

Assessment Questions and Answers

What is the difference between Assessment and APSA at HWC?

Assessment is an ongoing process which supports the improvement of student learning outcomes. The HWC Assessment Committee has been focused on gathering data regarding student learning outcomes in the general education objectives (see current catalogue p.128 for general education goals/objectives and p.129 for HWC's definition & philosophy of Assessment and Student Learning).

On the other hand, **APSA** is strictly program review and it focuses on data such as enrollment numbers, graduation rates, and employment rates.

What is the relationship between HWC Assessment and the self-study process for the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission (NCA/HLC)?

HWC is currently going through a *self study* for an Accreditation visit from NCA/HLC which will take place in 2008. The Criterion Teams working on the self-study report will most likely use data generated from HWC assessment activities such as the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST), the Information Literacy survey (SAILS), and the Diversity Culture Survey, etc. as *evidence* that the college has set learning objectives for general education and that there is an ongoing process to assess student learning outcomes in those areas.

NCA/HLC does not *dictate* how we assess student learning, rather it requires that the college have a plan in place for setting learning goals, assessing student learning outcomes, and disseminating assessment data to the college community in an effort to inform the teaching/learning process and ultimately improve student learning outcomes.

The HWC Assessment Committee charge describes the committee's role in the Assessment process at HWC
(see <http://faculty.ccc.edu/colleges/hwashington/assessment/> for more information).

Is Assessment *really* fun or is that just a marketing tool?

Yes! Or, it can be. Thinking about the teaching/learning process and getting a sense of whether or not students have learned what we hope they learn can be fun. Working with an interdisciplinary group of faculty to dialogue about student learning and trying to understand how to really assess that learning process can be fun. Combing through data and word-smithing documents can, admittedly, be tedious, but the committee tends to have a collective sense of humor about such things which can make the process seem like fun!

Assessment Quiz

True or false

1) Diversity at HWC is all about race and ethnicity.

False – HWC defines human diversity as describing “variations within the full range of cognitive, behavioral, and psycho-social practices through which human beings share life in common spaces. Experiences of diversity include race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, physical attributes and disabilities, age, health, language, education, political beliefs, and other differences in cultural expression and tradition.

2) Out of a possible score of 34, HWC students scored on average 12.99 on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) administered in 2003.

True – This score placed our students at the 43rd percentile compared to an aggregated sample of two-year college students. Since then, the HWC Assessment Committee has hosted a critical thinking workshop in addition to a guest lecture by Peter Faccione, lead writer of the CCTST in an effort to provide more information to faculty regarding critical thinking and strategies for supporting critical thinking skills across the curriculum.

3) HWC faculty members feel they give prompt feedback to students and students agree.

False – According to results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) administered spring 2005, 54% of the faculty reported that students receive prompt feedback “often”. In comparison, only 19% of students report that they receive prompt feedback “often”.

4) Information literacy is another way of saying “computer skills”.

False – Information literacy enables individuals to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the needed information. Information literacy is *part* of the HWC general education objective which focuses on “us(ing) information resources and technology competently” (HWC catalogue, p. 128).