specific rule….The process of obtaining a numerical description of the degree to which an individual possesses a particular characteristic. (Miller, et.al. 2009)

Rubric

A rubric is a scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for an assignment or piece of work. It provides details of what students are expected to know and do. A rubric divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery. Rubrics can be used for a wide array of assignments: papers, projects, oral presentations, artistic performances, group projects, etc. Rubrics can be used as scoring or grading guides, to

provide formative feedback to support and guide ongoing learning efforts, or both.

Standards

Standards refer to an established level of accomplishment that all students are expected to meet or exceed. Standards do not imply standardization of a program or of testing. Performance or learning standards may be met through multiple pathways and demonstrated in various ways. For example, instruction designed to meet a standard for verbal foreign language competency may include classroom conversations, one-on-one interactions with a Teacher Assistant, or the use of computer software. Assessing competence may be done by carrying on a conversation about daily activities or a common scenario, such as eating in a restaurant, or using a standardized test, using a rubric or grading key to score correct grammar and comprehensible pronunciation.

Student Learning Objectives

Objectives are brief, clear statements that describe aspects of goals. They use the language of Bloom's taxonomy and are specific and prospective (future looking) in nature.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Student learning outcomes are statements describing faculty intentions about what students should know, understand, and be able to do with their knowledge when they complete a course or graduate from a program. SLOs are what students take with them from a learning experience. SLOs provide evidence that

objectives have been accomplished.
(Huba & Freed, 2000; Suskie 2004).

Summative assessment

Summative assessment … is designed to determine the extent to which the instructional goals have been achieved and is used primarily for assigning course grades or for certifying student mastery of the intended learning outcomes….[It] typically comes at the end of a course (or unit) of instruction. (Miller, et.al, 2009)

Value Added

The increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. The focus can be on the individual student (how much better a student can write, for example, at the end than at the beginning) or on a cohort of students (whether senior papers demonstrate more sophisticated writing skills-in the aggregate-than freshmen papers). To measure value-added, a baseline measurement is needed for comparison. The baseline measure can be from the same sample of students (longitudinal design) or from a different sample (cross-sectional).

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