

Northern Essex Community College
Annual Report from the Assessment of Student Learning Committee
Academic Year 2018 - 2019

The Assessment of Student Learning Committee, comprised of faculty and administrators from across the college, oversees the policies, methods, and procedures in all levels of assessment at the college. The committee is pleased to report several accomplishments this year.

Multi-State Collaborative

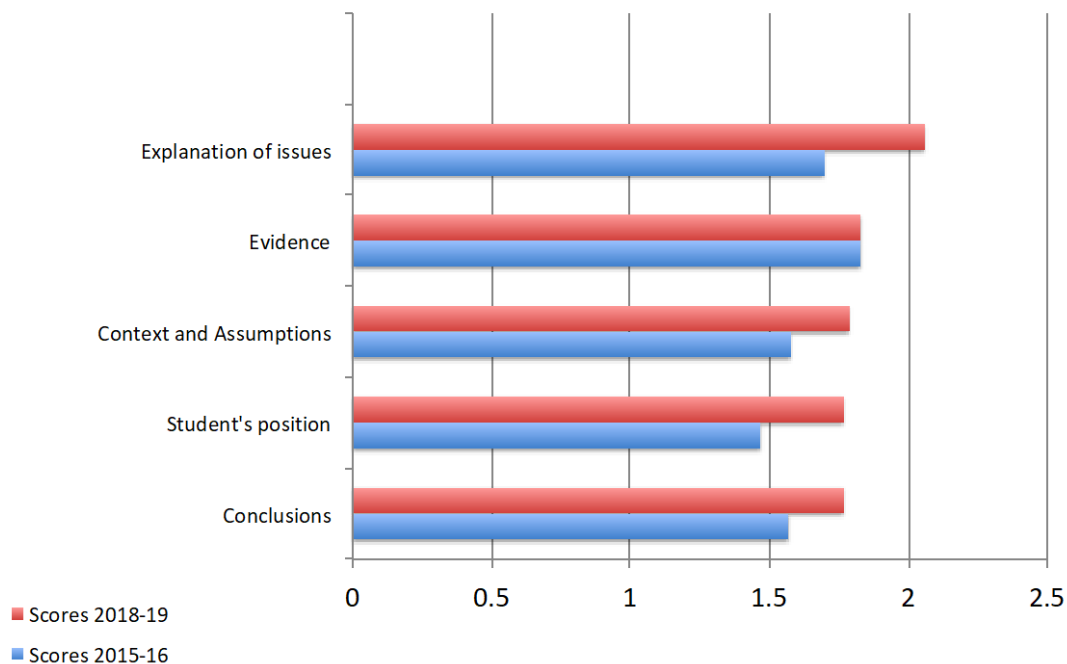
The Multi-state Collaborative facilitated by the VALUE Institute commenced a new project in the Fall of 2018, collecting only Critical Thinking artifacts from participating institutions for two consecutive years. Members of the MSC group elected to narrow the project's focus to just one skill, rather than trying to collect and study results from several outcomes, as in previous years. The target number of artifacts was 100 from each institution for each year. Eligible students are those who had completed at least 45 credits prior to the collection of artifacts. NECC met the goal and submitted our student artifacts for evaluation by raters from other institutions within the collaborative.

For Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 combined:

- 412 instructors were identified as having eligible students in their classes
- 35 instructors (8.5%) agreed to participate, representing 357 eligible students/products for the CT outcome
- 19 instructors (4.6% of the original number contacted) actually participated in the process

NECC forwarded the targeted 100 products to the MSC. About 20% more than that number were collected, but certain parameters, such as a maximum of 10 artifacts per faculty member and/or only one artifact per eligible student, disallowed some submissions. From the final collection of eligible artifacts, five were randomly removed in order to hone the pool down to 100. While we have provided raters for the MSC project in the past, participating institutions were not required to provide raters this time, and NECC did not do so.

Preliminary results received from the VALUE institute in Fall 2019 show a marked improvement in our students' Critical Thinking scores on the 4-point VALUE rubric:



The results received from the VALUE Institute were comprehensive; the committee will perform analysis on the additional data during AY2019-20.

Institutional Assessment

In the spring of 2018, the committee members agreed that AY2018-19 should enable a break from conducting institutional assessment and instead focus on helping faculty close the feedback loop. Following the recommendations of raters for our QR institutional assessment in the previous year, the committee supported two workshops to address the identified disparity between QR assignments and the QR VALUE rubric used to evaluate them. All faculty who teach QR intensive courses were invited to participate in training around assignment design, and departments where QR intensive courses are prominent were also invited.

Program Assessment

One committee member created a Blackboard portal to catalogue and store the various elements of program assessment data. The portal contains a folder for each program at the college to use and store assessment materials. Blank E-series forms, curriculum maps, and other planning materials were uploaded at the portal, along with some completed forms which can serve as examples. While eventually it would be most useful for everyone to be using TK20 for all aspects of assessment, right now the Blackboard portal represents a great resource for assessment since faculty are comfortable and familiar with using it.

Assessment Day 2018

The Assessment of Student Learning Committee facilitates college-wide participation in assessment by playing an integral role in Assessment Day. This year

Assessment Day was held on Friday, October 26th. Based on comments from our previous Assessment Day Evaluation Survey, the committee elected to forego scheduling a speaker or pre-set program, and instead provide time and space (along with stipends for PT faculty) so that departmental or program faculty could work together on their widely varied assessment goals. One supplemental workshop focused on assignment design for Quantitative Reasoning was offered for interested faculty.

Once again our follow-up survey indicated that faculty overwhelmingly felt the program and discussion provided by Assessment Day were valuable. Over 95% of those responding to the survey indicated that they believed their discussions were useful and advanced their work on assessment. Full survey results available upon request.

Assessment and NECHE

Standard 8 of our upcoming NECHE review focuses on assessment, and five members of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee served on the Standard 8 subcommittee. In that capacity, our members conducted SOAR forums to solicit feedback about the types of data needed by departments and programs, about the broader themes faculty would like to see pursued around assessment, and about recommendations regarding the future of assessment. In addition, the committee members reached out for information about how departments and programs use assessment data to “close the loop” and improve student learning (i.e., changes made to teaching methods, assignments, curriculum, etc.)

Looking Ahead

The committee chose Global Awareness as the Core Academic Skill for institutional assessment in AY19-20. This skill has not been assessed since 2011. An announcement was made at Professional Day in March so that faculty could begin thinking about creating or modifying existing assignments so that they will align with our Global Awareness rubric.

In an effort to increase our sample size, the committee made the significant decision to decrease the number of acquired credits for student participation in institutional assessment. Thus, in AY19-20, artifacts collected from students who have completed at least 36 credits (previously 45) prior to the beginning of the collection semester will be considered eligible.

Summary

- **NECC participated and achieved target collections goals for Critical Thinking assessment conducted by the VALUE Institute. Early returns received in FA19nshow a notable improvement in our students Critical Thinking scores**
- **Institutional Assessment skipped a year to focus on closing the loop in the previous year's QR assessment**
- **Program assessment was greatly improved by the creation of a Blackboard portal for compiling assessment data and materials**
- **Assessment Day was seen as valuable work time by an overwhelming majority of faculty responders**
- **Global Awareness will be assessed in AY19-20 with eligible students being re-defined as those having completed at least 36 credits instead of 45 credits**