Fall
Issue

General Education and Academic Assessment Newsletter

Continuous
improvement

Academic Assessment >>>

Academic assessment is the cornerstone of continuous improvement.

Assessment is the systematic, continuous process of gathering, reviewing, and using data on student learning and other outcomes for the purposes of making improvements.

The assessment of student-learning outcomes is an ongoing four-step process of "establishing clear, measurable, expected outcomes of student learning; ensuring that student have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations; and, using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning" (Suskie, 2009, p. 4).
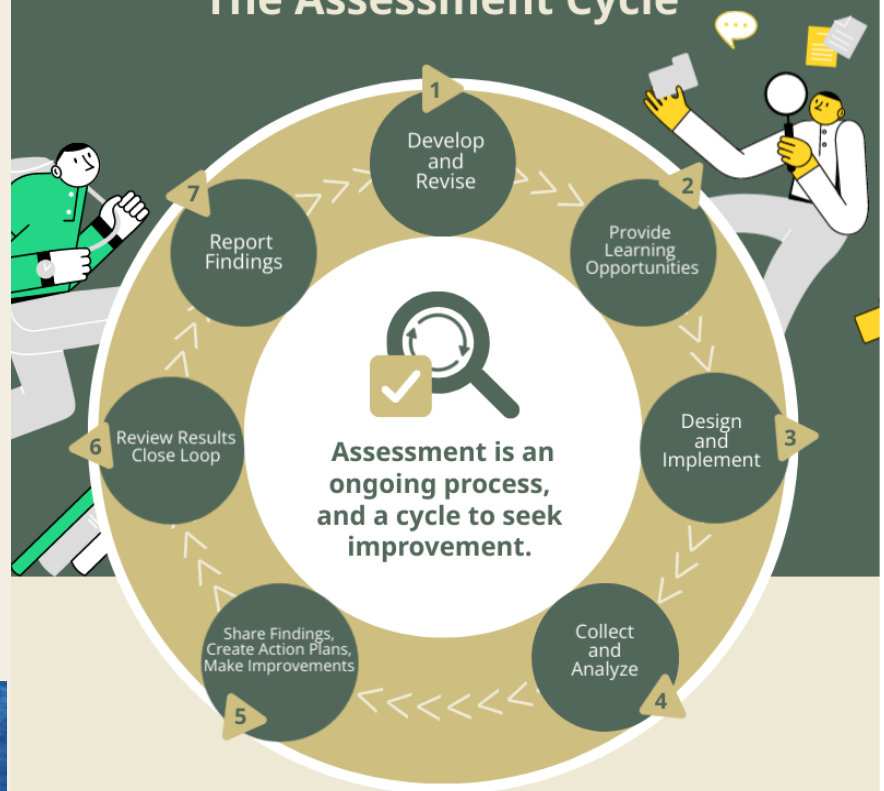
We can't improve what we don't measure.

The Assessment Cycle

1 Develop and Revise

2 Provide Learning Opportunities

3 Design and Implement

4 Collect and Analyze

5 Share Findings, Create Action Plans, Make Improvements

6 Review Results Close Loop

7 Report Findings

Assessment is an ongoing process, and a cycle to seek improvement.

1 **Develop & Revise Outcomes**

2 **Provide Learning Opportunities**

3 **Design and Implement Assessment Measures and Achievement Targets**

4 **Collect and Analyze Data for Each Outcome-Measure Pair**

5 **Share Findings, Create Action Plans, Make Improvements to Teaching/Learning and/or Departmental Processes**

6 **Review Results from Previous Action Plans to Close the Loop**

7 **Report Assessment Findings**

2023 SACSCOC Summer Institute - Session
with J. Roberts, C. Almquist, B. Bodo

What is Weave?

Credit: Shepherd.edu

Central Repository for Assessment Information

Weave is an online reporting software system that Tarleton uses to document assessment and quality improvement processes, procedures, and show evidence of seeking continuous improvement in the university's general education courses and educational programs.

The software can lead and record assessment practices in academic, administrative, community, and educational support areas.

Weave is helpful for tracking information for accreditation, annual reports, and budgeting requests.

Useful for all Accreditation Bodies

Weave is intended for documenting assessment for ALL accrediting bodies, not just SACSCOC.

Satisfying SACSCOC Standard 8.2

To meet SACSCOC requirements for academic assessment purposes, Standard 8.2 states "The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the following:

a. Student Learning Outcomes for each of its educational programs. (*Student outcomes: educational programs)*
b. Student Learning Outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (*Student outcomes: general education)"*

Triangulation of Methods

Refers to using two or more methods to assess outcomes.

Like research methods, assessment methods also have inherent strengths and weakness.

Triangulation helps overcome weaknesses and biases in assessment as well as provide a deeper understanding and produce innovation in conceptual framing (Cohen and Manion).

