



ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING GUIDE

**Updated:
Fall 2014**

Introduction to Assessment of Student Learning

The mission of New Mexico Junior College is to promote success through learning:

Mission- *As a comprehensive community college, New Mexico Junior College promotes success through learning.*

Values- *New Mexico Junior College's mission will be achieved by building a culture which values and promotes excellence, effectiveness, responsiveness, and community involvement.*

Assessment of student learning is essential to ensuring we live up to our mission. The following is a guide to NMJC's assessment process implemented spring 2014.

Before presenting NMJC's assessment process it will be helpful to provide the philosophical framework. Assessment should be understood from three distinct levels:

- ✓ Institutional- NMJC's institutional outcomes define broad student learning goals for all students regardless of selected program of study. Briefly stated the institutional student learning outcomes are- *Communication, Critical Thinking and Self and Community.*
- ✓ Departmental – Each department or program defines student learning goals for the overall area of study.
- ✓ Course- All courses have specific learning outcomes. As students experience planned, intentional efforts of professors to present course material, they also progress in learning departmental and institutional outcomes. Institutional and departmental student learning outcomes are assessed within the context of individual courses.

These three levels of assessment are presented in each course syllabus to provide a clear vision of all student learning goals.

Assessment of student learning should provide evidence of value in courses, programs of study and degrees earned. As stated in each course syllabus, NMJC's institutional student learning outcomes represent the knowledge and abilities developed by students attending New Mexico Junior College and students should achieve these outcomes as well as specific curriculum outcomes for their area of study. This statement of student learning captures NMJC's assessment philosophy by connecting specific areas of study to broader learning goals. "Success through learning" will be measured in how well graduates communicate, critically think and problem solve and interact within their communities as they pursue education and career goals beyond NMJC.

From this philosophical framework NMJC's assessment process takes shape. Valid and productive assessment will help professors help students. The following pages outline NMJC's assessment process in two ways: first according to the roles of various participants, second according to necessary steps in assessment cycles.

Processes described here are only intended to define basic principles and steps of assessment of student learning, rather than attempt to dictate specifically how assessment of student learning will be carried out. *Professors should work together to create plans that move assessment from an obligation to a vital activity that drives successful teaching and learning.*

Assessment of student learning should be viewed as a sequence of planning, sharing, and responding. Key components of NMJC's assessment process include:

- Faculty members of each department adopt a set of student learning outcomes that apply across all courses within the department. At least one outcome should directly relate to an established institutional outcome. Professors implement assessment methods in their individual courses to provide data for the respective department.
- Each department submits a report of assessment activities reflecting all courses within the department. Departmental assessment reports are reviewed by the corresponding dean, the vice president for instruction and the office of institutional effectiveness.
- Institutional assessment is a combination of applicable portions of departmental reports and standardized test results to document and track NMJC's overall student success.

Assessment of Student Learning Participants

Students

The natural place to begin describing assessment of student learning is with students. However, their role is passive in that they experience assessment within their courses as professors provide activities designed to measure learning with respect to a specific objective.

For other participants, assessment requires multiple levels of implementation and analysis. Regardless of participant, success will be defined the same way- student learning! “Telling the story” of how that learning occurs is *assessment of student learning*. Here are the other roles in the NMJC assessment process:

Professors

Professors have the most important role in assessment. They should...

- Communicate the three levels of learning goals to students early and often. Discuss with students purpose and intent in the activities and assignments within their courses.
- Design valuable, appropriate and engaging activities to promote student learning.
- Collaborate with others in the department concerning assessment activities. (Not all instructors will use the same methods, but all instructors will assess the same outcomes with consistent expectations.)
- Share data resulting from student work. Data gathered over a semester needs to be communicated to the department assessment coordinator in whatever format is requested. Data will be combined with others in the department for analysis by the group.
- Track student success within individual classes to determine course level changes that may be warranted.
- Maintain course assessment information for comparison semester to semester or year to year.
- Communicate with others in the department to discuss results and plan responsive actions. Meet as a department to share insights and observations about assessment activities and data generated. *This is the critical component of valuable, sustainable assessment which leads to improvements in courses and improvements in student learning.*
- Read the final departmental assessment report posted in group discussion in Assessment of Student Learning course of Canvas. Confirm statements made in the report and follow through by implementing agreed upon actions in the next assessment cycle.
- Some professors may be asked to work with OIE to give the ETS-PP during spring semester. This test is used to help with institutional assessment.

