

CLO Synthesis Report 2014-2015

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Prefatory Remarks

A few key themes emerge from an analysis of the 2014-2015 assessment projects submitted in response to the A-Team's RFP for the academic year. First, there continues to be **a wide disparity between and among faculty groups** interested in assessment in terms of progress towards artifact assessment. Second, **faculty groups** within programs **that have submitted and been funded for earlier projects, were able to move forward** towards the goal of ultimately collecting and evaluating artifacts from sections of a course with multiple sections or similar courses within a program, department or discipline. Third, these programs **benefitted from a lead faculty member with reassignment time** or sufficient seniority/understanding of both **assessment strategies** and **their discipline/program**. These themes/commonalities lead to several important conclusions about the future of assessment work on campus, a subject I will return to towards the end of this report.

Overview of the 2014-2015 RFP Design and Submissions

The 2014-2015 RFP for assessment scaffolded types of projects in recognition that not all faculty groups would be at the same stage of readiness to undertake artifact evaluation. Thus, the RFP included five levels of funding: a) development of outcome language for courses and programs in need of outcome refinement; b) development of supplemental materials such as signature assignments; c) mapping of CLOs against course outcomes and course materials; d) rubric development; e) artifact collection and assessment. In accordance with the RFP for 2013-2014, we required faculty to work in teams and to obtain the endorsement of either program/department leads or division deans.

We received RFP submissions from fifty-one (51) faculty, focused on fourteen (14) separate projects, drawn from transfer and C/T, and credit and non-credit programs. In addition, we funded Art to finish the project that they began in 2013-2014 but were unable to complete because of the drop in sections offered in their division and the subsequent lack of employment for PT faculty who had initially agreed to evaluate artifacts, using a rubric developed in 2012-2013.

Of the fourteen¹ groups that submitted RFPs, we were able to fund four fully, and eight at the lower end of the funding levels they'd requested (i.e., if the group requested 50 out of 40-50

¹ Chemistry (outcomes refinement); Exercise and Movement Science (outcome refinement); ESL (outcomes refinement); Nutrition (outcome refinement); Honors (two projects—mapping CLOs to assignments; development of rubric for e-portfolios); Communications (CLO mapping, signature assignment development); Dental Hygiene (CLO mapping to course outcomes across the DH curriculum); French (CLO mapping); Biology (development of shared assignment; mapping of "think critically" to BIO

hours, we funded 40); two groups, English and Spanish, were not funded for all projects requested (artifact scoring for English, who requested 88 hours; survey evaluation for Spanish, who requested 25 hours). Last year was the first year that requests for funding exceeded the moneys we had available.

Of those who were funded, nine groups completed all the work that had anticipated, while three groups completed some of their projects, and one group was unable to complete their project. I will elaborate on the reasons for the lack of completion towards the end of this report, as I discuss the implications of these projects/the process for future assessment efforts.

Variety/Level of Projects

One issue that emerged in 2013-2014, was that not all faculty groups were able to move towards CLO mapping against outcome language in a given discipline/program because not all courses have well-developed outcome language. Consequently, the RFP for this academic year included a more preliminary level of funding—the refinement of outcome language in anticipation of future CLO mapping.

Lane has only recently shifted to outcomes-based course design, having received a mandate from the state in 2005 per SB 342, legislation that required the revision of courses within the AA/OT. As an institution, we undertook the development of outcome language in 2007-2008, for implementation in Fall 2008. This process was, perhaps, unduly fast, due to the state mandate, and many course outcomes were revised hastily, without, I would argue, sufficient attention to helping faculty across our institution develop a robust understanding of how to write appropriate outcomes (or understand why they should want to do so). Thus, we have rather uneven outcome language within and across courses.

Outcomes Revision

Of our RFP submissions, four groups applied for funding to refine outcome language. In all four cases, the lead faculty member who submitted the RFP was interested in creating an opportunity for a largely PT faculty to congregate and discuss course objectives, refine outcomes, and develop a shared understanding of the meaning of these outcomes and the goals of the class. In one case, RFP funding created an opportunity for faculty to realize that all sections must have the same outcomes on all syllabi. In this specific case, the discrepancies were due to an overreliance on PT faculty and lack of sufficient reassignment time for a faculty lead to mentor new teachers assigned to a course. Even this modest amount of funding²

231-233); Physical Therapist Assistant Program (refinement of rubric & scoring artifacts/comparison with students' self assessment); English (development of framing materials for courses; artifact scoring); Spanish (evaluation of a survey that was to be distributed in spring, 2015)

² Twenty—to—twenty-five hours of funding, which is the amount that we can afford for outcome revision/refinement, is, perhaps, a small money to split among a faculty group. Consider that in years

offered faculty the opportunity to meet and develop a shared understanding of the course objectives and begin conversations about a potentially shared assignment, initial steps necessary to work towards artifact collection.

The following comment from the project coordinator for Chemistry, Doug Young, illustrates the importance of faculty conversations/collaboration:

Another goal of the project was to simply get the entire CH 104 faculty together to talk about our class – how do we envision it, what is its purpose, what do we feel our students should be able to do afterwards, etc? These discussions were great. I think they improved the cohesiveness of the group and the objectives for the class.

