

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences - Annual Conference 2024
Pre-Conference Assessment Workshop
Nuts & Bolts Track: Getting Your Assessment Process Started
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This is an *interactive* session.
Ask questions, make comments, debate the
issues with me.
We all learn from the exchange.

So, you're getting your assessment process started ... why?

1. Assessment has a variety of meanings in higher education. It includes “any activity designed to collect information on the success of a program, course, or University curriculum” in order to “improve institutional practices” (Stassen et al., 2001, p.5).
2. Program assessment “focuses on assessing student learning and experience to determine whether students have acquired the skills, knowledge, and competencies associated with their program of study” (Stassen et al., 2001, p.7).

Stassen, M., Doherty, K., & Poe, M. (2001). Program-based review and assessment: Tools and techniques for program improvement. Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA), University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Retrieved from http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf

Why?

- Accreditation / Re-Accreditation / External Program Review
- Institutional Program Review
- Other – issues unique to each region, state, institution, and program
- ACJS Program Review
 - Program assessment is conducted to enhance the learning experiences of current and future students.
 - It is designed to generate qualitative and quantitative information that will be used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a course or program.
 - That, in turn, allows programs to identify areas where improvements might be necessary, or achievements can be proclaimed.
 - Program assessment is a requirement for the ACJS-endorsed program review process.

What form will your assessment take?

- Institutional (Program / Degree-wide)
- Benchmark / Required / Core Courses
- No matter what you're doing, you are assessing student performance within your program, course, etc.
- What you are trying to assess makes a difference.

How will you assess?

- *What you are trying to assess makes a difference.*
- Objective or subjective?
- Methods
 - Multiple choice / “Scantron”
 - Essays (traditional papers, short essays, etc.)
 - Projects
 - Written Exams
 - Practical Exercises
 - External vendor – program & package

Methods

Method	Pro	Con
Multiple choice / Scantron (or similar)	Fast & easy to administer, objective, easily deployed	Out of favor, depends on simple answers, does not allow nuance, instrument & question design very important
Essays / Projects / Practical Exercises / Written Exams	Qualitative, <i>effective</i> instrument design allows assessment of many aspects (vocabulary, term usage, conceptual understanding, practical skills)	Issues of inter-rater reliability, time intensive, ineffective instrument design defeats all assessment efforts
External Vendor / Instrument	Skilled & experienced vendor with knowledge of design, content, and administration.	Potential loss of in-house control & design, costs beyond faculty action
All methods	Can be a grade-able event within the course administered – primary assignment or extra credit.	Lack of course credit (assignment, exam, etc.) likely to reduce student effort & participation

Common to all Assessments #1

- What to assess
 - Program
 - All courses or core?
 - Performed as program exit - are you willing to non-graduate a student who performs poorly on a final program assessment?
 - Course
 - Performed upon course completion or series of assessments throughout the course?
 - Graded or non-graded?
 - Specific content target
 - Program or course emphasis, topic, theme?

Common to all Assessments #2

- Until you answer the “What to assess” question, you cannot decide or design a method of assessment
- Instrument Design
 - Within the broad strokes of essays, practical exercises, or multiple-choice exams, you need to select your assessment targets (topics, concepts, issues)
 - What is important to your program or course?
- Rubric Design is based on your assessment target and method

