

## COMMON COURSE ASSESSMENT PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project has been designed to gather information about student learning in Barton courses taught at various sites and through various delivery modes. Its purpose is to document that students are learning the course's core competencies, to celebrate when they are, and to find ways to improve learning when they are not.

The faculty teaching these courses are solely responsible for developing the assessment instruments. While the associate deans, assessment coordinators, and course coordinators will offer whatever support is needed, the teaching faculty are considered the "experts" in this endeavor. Likewise, faculty should not seek to impose their pet exams or assignments on others; rather, this project should allow all instructors to have a voice and to share in the decision-making process.

### *Initial Meeting(s) - Course Coordinators & Instructors —*

- Arrange a meeting with instructors teaching course:
  - Ask instructors to bring a copy of their syllabus to the meeting. (It might be beneficial to ask them to bring a copy of their comprehensive final or post-test if they have one.)
  
- Review Syllabus Course Description, Outcomes and Competencies:
  - Make sure that course descriptions on instructors' syllabi match exactly the course descriptions in the college catalog. Facilitate revisions to the course description as needed.
  - Review course outcomes and competencies (sections IV and V of the syllabus). If your course is involved in the KBOR State Core Competencies' project, you may want to bring copies of the course's state competencies.
  - Facilitate any differences of opinion regarding the course outcomes and competencies. Focus on CORE competencies - what constitutes the core of your course. Individual faculty can always add supplemental competencies to their individual syllabi.
  - **ALL REVISIONS TO THE SYLLABUS COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES, AND MAJOR REVISIONS TO THE COURSE COMPETENCIES MUST BE FORWARDED TO THE LEARNING, INSTRUCTION, AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL.** (Contact the Office of Instruction and Student Services for more information or visit their website.)

- Discuss the idea of a common instrument for assessing your course's core competencies:
  - Begin with the end in mind! What do you, as instructors, want to know about your students' learning? The instrument you design needs to provide you with meaningful information. Try to strike a balance between simple and complicated. Keeping it simple will make the analysis phase easier, but too simple may not yield meaningful results. Similarly, a more complicated instrument may provide helpful information, but not if the analysis takes months to complete.
  - The common assessment instrument does not have to be a "final" exam, but does need to occur during the latter part of the semester/cycle (after all competencies have been covered).
  - Likewise, the common assessment instrument may be embedded within an instructor's existing test or assignment, becoming just a piece of **his** course's assessment. This option needs to be discussed! The primary goal of this phase of the process to design an instrument that will yield consistently derived data which faculty consider meaningful.
  - The common assessment instrument does not have to be an "exam"; rather, it may be whatever the instructors deem the best measure of the course competencies as long as all instructors teaching that course administer the same instrument at approximately the same time during the course:
    - For subjective assessment questions or instruments, faculty need to develop scoring criteria and a rubric.
    - For objective assessment questions or instruments, faculty need to develop an answer key.
    - Instructors may wish to develop a pool of questions for their common assessment.
  - Students' scores on the common assessment instrument do not have to be factored into students' grades; individual instructors may decide whether or not to count the assessment score.
  
- As faculty design their assessment instrument, they should consider administration guidelines:
  - Consider the timing of administration (e.g. exact date; specific week of semester/cycle; after a certain unit).
  - Discuss testing conditions (e.g. open book; collaboration allowed; restricted time; calculators allowed).

- Decide what kind of preparation will be allowed (e.g. practice test; general review of concepts).
  - Determine how the assessment instrument and results will be exchanged (e.g. through email; USPS). Outline everyone's responsibilities and timelines.
  - If using a pool of questions, determine where those will be housed and how they will be used (e.g. faculty randomly choose questions; all faculty use the same questions).
- After your group has determined what they want to learn about their students' learning and the type of assessment instrument they want to use, discuss *benchmarks*, standards by which the results may be compared.
- Once the instrument has been administered for the first time and faculty have shared their results, discuss your next steps:
- Is the instrument effective, or is it flawed, unwieldy, not yielding the desired results? If so, the group should consider revising the instrument.
  - Given the results, are the benchmarks realistic?
  - Are there patterns of gaps or weakness in the students' learning? Perhaps the group needs to add competencies or develop a course-wide plan for remediating those weaknesses.
  - Discuss the focus of the next administration. Does the group want to focus its next administration on adding to their baseline data? Does the group want to focus on assessing just one or two competencies to see if their improvement plan is working. Keep in mind that the PRIMARY focus of all of Barton's assessment efforts is to IMPROVE student learning, not merely to gather data!

Remember --

$$\underline{E = MC^2}$$

**Evaluation=Measurement x Common Sense Squared**

**Course Coordinators' Checklist (not necessarily in sequence)**

- Welcome and introduce colleagues
- Gather email addresses
- Appoint or ask for a volunteer recorder
- Describe course assessment project and participants' roles
- Review syllabus - Course description, outcomes, and competencies
- Facilitate consensus if differences in opinion regarding any of the above exist
- Brainstorm methodology for assessing course competencies (how can we best determine whether and to what degree our students have attained the competencies set forth on our syllabus?)
- Develop administration guidelines
- Implement instrument
- Collect and analyze results
- Determine next steps

<b><u>Objective Assessment</u></b>	<b><u>Subjective Assessment</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Questions based on course competencies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scantron or other form decided other _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multiple questions (bank) for each competency being assessed (optional)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Answer/key generated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Administration guidelines determined</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set Benchmarks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assessment based on course competencies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Form will yield valid results</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Criteria for scoring developed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scoring rubric generated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Administration guidelines determined</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set Benchmarks</li> </ul>