

Assessment of Lifelong Learning
Institutional Student Learning Outcome #5
Report to the Campus
2010-11

Prepared
By
The Executive Committee of the Assessment Commission

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Executive Summary

During the 2010-11 academic year, the OIT Assessment Commission conducted an assessment of lifelong learning. The assessment was based on five performance criteria:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss the concept of lifelong learning.
2. Demonstrate awareness of appropriate professional societies and organizations and discuss their relationship to career development.
3. Identify and discuss desired credentials.
4. Identify and discuss avenues for continuing education.
5. Describe short- and long-term career plans.

OIT does not currently have a general education requirement in lifelong learning, and this topic is normally covered within the major. Thus, assessment activities focused on student work at the program level. Concerted efforts were made, however, to ensure that similar procedures and materials were used across the institution. Each of the programs that participated in this institutional assessment has also used the data for programmatic assessment and thus will work with any specific weaknesses at the program level.

The assessment of lifelong learning was based on a rubric-scored career development and lifelong learning homework assignment in an upper division course in the major. Faculty gave students a writing assignment that had been developed by the Assessment Commission and vetted broadly across the institution. The customized assignment was designed to help students think about their career goals after graduation, their long-term career plans, and the concept of lifelong learning.

The Executive Committee found the results for all programs to be acceptable overall (Table 1). As expected, the results by clustered major showed a wide range of variance in the professionally related criteria due to the fact that many programs do not have specific credentialing bodies or professional societies. The committee recommends revising the assignment in more general terms to better fit all programs. To close the loop, a pilot will be run in 2011-12.

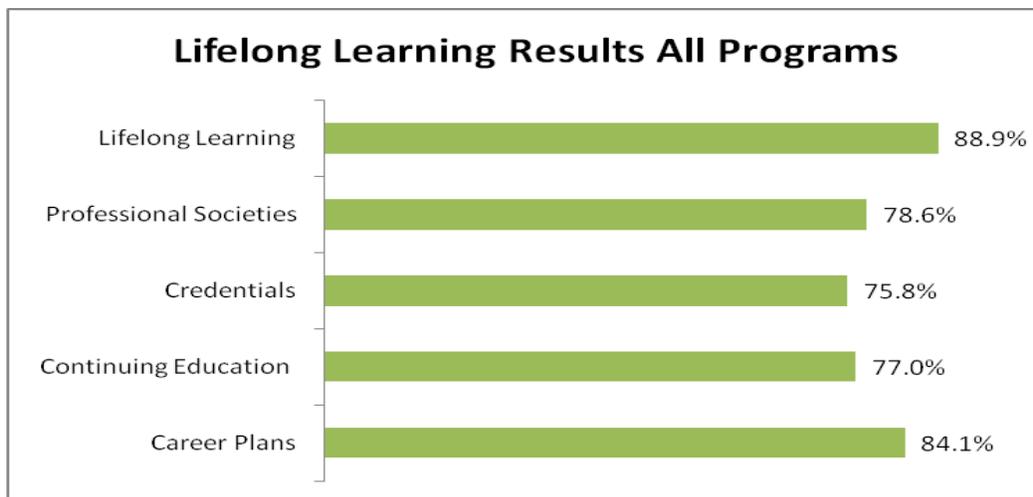


Table 1. Percentage of students proficient, all programs

Definition and performance criteria for lifelong learning

The Executive Committee of the Assessment Commission approved the following expectations and performance criteria for lifelong learning:

ISLO 5: OIT students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of career development and lifelong learning.

The body of knowledge within professions continues to grow. Success will depend on being able to continue to learn and grow.

Expectation: Graduates should be able to continue developing in their professional lives. This expectation may be met by establishing a good understanding of career development and the concept of lifelong learning.

Criteria for Assessment: Students will be able to

1. Identify and discuss the concept of lifelong learning.
2. Demonstrate awareness of appropriate professional societies and organizations and discuss their relationship to career development.
3. Identify and discuss desired credentials.
4. Identify and discuss avenues for continuing education.
5. Describe short- and long-term career plans.

Focus of assessments

The assessment focused on evaluation of student learning at the program level, as OIT does not currently have a general education requirement directly related to lifelong learning.

Description of assessment

In an upper division course in the major, faculty gave students a homework assignment on career development and lifelong learning (Appendix A) that had been developed by the Assessment Commission and vetted broadly across the institution. The assignment required students to reflect on their career goals after graduation, long-term career plans, and the concept of lifelong learning. In addition, students were asked to identify professional organizations specific to their field, and desired credentials and continuing education.

A lifelong learning rubric (Appendix B) was also provided to both students and faculty along with the assignment. This rubric was developed by the Executive Committee of the Assessment Commission. The Assessment Commission provided faculty training on the administration of the common homework assignment and rubric.

