

A. Overview

I. Academic Year

2015-2016

II. Purpose

Outcomes assessment at the course level measures student achievement of individual [course outcomes](#). Results and analysis from the [course outcomes assessment](#) are used by faculty to improve teaching and learning at the course level.

Course Outcomes lead to [degree, certificate and program outcomes](#) and [Institutional Core Learning Outcomes](#).

Course Outcomes assessment is tied to Core Theme Objective B: Transforming Lives – Education.

III. Total number of courses scheduled for assessment and total number of courses assessed (by department)

82% of instructors completed their scheduled course assessments.

Department	Total Number of Courses Scheduled for Assessment	Total Number of Courses Assessed
Arts/Humanities	9	5
CTE	30	23
ESOL	7	5
Math/Computer Science	12	10
Nursing/Health Occupations	13	13
Pre-College	10	7
Science	10	9
Social Science	12	12
Writing/Literature/Foreign Language	11	10
Total	114*	94

* Some courses were scheduled more than once (and included in this number) – when an instructor did not complete a course assessment, the course was rescheduled in a following term in an attempt to give the instructor another opportunity to complete the course assessment process.

B. Results of assessment work related to competency:

I. Total number of students assessed and average percentage of students meeting course outcomes (by department)

1667* students were assessed over the academic year with an average of 89.4% of the students meeting the course outcomes that were assessed (3 outcomes per course). A student was determined as meeting the course outcome if they earned a “C” or better on the assessment.

Department	Total Number of Students Assessed	Average Percentage of Students Meeting Course Outcomes
Arts/Humanities	106	92.6%
CTE	400	89.8%
ESOL	54	95.3%
Math/Computer Science	120	94.4%
Nursing/Health Occupations	254	92.5%
Pre-College	139	79.9%
Science	188	84.4%
Social Science	246	84%
Writing/Literature/Foreign Language	160	91.5%
Total	1667	89.4%

*The total of 1667 students may include students who would have been assessed more than once if a number of their courses were scheduled for course assessment.

The majority of course outcomes assessments indicate direct assessment methods to measure student achievement of course outcomes, such as tests, quizzes, papers, presentations and projects. Some instructors report specific measurements for specific outcomes (example: Maurer’s CG 111*), which would make it easy to determine student achievement of each outcome. Many instructors, however, use the same assessment strategy for all outcomes, without any indication of assigning separate scores for each outcome. This practice, much like using end of course grades, may not provide adequate feedback to students’ performance since they may represent overall competency of students, without identifying strengths and weaknesses on specific learning outcomes.

Many instructors use Student Course Evaluations (SCE) in their assessment of student course outcomes. Students self-report their improvement or achievement of a course outcome, which

*For more information on the COA Part Bs please contact the Academic Assessment Coordinator kkane@cgcc.edu.

can be valuable as this practice can encourage students to realistically self-assess and reflect on their understanding and progress, thus encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. While SCEs are considered an indirect measurement of student achievement of course outcomes, by comparing students' perception of their end-of-term understanding/mastery of the three outcomes with direct assessment of student achievement of the three outcomes, instructors can analyze discrepancies between students' self-perception and achievement of course outcomes. The Student Course Evaluations also provide instructors an opportunity to ask students specific questions, such as whether materials/resources are adequate, whether the time/location of a class is preferable, etc. CGCC continues to struggle with student responsiveness to SCE, and instructors may be lacking valuable information that could contribute towards course improvement.

II. Total number of changes indicated as a result of course assessment:

In total, 99 changes were suggested as a result of course assessments during the 2015-2016 academic year. Other changes were suggested by instructors; however these changes were not always linked to analysis of student achievement of outcomes. Changes, such as a "more simplified, concise Class schedule", "Additional introduction handout of do's and don'ts to clear up other confusion" and "Spice up" PowerPoints, as noted in the course assessment for MP 150*, while not linked to evidence that these changes need to occur, are still indicative of instructor intention to improve student learning and are noteworthy.

