

Assessment in Learning Communities
Friday, May 25, 2001
Breakout Session C

We began by considering the following definitions.

Questions for the day:

Is technology worth the investment?

Does technology provide added value?

Are universities better able to provide tech-enhanced courses/programs?

Recommendations:

Increase links in Portal about assessment

- case study with ongoing comments

Issue:

- the data input staff needs to have a payoff for the time it takes for input
- needs to be searchable
- suggestion: need a facilitator for this section of the portal, identify an "office" of assessment where the person would be coordinator and support, could call the person for information, person is not necessarily the expert but can provide the resources to the user. Need to have examples of "not best practice" for comparison.
- What would happen if we could have a discussion like we have had here to share the stories?
- Want to see what worked and what happened.
- As a potential user, I would want to see a paragraph of what happened and what the instructor thought and then have links to any course-related materials that the students have access to
- Description of the student audience is a must
- Need a statement of hypothesis
- Incentive for buying into this, award some grants, stipend
- Collaboration using a common method used in different situations (not widely supported within the group)
- Emphasis on minimal data input
- Suggestion to put in what you have and then give the opportunity for others to contact you for more information
- Argument will provide more information
- There are many different roles that go beyond professorial, there are those that complete only assessment and evaluation and do this at many levels.

- Build in some time for consulting
- Our assessment person is so overwhelmed, the time element is a big issue.
- Collaborative could fund a workshop to provide opportunity to assessment personnel to assist in publication.
- Team within the collaborative to produce some of this work. One creates the data and someone else assists in the write-up.
- I hate the idea that we are giving this image that no one is going to be willing to give their time to do this. I think that there are a lot of people who want to give their time to something like this. We need to look beyond the university for collaboration opportunities. There are many "centers" who would be interested in working on projects like this.
- Front page of the Portal will have single statements that would catch the attention of visitors.
- Centers should be included in the campus contacts list.
- Most campuses do not have assessment offices, but do have institutional research which is different.

- Can you compare DE/DL to traditional?
 - Can't answer this question the way it is stated
 - Not a fair comparison because they are different
 - There are some things that are not replicable because of the technology, referring to talk about virtual reality.
 - Don't know all of the possibilities yet, tend to implement it in ways that they already taught. May find some very exciting things in the near future.
 - Student population is emphasized again.
 - Faculty doesn't like when things are not working, need to encourage inquiry into this.
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Policy:

- Accreditation will now be looking for assessment, therefore it will start becoming a discussion in departments.
- Need to add information about what is good. How can we state that there is a range due to online and traditional class arrangements.
- Hard conversation, but we look at this all the time in the education department.
- Paradox of standardized testing, measure student outcome to determine what the teacher is doing.
- Faculty reward

Policy 2:

- Evidence of success should be qualitative as well as quantitative (expression in different modes)
- want all of the information presented, not filtered.
- Committed to explore this
- Encourage and promote exploration
- Can develop
- Collect data
- Everyone involved in data analysis
- Promote innovation
- Faculty should show this in portfolios with the support from administration
- Higher level thing: pluralistic, inclusive collection of assessment
- What is pluralistic?
- The evidence that the students meet the criteria.
- Validity
- We do not have a homogenous set of values in the group.
- What are our common values?
- Accessibility
- This will take place through the portal, promoting collaboration is our key thing
- We want to promote collaboration and discussion about implementing technology in higher education through a pluralistic collection of evidence about assessment and learning with technology in education.

Who are we? Who are we writing this for?

- This is an opportunity for faculty to teach to the community what faculty do.
- This portal will have a personality at times, it will reflect trends.
- It will probably be viewed by legislators, etc. so we want it to reflect issues so that those making decisions can be better informed.
- Variety of students

A concluding statement (from Dale):

Find out what's happening and share it.

Say what should happen and share it.

Encourage what should happen.

Encourage faculty to find out and share.

The form should follow the function. Our use of technology should follow our academic mission.

Accessibility

Technology comment should be higher up.

Ways we go about using the technology have come up in this group-- should it be part of our statements?

Maybe as a premise statement.

Maybe put in the recommendations.

Maybe put in that technology will help us do...

It is important to state to those who are learning about us and who may be reticent to use technology.

Ending notes:

Add encourage risk-taking to recommendations.

What do we do with differences of opinion?

Need to have these healthy arguments.

Cost, may be a means to have evidence to assist in keeping programs that you know are working.

Notes from the chalkboard:

Policy/Position Statement:

What should TLT do?

Technology will help us to do what we intend.

- Find out and share.

- Say what should happen.

- Encourage what should happen.

Define us, audience, assessment: all TLT collaborative, pluralistic collection of evidence about TLT.

Promote collaboration among TLT Collaborative community through facilitation of innovative assessment including pluralistic collection of evidence.

- Provide means for consideration of differing perspectives.

- Accessibility – for all persons via all means

- Validity

- Reward – promotion / tenure

Need to “get out” information about who university community is and what we do to inform decisions of policy makers.

Document assessment stuff to address accreditation issues.

Recommendation:

Links in PDP Portal about assessment that can be adapted to fit needs

- Track who participates
- Reports of examples with ongoing comments using input form with options to revise / build
- Identify facilitator for assessment items and campus contacts (with support) including centers.
- Parts of reports (format of what should be included)
 - Descriptions of students
 - Descriptions of faculty
 - Intent (hypothesis, assertion)
 - Results including student achievement, what might be generalized
 - Why do this – what are the possibilities?
- RFP for stipend, etc, req. info – collaboration.
- Encourage many levels of participation including short comments
- Ways to be easily involved
- Promote collaboration
- TLT collaborative event about assessment
- Develop ways to answer questions about the value of technology

Questions to be discussed among all:

Is technology worth the investment?

Does technology provide added value?

Are universities better able to provide tech-enhanced courses / programs (than other for-profit providers)?

DE/DL compared to “traditional” --what is the standard?

What is successful?

What is valuable? Cost vs. value?