2018-2019
Outcomes Assessment Report
(Published Spring 2020)

Harper College
GoForward®

Overview

Outcomes assessment at Harper College is the process of collecting, analyzing, and using data about student learning to focus institutional efforts on improving student achievement and the learning experience. Learning assessment at Harper is based on the following principles:

- The most effective assessment processes are faculty driven.
- Assessment is an ongoing process that leads to change and improvement.
- Assessment is never perfect.
- Academic freedom can be maintained while engaged in assessment.
- Assessment is not a task solely performed as a requirement of accrediting agencies; the reason for assessment is improvement.
- Assessment is not linked to faculty evaluation and results will not be used punitively.
- The use of data to support change leads to the most meaningful improvements.
- Course-embedded assessment is the most effective authentic method of conducting assessment.
- Assessment raises as many questions as it answers.
- Assessment focuses the attention of the College on continuous quality improvement.

The Nichols five-column model of assessment has been adopted by Harper College. This model organizes the assessment process by guiding programs and departments through the process of developing an assessment plan, collecting evidence of student learning, communicating results, and developing data-based action plans focused on continuous improvement. The five columns represent the following:

- Identifying the program or department mission (Column 1)
- Defining outcomes (Column 2)
- Selecting assessment measures and establishing the criteria for success (Column 3)
- Implementing assessments and collecting data (Column 4)
- Using assessment results to improve student learning or department quality (Column 5)

Academic course-level and program-level assessment, as well as student support and administrative services assessment follow an annual cycle in which the assessment plan is developed during the fall semester, the assessment is conducted during the spring semester, assessment results are entered in summer, and improvement plans are completed through department discussions the following fall semester (see Table 1).

Outcomes Assessment at Harper

The department chair or program coordinator is customarily responsible for ensuring the annual assessment process is followed. In some cases, the dean may appoint a faculty designee other than the chair or coordinator to oversee the assessment process within the department. All faculty members within a department are expected to participate in the assessment process as defined by the department's assessment plan.

Table 1 – Annual Outcomes Assessment Process

PLAN ✓ **Columns 1-3** Enter Mission Statement, Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment Methods and Criteria for Success	October to December	Create assessment plan based on discussion with faculty and dean. Submit assessment plan in Nuventive[1] (Columns 1-3). Assessment plan includes mission statement, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and criteria for success. Plan for assessment shared with the faculty. (Columns 1-3)
IMPLEMENT ✓ Collect assessment data	January to May	Implement assessment plan and collect data.
ANALYZE ✓ **Column 4** Enter Results	May to August	Analyze assessment data to identify trends, areas for improvement, and initiatives to improve student learning. Enter results into Nuventive in preparation for the beginning of the fall semester. (Column 4)
IMPROVE ✓ Discuss findings with appropriate constituents ✓ **Column 5** Enter Use of Results	August to early October	Discuss results among department faculty during Orientation Week. Meet with Dean to review findings and initiatives from previous cycle and discuss interventions and resources needed to initiate changes. Based on conversations with department faculty and dean, enter use of results (Column 5) in Nuventive. Assessment report completed (Columns 1-5). Begin planning for current academic year's assessment.
CLOSE THE LOOP ✓ Initiate changes defined above ✓ Begin new assessment cycle (Plan)	October	New assessment cycle begins. (See "Plan" above.) Incorporate revisions from last year.

[1] Nuventive is Harper's assessment management system, formerly known as TracDat. For more information, please visit Assessing Our Students on the HIP.

Course-Level Outcomes Assessment

Academic departments without AAS degrees or certificates of 30 hours or more participate in the course-level assessment process.[2] In 2018-2019, the total number of academic departments involved in course-level outcomes assessment was 26. Table 2 contains information about the outcomes assessment activities of these departments.

Table 2 – Course Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2018-2019

Assessment Submissions	Number of Departments (%)
Documented consultations*	26/26 (100%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	26/26 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	25/26 (96%)
Results	**Number of Items (%)**
Outcomes process issues	1/106 (1%)
Criteria met, no further action	36/106 (34%)
Criteria met, action taken	18/106 (17%)
Criteria not met, action taken	51/106 (48%)
Total Assessments	106/106 (100%)

*Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

Of the 26 departments engaging in course-level assessment in 2018-2019, 25 (96%) completed the full outcomes assessment cycle. The completion rates are equal to 2017-2018 but represent a slight decrease from 100% in 2016-2017.