Department Assessment Coordinators

Department assessment coordinators have the responsibility of writing assessment reports on behalf of the entire department. They should...

- Coordinate meetings for faculty to discuss assessment plans, methods, results, observations, action plans and goals.
- Communicate with all adjunct professors to include them in all phases of departmental assessment. Help them use Canvas by directing them to the Assessment of Student Learning course and the group within the course. As much as possible, use Canvas email to communicate assessment information.
- Request data from all instructors in the department each semester and combine data to reflect overall departmental results per outcome. Data can be presented by semester or by academic year as determined by members of the department.
- Maintain continuity in reporting across assessment cycles. The department assessment coordinator needs to “tell the story of student learning” for the department in such a way that it flows from one cycle to the next documenting successes and failures resulting from actions taken.
- Insure that at least one departmental outcome directly measures an institutional outcome and report on it in a way that provides sufficient detail for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to compare and combine with other departments for the purpose of institutional assessment reporting.
- Record observations and discussion from departmental meetings. State action plans for the department as a whole.
- Post the final departmental assessment report on the group discussion page in the Assessment of Student Learning course in Canvas. Request feedback and then approval of the report before submitting it to the dean.
- Submit the approved final report to the corresponding dean.
- Announce specific actions expected in each assessment cycle to all full time and adjunct professors. (Again, use the group page in Canvas for communication to all professors in the department.)

Divisional Deans

The role of divisional deans will be to assist the assessment process by offering support and feedback. They should...

- Discuss assessment during in-service meetings to foster open communication and sharing of ideas.
- Request submission of departmental assessment reports after faculty meet for data analysis and planning. Faculty need time to hold a meeting and department assessment coordinators need time to finalize a report at the beginning of each academic year. Deans should establish a timeline for faculty to accomplish these things.
- Provide feedback and call attention to any concerns or issues. Deans can best assist in the assessment process by acting as the outside observer following “loops” through assessment cycles. If an assessment report fails to address a lingering issue from a previous cycle, the dean should call attention to it and ask that more information be added or call for additional action.
- Coordinate professional development opportunities as needed or requested by faculty.
- Help department assessment coordinators keep track of all participating instructors. If new full-time or adjunct professors join the division, the dean should make sure they are in contact with the correct department assessment coordinator to guide the new instructor through resources and expectations for participation in assessment.
- Submit final assessment reports for each department to the Vice President for Instruction and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Vice President for Instruction

The role of the Vice President for Instruction will be to review all departmental assessment reports to maintain awareness and overview of all assessment activities. The Vice President for Instruction should...

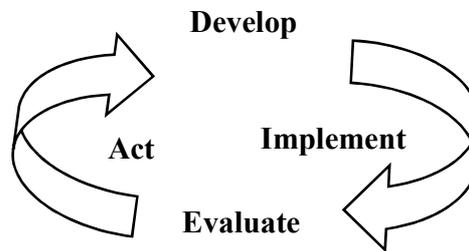
- Read all departmental, general education and institutional assessment reports.
- Provide feedback to deans and faculty as needed to maintain consistency and progress.
- Communicate to faculty the “big picture” of assessment for NMJC. The Vice President should provide encouragement by sharing as many successes in assessment as possible from across campus.
- Share “best practices” from across campus to help other departments.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The role of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will be to provide annual reports of student learning for NMJC as a whole. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness should...

- Combine and summarize results provided in all departmental reports for each institutional student learning outcome. The summary will demonstrate NMJC’s overall standing with respect to Communication, Critical Thinking and Self and Community. It will take data from across campus to accurately portray student learning in these areas.
- Coordinate use of the ETS-PP (Proficiency Profile) each year. OIE will work with professors to have students take the ETSP each spring semester. This will allow comparison of NMJC students to other students nationally. The ESTPP is a test designed to measure critical thinking and communication in the context of content areas such as literature, humanities, science, history, and math.
- Track ETSP data and report it within the annual student learning report.
- Present institutional assessment results to deans and faculty during fall in-service or other times as needed.
- Coordinate professional development opportunities based on needs or requests.

