

Planning Your Assessment of Students' Projects Backwards: Module 2

Peggy Maki

Education Consultant and Assessment
Series Editor, Stylus Publishing, LLC


PeggyMaki@aol.com

The University of West Florida


March 15, 2007

What Do You Want to Learn about Your Students?

- Questions about:
 - Demographics
 - Course-taking patterns
 - Status of students enrolled in relevant courses (transfer, for example)
 - Related courses students have taken that address the same outcome
 - Students' major

- 
-
- Grades in other courses related to project management
 - Involvement in co-curriculum
 - Previous work experience in project management
 - Students' self-reflection on the work and components of the work
 - Students learning histories (courses in the major before project management)

-
- Students' self-analysis of how they learned along the components of relevant courses
 - Students' self-assessment of learning gains
 - SALG (feedback from students about course-based elements—their own learning within context of aspects of a course –or an entire course⁴⁴)
 - <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/salgains/instructor/SALGains.asp#development>



What Do You Want to Learn about Teaching and Learning?

- Pedagogy (problem-based, experiential, didactic)
- Curricular or relevant course(s) design or co-curricular design
- Instructional design (computer-based, for example)
- Use of educational experiences
- Use of out-of-course assistance, such as tutorials

What Other Available Program- or Institution-level Data Might You Need?

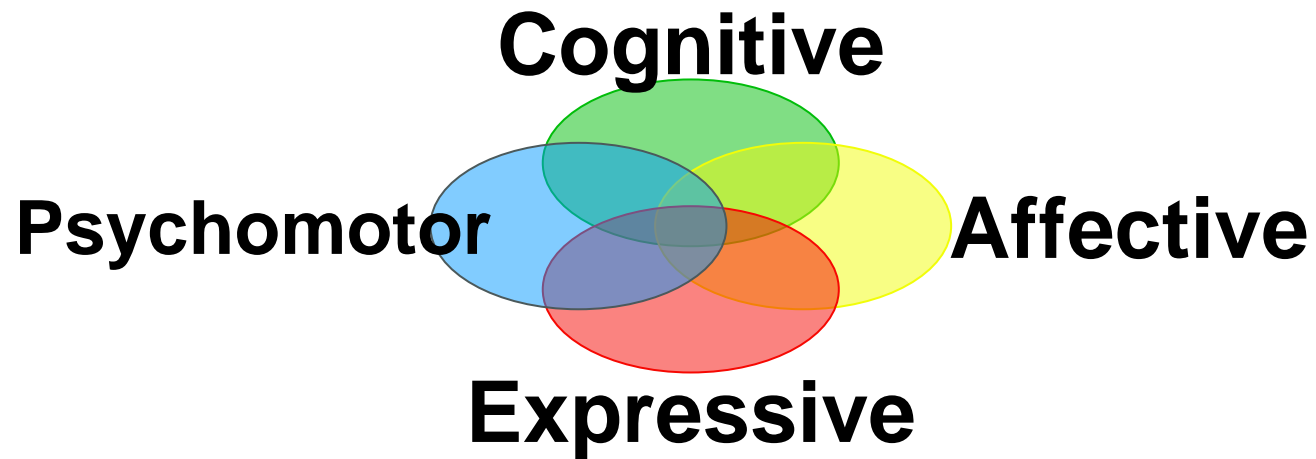
- NSSE
- Maps or inventories of practice
- Scores on standardized tests
- Surveys or interviews
- Standardized test results
- Other data your program or UWF stores?
 - -----
 - -----
 - -----



Criteria that Describe Project Management against Standards of Judgment-Scoring rubrics

- Knowledge
- Skills or abilities
- Habits of mind of the discipline (ways of knowing and problem solving)
- Disciplinary logic that is followed
- Dispositions (attitudes, values, “readiness” to respond)

Integrated Learning....






How Well Do Students...

- Synthesize
- Integrate
- Transfer
- Apply and re-apply
- Re-use
- Re-position understanding or perspectives



Case Study: Assessment of Students' Writing at a Two-Year Institution

- A two-year commuter institution decided to embed writing prompts into courses at the end of students' programs of study to ascertain how well they mastered "taking a position on an issue."
 - Look at the kinds of data they thought would be useful as they interpreted results.