Faculty are encouraged to identify actions for improving student achievement of learning outcomes. Data indicate that 69 of the 106 course-level assessment results (65%) led to improvements in course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods. Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of course-level assessment findings.

Communication Arts—SPE101

In 2018-2019, the department assessed the outcome, "Perform multiple presentations to increase poise and confidence when speaking in front of audiences." While there was a decrease in anxiety from the beginning of the semester to the end, it was observed that females reported high or moderate anxiety at the beginning of the course. Overall, the data showed that multiple presentations do reduce anxiety. A large percentage of the data came from blended courses. As a result, the department evaluated the differences between face-to-face versus the online

[2]Some departments conducted formal assessments at both the program and the course level: Accounting, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, and Law Enforcement and Justice Administration.

presentations and discussed results with faculty. Additionally, faculty were asked to report the number of times students presented in classes to see if there was a correlation between blended and face-to-face courses. The department will continue to investigate ways to help people who are taking the course a second time feel more confident in their presentations.

English—ENG101

The English department worked on revising their rubric and used this to evaluate the outcome, "Practice various principles of effective sentences, including idiomatic expression, rhythm, variety, emphasis, and economy (the key components of the writer's voice)." Faculty tested the validity of the rubric and collected baseline data that showed students scoring in the intermediate level for both the "style and voice" as well as the "organization, structure, control" categories. In addition to addressing students development of thesis statements, the department will continue to modify the rubric and make it more effective for quantitative analysis; request assignment sheets for essays that are selected for official assessment to help with quantitative assessment; investigate what types of research students should be doing in these courses; and also continue the process of gathering both formal and informal qualitative and quantitative data to help inform assessment.

History—HST111

During the spring semester, the History department evaluated an essay question that focused on the evaluation and interpretation of historical content. While the results showed that 73% of the students scored in the intermediate range, many had difficulty with language and mechanics as students scored lower in these areas. At the beginning of the next two semesters, the History Department will plan to discuss how to emphasize language skills in future assessments through mini writing assignments. These mini writing assignments will be used in both fall 2019 and spring 2020. Overall, student content remained strong in this assessment.

Humanities—HUM105

The Humanities department developed a large-scale writing assessment by norming expectations across the four full-time instructors. Three papers were collected from each of the faculty members and papers were categorized by quality and scored by the group. Baseline results were gathered and the department will now begin developing a rubric that will be used by faculty to improve college-level writing by students. Additionally, a prompt was created and will be used in HUM105. The prompt will be given at the beginning and end of the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters.

Career Program Outcomes Assessment

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, various certificate programs, developmental math, and English as a Second Language are involved in academic program outcomes assessment activities. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 39 total academic programs/departments were involved in program-level outcomes assessment. However, one AAS program was unable to participate in the outcomes assessment process due to low enrollment. Table 3 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these programs/departments.

Table 3 – Program Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2018-2019

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Programs unable to assess due to low enrollment	1* (this program not included in data)
Documented consultations**	39/39 (100%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	39/39 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	38/39 (97%)
Results	**Number of Items (%)**
Outcomes process issues	6/325 (2%)
Criteria met, no further action	156/325 (48%)
Criteria met, action taken	58/325 (18%)
Criteria not met, action taken	105/325 (32%)
Total Assessments	325/325 (100%)

* Human Services AAS

**Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

In 2018-2019, 97% of programs completed the full outcomes assessment cycle, a slight decrease from the 100% completion rates achieved during the last three years. Data indicate that 163 of the 325 assessment results (50%) were used to improve course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, an increase of 11% from 2017-2018 Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of program-level assessment findings.

Dental Hygiene

The program evaluated the outcome, "Provide individualized patient educational services to promote health maintenance and disease prevention." Faculty assessed students' patient education theory and foundational knowledge related to oral health self-care techniques and products through evaluation of students' self-created videos of clinician-patient case scenario regarding selection and teaching of patient self-care methods. As a result of previous outcomes assessment results, the assessment rubric and assignment instructions were altered to focus on the performance criteria component that consistently scored the lowest, "Information is detailed and uses appropriate words

and terminology the patient can understand." Assessment findings revealed that only a small percentage of students were able to achieve success on this component. Due to these results, the program will consider implementing various measures including separating this item into two separate components, modifying the scoring for the rubric, and eliminating the instructional activity as it is conducted in an earlier course. Additionally, the program will also consider adding units throughout the clinical sequence in emotional intelligence.

