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## Assessing the Self: The Cornerstone of Life-long Learning and Institutional Assessment

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## Session Objectives

- Define what is meant by self-assessment
- Discuss the need for self-assessment before other kinds of assessment can take place
- Determine the parameters for self-assessment activities
- Review step-by-step instructions on how to teach students self-assessment, including identifying learning goals
- Understand the analysis of assessment outcomes and how to feed those back into the institutional and self-assessment process
- Understand the role of self-assessment as a mechanism for the collaborative teaching-learning partnership with faculty, and as a mechanism to help sustain life-long learning.

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## A Checklist for Assessment

- ✓ What are you assessing and why?
- ✓ Ask probing, evaluative questions--ones that reflect your purpose
- ✓ Specify the information you need to collect
- ✓ Decide on criteria for standards
- ✓ Are there any unintended negative consequences of your mode of evaluation?
- ✓ Review your evaluation overall. Is it coherent, logical, realistic and practical?

- Adapted from the work of Drs. Richard Paul and Linda Elder, at the Foundation for Critical Thinking

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## The Wisdom of Mary J. Allen

- Assessment should be:
  - *meaningful*
  - *manageable*
  - *sustainable*

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## The Assessment Triangle

Observation Interpretation

Cognition

*Developed by Mark Wilson and Kathleen Scalise @ UC Berkeley*

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## Types of Assessment

- Individual level
- Classroom level
- Department level
- Program level
- Degree level
- School level
- University (or college) wide

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## Definition of Self-Assessment

**Self-assessment is a process by which you learn more about yourself. It should encourage further learning and empowerment.**

It can include:

- Values inventories
- Career assessment activities
- Performance indicators related to professions
- Questionnaires
- Rubrics

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## Benefits of Self-Assessment

**“Self assessment makes the student privately but directly confront personal attitudes, paradigms, and biases that may unconsciously present a barrier to learning.”--T.A. Angelo and K.P. Cross in *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (Jossey-Bass, 1993)**

**“Self assessment...(can tell you) how you tend to react to certain situations.”--The Riley Group**

**“The best part of assessment [of any kind] is learning what you don’t know.”--Susan Cash, Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs, California State University, Los Angeles**

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## Challenges of Assessing the Self

- Some people do not want to analyze themselves
- Criticism is not always constructive
- Analysis/assessment is not always accurate
- Sometimes it is easier to focus on weaknesses and ignore strengths.

**“Don’t overlook your strengths as you deal with your weaknesses.”**

Jon Jacobson  
Assistant Professor of Mathematics  
Harvey Mudd College

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## Successful Self-Assessment

Three key elements are necessary:

- Goal setting
- Guided practice with assessment tools
- Portfolios (but not necessarily the traditional kind)

Information adapted from The National Capital Language Resource Center

**Also:**

**Make connections between what was done and why it matters. Note challenges faced and what you are doing about them.**

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## Getting Students To Accept Self-Assessment

- Teach students to personalize goals, and to establish their own goals in each class and for each project/assignment
- Make them realize they are already doing assessment
- Use “friendlier” words
- Explain *you* are not assessing *them*
- Do self-assessment with them, by showing them you are not afraid to assess yourself

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## Analysis of Assessment Outcomes

In order for assessment to be effective its predetermined outcomes must be reached. The following are questions to get students thinking about their assessment process:

- What did you hope to learn from the assessment activities?
- How did you separate the work from your judgment about that work?
- What did you learn during your self-assessment?
- What did you learn that is transferable to other areas?
- How can you consciously improve on how you learn?

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**Self-Assessment as a Building Block to Life-Long Learning**

Teaching students to accurately self-assess determines if they will accurately assess themselves in their future careers and in their personal lives. Learning proper self-assessment techniques help students require reflective thinking habits that will teach them how to improve their work over time.

Self assessment also should be a building block of formal assessment.

NPR's All Things Considered report  
 "Americans Flunk Self Assessment"  
 October 6, 2007

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**Self Assessment Sample Questions**


*Taken from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville  
 (www.siu.edu/~deder/assess/cats/self5.html)*

**Sample Form: Self Assessment**  
 Consider the following two statements:

**A.** "I don't take ideas for granted; I am a thinker. My opinions are pretty well thought out, are based on objective experience, and have solid reasons supporting them. When somebody else offers an opinion, I like to play the devil's advocate and, for the purpose of uncovering and testing my thoughts, I often take the opposite position. I am sincerely willing to open my ideas to others for scrutiny and critique. Naturally, I often see flaws and weak points in opposing views because I have considered them previously. I enjoy a good argument and often learn a great deal from thinking about and responding to the tough critique of a worthy opponent."

**B.** "When I hear people voice opinions very different from my own, I seek first to


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**SIUE Self Assessment Cont'd**

Self-Assessment Questions:

1. Which of the two statements above, A or B, more closely describes the person you really are inside?
2. Which type of communicating, A or B, do you actually do more in your "professional" (business, classroom, conferences, lab/studio/office) life? Why?
3. Which kind of individual would you rather talk with in a purely social situation: A or B? Why?


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**Self Assessment for Portfolios**

**Taken from North Central Regional Educational Laboratory  
 (www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lrspport.htm)**

1. Arrange all your works of writing from most to least effective.
2. Reflect on your two best works, and on a separate sheet(s) of paper for each work, answering the following questions:  
**What makes this your best (second best) work? How did you go about writing it? What problems did you encounter? How did you solve them? What goals did you set for yourself? How did you go about accomplishing them?**
3. Place this evaluation of your process and product in front of each final draft when complete.
4. Answer these on a single sheet(s) of paper at the front of your portfolio: **What makes your most effective work different from your least effective work? What are your goals for future writing?**


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 **One last thought...**

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**Until we self-assess we may not know what we know. When we have students self-assess we may realize things they know that we didn't know they knew (invisible learning), and that in turn may make our assessments of them more accurate. And this assessment can be the cornerstone for any departmental or institutional assessment we do.**

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 **Further Resources**

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**Books & Papers available:**

- <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/Research/RubricSelf.htm>  
Rubrics and Self Assessment Project at Harvard
- Tan, Kelvin H.K. "Does Student Self-Assessment Empower or Discipline Students?" *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*. V. 29, n. 6., p. 651-662. Dec. 2004.
- Tan, Kelvin H.K. "Qualitatively Different Ways of Experiencing Student Self-Assessment." *Higher Education Research and Development*. V.27, n. 1, p. 15-29. Mar. 2008.


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 **Even More Resources**

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- Notes for a writing self-assessment, from Writing Place at Northwestern University  
[www.writing.northwestern.edu/self\\_assessment.html](http://www.writing.northwestern.edu/self_assessment.html)
- The University of Arizona Learning Style Self-Assessment  
[www.ulc.arizona.edu/learning\\_style.php](http://www.ulc.arizona.edu/learning_style.php)
- Self-assessment forms and questions for lecture courses and student involvement  
[trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching\\_Concerns/Misc\\_Tips/Self-Assessment\\_Form.htm](http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching_Concerns/Misc_Tips/Self-Assessment_Form.htm)
- Organizational Self-Assessment Tool (in handout packet)  
[www.arts.state.tx.us/toolkit/nonprofit/templates/organizationalassess.pdf](http://www.arts.state.tx.us/toolkit/nonprofit/templates/organizationalassess.pdf)

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 **Wrap Up**

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- **Questions?**
- **Effective Practice Sharing**

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