Using assessment to strengthen course offerings

THE BASIC STEPS OF ASSESSMENT
Why should we assess?

- Assessment provides great information on what knowledge our students gain from each course
- Assessment provides the opportunity for NMJC to evaluate our students’ performance and to ensure that they are prepared for future classes
Why do we assess?

- Required by NMHED
  - general education courses must provide proof that our students are receiving the same competencies as students at any other state institution
- Required by the Higher Learning Commission in order to maintain accreditation
Assessment **IS**

- A means to establish guidelines to meet educational needs
- A means to identify learning outcomes in each class
- A means for the faculty member to determine the need for changes or adjustments in their classes
- A means to ensure our students are prepared for future classes
Assessment is **NOT**

- A means to evaluate faculty performance
- A means to control what a faculty member teaches in the class
- A means to keep a faculty member from incorporating his/her own style and personality into the class
- A means to create more paperwork or headaches for faculty
Stages in assessment

1. Identify educational outcomes
2. Plan
3. Implement
4. Evaluate
5. Finalize
Step 1: Identify educational outcomes

- State objectives have been identified by various state-wide articulation task forces
- General education core competencies have been mandated by HED in Areas I – V
- Individual course objectives have been developed by the faculty

** All outcomes must be included on the course syllabi
Step 2: Plan

- Determine a specific plan of action
  - What medium will be used to assess objectives?
    - Tests, final exam, assignments, projects
    - Rubrics applied to evaluate essays, assignments, or activities
- Link method of assessment to each outcome
  - This planning must occur before the actual class begins
Step 2: Plan

- Determine benchmark
  - eg: 75% of students should demonstrate a 70% or higher when their research paper is applied to a rubric, or 70% of students should demonstrate a 75% or higher on 12 test questions related to this outcome
Step 3: Implement

- Add objectives/educational outcomes to syllabi
- Ensure assessment mediums (projects, tests, activities, assignments) address the objectives/educational outcomes
- Determine means of collecting data
- Enter preliminary assessment report in TracDat
Step 4: Evaluate

- Determine if your assessment results meet the benchmark
- Determine what changes will be made in order to strengthen the class
  - Changes to the course
  - Changes to assessment medium
  - Changes to your assessment procedures
Step 4: Evaluate

- **Do not use terms such as:**
  - “Continue as is”, “Keep the same assessment method”, or “No changes needed”
- **These actions will not strengthen your class**
Step 4: Evaluate

- **Assessment Cautions (DO NOT)**
  - Use final grades as your sole assessment medium
  - Measure all outcomes with the same assessment medium
  - Cite the same results on every outcome
  eg: 85% of students met the benchmark
Step 5: Finalize

- Incorporate the changes indicated in the previous assessment report
- “Close the loop”
  - What was the impact of the changes made to the class, the assessment medium, or assessment procedure
  - Did these changes help to improve student performance
Step 5: Finalize

- Enter all assessment outcomes, mediums, results, and future strategies in TracDat
- Begin the cycle again for the next school year
Future Considerations

- All alike courses agree on common assessment methodologies – This process must include adjunct and online faculty.
- Professors report assessment results to one office (IE?) which is responsible for entering all results into TracDat.
- IE office would maintain data on professors who had completed assessments and send reports to appropriate personnel.