Data scoring

To encourage motivation to perform well on the lifelong learning assignment, the student work was graded and counted in the overall course grade. In addition to grading the assignments, each instructor scored the student assignments for assessment purposes, using the lifelong learning rubric and a score sheet provided by the Assessment Commission. The instructors used a proficiency scale from “1” (limited or no proficiency) to “4” (high proficiency) for each of the performance criteria on the rubric.

Data collection

Data collection occurred during the fall 2010 term, with a broad sample of OIT programs participating in the assessment. The aggregated data for all courses were then submitted to the Director of Institutional Research for analysis.

Data elements

The data elements collected in the lifelong learning assessment process included:

- Student ID
- Student Last and First Name
- Student scores for each of the performance criteria

In addition, the Director of Institutional Research linked the above data elements to the student’s major.

Assessment results

The Executive Committee of the Assessment Commission, library faculty and the director of career services reviewed the overall results of this assessment.

Overall results for all programs

As described above, faculty scored the student assignments, using the lifelong learning rubric. A broad sample of OIT programs was included in the assessment. Results for students demonstrating proficiency or high proficiency for all courses combined are shown in Table 2. There were 270 students involved in this assessment.

Performance Criteria	% Proficient	% Highly Proficient	Total % Proficient or Higher
Identifies and discusses the concept of lifelong learning	55.2%	33.7%	88.9%
Aware of appropriate professional societies and organizations	46.0%	32.6%	78.6%
Identifies and discusses desired credentials	47.2%	28.6%	75.8%
Identifies and discusses avenues for continuing education	48.9%	28.1%	77.0%
Describes short- and long-term career plans	48.9%	35.2%	84.1%

Table 2. Percentage of students proficient or highly proficient, all programs

The Executive Committee found these results to be generally acceptable overall. As expected, most students were able to identify and discuss the concept of lifelong learning as well as describe short- and long-term career plans. These two criteria apply to all students at OIT while the other three criteria were a better fit for OIT's health and engineering programs. Lower levels of proficiency in the professionally related criteria were attributed to programs with less specific career paths. The committee did not identify any specific weaknesses that require further action at the institutional level.

Results by major

Because of small sample sizes in many programs, students were clustered in four major categories for this analysis, including arts and sciences, engineering, health, and management. The percentage of students performing at proficiency or high proficiency by major is shown in Table 3.

Performance Criteria	Arts & Sciences n=47	Engineering n=82	Health n=112	Management n=29
Identifies and discusses the concept of lifelong learning	87.2%	84.1%	94.6%	82.8%
Aware of appropriate professional societies and organizations	59.6%	78.0%	92.9%	55.2%
Identifies and discusses desired credentials	74.5%	72.0%	84.7%	55.2%
Identifies and discusses avenues for continuing education	72.3%	74.4%	88.4%	48.3%
Describes short- and long-term career plans	83.0%	70.7%	96.4%	75.9%

Table 3. Proficiency by major (percentage at proficiency or high proficiency)

In reviewing the data by major, the Executive Committee noted health programs scored the highest in all five criteria. These programs have specific professional organizations, registry exams and continuing education requirements. This is also true of some engineering programs, while most management, and arts and sciences programs do not have specific professional organizations or singular career paths.

As expected, the results by clustered major showed a wide range of variance in the professionally related criteria. The lower proficiency in management may be due in part to the lack of specific professional criteria for these programs. The structure of the assignment made it difficult for management students to fulfill each performance criteria. In addition, the management faculty reported that the lifelong learning assignment was rated by a group of faculty with at least two faculty members reading each paper. All other programs had just one faculty member rate the assignment.

The committee felt that the lower proficiency in the professionally related criteria by management, and arts and sciences students were mostly due to the lack of specific professional

criteria for many of these programs. The committee did not perceive this as a weakness and felt that the results by major were also generally acceptable overall. However, the committee felt that the assignment may have been too specific for an institutional level assessment.

As noted above, OIT does not currently have a general education requirement in lifelong learning, and this topic is normally covered within the major. Each of the programs that participated in this institutional assessment has also used the data for programmatic assessment and thus will work with any specific weaknesses at the program level.

Recommendations

The Executive Committee of the Assessment Commission made the following recommendations to improve the ISLO assessment in the future:

- Redesign the assignment with general prompts that better fit all programs. Pilot with selected programs in 2011-12.
- For the next assessment of the Lifelong Learning ISLO, include a faculty reflection to provide further insight into the assessment results and the process.
- Redesign the rubric to better fit programs without specific professional requirements or allow for N/A on these performance criteria.