English as a Second Language

The ESL program saw a lower than expected success rate on a student's ability to accurately write a summary on a given reading selection. In addition to planning a workshop to provide teachers with the resources to help students develop their summary writing skills, the program will encourage faculty to be more direct and consistent in teaching the skills necessary for writing good summaries. The program wants to ensure that students at all levels of ESL reading should be learning how to communicate main ideas and supporting points.

Massage Therapy

To evaluate the outcome, "Create concise, accurate documentation," the program evaluated client satisfaction with the student therapists. Though it was found that almost all students were given satisfactory evaluations by their clients, the program will continue to monitor for consistency over time. The results of the assessment were shared with faculty members and the program also determined in which parts of the curriculum to include more focus on criterion regarding charting in a clear, concise, and accurate manner to improve this score even more.

Radiologic Technology

Students' ability to critique radiographs were evaluated in the second and fourth semesters of their studies. Students in the second semester scored higher than students in the fourth semester. The program noted that this can be due to the difficulty of the advanced procedures required to critique. Clinical instructors report that the students are introduced to a large amount of spine work, but not skull, sinuses or facial bones. Going forward, faculty will have the students perform more simulations at the hospitals during down time. Also, faculty will stress continued lab practice for the students.

General Education Outcomes Assessment Activities

Harper College's five General Education Learning Outcomes are achieved as a result of successful completion of the general education requirements for any degree program. These five outcomes and their definitions are listed below:

- Communication: Communicate information and concepts in oral and written formats.
- Critical Thinking: Use evidence to develop arguments, make decisions, and evaluate outcomes.
- Diverse Perspectives and Cultures: Examine diverse perspectives and cultures as they relate to the individual, the community, and the global society.
- Information Literacy: Apply a variety of credible sources to support a given topic.
- Quantitative Reasoning: Use quantitative analytical skills to interpret and evaluate problems.

Harper conducts general education assessment annually. The Learning Assessment Committee and its Work Groups lead the assessment, and faculty members across the College measure the outcome within their courses. At least one General Education learning outcome is assessed each year according to a rotating schedule. Once a primary assessment has been conducted for an outcome in the first fiscal year, the next year the results are reviewed, and an improvement plan is developed. In the third fiscal year of the cycle, the improvement plan is implemented and in fourth fiscal year, a follow-up assessment is conducted. The fifth year is a time when the outcome is being reviewed and or revised if needed. The activities that occurred for each outcome in the fiscal year 2018-2019 are summarized below.

Communication – Full-scale Assessment

In 2018-2019, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education Communication Work Group assessed the communication outcome. The assessment was conducted with a random sample of class sections from courses mapped to the Communication general education outcome. The sampling technique also focused on sections with a relatively high percentage of students with 45+ credit hours earned. Faculty of selected sections then submitted student artifacts that they identified as the most intensive communication work in that class, which included papers, exams, journals, and presentations. Each assignment was then mapped to the rubric in order to ensure students were assessed only on the categories that were expected as part of the given course assignment. Assignments were scored and processed through the Outcomes Assessment Office.

In total, 891 artifacts were assessed. Overall results of the assessment are reported in Table 4 and assessment results by credit hour earned are reported in Table 5.

Table 4 – Overall Fall 2018 Communication Results

	Mean	% scoring 3 or higher
Organization (N = 331)	3.0	65.0
Paragraphs/Transitions (N = 339)	3.1	73.3
Control (N = 389)	3.1	68.9
Support/Evidence (N = 615)	3.0	73.5
Word Choice/Grammar (N = 617)	3.0	64.2
Mechanics (N = 636)	3.2	78.8
Overall (N = 891)	3.1	63.4

Table 5 – Results by Credit Hours Earned*

% scoring 3 or higher	1-15 (N = 39)**	16-30 (N = 70)**	31-34 (N = 79)**	45+ (N = 607)**
Organization	75.0	83.3	60.0	63.0
Paragraphs/Transitions	84.6	85.7	63.3	72.8
Control	81.8	71.4	68.3	67.9
Support/Evidence	76.5	67.6	72.6	73.8
Word Choice/Grammar	72.4	61.7	58.8	63.5
Mechanics	86.2	76.0	69.8	80.1
Overall	71.8	62.9	55.7	62.4

* Results for artifacts that were submitted without student information are not included in this table.