Examples of changes noted as a result of course assessment:

- improving instructional materials and resources for students (NUR 60, PHL 201, CIS 120, MA 117, MA 118, CG 111, COMM 237, BA 104, EET 219, ESOL Level C/D, HE 113, BA 213, ATH 101),
- increasing instructor-student interaction to better support student achievement of outcomes (PSY 201A, CH 121, PE 182J, MP 111),
- suggested college-wide improvements to address plagiarism (WS 101),
- increased student-student interaction (BA 211),
- changes to prerequisites (CAS 170, ENG 260),
- changes in format of course or course environment (hybrid, more computer lab, round tables etc.) (HEC 226, MA 117, PSY 101, MEC 120, CS 161, EMS 106, MP 150),
- changes to instruction (delivery) (MTH 60, NUR 110, JPN 101, ESOL Level C, CG 209, PSY 215, BA 228, BI 232, ATH 101),
- changes in curriculum (FN 225, RD & WR II),
- reduction in course content (MTH 95),
- changes in assessment methods (GS 106, HPE 295, ESOL Level A/B, ESOL Level D, MA 131, ENG 253, BA 177, MTH 98) or grading (ECE 236),
- changes to course design (CS 162, CS 163),
- clarifying assignments (ESR 171, SPA 101)

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III. Identify and give examples of assessment-driven changes made to improve attainment of course-level student learning outcomes.

A total of 94 course assessments were completed during 2015-16. Many of those courses (52 of those 94 courses) had not been previously assessed, the result of course assessment still being new to CGCC (not all courses have gone through the assessment cycle yet) and new courses being added to the catalog and thus, the course assessment schedule. Of the 42 courses that had been previously assessed, 24 changes were evaluated or noted as a result of a previous course assessment (2012-Spring 2015).

Changes ranged (but are not limited to):

- Clarification of class assignments/due dates (NUR 60*, NUR 110, NUR 210, MA 117, GS 106, PSY 215),
- Start Here/Moodle introduction revised (CAS 133),
- increased number of word problems (MTH 95),
- textbook changed (MA 117),
- outcomes changed (MA 118)
- improved instruction towards specific outcomes (FN 225)

C. Recommendations

I. Identify any changes that should be implemented towards course assessment.

1. Measurement of student achievement of outcomes:

Many instructors could benefit from more training regarding direct measurement of student achievement of outcomes, specifically those that do not assign separate scores for each outcome when using the one measurement of all outcomes, those who use participation as a direct measurement or for those using end of course grades.

2. Making the connection between evidence of student achievement of course outcomes and changes/improvements made to courses:

Of the 94 completed course outcomes assessment, instructors of 27 of those assessments (29%) either did not indicate any changes or improvements were to be made to future offerings of their courses or stated that no course adjustments are required. While it's likely that many of these courses are mature enough that there are not a lot of improvements or changes that need to be made, because CGCC [values "Excellence" and "Commitment to learning"](#) as evidenced in CGCC's Mission Statement and is committed to continuous improvement as indicated in [CGCC's Core Theme document](#), it is recommended that increased documentation of the adjustments and improvements that instructors say they are making in their courses

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would provide evidence to our students, our community, our peers and NWCCU of our commitment to a continuous improvement model. Making the connections between evidence of student achievement of outcomes and those improvements would further indicate that we are basing changes and adjustments on data and thoughtful analysis.

It is recommended that instructors could benefit from continued professional development regarding the importance of connecting assessment and analysis of student learning outcomes and improvements made to courses.

3. Documenting changes made from previous course outcomes assessment:

Many course outcomes assessments fail to make the connection from a previous assessment in the sense that changes will be recommended in previous assessments, but no indication of the effectiveness of those changes will be noted in current course outcomes assessments. The course outcomes assessment tool ([Part B](#)) most likely contributes towards this lack of closing the loop between course assessment cycles because the question that allowed for instructor reflection about previous recommended changes was indicated as “Optional”. It is recommended that a required question be included in the course assessment analysis (Part B) that requires instructors to document the effectiveness of changes suggested and implemented from previous assessments.

Similarly, instructors may not have had access to their previous course assessments, as the Completed Course Assessment page only includes course assessments from the past 2 to 3 years, and instructors may have difficulty accessing their archived course outcomes assessment.

It is recommended that previous course assessments are made easily accessible to instructors as they complete their Part B.

4. Feedback from Department Chairs, Directors, Chief Academic Officer:

Department Chairs, Directors and the Chief Academic Officer serve not only as leaders and mentors for their faculty, but also are part of the “checks and balances” in helping to ensure that faculty are instructing and assessing their students in a way that enables students to achieve course outcomes and ensuring that faculty have what they need to teach their students and make improvements to their courses. Part B includes an opportunity for instructors to request resources (materials, training, equipment, etc.) that might be required to implement recommended course adjustments, and to indicate budget implications resulting from their request. The process to document closing the loop between these requests and responses from DC’s, directors and the CAO seems to be broken. While 1 or 2 DC’s, and occasionally a director, document responding to requests, there is no regular documentation of these requests being acknowledged. Without documentation, it’s not clear how instructors are to make improvements if their requests for support are not acknowledged.