We can have greater confidence in the accuracy of our conclusions when multiple methods point to the same conclusions.

Elements in Weave

Mission Statement
Should concisely state a clear vision of the future; anchors to the programs and catalog description; flexible enough to adjust over time.

Goals
Long term in nature; form the foundation for student-learning assessment; directly linked to the mission; and stipulate the major principles the program serves.

Outcomes
Directly linked to the program's goals; encompass key specific knowledge, skills, and values students are expected to achieve in program. (*See triangulation of methods*).

Measures
Products of actual student work to specifically assess learning outcomes; prefer direct vs. indirect (upcoming newsletter); direct measures can be supported but not replaced by indirect measures.

Targets
Relate to outcomes; realistic; clearly indicate standards students are expected to meet.

Action Plans
Heart of assessment; incorporated for any measure not reaching its target; tool to achieve continuous improvement; every program must have one in-progress action plan.

Findings
Relate to targets; match description of measure; include an analysis; findings are disaggregated for location and delivery method (where applicable).

Course Map

A program's course map provides a visual representation of the classes all students will take to achieve the established learning outcomes. Course maps are a way of ensuring that every graduate of a program was introduced to, developed, and mastered the learning outcomes and objectives included in the assessment plans. Course maps provide an easy cross reference between outcomes/objectives and a program's required courses.

Key Points
- Objectives/outcomes on course map should match those in Weave.
- Objectives/outcomes must be "introduced," "developed," and "mastered" in a least one course on map.

Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Communications
Please indicate if the SLO is I=Introduced, D=Developed, M=Mastered in each course listed.

Student Learning Outcome	ACOM 1110	COMM 1315/2302	ACOM 2301	ACOM 2307	ACOM 2307 / COMM 2311	ACOM 3314/ 3321	ACOM 4305/ 4315	ACOM 4320	AGSD 4330	ACOM 4350/ 4325	ACOM 4684	AGSD 4185
1. Prepare and Present Oral Presentations	I	I	I/D	I	I/D	D	D	D/M	D/M	D/M	M	M
2. Discipline specific writing skills	I				I/D	D	M			D	M	M
3. Technology Skills in the Discipline	I	I	I/D	D	I/D	D	D/M	D/M	D/M	M	M	M

Example of Course Map for Agricultural Communications Program.

Sustainability Map

The sustainability map visually represents a program's 10-year plan of assessment. It demonstrates how a program plans to gather data systematically and routinely for its outcomes/objectives.

Key Points
- Objectives/outcomes on sustainability map should match those in Weave.
- Objectives/outcomes are assessed on at least an every other year basis.
- At least one objective/outcome is assessed every year. (Many programs choose to annually assess every outcome.)
- Map extends at least through 2029-2030.

SLO SUSTAINABILITY MAP

DEPARTMENT: Agricultural Education and Communications   PROGRAM: Agricultural Communication BS

Student-Learning Outcomes	Year for Measurement								
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
1) Prepare and Present Oral Presentations		X		X		X		X	
2) Discipline Specific Writing Skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	X
3) Technology Skills in the Discipline		X		X		X		X	
4)									
5)									

REMINDERS
- At least one SLO must be assessed each year.
- Each SLO must be assessed at least twice in each five-year period.
- When a single measurement instrument is used to assess more than one SLO, clustering objective(s) for that instrument into the same years may make use of that instrument easier to manage.

Example of Sustainability Map for Agricultural Communications Program.

Q: Looking assessment help?

A: Starting Oct. 6, Friday Assessment Sessions in Library Training Center 132, 3-5 p.m.

GEAAC has an associate dean, department head, and two faculty members from each college serving on the committee.

Drs. Martinez and Andrew are also available for additional trainings in your colleges or departments.

Visit: GEAAC Members for a full list of assessment support.

Measurement is the first step that leads to control and eventually improvement. If you can't measure something, you can't understand it. If you can't understand it, you can't control it. If you can't control it, you can't improve it. – James Harrington

Additional Resource Links

Assessment at Tarleton

FAQs

Glossary of Terms

Guides and Templates

Rubrics

SACSCOC Resource Manual for Principles of Accreditation

Important Dates

August 15
Assessment for all programs and courses should be fully updated.

August 31
All projects should be cloned in Weave to begin new academic year.
Cloning instructions.

September 1
GEAAC begins annual reviews.

October 31
GEAAC annual reviews are due to academic departments.

November 15
Departments should complete revisions in Weave based upon reviews.

January 15
Fall findings for core courses and programs should be entered into Weave.

February 1
Follow-up GEAAC reviews begin.

March 31
GEAAC holistic reviews are due to academic departments.

May 31
Spring semester's assessment findings should be entered into Weave.

August 15
Assessment cycle begins again.
Detailed Assessment Calendar