

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT & REVIEW NEWS

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WNC FACULTY PRESENT AT 2009 NNAC

Three members of the WNC teaching faculty were presenters at the 2009 Northern Nevada Assessment conference held Feb. 6 at UNR.

Susan Priest, college success instructor, and Cheryl Pawluk, psychology professor, spoke in an afternoon session about ways to predict academic success using the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) assessment tool in introductory psychology and college success courses.

Chad McCully, English instructor and PARC chair, presented "Using Free, Open-Source Technology to Track Assessment" in one of the morning sessions. His presentation focused on the benefits of using free technology at a time when expensive, proprietary

software may be out of reach and may not function as well.

In an afternoon session, McCully joined with Fred Lokken, Associate Dean of the Web-College Department at TMCC, and Alina Solovyova-Vincent, Instructional Designer from the Teaching & Learning Technologies Department at UNR, to discuss and answer questions about assessment tools available in Blackboard and Angel, the course management systems used at the three institutions.

Of the 138 registered participants, sixteen were from WNC. Fifty-eight participants completed an online evaluation, and the results are available on UNR's assessment Web site (<http://www.unr.edu/assess/>). —CB

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- ◇ **March 23-April 10**
Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory implementation
- ◇ **April 28**
Early Childhood Education Program Review external reviewer site visit
- ◇ **May 7**
General Education Program Review external reviewer site visit
- ◇ **May 15**
2008-2009 Program Review Reports due
- ◇ **May 15**
2008-2009 Assessment Reports / 2009-2010 Assessment Plans due

NOEL-LEVITZ UPDATE

Implementation of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory begins March 23. The staff in Institutional Research created a random sample of students representative of enrollments in Carson, Douglas, Fallon and Web classes. Instructors whose classes are in the survey sample are being notified by campus mail and by e-mail.

Students and instructors in face-to-face classes are being asked to give up approximately 40 minutes of instructional time so that surveys can be introduced, distributed, completed and collected. Students in Web classes will receive an e-mail at their WNC e

-mail address inviting them to complete the survey.

The 30-minute survey, which has been taken at more than 2,100 colleges and universities, measures the level of students' satisfaction with many aspects of their college experience. The Strategic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness Committee recommended in 2006 that the college implement this survey to measure progress in achieving the 2006-2012 Strategic Goals.

The survey was implemented at WNC for the first time in 2007. —CB

JANUARY WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON TECHNOLOGY

Faculty and staff from throughout the college filled the Cedar computer lab on January 13 to attend PARC's workshop focusing on the use of student course evaluations and Web technologies.

Dean Carol Lange began the workshop with a presentation about student course evaluations as an assessment tool. Instructors have the ability to write one question, and Lange suggested using that question to ask students to reflect on their skill or knowledge acquisition in terms of one learning outcome for the course. She stressed that if instructors can keep students aware of learning outcomes throughout the semester by linking class lectures, discussions, activities and assessments to the outcomes, instructors help students remain focused on what they are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the course.

Next, Catherine Boedenauer demonstrated how to use Blackboard tools to create rubrics and assignments and link them to goals. Once these were created, Boedenauer demonstrated how a student would complete the assignment, how the instructor would grade the assignment using the rubric, and how the instructor would view grade statistics for the class.

Chad McCully demonstrated how Turnitin technology is able to alert an instructor to potential cases of plagiarism. McCully submitted a piece of writing and showed how Turnitin highlighted those portions that matched a piece of writing already in the database. He explained that it was up to the instructor to determine whether there was an actual case of plagiarism or merely a failure to properly cite the source. McCully also demonstrated the grading rubric function of Turnitin and showed how to view rubric-based grade statistics.

Susan Priest ended the workshop with a presentation of resources to help instructors to guide students through the most common difficulties with Blackboard and related technologies,

including Blackboard login and browser issues. She directed participants to pages on the college Web site that are available to help students and instructors and provided a helpful handout that addressed common problems.

At the conclusion of the workshop, 31 of the 37 participants completed a brief survey that revealed the following:

- One hundred percent thought there was a need for faculty support in the use of Web-based instructional tools.
- Ninety-four percent planned to incorporate some of the ideas that were presented into future classes.
- The four ideas most likely to be incorporated into future classes were: 1) using the optional student course evaluation question for assessment purposes, 2) using Turnitin for originality checking, 3) Using Blackboard assessments, and 4) using Blackboard discussions.
- One hundred percent found the information presented to be somewhat or very useful. —CB



USING EMPLOYER AND GRADUATE SURVEY RESULTS TO REVISE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR NURSING

Nursing course objectives are based on the program's student learning outcomes. The student learning outcomes are revised yearly based on community needs and survey results.

Each year, surveys incorporating the outcomes are sent out to the employer, students and graduates.

The first survey is sent to the second-year nursing students before graduation and again one year after graduation. Another survey is administered to the employer one year after the students' graduation.

Results from these surveys guide the revision of learning outcomes and the curriculum as needed.

Nursing faculty determine community needs from the external advisory committee. The members of this committee are the directors or managers in local health care facilities. This committee meets at least once a year. The feedback received from these meetings guides the revision of the student learning outcomes. —MK

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COURSE-EMBEDDED OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Embedding assessment into everyday classroom activities is a fantastic way to gather information in order to improve instruction and services to students. Perhaps the most appealing aspect of embedded assessment is that the instructor can tailor the assessment to be more useful in gathering information about a particular class and its specific objectives. Also, the assessment can be added to existing assignments so that assessment is part of the evaluation instructors already perform.

Embedded assessment can happen every time the class meets, allowing an instructor to gather information on how well students are achieving desired outcomes during a given lesson, or it can be used once, at the end of a semester to assess whether students have achieved certain learning outcomes for the entire course. Repeating the assessment in successive semesters will yield information that is more useful by virtue of comparison.

Several factors make it possible to use daily activities in the classroom for the purposes of assessment on a larger scale. These include:

1. Clarifying the desired student learning outcomes for a course or discipline (identifying what matters to you and your students).
2. Using explicit criteria that will standardize the evaluation of how students achieve these learning outcomes.
3. Designing an assessment instrument or tool that evaluates students using these criteria.
4. Gathering the data and using it to improve instruction or recognize success (reviewing what the results suggest).

Examples of instruments or tools that can be used for embedded assessment include rubrics, multiple choice tests, writing assignments, and portfolios. Portfolios could potentially be used on a larger scale to track the achievement of learning outcomes over time and through a specific discipline or department. With any assessment, repeating it over a period of time for comparison purposes can yield even more useful information. –CM

SOURCES

“Embedded Assessment, 2006.” College of Saint Benedict; Saint John’s University. 8 Mar. 2009
<<http://www.csbsju.edu/les/pastevents/Embedded%20Assessment.htm>>.