

# Ideas for New, Useful Assessment Projects

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# End of Three-Year Cycle

- Most programs have continued at least one project for each outcome for 3 years
- Trending requires 3 years
- Need to identify new outcomes or new levels of earlier outcomes to assess
- Goal of change: (1) validate learning in more of the program and (2) assess outcomes at different levels (a benefit of program mapping)

# 3 Considerations for New Projects

- Significance or importance of the assessment to the health of the program
- Appropriate levels of assessment activities or methods
- Best methods and tools for the assessment activities

# Project Significance

What makes a project “significant”?

- Learning that faculty, as curriculum experts, identify as essential
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Values
- Importance for showing program achievement

# Project Significance

- Importance for transfer success
- Employability concerns/recommendations of employers
- Key skills recommended by advisory committees
- Certification skills or knowledge
- Gateway course material—key to student retention

# Identifying Significant Learning

- Think about department faculty concerns about learning that students consistently find difficult
- Consider goals for student learning at different points in program—beginning to advanced
- Review employer surveys or advisory committee comments
- Evaluate the meanings of scores on national exams or certifications
- Survey faculty in other departments

# Assessing at Appropriate Levels

Consider the program and related course outcomes—consider how outcomes are written to express cognitive goals

- Knowledge
- Application
- Analysis or Synthesis
- Creativity

# Assessing at Appropriate Levels

Consider the level of achievement intended in the courses where the assessment will occur (purpose and benefit of mapping a program)

- Beginning Level—conceptual learning or early-level skill practice
- Intermediate Level—developing knowledge or skills, increasing levels of competence
- Advanced Level—capstone level skills that reflect the “ideal graduate”

# Assessment Methods—2 Types

- **Direct Assessment:** assessment tasks that ask students to demonstrate what they know or can do. It is “tangible, visible, self-explanatory and compelling evidence” of learning (Suskie). VU’s assessment requires a minimum of one direct measure per outcome assessment.
- **Indirect Assessment:** assessments that include self-reporting measures or perceptions of learning from others. Evidence that consists of “proxy signs that students are probably learning” (Suskie).

# Methods and Tools Examples

Introductory level knowledge of discipline:

- Might use objective exam that uses questions reflective of the cognitive level
- Might use short answer questions
- Might use a pre/post-test approach
- Might use definition or explanatory papers
- Might use checklist of basic steps in process
- Might use survey or reflection to determine what concepts are difficult to understand

# Methods and Tools Examples

Intermediate level skills of the discipline:

- Might use an evaluation of developed lab skills
- Might use a problem-based approach to assess ability to apply concepts
- Might use a student reflection to better understand why application is difficult
- Might use an analytic rubric to evaluate the performance (to help students better understand the rubric, you might ask students to assess other students and discuss results)

# Methods and Tools Examples

Advanced level of knowledge and skills

- Might use a capstone project where students do research on a problem and create solutions
- Might have students demonstrate advanced or proficient level skills in a lab or presentation
- Might use reflection for students to describe benefits of learning for job or internship preparation
- Might use potential employers or advisory committee members to help assess