



UM-Dearborn Program Assessment Reports: *Shining Examples*



ASSESSMENT WEEK 2024

This slideshow includes excerpts and “shining” examples of thoughtful, program assessment from programs across the UM-Dearborn campus. We hope the definitions and accompanying examples give you great ideas about how you could approach your own program’s assessment. There has been some light editing of some of these examples, and we omitted the specific program names, to make them useful for all instructional faculty out of the context of the full reports.



Starting with the Assessment Report Template, faculty are asked to:

Identify the question(s) that your assessment seeks to answer or address about your program, and briefly explain why the question(s) is of interest to program faculty.

In other words,

- Why are you assessing what you present in this report?
- What do you hope the results of this assessment will help you understand about your program and your students' learning?

Examples...

- **Which courses are providing a gateway function when there are several paths to the major?** *Both the certificate and forthcoming major have multiple pathways into the program of study rather than a single, upper-division gateway course. So, we are interested in assessing which program-affiliated courses are serving the “gateway” function well by meeting program goals to the “basic mastery” level for students who have not had prior coursework in the program.*
- **Which courses are leading students from theory to application?** *The program assessment seeks to understand how well students are able to apply the fundamental principles being taught to specific problem applications within the field. The question is of interest to the program faculty because, for many students we see in our courses, they take at most two classes in this area.*
- **To what extent are our majors internalizing key concepts related to conducting research as they traverse the major?** *This question is important as multiple classes provide students with information on how research methods impact research findings and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. A strong understanding of research methods prepares students for careers in our major*

Moving to Modes of Assessment

1. Direct Assessment

Direct Assessment involves measuring student learning and performance by directly examining and assessing student work within a course or program. This is often referred to as “course embedded” assessment. If students are required to complete work beyond courses for their degrees (such as with a final portfolio or dissertation defense, for example) that student work can also be assessed directly.

Examples...

- **One Goal Overtime in the Same Course:** *To assess the overall comprehension level of students in the program and class, a comparison was made between quiz scores from the past three years, which were established as a benchmark standard. The following data presents the number of students who took the course and their average quiz scores over the past three years.*
- **Comparing Different Groups of Students Across Multiple Courses:** *The decision was made to use an empirical approach in which results for majors further in their academic career (i.e., Juniors and Seniors) could be compared to two control groups: incoming freshman and non-majors. The theory underlying this approach is that majors should possess significantly more knowledge relative to freshman and non-majors. The decision was to assess Learning Objective 1 and Learning Objective 2.*
- **One Learning Goal in One Course:** *This learning goal was directly assessed through two short essay questions in a required course providing certificate students with a foundation in the subject.*

2. Indirect Assessment



Indirect Assessment involves gathering information about student learning by looking at indicators other than student work already being graded or done within a course. Indirect Assessment is most often used in program (rather than course) assessment.

Examples include questions administered to student focus groups, surveys (of students, alumni, employers), relevant institutional assessment data, anecdotes, faculty interviews or conversations with students, faculty self-and peer-assessment of teaching methods and pedagogies, exit-interviews with graduates.

Examples...

- **Comparative Course Evaluation Data:** *We wanted to know whether redesigned and restructured courses are more relevant to student concerns and interests with more innovative assignment structures, increasing students intrinsic motivation to learn. To get at this question, we looked at comparative student course evaluations in particular the questions “The instructor was effective in teaching the course material” and the question “I gained new ways of thinking about the topics covered in this course.” Improvements in the comparative evaluation data showed that the program is making progress on its external reviewers’ suggestion to repackage our courses to highlight a more innovative pedagogy and that the first offering of one of those courses was well-enrolled and well-received.*
- **Student Reflections:** *Our certificate program used a required student reflection to understand how students articulate the connections between the certificate and their upper-level DDC courses. This provided an opportunity both to directly assess student work on the learning goal (are they able to reflect?), but also to use the student reflections themselves to indirectly assess student learning in the certificate.*



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FINALLY - CLOSING THE LOOP

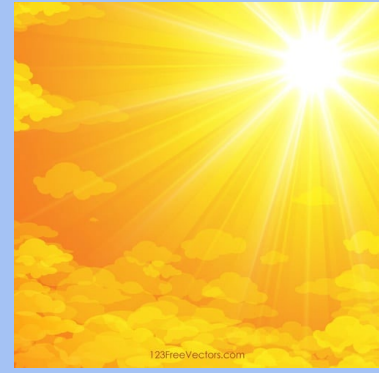
Once faculty complete program assessment (direct and indirect) they are asked to reflect on their findings for each specific assessment approach, as well as across all their assessment reports, and identify how they will address their findings going forward.

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Examples...



- **Reincorporating Attendance:** *I believe one of the most important steps in getting students from 72% to 80% mastery is to incentivize attendance. There is a strong correlation between missing class and having difficulty with the essays. Reincorporating attendance as a portion of the grade (something I had moved away from pre-pandemic) and communicating its importance to students clearly and consistently will mean that more students benefit from instruction prior to taking the essay tests*
- **Highlighting Research Methods:** *The findings with regard to our specific questions indicated that as majors matriculate through the curriculum they are increasing their knowledge base with regard to research methods and understanding of correlations. While these gains are most pronounced for students who have taken a research methods course, they are broader overall. This implies that students are benefiting from the faculty decisions to teach these concepts across multiple courses.*
- **Creating Consistency Across Assignments:** *We plan to review assignments that may be common in structure and purpose (ie. literature reviews, analytical papers) to see how we can create greater consistency in those assignments across classes and instructors. Our consensus is that it is important for students to have multiple opportunities to do these kinds of assignments.*



We truly hope that these definitions, report samples, and examples, help to provide you and your colleagues with your own efforts to create meaningful and productive assessments.

For more details and to see the full report (including program reports) please go to: [Exemplar Program Reports](#)



Thank
You!