Overview of Assessment Process



Develop:

- Professors in each department agree on 4-6 student learning outcomes that will be assessed in each course. Where appropriate departments should use the General Education Outcomes defined by the New Mexico Higher Education Department. For Departments or programs not part of general education professors should articulate a set of outcomes applicable to all courses in the department.
- At least one of the learning outcomes needs to directly measure an established NMJC institutional outcome- *Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Communication, or Self and Community*. Departmental Outcome statements should clearly identify which outcome(s) coincide with an institutional outcome.
- Professors should develop methods of assessing each departmental outcome. Professors do not need to assess outcomes with exactly the same methods. However, each professor is responsible for assessing each outcome in each class in a way that generates data that can be combined with others.
- When developing outcomes and discussing various methods of assessment, professors also need to establish consistent standards or benchmarks to measure student work.

Implement:

- Each instructor carries out assessment activities for each outcome in each class and maintains data to recognize when changes in courses may be necessary. Data and changes made within courses should be shared with the department.
- Departmental assessment reports will be submitted annually, but data should be gathered each semester and combined with other instructors' data by semester or by academic year as arranged within the department.

Evaluate:

- Professors share data with the department assessment coordinator who will compile and summarize results for the entire department. The department coordinator then arranges a meeting with all instructors to analyze the results.
- When analyzing results several questions need to be considered. For example,
 - Do the results make sense? Were the results surprising in any way?
 - What does the data show? How do the results compare to previous semesters or years?
 - Did the assessment methods work well for students and professors?
 - Was benchmark met? Is the benchmark appropriate?
 - Are there any concerns that may not be evident from the data?
 - How do assessment results compare to overall success rates in the department?
 - Where is improvement needed?

Act:

- The purpose of analyzing results as a department is to discuss changes needed to improve student learning. Professors should agree to implement changes based on analysis and discussion.
- The department assessment coordinator will complete the assessment report according to analysis and conclusions from the departmental meeting. Professors will review a final draft of the report in Canvas so they know and agree to what is submitted to the dean.
- Once a departmental report is submitted to the dean, he or she offers feedback before sending the finished report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). OIE then conducts institutional assessment using departmental reports and ETSP test results.

Develop:

- **Start next assessment cycle by developing a plan to implement any changes according to actions agreed to by professors.**

NOTE: Assessment is not a task that gets completed. It is a constant process. Based on results, changes are made, but it is never finished.

As of spring 2014 NMJC defined the following departments for assessment reporting:

DIVISION	DEPARTMENTS
Arts and Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication (Area I of NMHED general education) • Student Success (Area IV of NMHED general education) • English/Humanities/Fine Arts (Area V on NMHED general education) • The Arts
Business, Math and Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Computer Information Systems • Mathematics (Area II of NMHED general education) • Natural Sciences (Area III of NMHED general education) • History (Area V of NMHED general education) • Social/Behavioral Sciences (Area IV of NMHED general education) • Physical Education- Activity • Physical Education- Theory • Physical Education- Outdoor Adventure
Public Safety and Career Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Safety • Criminal Justice • Career Technology Training • ACTA
Nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing
Online Learning and Professional Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Studies (Equine, Energy Technology, Music and Entertainment)
<p>The SLOAC approved departmental assessment report forms can be found in the “Department/Program” module of the Assessment of Student Learning course in Canvas.</p>	
<p>NOTE: Divisional deans and department assessment coordinators should maintain up to date lists of courses within each department and instructors teaching those courses.</p>	

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes Defined

New Mexico Junior College's institutional student learning outcomes represent the knowledge and abilities developed by students attending New Mexico Junior College. Upon completion students should achieve the following learning outcomes along with specific curriculum outcomes for respective areas of study:

- **Communication**
 - Comprehend information to summarize, analyze, evaluate, and apply to a specific situation.
 - Communicate in an accurate, correct, and understandable manner.

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**
 - Define a problem and arrive at a logical solution.
 - Use appropriate technology and information systems to collect, analyze, and organize information.
 - Apply critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving to data.

- **Self and Community**
 - Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and / or scientific issues
 - Communicate an awareness of a variety of perspectives of ethical issues.
 - Interact with individuals and within groups with integrity and awareness of others' opinions, feelings and values.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes were defined by the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) and are stated in section VI of each course syllabus.

Means of assessing the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

1. Formal assessment reporting focuses on the departmental level. Each department specifies at least one outcome that directly references an institutional outcome. This builds institutional data into departmental reports that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness can take to build a portrait of student learning from across all areas.