** Not all artifacts were assessed on all six criteria.

While the results of the Spring 2018 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Harper Follow Up Survey revealed that a majority of students believe that they are successfully engaging in communication in the classroom, results of the assessment show areas for improvement, particularly with "organization" and "word choice/grammar". It also appears that students with 31-44 credit hours earned scored lower overall than the other student categories.

Please see Communications on the HIP for more detailed results. Review of results and development of the improvement plan are scheduled for 2020.

Critical Thinking – Improvement Plan Development

After reviewing the 2017-2018 Critical Thinking assessment results and feedback gathered in fall 2018, the Work Group developed the Critical Thinking Improvement Plan in spring 2019. The plan focuses on faculty development and communication of effective learning activities and assignments, and attitudes about students and learning that positively impact students' critical thinking.

The Learning Assessment Committee, General Education Critical Thinking Work Group, and Outcomes Assessment Office will work jointly to implement this plan throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. These groups will partner with the Academy for Teaching Excellence for faculty development initiatives, as well as other campus stakeholders in an effort to improve students' critical thinking.

Please see Critical Thinking on the HIP for more detailed results.

Diverse Perspectives and Cultures – Improvement Plan Implementation

In 2018-2019 the Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Improvement Plan was implemented. Much of the plan focused on faculty development around infusing Diverse Perspectives and Cultures topics into their courses, as well as helping students make connections across a variety of topic areas. The Learning Assessment Committee, General Education Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Work Group, and Outcomes Assessment Office also partnered with the Academy for Teaching Excellence for faculty development initiatives and the International Studies and Programs committee for items relating to the College's Global Learning Outcomes.

Please see Diverse Perspectives and Cultures on the HIP for more detailed information.

Quantitative Reasoning – Follow-up Assessment

In spring 2019, the General Education Quantitative Reasoning Work Group conducted a follow-up assessment to the 2016 large-scale assessment. For the 2019 follow-up assessment, faculty who were part of the large-scale assessment were asked to participate. Faculty used the same assessment tool as in 2016. When examining the results by question, students scored the lowest on "graph reading" in both 2016 and 2019. Performance also decreased on "graph reading" in 2019 from 2016. Student performance was highest for "table reading" in both 2016 and 2019. For the "evaluation" questions, students performed better on "graph evaluation" compared to "table evaluation" for both 2016 and 2019. Prior to conducting the next full-scale assessment of this outcome, further analysis of this data will need to be evaluated to incorporate next steps for student improvement. These results will be used to inform the next assessment of this learning outcome and will be addressed in the Quantitative Reasoning Work Group.

Please see Quantitative Reasoning on the HIP for more detailed information.

Information Literacy

In 2019, the Information Literacy Work Group reviewed assessment results from the follow-up assessment that was conducted in spring 2018. The next full-scale General Education Information Literacy Assessment will be conducted 2019-2020.

More information on Information Literacy assessment and improvement resources can be found on the Information Literacy General Education HIP page.

Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment

During the 2018-2019 academic year, 34 total student support and administrative units took part in the outcomes assessment process. Units from across all non-academic divisions participated, such as the Academy for Teaching Excellence, the Business Office, and Student Involvement. Table 6 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these units.

Table 6 – Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2018-2019

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	23/34 (68%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	34/34 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	32/34 (94%)
Results	**Number of Items (%)**
Outcomes process issues	13/102 (13%)
Criteria met, no further action	30/102 (29%)
Criteria met, action taken	39/102 (38%)
Criteria not met, action taken	20/102 (20%)
Total Assessments	102/102 (100%)

* Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

In 2018-2019, 94% of units completed the full assessment cycle, a decrease from the 100% achieved during the last three years. The Student Support and Administrative Services assessment process has been in place for many years at the College, and many departments have integrated these processes into their regular workflow. Thus, many departments complete their assessment work without requiring consultation with the Outcomes Assessment Office. However, Outcomes Assessment continues to support all non-instructional areas through online materials, assessment handbooks, drop-in sessions, and individual consultations on an as-needed basis.

