

Cornell College
Departmental / Program Assessment Project
Final Progress Report

Department / Program:	Education
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Briefly describe your assessment project, including the outcomes/questions you addressed, the methods used to gather/analyze evidence, and the interpretations drawn from the results.

Outcomes: Upon completion of the teacher education program, students selected and used multiple teaching strategies in their unit and daily lesson plans which included: desk-top documentary making, debate, classroom discussion, performance, artistic expression, film analysis, and literary and artistic analysis.

Assessment question: Do education majors recognize the importance of displaying multiple instructional strategies in their curricular instruction and design?

Method of Data Collection: We collect data in multiple ways including: electronics surveys administered to seniors, 1st and 5th year graduates, cooperating teachers and principals; formal course evaluations, and informal written and oral feedback from our students during and at the end of our courses.

Qualtrics Survey: We administer electronic surveys to our seniors during the Senior Seminar course. We also survey 1st and 5th year graduates using this same electronic survey software. The data collected is then aggregated and reviewed in June of each year by department members. We discuss feedback and analyze trends and then prepare a summary written report.

Interpretations drawn from Qualtrics survey results:

We received positive feedback from students who recognized the importance of multiple instructional strategies in their teaching. They clearly understood the importance of creating a student centered classroom where differentiation of instruction is needed in every single lesson. Students responded that they used cooperative and collaborative learning activities on a regular basis. They also revised their lessons and curriculum to ensure that all students were engaged and learning.

The qualitative feedback gathered also indicated that students had a recognition and appreciation for our modeling of multiple instructional strategies. What we construed from this feedback was that we need to continue to make explicit to our students the varied and useful teaching strategies available to them.

These strategies are first introduced to the students in the 200 level courses where we are trying to bring them into the discourse of professional teaching. We then revisit these strategies in the junior-level methods courses, model them and mentor students in the use of them. This is accomplished through micro-teaching in class, teaching sessions in their practicum placements and their design of a two-week unit plan.

Unit Plans for junior students: The majority of students showed varied instructional strategies in their unit plans. On average, students employed at least three different learning activities in each lesson; these activities were student-centered and involved formative assessment so that they could not only gauge comprehension but also adjust their instruction accordingly. All students completed a teaching session in class for which they completed a lesson plan that illustrated their use of multiple teaching strategies. Their peers then provided feedback with detailed attention to the importance of multiple teaching strategies in a lesson. At the end of the course, we solicited both informal and formal feedback from the students regarding their use of multiple teaching strategies in the process of curricular instruction and design.

Feedback from students during and end of courses: We believe in formative assessment and evaluation in all of our courses, and so we solicit feedback from students in every course. We also evaluate student work in both oral and written fashion so that students can learn and improve. One of the most effective means of gathering data has been to simply talk to our students about their work and have them provide critique and feedback to each other regarding their use of multiple teaching strategies in their lesson plan design. As students have opportunities to teach lessons in class, we explicitly discuss and analyze their use of multiple teaching strategies so they can apply theory to practice and gain an understanding of how differentiation improves curricular instruction and design.

What changes did you implement based on the results of your assessment project? Please be specific.

The first change is that we are being more explicit in regard to lesson plan design in all four of our 200 level courses that students complete prior to admission to the department. We are introducing to students the importance of differentiation in daily instruction and modeling for them various pedagogical strategies. We are then providing more opportunities for them to practice these strategies in a teaching simulated activity. In EDU 240 Human Relations, students complete a group teaching session in which they must design a lesson plan that requires at least three different types of instruction. Other students then critique the session, providing specific focus and analysis upon the various teaching strategies employed.

The second change is that we are more explicitly modeling various teaching strategies in the junior-level methods courses and requiring evidence of them in the daily lesson plans. We provide students a detailed assessment rubric that explains this importance. We also devote specific time in class for small-group workshop and revision of these lesson plans so that students can learn from each other and witness their peers' use of multiple teaching strategies.

The final change is that we are more explicitly revisiting this notion of multiple teaching strategies in the Student Teaching Seminar that students take while student teaching. We have found that even though students learn this importance in the methods courses, they sometimes lapse during student teaching and

revert back to singular, teacher-centered instruction. Discussion of differentiation unfolds during evening seminar to remind students and provide models, and college supervisors are also asked to evaluate students on their use of multiple strategies and support them if they are not present.

What has the department learned from the assessment process?

Basically, that we need to continually reinforce the importance of multiple instructional strategies to our students and model them in our own teaching. This is particularly true during student teaching, where some students lapse back into teacher-centered, singular instruction. Some of this has to do with the style of their mentor teacher, and some of it has to do with going back to perhaps what they feel most comfortable with; either way, we must continually monitor it, redirect it and support our students if they are to successfully implement multiple teaching strategies into their curricular instruction and design. We will also sound the message that they must continue to implement such strategies once they enter the profession, for they will encounter cultural constructs that privilege more essentialist modes of teaching. In an era of high-stakes testing where teachers feel considerable pressure to move through content quickly, they maybe understandably inclined to choose more efficient yet less engaging and meaningful modes of teaching that disadvantage some students who learn in more non-traditional ways.

Next year, you will begin anew in the assessment cycle, what comments/concerns would you like to share about the process? What needs do you have moving forward?

We feel the process has been explicit and manageable so we really don't have comments or concerns. Perhaps it is because we are accustomed to gathering data and assessing as part of teaching certification. As to our needs, we will undergo a State Review in 2014-15, and so we are concerned about getting everything in order for that "ordeal." At this point, we do not have a template or even much specificity as to what the state will be assessing, but when we receive this information, we will need to target our program assessment to this review.