

EXAMPLES OF 2008 UNIT ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

(reported at <http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/index.html>)

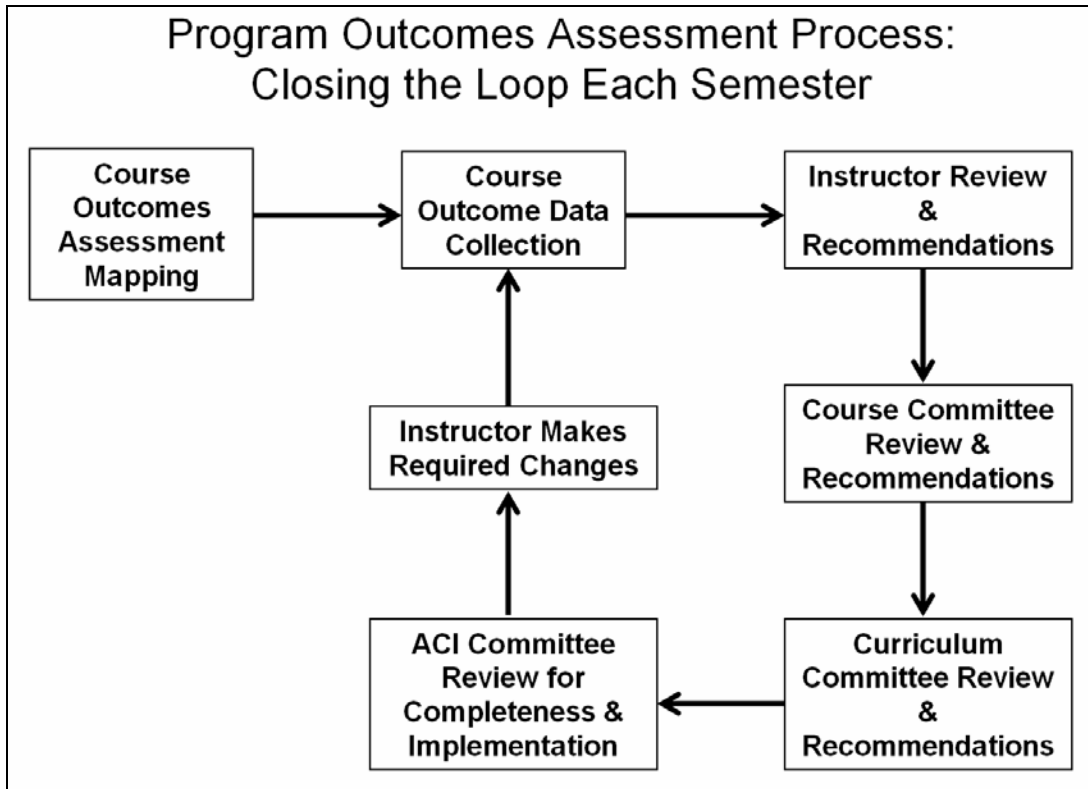
Following are examples of what units have done or plan to do with student assessments of learning extracted from the 70+ unit assessment plans made available to the campus at [www....](http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/index.html)

The School of Social Work

The School has engaged in a number of assessment activities in recent years. Several of these include a bi-annual survey of recent graduates, focus groups with current students, and analyses of ICES student ratings. Results of these assessments (shared with all faculty and reviewed by both the MSW Program Committee and each Specialization Committee), have resulted in the development of new courses and the development of Problem Based Learning case scenarios for each specialization. These cases are given as a class assignment toward the end of students' internships and are graded by the instructor. Instructors then provide a sample of these to the Specialization committees who in turn discuss their findings with the MSW Program Committee.

Department of Industrial and Enterprise Systems Engineering

Similar to some other engineering departments, the Department of Industrial and Enterprise Systems Engineering uses direct measures of student learning to assess desired program outcomes. Curriculum mapping first identifies courses addressing each of the program outcomes. Exam items assessing the outcomes are embedded in course exams or class assignments. Instructors record student achievement and report back to the college any changes they make to increase the level of student learning. All data (courses, outcomes, embedded items, instructor actions) are stored in a custom-developed database and reviewed by the Continuous Improvement Committee (ACI). The ACI committee has the responsibility to review the course outcome data, as well as the recommendations/actions of the instructor. This closes the loop to make sure that appropriate actions are made to maintain the high quality of the educational experience in each required course in the program. An illustration of the process and the closed feedback loop is shown below:



The Department of History

In assessing their graduate programs the History Department brought previous graduate students back to campus to discuss the effect of their training on their current careers, and engaged departmental forums on the success and needs of the graduate program. These discussions generated a number of areas where the program could be strengthened, especially (1) first-year cohort-building and introduction to historical scholarship and (2) an improved set of milestone checks on student progress through program requirements in order to lessen time-to-degree by clearly mapping expectations and achievements. Specifically, a “prelim preparation” coursework option was developed, whereby a student could contract for a special writing assignment, such as an annotated bibliography, to replace the standard long paper in ONE course taken to satisfy ONE of the three preliminary examination fields.

