

## Guidance for Subject Area Committees

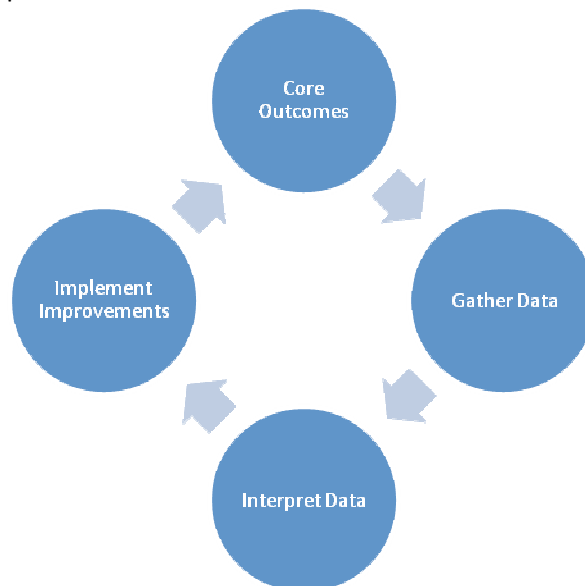
- Each SAC is asked to engage in *at least* one learning assessment activity per year, ideally focused on the core outcome chosen by PCC's Learning Assessment Council. This year's choice is:

***Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:*** *Identify and investigate problems, evaluate information and its sources, and use appropriate methods of reasoning to develop creative and practical solutions to personal, professional and community issues.*

- At the end of the school year a committee of interested persons will take a comprehensive look at everything that has been submitted throughout the school and make recommendations for changes or improvements based on the results.

### Guidelines:

- Please look at the program review guidelines for "Assessment of Core Outcomes" as you plan your projects. In that way you can take what you do each year and plug it in to your program/discipline review in the future.
- Please utilize everything you can that you are already doing! Be efficient! And feel free to be creative and use other methods as well.
- Ideally, core outcomes **assessments will reach beyond one classroom – we are trying to go for the big picture.** While it is fine to use class work to demonstrate student learning, it would be wonderful to design an assessment that involves more than one instructor's class or students, unless the program is so small that is not possible.
- ***Note: in all cases you should have students sign a permission slip, and their names should not be attached to the work you are examining. See approved form below.***
- Think about assessment as an expression of our culture of inquiry. In our attempt to meet our obligation to gather and interpret data on the core outcomes, it is important to not lose sight of the real purpose behind assessment: which is to improve education through intelligently implemented improvements in what we do.



- We hope for a **mixture of both direct and indirect assessment**.
  - Possible methods of **Direct Assessment** (see further below for some specific examples):
    - Devising a rubric describing various levels of learning achievement, looking at:
      - Essays
      - Performances or Products
      - Portfolios collecting student work
      - Other creative ideas
    - Exams that address one of the core outcomes to one degree or another
  - Possible Methods of **Indirect Assessment** (see further below for some specific examples):
    - Interviewing students about their experience
    - Follow up surveys or interviews with graduates from your programs or disciplines
    - Statistics garnered from a transfer university
    - Statistics on successful employment of students after training
    - Surveys of graduating students
    - Surveys of alumni
- Place your plan of action on the website [not yet functional – TBA]. After the assessment project is accomplished, add:
  - The method you used
  - What you learned
  - Changes you made – or recommendations for change
- The following year, you will follow up on the results of the changes you made.

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**Specific examples of possible ways to go about things:**

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- Find a rubric on critical thinking or problem solving (there are many examples on the website) that works for your discipline, or create your own. After the course grading has been completed, look at all (or a sample of) the exams from all the different classes, applying the rubric. Reflect on what is going well and what could use improvement. Make recommendations or changes based on the results.
- Choose a course that students tend to take winter or spring term. Devise a pre-post test for the class focusing on the core outcome and have all instructors teaching the course do the same thing. Choose a sampling of these exams from each class and collate the results. Reflect on what is going well and what could use improvement. Make recommendations or changes based on the results.

- Include core outcome questions to students on any survey, which might include instructor evaluations, or a survey in its own right. Collect the results, reflect on them, and make recommendations or changes based on the results.
  - Use any exams that are already required for certification and which may indicate some level of critical thinking or problem solving. Collect the results, reflect on them, and make recommendations or changes based on the results.
  - If you are already contacting students after they graduate, or collecting information from employers, include a question on critical thinking or problem solving. Collect the results, reflect on them, and make recommendations based on the results.
  - Many more to come. If you would like to share what your discipline or program is doing, please contact Sylvia Gray ([sgray@pcc.edu](mailto:sgray@pcc.edu)) with your ideas.
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**Approved Permission slip:**

I give permission for PCC to use my schoolwork for learning assessment purposes. I understand that my name will not be attached and that PCC will do everything possible to protect my privacy. This will not affect my grades in any way.

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Print Name

Signature

Date