This sentiment—that time together is important for faculty to develop common understanding of course content and objectives—was universally shared in project reports and serves almost as a lamentation about our systematic lack of collegial opportunities on campus.³ It is, perhaps, unnecessary to note that this deficiency could be remedied by a more substantially FT faculty cohort.

CLO Mapping

Seven of the twelve groups mapped CLOs against course outcomes and/or foregrounded CLO language on syllabi or other supplemental materials. ESL faculty were particularly productive in that within their limited funding to refine outcomes and develop a rubric, they also managed to map CLOs against the entire non-credit sequence of five courses. The hours awarded afforded them an opportunity to revise their courses in alignment with newly announced Oregon Learning Standards for non-credit language instruction AND to map these revised outcomes to our CLOs.

Development of Rubrics and Supplemental Materials

In some instances, mapping of the CLOs was part of a larger and more robust project of developing materials to assist faculty and students in understanding the role of CLOs in the general education curriculum. For instance, Biology's mapping project included alignment of course outcomes to CLOs, as well as identification & alignment of specific class assignments/course content to course outcomes (what they have termed "tiered mapping") in the three-term Anatomy and Physiology sequence. This mapping will assist new faculty who teach the course in understanding the relationship between a particular class/activity, larger

past, an individual faculty member would be funded 100 CD hours to develop a new course and 50 to revise existing curriculum—revision of outcome language is surely a form of course revision.

³ The survey created and distributed to Art faculty by JS Bird revealed that fully 2/3rds of the faculty indicated that working with other faculty is necessary for undertaking assessment work, but lack of time is an impediment to participating in such work, and half of the faculty felt that meetings and workshops are a prerequisite for such work.

course objectives, our CLOs, and their national organization's Vision and Change document, that articulates the goals of a college education in the biological sciences. Additionally, this mapping will assist faculty in helping students understand how disciplinary forms of critical thinking and the application of theories/knowledge within a discipline are translated into our CLOs.

Two groups who received the first level of funding—Chemistry and Nutrition—are planning on applying for funding in 2015-2016 in order to map their newly revised outcomes against the CLOs. All groups have plans to apply for additional funding to pursue assessment work, a phenomenon that reveals an increasing level of faculty interest in assessment work (and the preliminary work—developing coherency and alignment across course sections, as well as crafting signature assignments—necessary to work towards assessment projects. I cannot state strongly enough how valid assessment of artifacts is simply not possible without departments laying the necessary groundwork for such work).

Likewise, the Communication faculty developed an impressive number of resources through the RFP: COMM 111 course outcomes mapped to the CLOs; signature assignment directions; scaffolded assignment materials; an evaluation sheet, a student self-diagnostic tool.

Honors faculty produced not only a rubric for assessing students' ability to think critically (and their reflection on their own thinking) but also materials for several assignments, including the capstone project. In particular, this group has done an excellent job of communicating to students how particular class assignments articulate with LCC's CLOs, which are threaded through all class activities.

Artifact Collection and Scoring

Two groups—Art faculty and PTA faculty—were able to assess student learning. Art utilized their "Create Ideas and Solutions" rubric, which was developed two years ago in 2013, to assess 135 artifacts collected from eleven classes focused on 2-D curricula during winter and spring 2014.⁴ Seven faculty members participated in this evaluation process, and faculty envisioned their assessment work as two-fold: to gauge the level of student proficiency in creative thinking; to evaluate, according to JS Bird, the "success of faculty projects and assignments in teaching creative thinking." Data generated from this project will be shared with Molloy Wilson in IRAP.

In the case of the PTA program, four PT faculty, guided by the program coordinator, Christina Howard, used the "Apply Learning" rubric that they developed in 2013, to analyze student self assessment of "apply learning" over time; they have used data to inform the refinement of this

⁴ Classes included ART 115, 116, 131 and 231.

rubric and the curricular activities and assessments that contribute to students gaining proficiency with the apply CLO. Eighteen students were sampled in winter 2014 and then a year later, in winter 2015, as they scored themselves on the apply rubric. Faculty also gathered artifacts (exams and practicals) from the second year students to compare with the student-generated data. Faculty engaged in robust discussions about how to make CLOs more visible in classroom materials and discussions and how to provide feedback that will allow students to move from lower-level skills of recall and identification into the process- and problem-posing/solving mindset necessary to enter the PTA profession. The project also afforded faculty the opportunity to create a rubric to evaluate 1st-year clinical exams. The program is now considering a portfolio and is rethinking how to make the role of quantitative reasoning in clinical decision-making explicit to students. Faculty also concluded, though, that the rubric may not be that valuable in helping students self assess.

Trends and Themes

As was the case for the RFP in 2013-2014, programs or departments with national organizations that set standards/parameters for the discipline benefitted from these external resources in undertaking outcome refinement. For instance, EXMS was able to turn to American Council on Exercise (ACE) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) in revising course outcomes, with the ultimate goal of getting students ready to pass certification exams on necessary KSAs as they map to the Anatomy and Kinesiology course. PTA, Dental Hygiene, English, Biology, Exercise and Movement Science, and ESL all have external standards/accrediting agencies/articulated outcomes to reference, a situation that has aided them in developing appropriate outcomes for programs and courses.