- 
-
- Look at the criteria and standards of judgment they used
 - Look at the results
 - Look at the recommendations for action



Fields Included in Student Profiles


- Accuplacer scores in reading & writing
- Number of college credits completed
- Program affiliation
- Grades in courses related to the assessment goal
- GPA
- History of enrollment in a Learning Community or First Year Experience class
- Other (use of learning support services, completion of tangentially related courses, etc.) ¹²

Institutional Example of Analysis of Course-embedded Student Writing

- 30% of our students are writing at the proficient level (holistic score of 3 or above represented in a graph) based on an expectation of 80%
- The median and mode holistic score (2.5) and the mean holistic score (2.34) are not quite at the proficient level, so the distribution curve lumps to the left of center
- Students are closer to proficiency in the skills relating to *Purpose and Audience* and *Organization* than they are in skills relating to *Development* and *Language* based on analytic scoring of :
 - *Four Criteria: Purpose and Audience, Organization, Development, and Language*
 - *Four Proficiency Levels: superior, proficient, essential, in progress*

Institutional Example of Interpretation of Results

- The main obstacles to proficiency lie in the areas of *development* (support of ideas with evidence, examples, elaboration of topics, etc.) and *language* (effective use of sentence structures, word choices, and mechanics of standard written English):
 - Developmental students consistently scored below all other students
 - Students who report having written essays in classes other than English 006 and 101 demonstrate greater levels of writing skill and are more likely to have reached the proficient level


- 
-
- Showing growth over time, scores indicate steady increases in students writing at the *proficient* level in three sequential categories of writing-intensive courses: English 006, English 101, and writing beyond English 101. However, across these three stages, a significant number of sampled students continued to write below the *essential* level


Institutional Example of Actions to Improve Students' Writing


- The Student Learning Assessment Team suggests that units throughout the College design interventions leading toward achievement of the following goals by Fall, 2005:
 - Raise the holistic mean by .5 from 2.3-2.8
 - Increase the percentage of students writing proficiently by one third, from 30% to 40%
 - Repeat the Common Writing Assignment in 2005-2006 to assess progress toward these goals


Strategies to Achieve These Goals:


- Humanities Department Committee on Writing Standards should coordinate activities for improving student writing:
 - Offer professional development to assist faculty and other educators to explore methods of increasing students' skills in the categories of development and language, as defined in the scoring rubric
 - Distribute the rubric to students and staff throughout the College to open discussion of the College's writing standards

- 
-
- Advise students of College policy that states students should complete English 101 within their first 15 credit—an issue for academic advisors, counselors and support staff.

- 
-
- Since developmental students consistently scored lower than other students,
 - Develop interventions for these students so that they advance under all four criteria, as well as agree upon what “increasing” mastery means for these students across developmental writing courses

- 
-
- Since students who report having written essays in classes other than English 006 and 101 demonstrate greater levels of writing skill and are more likely to have reached the proficient level,
 - The College should pilot W-designated writing-intensive classes in business, science, social science, and other fields. It should support these pilot courses with professional development activities, limited enrollments, and assigned tutors to provide supplemental instruction in writing. These courses will engage more faculty in assigning, assessing, and improving student writing

- 
-
- The College should continue to develop learning communities that pair writing courses with introductory courses in the disciplines. The purpose is to support writing across the disciplines and engage more faculty in assigning, assessing, and improving student writing.

- 
-
- Since scores indicate steady increases in students writing at the *proficient* level in three sequential categories of writing-intensive courses: English 006, English 101, and writing beyond English 101,
 - The College should develop goals and practices for increasing the percentage of students writing at or above the essential level upon successful completion of English 101 building on this year's baselines and setting benchmarks at each stage for additional growth

Examples of Changes across Different Institutions:

- Increased attention to weaving experiences across the institution, a program, or a department to improve student achievement
- Changes in advising based on assessment results
- Closer monitoring of student achievement--tracking

-
- Faculty and staff development to learn how to integrate experiences that contribute to improving students' achievement of specific learning outcomes
 - Changes in pedagogy and curricular and co-curricular design
 - Development of modules to assist learning; use of technology; self-paced learning, supplemental learning

What Will You Want to Learn?

- Based on what we discussed today, identify the questions you want to answer about students' learning how to manage a project?
- What other kinds of institutional data might be useful to you as you interpret results?
- How would you expect analysis of results to be reported to you?
- How will you engage others in interpretation of these results to identify students' strengths and identify student weaknesses to improve student learning?