2. Another view of institutional student learning is attained by use of a standardized test. During spring 2014 SLOAC elected to use the ETS-PP or "Proficiency Profile" from ETS (Educational Testing Service). ETS-PP is a test designed to measure critical thinking and communication in the context of content areas such as literature, humanities, science, history and math.

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

State-Mandated Competencies

In addition to NMJC's assessment process as stated above, the New Mexico Higher Education Department has established competencies in five [general education](#) areas. For assessment purposes, instructors must assess all state-mandated competencies within their area(s). NMJC departments may adopt general education area competencies as departmental outcomes. General education assessment report forms can be found in the "General Education Assessment for NMHED" module of the Assessment of Student Learning course in Canvas. The competencies for each area of general education are as follows:

Area I: Communications Competencies

- Analyze and evaluate oral and written communication in terms of situation, audience, purpose, aesthetics, and diverse points of view.
- Express a primary purpose in a compelling statement and order supporting points logically and convincingly
- Use effective rhetorical strategies to persuade, inform, and engage.
- Employ writing and/or speaking processes such as planning, collaborating, organizing, composing, revising, and editing to create presentations using correct diction, syntax, grammar, and mechanics.
- Integrate research correctly and ethically from credible sources to support the primary purpose of a communication.
- Engage in reasoned civic discourse while recognizing the distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences.

Area II: College Algebra Competencies

- Construct and analyze graphs and/or data sets.
- Use and solve various kinds of equations.
- Understand and write mathematical explanations using appropriate definitions and symbols.
- Demonstrate problem solving skills within the context of mathematical applications.

Area II: Liberal Arts Math Competencies

- Construct and analyze graphs and/or data sets.
- Use and solve various kinds of equations.
- Understand and write mathematical explanations using appropriate definitions and symbols.
- Demonstrate problem solving skills within the context of mathematical applications.

Area II: Statistics Competencies

- Display, analyze, and interpret data
- Demonstrate knowledge of problem-solving strategies
- Construct valid mathematical explanations
- Display an understanding of the development of mathematics
- Demonstrate an appreciation for the extent, application, and beauty of mathematics

Area III: Laboratory Science Competencies

- Describe the process of scientific inquiry.
- Solve problems scientifically.
- Communicate scientific information.
- Apply quantitative analysis to scientific problems.
- Apply scientific thinking to real world problems.

Area IV: Social and Behavioral Science Competencies

- Identify, describe, and explain human behaviors and how they are influenced by social structures, institutions, and processes within the contexts of complex and diverse communities.
- Articulate how beliefs, assumptions, and values are influenced by factors such as politics, geography, economics, culture, biology, history, and social institutions.
- Describe ongoing reciprocal interactions among self, society, and the environment.
- Apply the knowledge base of the social and behavioral sciences to identify, describe, explain, and critically evaluate relevant issues, ethical dilemmas, and arguments.

Area V: Humanities and Fine Arts Competencies

- Analyze and critically interpret significant primary texts and/or works of art (this includes fine art, literature, music, theatre, & film).
- Compare art forms, modes of thought and expression, and processes across a range of historical periods and/or structures (such as political, geographic, economic, social, cultural, religious, and intellectual).
- Recognize and articulate the diversity of human experience across a range of historical periods and/or cultural perspectives.
- Draw on historical and/or cultural perspectives to evaluate any or all of the following: contemporary problems/issues, contemporary modes of expression, and contemporary thought.

Over the past six years NMJC has published the following reports:

Annual Reports of Student Learning (internal)

- Annual Report of Student Learning- fall 2008 through Spring 2009
- Annual Report of Student Learning- Fall 2009 through Spring 2010
- Annual Report of Student Learning- Fall 2010 through Spring 2011
- Annual Report of Student Learning- Fall 2011 through Spring 2012

Annual Reports with NM Higher Education Department for General Education Courses:

- General Education Assessment Report for 2008
- General Education Assessment Report for 2009
- General Education Assessment Report for 2010
- General Education Assessment Report for 2011
- General Education Assessment Report for 2012
- General Education Assessment Report for 2013
- General Education Assessment Report for 2014

Each of these reports can be viewed on NMJC's [Assessment of Student Learning website](#)