

# QUICK GUIDE- to assessment of student learning

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## What is assessment?

Assessment of student learning shows the extent students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with your course objectives, program goals, and/or the College mission. As you will see, you will focus on one or two of these. The purpose of assessment is to ensure students who successfully complete your class or graduate from your program(s) have the knowledge and skills appropriate for higher education.

Assessment is finding out what your students KNOW and CAN DO...and what they DON'T KNOW and CAN'T DO. It's about the student's level of proficiency. Assessment is not about evaluating faculty or staff.

## Why am I asked to do assessment?

You really are being asked to report what you are probably already doing. The bottom line is you are asked to do assessment to determine if students are learning. You are asked to follow-up on the assessment to see if, and how, you can improve on that learning.

## How do I assess?

There are a couple of easy steps to assessment explained below. First, some definitions are given to help.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Assessment**- method of finding out if student work is acceptable!

**Direct Methods of Assessment**- methods of assessment that require students to demonstrate their learning (some ex. essays, exams, certification and licensure exams, quizzes, presentations, on-&-on).

**Learning Objectives**- statements of what students are expected to know or do. Also included in the learning objective is the level of proficiency- the level that makes student work acceptable.

**Results**- the information collected from your students during the assessment aggregated to make meaningful decisions about student learning.

**"Closing the Loop"**- documenting if changes made from astute examination of assessment results improved what students know or can do.

### SIX STEPS

- 1.) **Articulate learning objectives**-Determine what you want your students to know or do. Usually that is 4-5 learning statements for a class or program
- 2.) **Plan**-
  - a) Identify WHAT your students are going to do by identifying the assignment(s) or class activity that aligns with at least one learning objective.
  - b) Determine WHO: the students that will receive the assessment (some ex. your entire class, all sophomores, capstone participants)
  - c) Decide on the **method** and how you will capture the level of PROFICIENCY in that assignment or class activity (some ex. rubric, checklist, observation, not blowing-up the lab!)
  - d) Determine WHEN you will conduct this assessment and how frequently.
  - e) Figure out WHAT **data** will be collected.
- 3.) **Conduct the assessment**-It's that easy if you **P-L-A-N-N-E-D**.
- 4.) **Collect the data & compile the results**- Almost home...Collect the data, aggregate it appropriately, and report the results
- 5.) **Use of Results**- What do the results mean? Are your students learning? Do they know or are able? Do they possess that targeted competency? Is their level of proficiency acceptable? If it is, congratulations. If it's not, what are you going to do differently? What will you have your students do differently?
- 6.) **Close that loop**- Now that you are an expert, you look to see if the changes made to what you do or your students do or both to see if learning (what students know and/or do) has improved.

## Resources

Siena Assessment Website: <https://community.siena.edu/academic-affairs/offices/institutional-effectiveness/assessment1/>

Student Learning Assessment Committee (SLAC): <https://community.siena.edu/academic-affairs/offices/institutional-effectiveness/assessment1/student-learning-assessment-committee/>

Assessment Report Examples: [SoB](#), [SoLA](#), [SoS](#)

Office of Institutional Effectiveness: [assessment@siena.edu](mailto:assessment@siena.edu)