ISSUE
03
November
2018

CBA Assessment

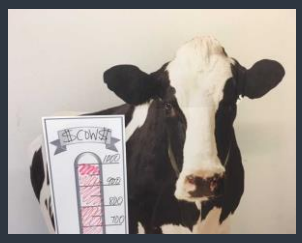
We Did It!
Thank you CBA for buying the Cow and Sustainable Farming Equipment!

Assessment Haiku

Assessment for class
Long planned data collection
Are they getting it?

Professor to class
Measure critical thinking
Pick a b or c

Assessment reveals
Something more about SLOs
Implement a fix



What Faculty Say About Assessment

Congratulations CBA! We successfully participated in this odd project to earn $1000 towards the Assessment Cow.

The project had participation from every department, with 61 participants and 79 instances of someone participating in assessment. Of the 61 people, 13 were lecturers, two of which knew a tremendous amount about assessment. Nine staff participated.

- ACC: 13
- BUS: 14
- CIS: 11
- FRL: 10
- IBM: 12
- MHR: 10
- TOM: 6

Several faculty engaged in a short discussion about assessment. Some topics discussed -

- How did a degree from the CBA help students after they graduated or after they had been working for 5 years?
- The need to improve soft skills, particularly public speaking.
- Will you move this furniture if I listen to you about assessment?
- Teamwork
- Multiple Choice versus Project Based Assignments.
- Having an Institutional Research person dedicated to Assessment.
- Teaching students to be change makers after they graduate.
- The problems with standardized exams for assessing Business Functional Knowledge.
- Who gets to keep the cow after the study?

We met with a few departments. The Accounting department offered to depreciate the cow after the study was over.

Our celebrity guest, Brad Pitt, spent some time behind the refrigerator in the CIS/TOM mail room. He was then put in the window, creating a surprise for some passing people.

The remainder of this newsletter contains a few write-ups about assessment from faculty.

CBA Faculty on Assessment

Client Involvement in Student Assessment
Alex Mitchell

A major benefit of having client organizations engaged in the classroom is direct student experience with rich, intimate contexts. When a client organization engages in a course, it is typical for students to work towards creating deliverables, such as marketing plans, financial audits, or investing models, that the client can take and immediately use in their current business operations. Rather than situations described in cases, or examples taken from current events, both of which remain at arm's length, a client organization brings with it real issues of immediate importance, real people who care about the outcomes, and an opportunity for students to see their work have a tangible, positive impact.

One of the pedagogical challenges of incorporating engagement with a client organization into a course structure is determining how to assess student work. At the core of this assessment challenge is ambiguity around evaluation criteria for the deliverables; especially the development of rubrics for tasks and outcomes yet to be determined by the collaboration with the client. Another challenge is to determine which stakeholders are best positioned to evaluate the work that students and student-driven teams create and communicate with clients. Course instructors are charged with a responsibility for student learning and outcomes, and it may be natural to assume instructors are best positioned to evaluate student work against course learning objectives. However, an alternative position is that given the focus on developing client-facing materials for immediate use, representatives of the client organization are better able to evaluate the quality of student work because client representatives are better able to assess how well the final deliverables address the current business needs of the organization. Far from requiring an all-or-nothing solution, resolving this challenge involves developing a system of assessment that is fair, consistent, and in alignment with the objectives for the course.

One possible approach is to create an *assessment mix* composed of process-based and outcome-based evaluations. Instructors who deal with student teams throughout the course may be better suited to evaluate process-based criteria by focusing on evaluating how things got done. Here, assessment can focus on whether students are working towards certain course objectives in a desired way, such as applying course concepts during analysis, engaging in primary and secondary research, working cohesively in teams, and meeting deadlines. Representatives of a client organization, who may interact with students intermittently throughout a course, may be better situated to evaluate outcome-based criteria by focusing on what is produced. Given the necessary rubrics by course instructors, client representatives can contribute meaningful assessment of outcomes such as presentations or final project reports by evaluating how these final deliverables meet the needs of the organization.

Ultimately it is up to course instructors how best to create assessment mixes and whether to incorporate evaluations from client organizations in the mix, and there are important considerations about how much weight to give to various elements of the mix. However, through an assessment mix that combines evaluations from both instructors and client representatives, there is an opportunity to construct a course grading approach that more effectively bridges theory and practice than can be achieved through assessments that are based entirely on instructor evaluations.

Faculty Want Assessment With Impact
Ron Pike

Faculty don't like assessment because they don't want to spend time on something that doesn't have an impact. We're really good at doing assessment that satisfies a report, but the results don't often improve student learning. We don't measure things in a way that leads to a change in what we are doing. It needs to be more bottom up. If faculty were asked to pick one thing that students struggle with in their classes, and then assess and figure out ways to improve it, every faculty member would be interested in that. Faculty are more interested in assessment that improves student learning, not assessment that merely shows the global outcome of a program learning goal. I know that for accreditation, we're not asked to improve one item in one class. But, focusing on where a problem is can create a more impactful result. Perhaps assessment reports should focus to some extent on capturing the bottom up changes and reporting on related improvements in student learning. That is more satisfying to a professor.

