

Assessment Academy-Version 2.0 Questions:

1. What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To name a few:

- A. Saint Louis Community College, MO
- B. Quincy University, IL
- C. Coconino County Community College, AZ
- D. Three Rivers Community College, MO
- E. Cloud County Community College, KS
- F. Maricopa Community Colleges-GateWay Community College, AZ

Lessons Learned:

- Do not tackle too much at once. Several schools started by tackling everything, were met with failure, and were only later successful when they narrowed their focus. (A, B)
  - Co-Curricular is a beast, so start small. Student life/Clubs tends to be a good place to start. (B)
  - Pilot first with a small group of “friendly” faculty. (C)
  - Keep the focus on student learning. Many schools lost sight of this in the second/third year. (C)
  - Ensure that the Assessment Academy team is faculty driven and not perceived as yet another administration initiative. (C)
  - Give faculty time with new software/technology. “Baby-steps” are needed or you risk them seeing it as an extra burden. (E)
  - Curricular Mapping is a must, informative, and worthwhile. (F)
  - Develop common terminology to prevent confusion. (F)
2. How has your project developed and changes since the Roundtable?
    - Barton selected a new Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, Dr. Robin Garrett. She has experience with Program Assessment and Curricular Mapping from her previous institution.
    - Barton selected a new Learning Management System (LMS) switching from eCollege to Canvas. This switch was a business decisions based upon the current needs of the college.
    - Barton selected a new Survey Tool switching from Survey Wizard to Evaluation Kit.

3. Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design.

Goal: Automate, as much as possible, the processes relating to the collection and documentation of assessment data.

- Evaluation Kit, a survey tool, was selected as our method to collect student-teacher evaluations. Our goal was to possibly use this for collecting assessment data as well. However, it was not designed for more than its stated purpose, and will not be used for course outcome assessment purposes.
- Our new learning management system, Canvas, has an Outcomes Assessment feature that has an update from the software company forthcoming. This will be investigated after the update and as more courses are converted over to Canvas.
- Various other software packages were explored such as Xitracs and CampusLabs. However, due to cost or having to basically scrap our entire assessment model to fit the program, these were not viable for our purposes of data collection.
- As such, our methods for automation will need to be developed in-house. Fortunately, Kirstan Neukam our Primary Mentor on this project, suggested that we might be able to utilize Microsoft Access. As she stated, based on what we hope to automate, we need a database.
- This suggestion was brought to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and with the support of the President, Barton was given full access to an Institutional Researcher specializing in Microsoft Access. Multiple meetings have already taken place and we have made forward progress, detailed in later sections.

Goal: Improve Communication regarding Assessment

- Regarding student learning, automation is nice, but our goal is to have instructors using the data, not just a pretty data package.
- Initially the goal was stated to have an all-faculty meeting with the intent to improve communication regarding assessment. However, the cost and coordination amongst various campuses became exorbitant and drew our conversations away from the goal of improving communication. We have therefore adjusted the goal to reflect this purpose.
- An all-faculty meeting is already scheduled for the fall 2016 semester. The point is to enable faculty to discuss their assessment results, share best practices, and learn from each other to further improve student learning overall. An all-faculty meeting is simply one opportunity for this type of communication to occur.
- For instance, to help inform faculty and staff of Barton's participation in the Assessment Academy and Barton's Assessment plan in general, the Coordinator of Assessment and Student Learning, with the assistance of the respective Deans, presented at faculty

meetings at the Great Bend, Fort Leavenworth, and Fort Riley Campuses. Barton's entire Assessment Model including its strengths and deficiencies were covered. The goals relating to the Assessment Academy Quality Initiative were presented and questions were answered. This was done for the following main reasons:

- One, to ensure faculty and staff are familiar with the necessary vocabulary for assessment purposes. This was an issue that we had with the first version of this project as pointed out by the reviewers.
- Second, to reinvigorate the conversation. Through prompts many spoke up and shared their stories about how they have improved their courses based on assessment data. Some excellent conversations took place to such an extent that every presentation went over the time limit, some by as much as two-three hours. In hindsight, we should have documented the whole thing.

Goal: Develop Co-Curricular and Program Level Assessment Processes.