Similarly, many instructors are documenting best practices, improvements or exemplary instruction and assessment. Again, there does not seem to be much acknowledgement of the great work that our instructors are doing, potentially adding to the opinion that course

assessment is a futile exercise that one must cross off their to-do list. Much like the feedback a student receives from an instructor on a term paper, it would benefit instructors if they could receive some kind of feedback on their annual course outcomes assessment.

It is highly recommended that there be some documentation of a feedback loop between instructor course assessments and requests for support and their direct supervisors, whether DC, director or CAO.

5. Sharing of “best practices”:

As stated above, it should be acknowledged that many of our instructors are doing exceptional work, as evidenced by their course outcomes assessment. It’s unfortunate, however, that there does not seem to be much sharing of “best practices” whether in instruction, curriculum development or assessment practices. Many instructors seem to be re-inventing the wheel or struggling to develop resources or assessment materials as a result of this lack of collegial collaboration.

It is recommended that an improved method that allows for sharing of best practices be implemented.

6. Increased participation in Student Course Evaluations

Student and instructor participation in Student Course Evaluations remains fairly low: of the 1667 students assessed, only 699 (42%) completed SCE. SCE are an opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own learning and could be considered the “Voice of the Student”. Instructors can benefit from the results of the SCE as it allows them to compare their data with students’ self-perception of their achievement of course outcomes and note any discrepancies. SCE results can also provide information for specific improvements with regard to the instructor generated questions. With such a low participation rate for SCE, instructors and students are not benefiting from the results of this indirect measurement of student achievement of course outcomes, and students may feel that they don’t have a voice with regards to their learning.

It is recommended that Instruction attempts to facilitate an increase in participation of SCE.

II. Describe your plan for implementation of any changes.

Fortunately, many changes and improvements are already being implemented. Budget for faculty professional development has been increased for 2016-17, and hopefully, some of this money can be used to support faculty in improving their assessment and documentation of assessment of student achievement of course outcomes (#1 and #2).

The AAC is beginning to include previous course outcomes assessment documents in emails to faculty as they complete their Part B, so that they have ready access to any improvements they had indicated and can address the effectiveness of implementation of these improvements (#3).

As the course assessment cycle continues and more and more courses will go through a second opportunity for analysis, the "Optional" should be removed from Plan B as soon as possible. (#3)

While it would be helpful to require DC's and Directors to respond to faculty as they submit their course outcomes assessment, it should be noted that DC's and Directors are already stretched with other duties. While the Academic Assessment Coordinator makes every attempt to notify DC's and Directors of requests for support or examples of "best practices" by indicating such in bold in notification emails, it could be assumed that some of these requests for support or acknowledgements of "best practice" are happening "behind the scenes" in responses to faculty without cc-ing the Academic Assessment Coordinator. The AAC will continue to request being included in any responses to faculty so that closure of the feedback loop can be documented and at the same time continue to encourage DC's and Directors to read and respond to their faculty's efforts in academic assessment. (#4)

Sharing of "best practices" among faculty continues to come up in conversations among both faculty and administrators. Web pages that share this information have been discussed, and faculty have access to other faculty's course outcomes assessment on the college website. Exemplary course outcomes assessment are also noted on the website. One thought is to directly share exemplary assessments, best practices, concerns, etc. among all faculty within a discipline. With submitting instructor permission, the AAC could share course outcomes assessments by emailing copies to other faculty within the discipline. This practice could potentially engage faculty within in discipline to collaborate on problem solving, best practices, concerns, etc. (#5)

The importance of student participation to course improvement has been clarified with the addition of the following question to Part B:

Helping students to realistically self-assess and reflect on their understanding and progress encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Consider comparing your students' perception of their end-of-term understanding/mastery of the three outcomes (found in student evaluations) to your assessment (above) of student achievement of the three outcomes. (#6)

III. Number of Departmental faculty involvement by department.

A total of 98 faculty participated in course outcomes assessment.

The following numbers indicate the number of faculty, by department, who completed Course Outcomes Assessment.

Department	Total Number of Faculty involved in course assessment
Arts/Humanities	5
CTE	23
ESOL	9
Math/Computer Science	8
Nursing/Health Occupations	15
Pre-College	6
Science	10
Social Science	12
Writing/Literature/Foreign Language	10
Total	98

IV. Additional comments.

The first plan of action is to share the results and analysis with faculty, Department Chairs, Instructional Administrators and the President. Doing so would help to move the college forward in implementing the recommendations.