The goal of this newsletter is to promote better awareness and understanding of assessment, and to keep Concord faculty, staff, and students informed on important and relevant information related to assessment and accountability.

What's Happening in Assessment

Announcing the Updated Assessment Handbook

We are excited to announce the release of Concord University's Updated Assessment Handbook, your comprehensive guide to designing, implementing, and improving assessment practices across programs and disciplines.

Whether you're just beginning to build your assessment plan or refining your program's data collection and reporting, this newly revised resource walks you through:

- The Assessment Cycle
- Developing clear, measurable learning outcomes
- Selection and application of direct/indirect tools
- Rubric design and implementation
- Data collection, analysis, and "closing the loop"

Each chapter is grounded in national best practices and aligned with accrediting body expectations (HLC, 2024). You can find the full contents outlined on page 1 of the handbook.

Reminder: All departments should reference the handbook when completing annual program reports and during curriculum updates.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC). (2024). *Guiding Values*. Retrieved from https://www.hlcommission.org/accreditation/policies/criteria/guiding-values/

Creating Strong Learning Outcomes: Foundation for Effective Assessment

Well-constructed student learning outcomes (SLOs) form the backbone of effective assessment. They not only clarify expectations for students but also guide faculty in selecting appropriate assessments and analyzing data.

Best Practices for Writing SLOs:
- Use action verbs aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy (e.g., "analyze," "create," "evaluate").
- Ensure SLOs are measurable and tied to program goals.
- Focus on student performance, not teaching objectives.
- Link outcomes to institutional learning goals.

According to the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), effective SLOs drive better curriculum alignment and contribute to institutional improvement initiatives (NILOA, 2023).

Use Chapter 2: Building an Assessment Plan in the new handbook for examples and a step-by-step guide.

By ensuring that assessment data translates into real improvements, educational institutions can enhance student learning experiences and overall institutional effectiveness.

Reference:
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA). (2023). Writing Student Learning Outcomes. https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Contact

Dr. Amanda Sauchuck
asauchuck@concord.edu

Closing the Loop: Strategies for Meaningful Data Use

Collecting data is only the beginning. The true value of assessment comes from using that data to enhance teaching, improve curriculum, and support student learning—a process commonly known as "closing the loop."

Strategies to Effectively Close the Loop:

- Schedule annual faculty meetings to review assessment results and discuss instructional changes.
- Document how findings lead to course revisions, new teaching strategies, or student support services.
- Identify areas for further investigation or professional development.
- Reassess after implementation to track the impact of changes.

According to Banta & Palomba (2015), integrating data use into regular faculty workflows ensures continuous improvement and promotes a culture of accountability.

Explore Chapter 4: Implementation in the handbook for practical examples of data analysis and follow-up actions.

Reference:
Banta, T.W., & Palomba, C.A. (2015). *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education.* Jossey-Bass.