The Department of Dance

The Department of Dance uses several mechanisms for assessment such as the sophomore review, post-production evaluations of concerts, mid-term evaluation meetings and exit surveys. Among other things, results indicated a large majority of students felt procedures for casting roles in productions were unfair or biased. To address this, the department revised their casting procedures for departmental productions in order to give more students a range of performing experiences before graduation. It was also determined that a faculty or guest choreographer would be assigned to choreograph a piece for the senior class each year that would be performed in one of the main stage concerts, ensuring that every dance major has that experience before graduation.

Other unit changes from assessment results included, hiring a physical therapist to evaluate majors in both programs yearly, tracking postural, muscular and mechanical features and potential weaknesses of every student, revising the curricular sequencing of courses, adding two more required courses in choreography and a course specific to mentoring graduate students through the Thesis requirement, plus revisions to the Student Handbook.

The Department of Special Education

All undergraduates in the Department of Special Education are required to complete an electronic portfolio which includes a multimedia teaching philosophy, integrated reflections that address the major standard areas required to be a special education teacher, and results of assessments and or assignments they have completed in order to meet multiple indicators within the standards. The e-portfolio is developed across several semesters with guidance from Special Ed Department faculty and the student's advisor. A formal e-portfolio presentation attended by the advisor and e-portfolio coordinator occurs prior to the student's graduation from UIUC. Written and verbal feedback from cooperating professionals and university supervisors also provide data regarding each student's dispositions, attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

The e-portfolios have provided an opportunity to reflect on the program knowledge and performance standards. As a result, the department has identified standards and indicators that have not been adequately addressed in the program and subsequently made several changes in the courses or program experiences.

Department of Statistics

The Department of Statistics made significant changes in its undergraduate and graduate programs as the result of assessments since 2000. These were in response to indicators of student demand, exit interviews with graduates, post-degree communications with alumni, feedback from industry on the MS program, and faculty assessment of the training of our students and trends in the field. The major developments included:

- A new first course for Statistics majors was developed, Statistics 200, "Statistical Analysis."
- The requirements of the B.S. in Statistics were revised to include more exposure to data analysis and computing earlier in the undergraduate experience,
- Electives available to upper level Statistics majors were expanded to incorporate new courses developed in the past several years.
- A new Minor in Statistics was developed in response to interest on the part of students majoring in other subjects who frequently take several of our courses to enhance their research skills.

Department of Business Administration

The Department of Business Administration is using several case write-ups to assess student learning objectives in their capstone course (BAdm 449). The criteria used to grade the case write-ups matches the language of the learning objectives, such as:

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze an unstructured problem, formulate solutions, identify strengths and weaknesses of those solutions, and make an appropriate recommendation.

Results of the cases are collected by the college assessment coordinator and shared with the faculty and curriculum committees.

SOME FUTURE UNIT PLANS

Department of Philosophy

A “Comment Review” is being planned by the Department of Philosophy based on the faculty practice of regularly write comments on students’ papers. Each faculty member will be requested, for each Philosophy major in his or her class, to make a copy of any set of comments for the student’s file. A group of faculty would then review comments from a range of semesters from their seniors’ folders, looking for evidence of problems that their students are having or evidence that students have improved in various respects over the semesters.

Department of Linguistics

The Linguistics faculty is currently discussing the incorporation of one or more capstone courses for Linguistics majors to take in their senior year. A capstone course would be focused around a research project in which students would collect linguistic data that they would then analyze drawing on theories of grammar and language use introduced in the courses required for the Linguistics major. At the end of the course, participants would present their research projects to the broader UIUC linguistics community at a Linguistics Senior Symposium, held on the UIUC campus. An evaluation will be administered at the end of the capstone course, to capture students’ evaluations of their own learning outcomes over the major program of study. The faculty member(s) directing the capstone course will also be surveyed for their input about specific skills and areas of knowledge in which students demonstrate strengths and/or weaknesses. This data will inform faculty decisions about courses and teaching methods in upcoming semesters.

Department of Journalism

Journalism pre-majors will be asked to complete an ungraded test at the start of Introduction to Journalism (Jour 200) or Journalism Ethics and Diversity (Jour 250) concerning their awareness and understanding of core principles. Majors then will be tested again during their last semester before graduation. Results from the latter test will be compared with the earlier test to gauge student learning. Master’s students will be

asked to complete a similar test during their initial orientation or otherwise upon admittance to our graduate program. They then will be tested again at or near the completion of their final Master's projects. Again, the earlier and later results will be compared.

The department will also collect student work (for example, final projects or audition tapes that serve as portfolios for those particular classes as well as final Master's projects) and have selected professionals review a sample of that accumulated work. These professionals will provide comments through an evaluation form which requires the evaluator to rank the effectiveness of the work in presenting the 11 student outcomes relevant to the sample area.