

**THE DIVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT**

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**Electronic Tools May Help with the Assessment Process**

Some institutions are turning to electronic tools to help them with their assessment endeavors. To introduce you to some of those tools, I have described those of which I am aware. Please note that descriptions of these tools have been taken directly from the instruments' websites.

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**TracDat**

TracDat is the brainchild of a faculty member who himself was assigned assessment responsibilities. After reviewing the history of academic assessment at his institution he realized that a software solution was needed to simplify and streamline the process. The concept was brought to and jointly developed with the GCS Group. TracDat was introduced in the spring of 1999.

The primary purpose of assessment activity in education is program improvement. Assessment programs often fail to fulfill their purpose due to the absence of an efficient, economical method of managing the process.

For an assessment program to be effective, all phases of the process must be addressed. These include Planning, Data Storage Data Analysis, Data Utilization and Follow-up. TracDat software was designed with each of these steps in mind.

NuVentive believes that using this software can make continuous assessment easier to manage. It

- provides departments with a template for addressing the entire assessment cycle,
- allows users to access data using appropriate security privileges,
- establishes a consistent methodology for satisfying institutional assessment requirements,

- saves valuable staff and faculty time,
- provides quick and easy reporting,
- allows users to implement changes quickly,
- provides an efficient, economical method of managing the process,
- achieves institutional uniformity without sacrificing departmental autonomy, and
- allows for administrative control of data at both department and institution levels.

For more information about TracDat, owned by NuVentive, see

<http://innervateinc.com/TracDat.htm>

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### EnableOA™

EnableOA™ advertises that they assist institutions in managing the curriculum for each of its programs through two major reporting tools: 1) The Program Criteria Matrix, and 2) Drill-Down of Instructor Intended Outcomes.

Using the Program Criteria Matrix, curriculum committee members, administrators, program and department heads, and others who are responsible for the various programs' curriculum may see a listing of any program's outcomes and the percentage of students that should be receiving instruction to attain those specific outcomes. By drilling down into a specific course or specific outcome, they can then see the all of the course sections that intend to emphasize an outcome, and read about the methods that instructors are using to help students attain that outcome.

In a similar manner, the On-Line Charts for Instructor Intended Outcomes give a quick high level visual representation of a program's coverage of its objectives. One can quickly see, across the entire institution, if there are any educational gaps where expected outcomes are not being emphasized strongly enough. One can then drill down into that chart, through the applicable course sections, and down into section's syllabus to see how the desired student outcomes are planned to be attained.

Utilizing the information from these reports, those responsible for assuring that the curriculum provides students with the proper experiences can then work to find ways to plug the gaps, while allowing instructors the academic freedom to impart their knowledge of the subject as they see fit.

For more information about EnableOA, owned by Enable Technologies, see

<http://www.enableoa.com/home.html>

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## Institutionally Designed Electronic Assessment Tools

Some institutions have designed their own electronic assessment management tools. These tools vary in their purpose. URLs for specific examples are provided below.

George Mason University - <http://assessment.gmu.edu/AcadProgEval/index.shtml>

Montana State University - <http://www.montana.edu/aircj/assess/majors/majors9899/>

St. Louis Community College - <http://www.stlcc.cc.mo.us/assessment/>

Northern Michigan University - <http://www.nmu.edu/soa/depart.html>

North Carolina State University Undergraduate Affairs -  
[http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad\\_affairs/assessment/files/projects.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/files/projects.htm)

The universities who developed institutional portfolios out of the Pew Charitable Trust funded Electronic Portfolio Project include

Cal State - Sacramento - <http://www.csus.edu/portfolio/>

Georgia State - <http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwupp/portfolio/>

UMAS-Boston - [http://www.umb.edu/about\\_umb/pew/about/index.html](http://www.umb.edu/about_umb/pew/about/index.html)

Portland State - <http://www.portfolio.pdx.edu/>

University of Illinois - Chicago - <http://www.uic.edu/portfolio/>

IUPUI Student Portfolio - <http://www.imir.iupui.edu/iupuifolio/>

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