

DISCUSSION GUIDE

ANALYZING, REFLECTING, AND REPORTING ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN ACADEMIC MAJORS/PROGRAMS

“Stories are powerful...the stories we tell define our institutions. And while a lot of data is gathered through assessment, meaning needs to be made of the data. To tell audiences what data on student learning means, we must make sense of it ourselves. Higher education has struggled with telling compelling narratives about its impact and value. The response can be one that involves evidence and story, because *evidence gives stories substance, but stories give evidence meaning.*” – Natasha Jankowski (National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment occasional paper titled “Evidence-Based Storytelling in Assessment,” February 2021).

1. Run assessment reports to determine student performance.

- a. **Assignment outcome linking result:** report shows you which course sections have results coming through to AEFIS, displays assignment name and student score data (proficiency level achieved, mean, median, mode, SD). Filter the report by PLOs reported this academic year.
 - i. *Tip: If results are not coming through, check the course section and repair the assignment linkage/Canvas assignment settings.*
- b. **Student outcome achievement report:** displays percent and number of students who met the target for each measure you collected.
 - i. *Tip: Make sure you select the outcome space (program) that was used for assignment linking. Also, you can filter this report by student major.*
- c. **Direct assessment graphs report:** displays percent or number of students who achieved each proficiency range on each PLO.
 - i. *Tip: Click on any bar graphed to populate section breakdown below. Click on section to see more detailed assessment results within the section.*
- d. **Direct assessment summary:** produces more detailed reports if you have questions about variations in student learning by student characteristic.
 - i. *Tip: This report filters data by student degree, concentration, certificate, or track, athletic status, gender, or ethnicity.*

- #### 2. Assessment results in and of themselves are not very useful. Assessment becomes useful when we tell a story about the assessment by sharing the meaning we made out of the results. Examine the assessment results and answer the most important question: how well did students learn what we wanted them to learn? Record both numeric results and department discussion about the results in your assessment plan form under “results.”

- a. Consider the percentage of students scoring within each proficiency range (below basic/basic/proficient/advanced). *What do you notice about the strengths or weaknesses in the overall performance?*
 - i. Consider where the targets are set (“x percentage of students will score x or higher...”). *Is this reasonable, too high, or too low?*
 - ii. Consider variations in performance by section. *Are there disparities? If so, discuss possible reasons for disparities.*
- b. Discuss how you evaluated student performance on the learning objective.
 - i. *How well do the linked assignments match up with the stated learning objective? Record observations and any recommendations on the types of assignments that best evaluate the learning.*
 - ii. *Does the learning objective itself accurately state what students should know or be able to do as a result of completing the course?*
 - iii. *What aspects of the assignment did students seem to struggle with (sometimes skill/knowledge challenge or gap, sometimes motivation, sometimes non-instructional issues)?*
 - iv. *Did you notice certain students struggling (e.g., students in particular majors)? If so, do you know why?*
- c. Discuss the instruction you provide on this learning objective. *Are we providing adequate opportunities for students to develop the learning stated in the objective, or are changes needed?*
- d. *What other campus resources are available (or should be available) to help students in areas of struggle?*

3. When you think about assessment results (and supporting evidence from your experience with students, observations about the assignments or course objectives) as the grounds or evidence in an argument, what claims might you make about the evidence (that is, what should we do as a result of the evidence)? These claims will become your action plans, and you will enter these under “action plans” in your assessment plan form in AEFIS:

- a. advertise positive results to prospective students or program accreditors in specific ways,
- b. change the assignment assessed,
- c. change the learning objective,
- d. improve or add instruction,
- e. more deliberately connect students to needed resources,
- f. obtain additional information (if you see certain groups of students struggling, do you need to collect more information about whether the observation is supported by evidence, i.e., student scores and trends?)
- g. something else?

4. Review your action plans from last year’s assessment cycle. If you had action plans related to any program learning objective (PLO) last year, document what you did to accomplish your action plan. What evidence do you have that the action plan was successful? Are any additional actions needed? You will enter the answers to these questions in your assessment plan form under “closing the loop records.”

Example: “Last year, 87 percent of students scored 85 or higher on the vocation assignment. Faculty determined that students need greater awareness of skills required and expected in career fields associated with the major. Our action plan was to incorporate more instruction and opportunities for reflection on skills related to the field. We believe this action plan was effective because this year, 93 percent of students scored 85 or higher on the vocation paper.”

***Note: unless you collect all measures annually, you will not enter closing the loop records on the same year you enter results and action plans for any PLO.**