

Assessing Online Learning & Closing the Loop for Program Improvement

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AACSB Assessment Process

(AACSB 2007a)

Step 1 – Define learning goals and objectives.

Step 2 – Align curriculum with goals.

▶ Step 3 – Identify instruments and measures.

▶ Step 4 – Collect, analyze and disseminate assessment data.

▶ Step 5 – Use assessment data for continuous improvement.

Assessment Process

Involve faculty in each and every assessment step (AACSB 2007b).

Operationalize each of the 5 assessment steps into 3-5 actionable tasks.

Assign faculty to complete each task.

Develop milestone schedule of steps and tasks and monitored their progress.

Strategic MBA Program

Strategic Business Plan is used throughout to integrate program.

Every core course includes content and a student assignment that focuses on a portion of the Strategic Business Plan.

All sections of each core course use a common textbook and are taught by the same faculty.

About 60% of sections are online and 40% face-to-face.

Faculty Involvement in Program Assessment

Curriculum Planning & Assessment Committee

Faculty teaching courses with embedded measures

Faculty member as Director of Program Assessment

Department Chairs

Program Mission and Learning Goals

Preamble: The Strategic MBA is a 48-hour MBA program (36-hour core and 12-hour concentrations) integrated using the strategic planning process.

Mission: The mission of the Strategic MBA Program is to provide graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully manage organizations in a dynamic environment by offering an integrated curriculum that blends theoretical concepts with practical applications.

Program Mission and Learning Goals

Strategic MBA graduates will be able to:

Analyze business operations and processes;

Analyze changes in the business environment to develop strategies that respond to emerging opportunities and threats;

Apply leadership skills to work effectively with individuals and teams in organizational situations; and

Apply cross-functional approaches to organizational issues.

Example – Actionable Tasks

Step 3 – Identify instruments and measures

3a) Determine type of measure(s) (e.g. selection, course-embedded, stand-alone testing, etc.) for each learning goal.

3b) Develop rubric(s) and rating scale(s) for each learning goal.

3c) Identify which courses will include embedded measures.

3d) Develop student assignments for embedded measurement.

Step 3 – Program Measures, Rubrics and Traits

4 Learning Goals – (2 are Bloom’s Taxonomy learning level 3 and 2 are Bloom’s learning level 4) (Bloom 1956)

Direct Measures – Course-Embedded

7 Rubrics

Primary Trait Method – 28 total Traits to assess – (1 trait Bloom’s level 1, 3 traits Bloom’s level 2, 9 traits Bloom’s level 3, 9 traits Bloom’s level 4, 2 traits Bloom’s level 5 and 4 traits Bloom’s level 6)

Embedded measures in 6 core courses

Additional Assessment Question - Learning Outcomes in Online Courses

**About 60% of course sections online and 40%
face-to-face.**

**Assessment data from online course sections
compiled separately from assessment data
from face-to-face course sections. (Terry 2007)**

Step 4 – Collect, Analyze and Disseminate Assessment Data

Data Collection:

For the 6 core courses with embedded measures, student assessment data were collected from 23 total course sections (10 face-to-face and 13 online course sections).

For each of the 6 core courses with an embedded measure, a random sample (Martell 2005) of student assignments across all online sections and a random sample of student assignments across all face-to-face sections were taken. Student names were removed from the assignments.

Faculty teams assessed student papers resulting in 52% of School's faculty involved in assessing student performance.

Step 4 – Collect, Analyze and Disseminate Assessment Data

Assessment data results found:

**2 traits below expectation goals in face-to-face classes
(1 trait Bloom's level 4 and 1 trait Bloom's level 6)**

**4 traits below expectation goals in online classes
(3 traits Bloom's level 4 and 1 trait Bloom's level 6)**

**Student performance in online classes were
significantly lower than face-to-face classes on 7 traits
(2 traits Bloom's level 3, 4 traits Bloom's level 4, and 1 trait Bloom's
level 6)**

Step 4 – Collect, Analyze and Disseminate Assessment Data

Other assessment analyses:

Student performance was below expectation goals in traits at Bloom's level 4 or higher.

Some written assignment descriptions were very brief with few specifics.

Some faculty explained assignment expectations to students while others did not.

Step 4 – Collect, Analyze and Disseminate Assessment Data

Results of online versus face-to-face analysis:

Online sections have same textbook, course content, and faculty instructors as face-to-face sections.

Many faculty augment written assignment descriptions with oral communications in face-to-face classes.

Face-to-face sections appear to include more in-class student activities addressing applications and analysis than online classes..

Step 5 – Use Assessment Data For Continuous Improvement (Closing the Loop)

Identify areas needing improvement (Redle and Calderon, 2005):

Review and enhance student assignment descriptions.

Explain assignment expectations to students.

Add more class discussions, especially in online sections (Vonderwell, Liang and Alderman, 2007), addressing similar applications, analyses and evaluations (e.g. case analyses).

In online sections, add Webinars, interactive discussions, and/or other activities concerning related applications, analyses, and evaluations.

Step 5 – Closing the Loop Example – MIS Online Course Sections

Enhancing online sections of MIS core course by:

Providing more detailed assignment instructions.

Explaining what student performance meets expectations.

Adding discussion board topics that include case examples and address assignment questions and comments.

Adding Breeze meeting sessions to discuss course assignments and answer student questions.

Results of Enhancements in Online MIS Course Sections

Rubric with Four Traits	Meets or Exceeds Expectations Before Enhancements	Meets or Exceeds Expectations After Enhancements
Describe firm-based value chain model and decision-making levels (Bloom's level 2).	86.7%	95%
Apply value-chain model and decision making level identification to the specific firm's situation (Bloom's level 3).	76.7%	92.5%
Analyze opportunities in terms of functional areas, business processes and decision levels for IS/IT implementation in the firm (Bloom's level 4).	66.7%	82.5%
Analyze the matching functionality of the IS/IT product(s) (Bloom's level 4).	43.3%	92.5%

References

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