

ENMU-Roswell ASL Project

Response - Version 3

2019-09-18

What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

Wanda Baker

Wow - so many strengths! I am truly impressed by all that ENMU-R has accomplished. Here are some highlights:

You've accomplished nearly everything you identified for this phase, and it is clear that you did them in a thoughtful and collaborative way, building quality into everything you did. These efforts show a school-wide commitment to meaningful assessment processes rather than a "check it off the list and move on" approach. The work you're doing now will help the school to build, sustain, and improve your program over time, even as people come and go from your committee, your academy team, and your university.

Your assessment activities involve people throughout the academic units as well as others. Getting so many responses from the student success staff is actually a good thing. Student success personnel often have good insights about student learning and it's a positive sign that they feel welcome to get involved. You do want faculty more involved, though, and you've taken steps to achieve that.

The assessment web site is a great way to get information out to everyone on campus (and beyond). This is an important step to make sure that assessment is owned and operated by the whole campus, not just a few people.

You're providing a variety of professional development opportunities to faculty to increase their understanding and participation.

You've gotten some cycles under your belt and moved into the "rinse and repeat" phase. Great! You didn't stall out at this point, and that's important. Other programs are following along and will benefit from lessons learned by the early adopters.

By developing your Institutional Learning Outcomes, then program and course outcomes, you're in a good position to ensure alignment among those. I hope you'll take steps to ensure that your gen ed and co-curricular work is also well-aligned. These efforts make it possible to take a 360-degree view of student learning and efforts to improve learning.

Susan Hatfield

What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

Whew! You've been busy! Substantial progress has been made and most importantly, as Wanda pointed out, the work has been accomplished in a collaborative and thoughtful manner. I agree with the rest of Wanda's observations of the strengths of this project as well. The appears to be real momentum here.

What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

Wanda Baker

I know you're making good progress with developing learning outcomes, collecting data, reporting, communicating with stakeholders, and getting things set up in TaskStream.

I couldn't tell from your project update whether/how you're using assessment data to drive improvement in student learning or planning/budget decisions at the institution, department, program, and course levels. You have a lot going on, but if you aren't paying close attention to how you use the data, I'd encourage you to incorporate that sooner rather than later. When I talk to faculty about their assessment data, I always ask them to identify factors they think contributed to the results they saw, then think about ways they might improve student learning in future cycles. In the next cycle, I ask them to do a brief update on those action plans from last year: Did they do what they planned to do? What results, if any, did they observe? Of course, some initiatives take more than a single cycle to bear fruit, but we ask them to track those as well. If you have mechanisms in place for this, great. If not, and it would help to chat, just let me know.

Susan Hatfield

Is TaskStream being set up with your specific assessment questions in mind? You want to be sure that you are not just collecting data because TaskStream allows you to collect it.

Is there a mechanism to be able to formatively assess the progress mid-cycle for programs in Business Administration, Computer Services, General Education, and Nursing? Be careful to not put staying on schedule ahead of good practice. Encourage a critical perspective at each phase of the process and the option to slow down to rethink or revise if necessary. You don't want data from a process you realized was problematic.

Who is responsible for General Education assessment?

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

Wanda Baler

You are doing amazing work -- keep it up.

I think we've talked about this before, but I'll say it again. You have so many things going on at once - the big things going on in NM have been a challenge for everyone out there. On top of that, you've had significant personnel changes recently. You're tackling your assessment work on multiple fronts at once. I just encourage you to watch for fatigue and burnout with your core personnel; I can tell they're starting to be stretched rather thinly. Is it time to start developing more assessment expertise to share the load?

Going back to my comment about using results to improve student learning ... if that needs some attention, I'd encourage you to start incorporating that. It is a critical part of how faculty need to think about assessment, and sometimes it takes a cycle or so of mastering the mechanics before this begins to click for them.

If you aren't doing so, I'd encourage you to have processes for using assessment results for budget and planning decisions at all levels. If you need some suggestions about how to do that, just let me know. Edward implemented a good approach for that at SIPI, which has evolved in recent years. I have implemented a variation of our SIPI methods at a school I'm helping. I can offer you some options to consider if you need ideas.

Susan Hatfield

Again, and as usual, I agree with Wanda. While getting information into the database is an accomplishment -- the real trick is getting the data back out in a way that makes sense. Be sure to know what data you are entering into the database and why -- Think: Why THIS data on THIS outcome from THIS student. What question are you trying to answer? A lot of time databases are more problematic than helpful because much of the data in there is "noise" (not useful to answering your assessment question).

In addition, your observation that how students are being assessed is not necessarily measuring learning is really, really important. I often see this in multiple guess exams provided by text book companies -- the goal of many of the questions seems to be to see who read the chapter and who memorized definitions -- as opposed to actually measuring how well students understand and perhaps can even apply concepts and ideas. Getting faculty together to share ideas on they measure what their students have actually learned might be motivating to faculty who are reticent to embrace assessment.

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

Neither Susan or Wanda have any suggestions at this time except to keep up the good work!

Reviewed by **Wanda Baker** (Primary Mentor)

Reviewed by **Susan Hatfield** (Scholar)