

# Assessment Tips

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Do you have an assessment "Tip" you would like to share with others?

→ If so, please send it to the office of Assessment and Program Review, 226 Anderson Hall, c/o Patricia Marsh.



Email questions and additional suggestions to [pmarsh@k-state.edu](mailto:pmarsh@k-state.edu)

## What is Program Assessment?



### Program Assessment "IS" About:

- ◆ A formalization of what we do all the time
- ◆ Improvement in academic programs
- ◆ The overall level of students learning in an academic program
- ◆ An ongoing process
- ◆ *Using* assessment
- ◆ Student learning

### Program Assessment is:

- ◆ NOT about external reviews of academic programs
- ◆ NOT about individual student assessment
- ◆ NOT about a one-shot event
- ◆ NOT about *doing* assessment
- ◆ NOT about a new thing
- ◆ NOT solely about student learning

Source for the information presented above: Cecilia Lopez, NCA Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Opportunities for Improvement: Advice from Consultant-Evaluators of Programs to Assess Student Learning, March, 1996.

## How Do I DIRECTLY Assess Student Learning?

*Here are just a few examples:*

- ✓ Locally developed tests
- ✓ Essays
- ✓ Blind-scored projects
- ✓ Professional exams
- ✓ Capstone experience or course
- ✓ Juried review of projects, exhibitions, and performances
- ✓ Portfolio assessment
- ✓ Certification & placement exams
- ✓ Standardized tests

# Can I Still Use Self-Report Measures to Assess Students' Learning?

**YES!** Self-report measures are considered **INDIRECT** methods of assessing students' learning.

- Some indirect techniques can provide useful information for making improvements to courses and curriculum. However, they should NOT be the sole means of assessing learning. **DIRECT** measures are also needed for a well-balanced assessment plan.

Here are a few examples of **Indirect Measures of Students' Learning**:



- ✓ Exit interviews of graduates and focus groups
- ✓ Alumni, employer, and student surveys
- ✓ Interviews of instructors, program coordinators, residence hall leaders, and others who have direct contact with students
- ✓ Graduate follow-up studies
- ✓ Length of time to degree and retention rates for cohort group of majors
- ✓ Graduation and transfer rates
- ✓ SAT / ACT scores
- ✓ Job placement data
- ✓ Satisfaction surveys
- ✓ Self-report measures assessing students' perceptions of what they've learned
- ✓ Observing and recording students' behaviors

Sources: (1) Parkland College Academic Assessment Program (<http://www.virtual.parkland.edu/aac/facres/lopez/indirect.htm>) and (2) Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice's List of Indirect Measures (<http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/indirect2.htm>).

## Recommendations from North Central Association (NCA):

**Faculty Ownership of Assessment**—There should be faculty ownership for assessment in academic programs consistently across campus. They must be extended to graduate programs as well.

**Knowledge and Awareness of Assessment**—University settings need to have a coherent, widespread understanding that the purpose of assessment is the continuous improvement of student learning both within the degree program and within general education.

Source: NCA Site Visit Report (<http://www.k-state.edu/provost/academic/nca/index.htm>).

*These TIPS were brought to you by the office of Assessment and Program Review (APR)*