Among the non-instructional assessments for 2018-2019, 58% led to improvements in services, programs or other operations, which is consistent with 2017-2018. Following are samples of plans and actions taken as a result of assessment findings.

Academy for Teaching Excellence

One of the goals for the Academy for Teaching Excellence in 2018-2019 was to reduce the cost of course materials for students through Open Education Resources (OER) and related efforts. Through the OER Transformation Grant, 20 faculty implemented OER/no cost/low cost course materials in 36 sections, impacting 877 students. First semester student savings is estimated between $45,000 - $70,000. Success rates in spring 2019 sections were higher than success rates in comparable spring 2018 and fall 2018 sections by 3.5%. Additional funding was secured for

FY2020 through the Strategic Planning Champion Team and the grant will be modified to better support faculty who are adapting/building OER content in 2019-2020.

Job Placement Resource Center

To increase student success, retention and persistence, the Job Placement Resource Center offered on-campus training opportunities for students and supervisors. In 2018-2019, the "Student Employee Excellence Development" (SEED) program was piloted and offered to student aides. Twenty-six students participated in the SEED workshops held between October 2018 - May 2019. At the April Student Appreciation Lunch, nine students received their certificate of completion. Supervisors were made aware of participation rates and efforts to increase the number of aides attending workshops will be implemented in FY2020.

Library

In 2018-2019, the Library focused on improving basic information literacy concepts to students in the course of library instruction. Students in English 101 and Speech 101 received library instruction on the importance of forming effective key word searches and of selecting appropriate resources for their research needs. Students were asked a series of questions after the training and the results indicated that "selecting appropriate resources for their research needs" was met. There was an implied proficiency in "importance of forming effective key word searches" but it was not mentioned directly. Students also appear to need more instruction in the area of citations. The Library will continue to investigate incorporating more citation instruction into classes in 2019-2020.

Retail Services

In 2018-2019, Retail Services piloted an Inclusive Access program that includes the cost of course materials as a course fee for approved courses. The program saved students an estimated $13,700 to $30,550 on their course materials, or about $18 to $41 per student. In fall 2018, 352 students used the inclusive access materials, and in spring 2019, 379 students used the materials. If the Inclusive Access program is fully implemented, there would still need to be a process for identifying, approving, and setting up courses which will be evaluated in 2019-2020.

Other Assessment Efforts at Harper College

In addition to the assessment processes and outcomes analyses described above, the College continued its assessment efforts in 2018-2019 through:

- The 10th Annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair, held on September 21, 2018. This professional development event featured Dr. Saundra McGuire, who presented, "Metacognition: The Key to Improving Outcomes Assessment Results" along with a session on increasing student motivation. Other breakout sessions included "We get the Job Done' – Using Popular Culture to Address Diversity" and a panel discussion, "Improving General Education Skills Across the Curriculum."

- Harry Potter themed Critical Thinking workshops. In fall 2018, Outcomes Assessment and the Academy for Teaching Excellence hosted two workshops focused on how to better understand, measure, and draw out Critical Thinking.

- The "Engaging Students in Diverse Perspectives" Graduate Equivalency Course (GEC) offering. This blended GEC course was conducted in spring 2019 and immersed faculty members with teaching and assessment strategies related to Diverse Perspectives and Cultures.

- The Learning Assessment Community of Practice (CoP). Eight faculty members participated in this professional development experience designed to bring divisions together to investigate and implement assessment projects that will then be shared with the campus more broadly. Findings were shared at the Assessment Conference and Share Fair in September 2019.

- The Student Learning blog, which provides biweekly updates to faculty and staff regarding student success and learning assessment. The blog is posted on the Academy for Teaching Excellence website and in its newsletters.

- General Education Learning Outcomes student communication. Outcomes Assessment increased students' knowledge of Harper's five General Education Learning Outcomes by hosting interactive activities during both Hullabaloo in fall 2018 and at the Student Carnival in spring 2019.

- Outcomes Assessment Office support of faculty and staff assessment efforts, including individual consultations, workshops, drop-in sessions, and development and updates to assessment guides and online support materials.