

Selected resources to support program-level assessment

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The array of on-line examples and resources to support institutional-level, program-level, and classroom-level assessment continues to grow. The annotated list below was developed to address the distinctive challenges of program-level and/or discipline-based assessment.

Resources from disciplinary associations

Some disciplinary associations and/or field-specific accreditation organizations have developed helpful resources specific to assessment in a particular field. Examples:

- *American Sociological Association*, “Creating an Effective Assessment Plan for the Sociology Major” - <http://www.asanet.org/galleries/APAP/Assessment%20Final%20Copy%202005.pdf>
- *American Chemical Society Assessment Materials* website - <http://www4.uwm.edu/chemexams/materials/index.cfm>
- *American Philosophical Society Statement on the Profession: Outcomes Assessment* - http://www.apaonline.org/documents/governance/APA_Outcomes_2008.pdf
- *Association for Theatre in Higher Education Outcomes Assessment Guidelines for Theatre Programs in Higher Education* - <http://www.athe.org/files/pdf/OutcomesAssessment.pdf>

Institutional-level approaches to assessing critical thinking adaptable to program-level assessment

- *Rubrics*
 - AAC&U VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubrics, including critical thinking, civic engagement, and quantitative reasoning: <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index.cfm>
 - CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) common scoring rubric: http://www.cae.org/content/pdf/CLA_Scoring_Criteria_%28Jan%202008%29.pdf
- *Questionnaires*
 - Critical thinking items incorporated in institutional-level surveys:
 - NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement)
 - CIRP (Higher Education Research Institute’s Cooperative Institutional Research Program “Freshman Survey”)
 - HEDS (Higher Education Data-Sharing Consortium) senior and alumni surveys
 - St. Olaf’s pilot “Essential Learning Outcomes” survey
 - NITLE/HEDS *Research Practices Survey* - A fifteen-minute online questionnaire that examines students’ experiences with, attitudes toward, and proficiency in conducting effective academic research in a liberal arts setting (combining “indirect” and “direct” assessment), including the ability to evaluate sources critically - http://www.stolaf.edu/offices/ea/RPS_SurveyInstrument09.pdf

Resources from organizations, projects, and partnerships

- *National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment* – <http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/index.html>

NILOA's primary objective is to discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders. The NILOA project is based at the University of Illinois and Indiana University and is supported by the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and The Teagle Foundation.

- *Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)* –
 - *Liberal Education and the Disciplines* – A special issue of *Liberal Education*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Spring 2009) - Drawing from a recent initiative of the Teagle Foundation, this issue presents a series of reports on the relationship between the goals and objectives of liberal education and those of the undergraduate major in each of six disciplines: biochemistry and molecular biology, classics, economics, English and foreign languages, history, and religious studies. http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-sp09/le-sp09_index.cfm
 - *Engaging Departments Summer Institute* – A new five-day summer program offered by AAC&U with funding from the Teagle Foundation, helping campus teams of academic administrators, department chairs, and faculty with to advance their plans to foster, assess, and improve student learning within departments and across the institution. The Institute provides information resources, consulting services by an inter-institutional team of faculty and administrators, and structured time for teams to work together. http://www.aacu.org/meetings/engaging_depts/index.cfm
- *State Your Case! Developing and Supporting a Point of View* – <http://serc.carleton.edu/case/index.html>

State Your Case! is a three-year inter-institutional project focused on helping students learn how to develop and support a point of view in any disciplinary or interdisciplinary field. Led by St. Olaf and supported by a “Systematic Improvements” grant from the Teagle Foundation, the project includes classroom instructors and faculty leaders from St. Olaf, Carleton, and Macalester, and features a project website hosted by Carleton’s Science Education Resource Center, with extensive resources about instruction and assessment in critical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, and effective writing and speaking.

- *Rutgers University “Scientific Abilities” project of the Physics and Astronomy Education Research (PAER) group* – <http://paer.rutgers.edu/scientificabilities/>

Sponsored by the National Science Foundation program “Assessing Student Achievement” (NSF-ASA), the goal of this project is to help students develop some of the abilities used by scientists and engineers in their work. The site includes template tasks to help students develop these abilities as well as rubrics to assist in assessment.

- *Teagle Foundation “Outcomes and Assessment” website* – <http://www.teaglefoundation.org/learning/resources.aspx#assessment>

Teagle’s commitment to supporting and strengthening liberal education is reflected in both its extensive grant-making activities and its on-line resources about assessment in general, specific assessment instruments, and ways of using assessment to improve teaching and learning.

- *Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide* – <http://www.flaguide.org/>

Developed by a National Institute for Science Education team of faculty, education researchers, faculty developers, and students, this site includes a wide array of approaches to classroom-level learning outcomes assessment in mathematics and natural sciences. Many are adaptable to program-level assessment and to assessment of outcomes in other fields.

Resources on college and university assessment websites

Many institutional assessment websites include helpful examples of assessment strategies being undertaken in specific departments and additional handbooks and resources to support departmental assessment planning. Below are examples representing several types of institutions.

- *American University* – <http://www.american.edu/provost/assessment/index.cfm>

This site includes a section devoted to program-level assessment, with links to the assessment plans of all AU graduate programs and undergraduate majors, and a special “best practices” page identifying exemplary department-level plans.

- *Bowling Green State University* – <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/assessment/page31436.html>

BGSU received a 2007 award for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). This link brings up the assessment reports of a wide array of specific departments and programs.

- *Bucknell University* – <http://www.bucknell.edu/x5191.xml>

If you scroll down the page, you will see a list of links to thoughtful department assessment plans at a wide array of institutions, organized by department.

- *Duke University* – <http://assessment.aas.duke.edu/resources.php#DepartmentSpecific>

This site includes suggestions on the process of developing department assessment plans as well as links to examples of departmental assessment sites, not only at Duke but at selected other institutions as well. Access to some sites requires a log-in, but not with most of the resources.

- *James Madison University Program Assessment Support Service* -- <http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/pass/index.htm>

The general assessment resources available through the James Madison Center for Assessment and Research are quite extensive (<http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/>). The above link takes you to the resources designed specifically for program/department-level assessment.

- *St. Olaf College* – <http://www.stolaf.edu/offices/ea/Assessment/AssessmentProgramLevel.html>

St. Olaf's assessment website includes pages specific to department-level assessment, including thoughts on the relationship between program-level assessment and program evaluation and information about the college's small grants program for department assessment projects.

Note: The office that maintains the assessment website will be reorganizing the site later this summer, so if you have trouble finding this link, contact the author of this document.

- *University of Massachusetts Amherst* – http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/other_pubs/sample_inventory_with_definitions.pdf

This link brings up a succinct (two-page) but very helpful description of the components of assessment at the department level (articulating student learning goals, gathering and interpreting evidence, using results for improvement).

http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf

A link to *Program-Based Review and Assessment: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement*, a detailed and very helpful handbook prepared by the UMass Amherst Office of Academic Planning and Assessment.