Co-Curricular:

- The student life, clubs and student groups at Barton were narrowed down to nineteen areas that we would examine.
  - We were pleasantly surprised to find that we in fact had co-curricular assessment and just were not aware of it. We found that many of them had clear goals, data to back them, and a list of improvements that have been made based on the data.
  - For example, the Journalism Club produces a paper. The sponsor keeps track of the number of errors and edits needed with each edition. Based on this a trend became evident where the first issue of the year consistently had a significant number of errors compared to the rest. He decided not to publish the first issue. Instead, when finished he went over it in detail with the club pointing out how it could have been improved and made it a learning moment.
  - Other examples exist and we still have more to go through and more areas to contact as we did not get through all nineteen yet. The question remains what to do with it all? We do not want to disrupt successful assessment activities or make them more cumbersome for the groups, but we still need to establish what the processes are and highlight their successes.

Program:

- We started by looking into well-established programs that already do a thorough Program Review for third party accreditation. This includes Medical Lab Technicians, Emergency Medical Services, and Nursing. Nursing specifically has a full Curricular Map already in place. We intend to model this in other areas as Curricular Mapping will be the cornerstone upon which we build our Program Level Assessment processes.

- Our next task will be to develop a template for Program Assessment that is both flexible and consistent to account for the fact not all programs are the same and yet by its very nature a template is a fixed item.
4. How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on the previous posting?
- As evident in the response document, our vocabulary and terminology was a point of confusion. After discussing this with our Primary Mentor, it became clear that what we called degree level assessment, should be called institutional level assessment. As a result, this has been adjusted and will now be referenced as institutional level assessment. Additionally, what we called course and classroom level assessment is typically combined as course level assessment. We will still keep them separate, but consider them under the umbrella of course level assessment.
  - Looking over our model our Primary Mentor pointed out that we lacked co-curricular level assessment. This is currently being explored and developed, and information has been shared with faculty and staff on importance and use of co-curricular level assessment.
  - *Assessing Student Learning A Common Sense Guide* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition by Linda Suskie was purchased by the team leader. Concepts to focus on include, but are not limited to:
    - You should not dictate assessments to faculty. Allow for flexibility or risk coming across as criticizing their life's work.
    - You can have all of the consistency in the world, but if the data is not being used, it is worthless.
5. What are the plans for the next six months? How will this work advance your project?
- We will continue to expand upon the use of Microsoft Access towards automating parts of our assessment processes. Our institutional researcher successfully developed a process to pull the documentation of the classroom assessment techniques into an Access Database. The automated processes put in place have already saved an estimated 500 hours of work a year.
  - A group of eight “friendly” faculty piloted the new Access interface and based on the feedback, we made one major adjustment and two minor ones to remove confusion and add additional instructions as needed. We will fully implement it in spring 2016.
  - We will continue on this path with institutional assessment as well. We hope to pilot an Access database interface by fall 2016. Our hope is for instructors to be able to see immediate comparative historical data for their courses as a result of the automation. As a result, data driven improvements can then be made in real time.

6. What challenges do you anticipate? How will you address them?

- A new process for collecting assessment data may present a learning curve for faculty.
- Faculty already have an increased work load due to the course conversion to a new LMS.
  - Initial training has already taken place at the Great Bend and Fort Riley campuses, and additional Fort Leavenworth training will take place in spring 2016. It is our intent to visit all three campuses again by spring 2017. Fortunately, compared to how the data was collected before, the interface is by far easier to navigate which is a huge selling feature. Additionally, as they get used to using it to submit their classroom assessments, they should be more accustomed to it by the time we roll out for institutional assessment.
  - To monitor any complaints, feedback, or rumblings that may develop and to keep ahead of them, one to two of the members are attending the monthly all-faculty council meetings.
- There is always a need to continue to educate ourselves on assessment.
  - The President authorized funds for the team leader to attend the Institute for Student Learning Annual Assessment Conference in fall 2015.
  - Several individuals from Barton will attend the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference in spring 2016 including two to three members of our team.
  - The Vice President has allocated funds for the Regional Community College Annual Assessment Conference in spring 2016 which will be attended by one to two members of our team, the Director of Learning Services, and potentially others.