Assessment Reporting

The Director of Assessment, along with the Executive Committee of the Assessment Commission, will report the results of this assessment to the campus by email to the faculty list serve, by posting the final report on the assessment web site, and by a convocation presentation to the faculty.

Documentation

The Assessment Office will retain the final report and documentation of this assessment indefinitely.

Appendix A

Career Planning and Lifelong Learning Assignment

An OIT graduate should be able to continue to develop as a learner and thinker in his or her professional life. This assignment is designed to help you think about your career goals after graduation, your long-term career plans, and the concept of lifelong learning.

For this assignment, please prepare a paper of approximately 1000 words (four full pages), using a double-spaced format. Your paper should address the four broad areas described below. The bulleted items are suggested topics to help you develop your ideas, but you may add your own ideas as well. *Your paper should be written to form a satisfying whole on the subject of your future career and lifelong learning in your profession, rather than as a series of separate answers to the required areas.* In addition to content (topics below), your paper will also be assessed on purpose, organization, support, style, conventions, and use/citation of outside sources. The attached rubrics (2) will be used to evaluate your paper. Please submit two copies of your paper.

Broad topics to be included in your paper:

1. Lifelong learning
 - Define and discuss the concept of “lifelong learning” and the need for it.
 - As you progress through your career, in what ways do you believe that your learning will continue? How will you make this happen?
 - How will you know learning has occurred, or whether more learning is needed?
 - Evaluate your current ability to learn independently in your field. Give an example.
2. Professional societies and organizations
 - What professional societies or organizations are available in your field or your community and what are the requirements for membership?
 - What are the advantages of joining or disadvantages of not joining these organizations?
 - How might you be involved/participate beyond basic membership?
3. Credentials and continuing education
 - Identify and discuss the different types of credentials (licensure, registration, certification, etc.) or further degrees that are available in your future profession and how to obtain/maintain them.
 - Define and discuss appropriate continuing education in your field, either formal or informal, how to obtain it, and the need for it.
4. Short- and long-term career plans.
 - Describe your career goals after graduation and your long-term career aspirations.
 - What is your plan to meet these career goals and aspirations?

Appendix B
OIT Lifelong Learning Rubric

Performance Criteria	Limited or No Proficiency (1)	Some Proficiency (2)	Proficiency (3)	High Proficiency (4)	Score
1. Lifelong learning	Fails to identify the need for “lifelong learning” and/or omits discussion of their own learning and relevant examples.	Misses important elements in discussing “lifelong learning,” applying concepts to their own learning or providing a relevant example.	Defines and discusses at least one concept of “lifelong learning” and the need for it. Applies concept and gives an example related to their own learning.	Defines and discusses various concepts of “lifelong learning” and the need for it. Applies these concepts to their own learning now and in the future. Demonstrates self-awareness by accurately identifying strengths/ weaknesses in their own ability to learn independently. Gives relevant example(s).	
2. Professional societies and organizations	Fails to discuss an appropriate professional society, advantages of joining or disadvantages of not joining, and/or possible involvement/participation.	Misses important elements in identifying appropriate professional societies or organizations, the advantages of joining and disadvantages of not joining, and/or possible involvement/participation.	Identifies and discusses appropriate professional societies or organizations, the advantages of joining and disadvantages of not joining, and possible involvement/participation.	Identifies and thoroughly discusses appropriate professional societies or organizations, the advantages of joining and disadvantages of not joining, and possible involvement/participation. Demonstrates detailed understanding of relevant requirements.	
3a. Credentials	Fails to recognize the need for credentials or further degrees and/or omits information on how to obtain/maintain them.	Identifies available credentials or further degrees, but important elements or details on how to obtain/maintain them are missing.	Identifies and discusses the different types of credentials or further degrees that are available and how to obtain/maintain them.	Identifies and thoroughly discusses the different types of credentials or further degrees that are available and how to obtain/maintain them. Demonstrates detailed understanding of relevant requirements.	
3b. Continuing education	Fails to recognize the need for continuing education (formal or informal) or omits information on how to obtain it.	Misses important elements in identifying appropriate continuing education (formal or informal), how to obtain it, and the need for it.	Identifies and discusses appropriate continuing education (formal or informal), how to obtain it, and the need for it.	Identifies and thoroughly discusses appropriate continuing education (formal or informal), how to obtain it, and the need for it. Demonstrates detailed understanding of relevant requirements.	
4. Short- and long-term career plans	Vaguely describes career goals and/or includes no realistic plan to meet them.	Career goals after graduation do not include both long and short term plans and/or the plan to meet these goals is missing important details or is unrealistic.	Describes realistic career goals after graduation and long-term career aspirations. Includes a plan to meet these goals and aspirations.	Describes realistic career goals after graduation and long-term career aspirations. Includes a thorough and thoughtful plan to meet these goals and aspirations.	