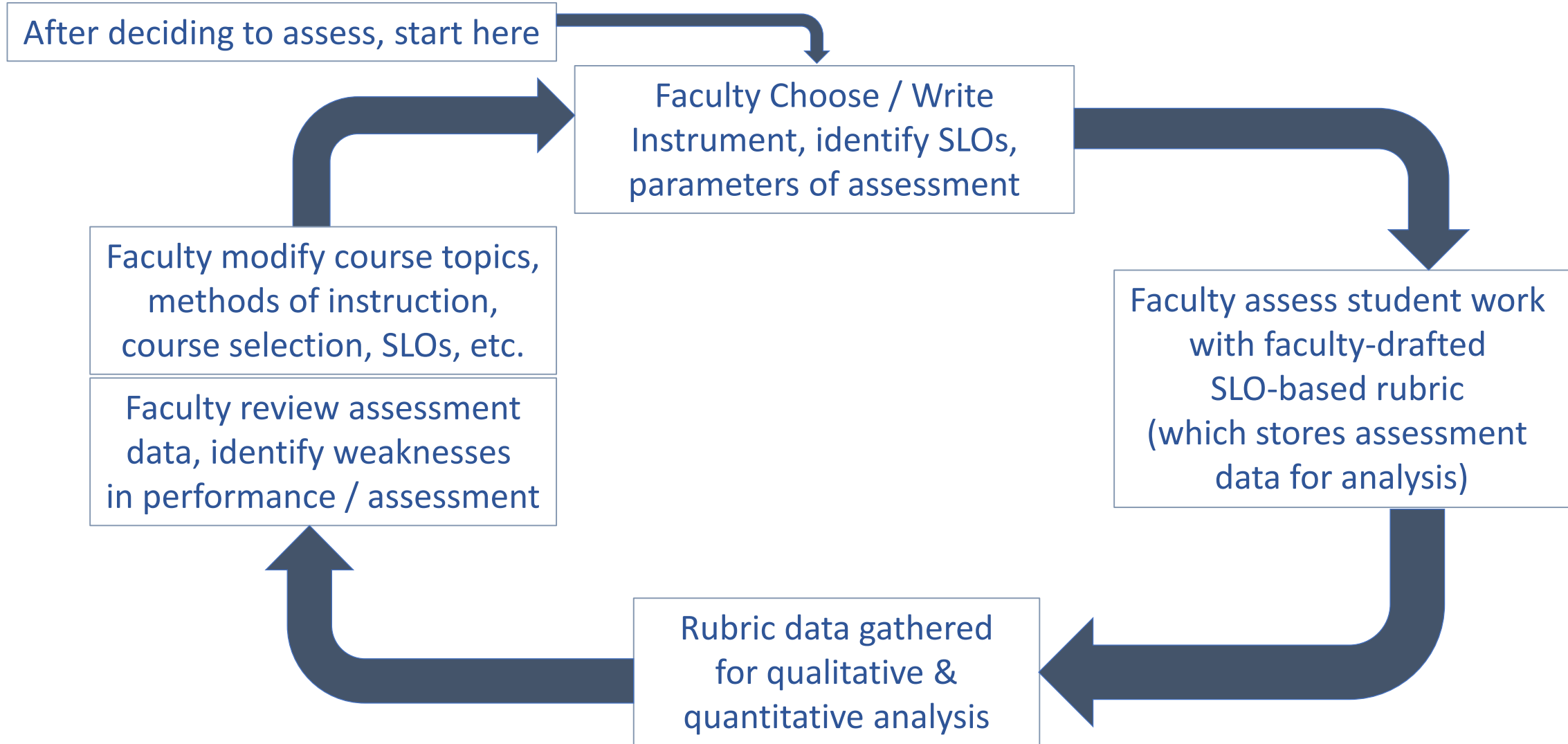
Common to all Assessments #3

- Who will measure performance?
 - Instructor of the class
 - Other program faculty
 - Non-program faculty
 - Multiple reviewers
- If using multiple reviewers
 - Provides two (or more) sets of eyes to reduce evaluation effect
 - Inter-rater reliability
- The ability to perform the assessment of student work will flow from adequate subject matter knowledge by your assessment personnel and an understanding of the goals of the assessment schema

Common to all Assessments #4

- Rubrics
 - If shared with students, provides insight into scope and how to form answers (but not content)
 - If not shared with students, potentially undirected effort responding to the prompt
- Faculty buy-in
 - Is this institutional busywork?
 - Faculty involvement in assessment targets, instrument, and rubric design
- Validity of entire approach and individual instruments

Opening and Closing The Homegrown Assessment Loop



Thank you!

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