

Kapi'olani Community College's

1st Annual Closing the Loop Assessment Institute

May 14, 15 & 17, 2012

Summary Report

Sally Pestana & Tanya Renner

6/12/12

Assessment of student learning is central to a variety of goals and plans of the College. Our College wide Strategy #8 challenges us to “[I]mprove ongoing cycles of integrated research, planning, evaluation, and budgeting.” We also have committed to completing “two documented cycles of development for all certificate and degree programs, for assessment, evaluation, and improvement of student learning outcomes” (Performance Measure B7).

To promote achievement of these goals, we designed and implemented a summer training in assessment practices for faculty. We used data from the Fall 2011 KapCC Faculty Survey to guide us in the development of this training. Nearly all (91)% respondents were willing to work with colleagues on learning assessment and 80% of them asked for examples of student learning assessment. Therefore, our three-day assessment institute included showcase samples of completed student learning assessment, information on how to design and implement meaningful assessment, thought-provoking dialogue related to the next steps for those courses with completed learning assessment, mentoring by experienced colleagues and time to design and complete *Course Learning Reports (CLRs)* and *Course Assessment Plans (CAPs)*.

In addition, there was rich discussion on how to shape long term strategies for continuous learning improvement at the college and policies on how best to use learning assessment for driving vital college decisions including, but not limited to, resource allocations.

The planned outcomes and products for this event were:

Learning Outcomes:

- Describe three benefits of assessing learning at the course level.
- Identify a new option for assessing learning that you want to try.
- List two action steps related to improving student learning that you intend to implement in fall 2012. Explain how these are related to your CLR.

Products:

- Completed CLRs
- Motivation and recognition plan
- CTL recommendations

Institute Results:

A total of 41 faculty participated, including two facilitators and seven mentors. There were 25 participants from Liberal Arts disciplines and 16 from Career and Technical Education disciplines. We encouraged faculty who had not yet completed Course Learning Reports for priority one courses (five or more sections taught each semester) to come as a team of 2-3 faculty who all teach the same course.

At the end of the first and second days, participants were asked to evaluate the sessions they had attended. There were 36 respondents for the first day, and 33 for the second. The rating scale went from 1 (Not helpful) to 4 (Extremely helpful) and 1 (Boring) to 4 (Extremely interesting). The average rating for the first day was 3.21; for the second day it was 3.32. Spontaneous comments mentioned a sense of relief (one respondent wrote, "Assessment is not terrifying.") and interest in the various types of resources available. Intent to visit websites and gratitude for the showcase examples presented by the mentors were mentioned specifically.

A primary goal of the institute was to support faculty in completing their Course Learning Reports, especially for priority one courses. Since attending this training, faculty have completed 45 Course Assessment Plans and 31 Course Learning Reports were completed by the participants.

Keeping on Keeping On: Motivation & Recognition Plan

Participants developed an extensive list of suggestions for inspiring faculty to see the value of ongoing SLO assessment and to feel motivated to participate in a meaningful, authentic way. The dialog also included ways to recognize those who have taken leadership roles as well as options for sharing their expertise both inter and intra discipline. A concise list follows, with a more detailed compilation attached.

Both campus assessment coordinators independently evaluated the suggestions in terms of how imperative they are to move the college forward in its assessment journey. Their top three are indicated by an asterisk.

- Campus assessment office**
- IT support
- Faculty incentives & recognition of various kinds*
- Training*
- Time
- Peer support
- College decisions tied to assessment results**

Beyond the Course: Closing the Loop Recommendations

Participants had an in-depth discussion on how to expand the value of course level and program level SLOs beyond course/curriculum modifications. During the discussion, participants suggested that we create a “Magical Plan for Transformation” of the assessment experience. The list of suggestions for the transformation can be categorized in terms of how to use assessment data and how to best support faculty to generate quality assessments of student learning.

Use the results of assessments to

- recruit students (e.g., from feeder courses) and market campus programs
- recruit faculty
- request funding, justify new resources
- determine resource allocation
- to exchange with other faculty to improve learning and focus our visions

Provide support for faculty by

- creating an assessment office
- encouraging disciplinary groups to discuss results together
- creating a department liaison with the assessment office
- committing TE on an ongoing basis
- providing ongoing workshops/training
- providing more support staff
- committing an entire week to assessment work annually that is not part of the duty period and pay faculty overload/stipends for the work
- providing an assessment expert to evaluate the data
- create an Assessment Milestone Funding Award (financial reward that faculty choose how to spend to improve student learning outcomes)

In addition to the planned outcomes and products described above, both campus coordinators believe that many participants who had been reticent to embrace course level assessment had a change of heart, for a variety of reasons. Some came to understand the ultimate goal of course level assessment is continuous quality improvement, a concept that they have always valued. Others came to realize that what they were anticipating was going to be arduous and complex was actually a manageable task that they are fully capable of completing.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the attendance at the sessions, the evaluations, the tenor of the discussions, and the suggestions elicited in various ways, we strongly recommend that faculty training in assessment become a regular, perhaps annual, event. Our specific recommendations are to:

- continue this event at least once a year
- determine the best model for faculty training to meet future college needs (for example, who should be trained, when, and how often?)
- foster collaboration between Faculty Senate, campus assessment coordinators, and administration to develop and implement proposals based on the *Closing the Loop Recommendations* and the attached *Motivation and Recognition List* (Appendix 1).