Key Skills Cannot be "Googled"
Mike Assumma

Learning takes place in students' heads where it is invisible to others. This means that to me, the said learning must be assessed through performance - what students can *do* with their learning.

Being that we are a polytechnic university, assessment should inspire us to ask these hard questions:

(1) "Are we teaching what we think we are teaching?"
(2) "Are students learning what they are supposed to be learning?"
(3) "Is there a way to teach the subject better, thereby promoting better learning?"

From my perspective, today's students need to know not only the basic reading and arithmetic skills, but also skills that allow them to face a world that is continually changing. They must be able to think critically, to analyze, and to make inferences. Key skills that cannot be "Goggled".

I believe that faculty need to take a more active role in making decisions about the curriculum we are teaching and how it will assist the students in being able to execute the typical "theory based" learning. Remember, in the workplace, students don't get a multiple-choice test to see if they're doing their job effectively. They have some performance assessment. Instead, employers use a richer, more practice based assessment.

We should focus our attention on internship/community based projects where students apply college learning in a real-world setting or even advanced comprehensive senior projects that demonstrate student's depth of knowledge in their major, problem-solving, writing, and analytic-thinking skills.

As faculty, we should pride on our industrial-strength "stories" of real work that we share in the classroom. Students remember the context of "stories" and can use them to inform their approaches to real-world problem solving.

KPIs
Belarmina Richards

Academic assessment has no limitations, but we must create boundaries to align improvements and monitor results. Although collecting and analyzing assessment data is a busy task, it is well worth the effort to make teaching more meaningful to the student. To this point, I wish to comment on the techniques and indicators to measure the effectiveness assessment factors.

One way to interpret assessment data is through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). As evaluation tools, they offer a new perspective on student learning and engagement. There are many KPIs to set benchmarks for persistence and retention, graduation rates, learning objectives, etc. Focusing on KPI outputs can help measure the teaching effectiveness and the quality of our business programs. KPIs aggregate assessment data and calculate outputs or metrics applicable to our role with the University. Similarly, students and employers' satisfaction surveys can be used to develop Net Promoter Scores (NPS) to measure retention and new student enrollment. Schools use NPS as a metric to support how student loyalties can lead to new student referrals.

It is common to see all sorts of metrics showcasing improvements and trends, but to fully understand KPI behavior, analysis and narratives are required. Interpreting KPIs also need feedback to appreciate the drivers with the most impact on assessment performance and to gauge the use of assessment data. Assessment metrics are simply measurements to evaluate on-track performance and the areas needing attention based on KPI trends.

Assessment as a quality initiative needs measurable data and a planning process for reporting improvements. Both of those factors require continuous strengthening to improve strategies and coordination efforts to enhance learning and engagement experiences. I invite you to answer the following questions intended to reflect on assessment practices and data interpretation.

How do CBA academic programs impact academic standards, learning outcomes, and student learning?

How will assessment metrics impact faculty understanding and strategies to promote classroom learning and make teaching improvements?

Assessment is Proof
Stefan Bund

Assessment is proof that teaching has taken place. It also serves as an artifact that you completed syllabus objectives — and to what degree. Whenever I have had my teaching evaluated, I have been asked to present pieces of finished work. This is a strong way for the university to prove that their faculty are imparting the lessons that the department requires.

Assessments, in project form, are walking papers for students. Pieces of finished work act as tokens for job acquisition. Simply put, when students present pieces of finished work, they gain trust of employers. My students have out-competed students from our neighboring schools (USC, UCLA) when they present evidence that they are properly trained.

For adjuncts like myself, assessment is the thread that ties me to my work. Operating without direct supervision (and appreciating this), I need finished work to represent what took place while with the students!

FRL 3000 Common Exam Assessment
Wei Yu

One of the College of Business Administration's learning goals is that students completing the BSBA program will demonstrate knowledge of business functions and deal with business problems from a global and integrative perspective. In order to assist students in achieving this goal, the Finance, Real Estate and Law department decided to ensure several common requirements in all sections of Managerial Finance (FRL 3000), including a common textbook, expanded course outline, requirement to use CONNECT homework, suggested weights on exams, suggested financial calculators, common formula sheet, as well as a common final exam.

Since fall 2009, the common final exam has been administered to all sections of FRL 3000 every quarter/semester. It serves as a summative assessment instrument to evaluate the finance functional knowledge of all business students, improve students' mastery of learning objectives and competencies, ensure coverage of core topics by all instructors, and provide an equal assessment for all students in different sections. Assessment results were summarized and communicated to all faculty members who teach the course, with recommendations of the topics that need more attention and coverage. The assessment results show that students specializing in less quantitative areas struggle the most with quantitative reasoning questions. To help those students achieve the same learning objectives and competencies, several FRL faculty members have developed step-by-step problem solving videos on topics with poor performance. Overtime, the assessment results show a positive trend of improvement in quantitative reasoning questions, from an average of 57% in fall 2009 to 74% in fall 2017.

Ruth, Bradly and the Cow.

Thanks CBA!