Of the groups that have made great strides in assessment projects, the majority have also benefitted from at least one group member's direct involvement with the A-Team: Biology, Art, English, PTA, Communications.

The importance of time and staffing

As I mentioned earlier, every group indicated that time and support are necessary for this kind of assessment work. In particular, groups that were able to move assessment work forward—from refinement of outcomes, to mapping of CLOs, to development of signature assignments, to, in two cases, artifact collection and assessment—had the benefit of a lead faculty member with reassignment time (PTA, Communications, Dental Hygiene) or who formerly had reassignment time to develop facility with assessment work (Art). Probably the most robust assessment work (historically) has been accomplished in the composition program,⁵ which boasts a coordinator with almost half time reassignment time.

⁵ English faculty undertook artifact assessment in 2011, 2012, and 2013. During the last two years, artifact collection has continued, but departmental instabilities—loss of work study/LETs worker to provide support for the project, the departure of the composition coordinator—have created a situation where actual assessment efforts could not be undertaken.

In the case of the two programs that did not realize their assessment projects as envisioned via their RFP submissions—Spanish and English—challenges in staffing and working conditions led to the suspension of their projects. In the case of Spanish, faculty health issues, retirements, and the small number of individuals teaching in the program, have forestalled assessment work. In the case of English, an increase in enrollment caps within the program increased workload to the extent that faculty were unwilling to take on the additional labor of assessment; this challenge was followed by the loss of their composition coordinator, who has taken a job elsewhere, and the absence of artifact scoring in 2014-2015.

Indeed, sufficient staffing and stable employment are necessary for quality instruction and assessment. Specifically, faculty groups can only move forward from the preliminary groundwork that is necessary to create the conditions for artifact collection and assessment—mapping and the construction of signature assignments—to the actual evaluation of student work, if they know that the same faculty members will be employed and available to complete projects started at an earlier time. In the absence of such continuity, faculty may abandon efforts or redo work that has already been completed.

For instance, Art faculty's artifact scoring took place over a two-year window that included the creation of a rubric, the collection of artifacts, followed by scoring and analysis of data; their project unfolded over an extended period of time. If we want departments and programs to deepen their thinking about the role of assessment in determining student proficiency and developing and refining faculty instruction, they must be afforded stability to undertake this work.

In other words, we need to think of assessment as on-going process that is only possible through sustained faculty investment in multi-staged and multi-faceted projects. The amount of time it takes for faculty groups to develop facility with assessment and to see projects through to fruition also highlights the necessity of hiring a FT assessment coordinator/director who will develop a thorough familiarity with on-going projects across campus. As our organization stands now, new A-Team chairs and CLO coordinators have to work to familiarize themselves with work that began before their tenure in the position and that will likely (and hopefully) continue after they vacate these positions. There is, as one can imagine, a level of inefficiency in such a model.

The good news, as I intimated earlier, is that every faculty group that answered the 2014-2015 RFP and completed a project has plans for the next stage of their work. For instance, EXMS has identified the next courses to refine outcomes and align CLOs—Injury and Prevention & Fitness and Assessment (EXMS 295, EXMS 194F)—and they have a larger goal of setting up direct articulation with OSU, course-by-course. Nutrition faculty are planning on developing a shared exam question and/or assignment to be collected and scored. Communications faculty will be collecting student speeches to evaluate next year, and Biology faculty plan on repeating the tiered alignment in two additional courses.

Given the proper support, the future of assessment at Lane looks brighter than ever, and our recent decision to extend the annual RFP to include summer term has elicited interest in and RFPs from three programs heretofore who have not engaged in assessment work: Welding, Respiratory Care, and Math. All of these groups have been working with the outgoing CLO coordinator summer 2015.

Final Thoughts

We have witnessed how specific groups that have submitted RFPs in the past few years move forward in the projects and deepen their thinking about assessment, and consider this to be a very positive phenomenon; there is more work to be done. We still have pockets on campus where no assessment work is taking place, and our current outreach model has yet to result in measurable progress within such groups.

In addition, we have yet to achieve a saturation point where the CLOs are visible in all classes, mapped to course outcomes, and apparent in, and understood by, all factions of the campus. In order to move this work forward, CLO mapping will have to be made a high priority by administration and not be driven by only those faculty who've independently shown an interest in assessment or have been open to the evangelizing of A-Team members. In other words, we are hopeful that administration devote resources—funding, publicity, time, focused discussions/workshops—to the systematic mapping of CLOs in all courses and programs. We are also hopeful that the new position/hire of Director of Assessment⁶ will provide stability and appropriate resources for faculty moving forward with assessment projects.

⁶ Speaking for myself only, I might suggest that we consider the model used by Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland. They fund “faculty assessment fellows” to undertake assessment work within a given department. The fellows, during and after their reassignment time/funding, mentor new fellows and share in the work of campus wide assessment. Fellows apply for funding, and the positions rotate among all faculty on campus.