

Tips for Creating an Assessment Plan

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Identifying goals

1. Often it is helpful to ask yourself a question or series of questions about the project/program/activity you are trying to assess. Those questions are typically worded as follows:
 - What do you want students to know, value, and/or be able to do as a result of this experience?
 - What knowledge, skills, and abilities do you want students to attain as a result of this experience?
2. Another helpful tool is the Teaching Goals Inventory, published by Angelo and Cross in 1993. It may be found online at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~centeach/tgi/index.html>

The TGI is most often used to help faculty as they are preparing to teach a course, but it may help you focus your thinking on a larger project as well.

3. Sometimes it is easier to work from existing course syllabi or other materials to see what works well and establish goals based on that. Talking with your colleagues can really make a difference here, as well.

Articulating learning outcomes

1. In order for students to know what is expected and to help guide your evaluation of individual student work, it is helpful to be clear about the learning outcomes for a particular experience or set of experiences.
2. The table below may help you think about some appropriate verbs to use as you write learning outcomes for your project. These are sorted by broad goal area, so it is helpful to identify those first.

Knowledge Acquisition and Application	Enhancement of higher order thinking skills	Development of psychomotor skills	Changes in attitudes or values
to identify	to reflect	to demonstrate	to challenge
to list	to compare	to produce	to defend
to define	to contrast	to assemble	to judge
to describe	to classify	to adjust	to question
to prepare	to evaluate	to install	to accept
to name	to rate	to detect	to adopt
to categorize	to formulate	to locate	to advocate
to chart	to investigate	to isolate	to endorse
to rank	to modify	to arrange	to cooperate
to distinguish	to organize	to conduct	to persuade
to explain	to select	to check	to resolve
to outline	to research	to manipulate	to approve
to inform	to assess	to perform	to express
to summarize	to differentiate	to sort	to reflect
to specify	to analyze	to construct	to justify

Selecting appropriate instructional methods and/or experiences

1. It may seem obvious, but it is important to remember that the instructional methods selected and experiences offered to students need to facilitate the achievement of the objectives identified.
2. Very often, without any malevolent intent, faculty will rely on historical and more comfortable modes of instruction that may or may not be best for achieving the stated goals.
3. Numerous resources exist for assisting faculty in selecting appropriate methods. The Office of Assessment web site may be helpful in that regard <http://www.du.edu/assessment>

Selecting appropriate assessment tools

1. It is important to establish at what level the assessment is occurring before selecting the assessment methodology. Are you assessing or evaluating individual student work for purposes of a grade? Are you more interested in assessing the effectiveness of a course or program? Some of the methods are the same regardless of your response to the question, but the nature of aggregating and reporting the findings is different.
2. Depending on the complexity of the project, effective assessment may be achieved by multiple measures rather than a single one. It is important to remember that a primary purpose of assessment is to gather information that can be used to improve the program or experience.
3. Many effective assessment measures exist. The following chart may help you think about how to approach your particular project. Again, the Office of Assessment web site offers a variety of resources that you may find helpful.

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Student Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance appraisals in clinical or internship settings* • Simulations* • Portfolio analysis* • Behavioral observations* • External review of exhibition* • Oral examinations* • Capstone course* • Tracking alumni performance and success** • Employer focus groups** • Self-assessment papers** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized exams or testing instruments (locally or nationally developed)* • Portfolio analysis* • Analysis of archival or current records** • Tracking alumni performance and success** • Employer surveys**
Student Satisfaction and Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews** • Focus groups** • Open-ended surveys** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple-response surveys** • Record of attendance at events, use of a service, etc.**

* direct measures

** indirect measures

4. As you think about assessing your project, you also need to consider timing and access to students. Assessment is similar to some research in that it can be approached from a pre-post perspective, where a measure or measures are administered at the beginning and end of a project or experience (or even again at some point after the experience has concluded). It can also be approached from a competence or proficiency perspective, with a single measure administered once. It is often easier to access students for assessment purposes and to gain their serious participation when assessment activities are embedded in the course or experience rather than separate from that. This is not always possible, but it is probably preferable.