Patterns of Assessment Capacity in Community College World Language Programs

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“Assessment” = Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1. Develop learning outcomes
2. Assess student performance
3. Analyze results
4. Use results, improve
Accreditation Commissions

The main drivers of post-secondary assessment (i.e., evaluation)
To become accredited, U.S. institutions must show evidence of...

- Fulfilling institutional mission
- Achieving core purposes
- Attending to educational effectiveness
  - Assessing student learning (i.e., evaluation)
Current U.S. Accreditation Framework

Two main purposes/uses:

1. Educational improvement
2. Accountability

Known challenge: “closing the loop”
Formative Assessment Usefulness is Enhanced When...

...there is sufficient “evaluation capacity”

Capacity =

The extent to which an organization has the necessary resources and motivation to conduct, analyze, and use evaluations.

(Gibbs et al., 2002, p. 261)
Capacity to Do and Learn from SLO Assessment in College Language Programs

**Institutional Support**
- Funding
- Incentives
- Training

**Institutional Governance & Leadership**
- Monitoring
- Leadership

**Ethos**
- Curiosity
- Valuing Innovation
- Proactiveness
- Improvement-oriented

**Pro-SLO Assessment Attitudes**
- Valuing SLOA
- Needing SLOA

**Infrastructures**
- SLOA Plan
- Rubrics
- Assessment Coordinator

**Program Support**
- Materials
- Tech. Expertise
- Technology

**Quality Activities & Conditions**
- Feasibility
- Timelines
- Cyclical

**Leadership**
- Promoting
- Valuing
- Initiating
- Participating
Estimating SLO Assessment Usefulness (& Needs) in College Language Programs

- AELRC research & outreach agenda:
  - To better understand how SLO Assessment can be useful in college WL programs
  - Use concepts from evaluation (i.e., “capacity”) to conceptualize useful SLO Assessment conditions / practices
  - Estimate amount of capacity in WL college programs
  - Identify capacity shortfalls and other SLO Assessment needs
Community Colleges

1. Community colleges enroll 46% of the undergraduate students in the United States (AACC, 2015)
   1. First time freshman – 41%
   2. Native American – 61%
   3. Hispanic – 57%
   4. Black – 52%
   5. Asian/Pacific Islander – 43%

2. 29% of total post-secondary language students enrolled at two-year institutions (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015)

3. 50% of heritage language learners (Fechter, 2010)

4. Many are Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)

5. No proportionate research on assessment/evaluation in community college WL programs
1. What are the patterns of SLO assessment capacity in community college WL programs?

2. What appear to be the SLO assessment capacity needs of language educators in community college WL programs?
Methods:
Survey Administration

- Online questionnaire
- Sent to 535 programs (1123 total 2-year institutions; AACC, 2015)
- 93 programs responded (17.4% response rate)
- Respondents
  - Program heads/chairs
  - Faculty (adjunct)
  - Coordinators
  - Language instructors, lecturers
- Reporting on...
  - Levels/Types of SLO Assessment capacity
  - What educators need in order to conduct SLO assessment successfully
## Results: Respondent Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program director</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate dean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim dean of languages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreter education instructor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior lecturer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ1: What are the patterns of SLO assessment capacity in community college WL programs?

Item-type: Institutional Support

Does your university/college...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>no</th>
<th>develop.</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) provide training workshops for student learning outcomes assessment</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ1: What are the patterns of SLO assessment capacity in community college WL programs?

**Item-type: Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do program* leaders...?</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>very much /a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) take the lead in initiating or coordinating outcomes assessment</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*program = major
### Institutional Governance Capacity

**“does your institution…”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Develop</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders encouraging part. (g)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make SLOA part of duties (b)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide sufficient time (d)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have leaders who follow-up (g)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Infrastructures Capacity

“does your program have…”

- **student learning outcomes (a)**: 6% no, 16% develop, 78% yes
- **rubrics (b)**: 8% no, 23% develop, 69% yes
- **SLOA committee (f)**: 42% no, 12% develop, 47% yes
- **require SLOA skills for hires (i)**: 57% no, 19% develop, 24% yes
Institutional Support Capacity

“Does your institution provide...”

- **tech support (c)**: 20% no, 14% develop, 52% yes, 14% don't know
- **training workshops (a)**: 24% no, 24% develop, 48% yes, 4% don't know

[Most: 52% yes, 4% don't know; Least: 14% no, 4% don't know]
Program Support Capacity

“does your division or department...?”

- **provide tech (g)**
  - Yes: 43%
  - Develop: 21%
  - No: 36%

- **employ SLOA expert (h)**
  - Yes: 51%
  - Develop: 13%
  - No: 36%

- **provide SLOA funding (c)**
  - Yes: 79%
  - Develop: 8%
  - No: 13%

- **obtain SLOA funding (a)**
  - Yes: 83%
  - Develop: 9%
  - No: 8%
Ethos Capacity

“to what extent do a majority of your colleagues...?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1%</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value innovation/development (b)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire program success (d)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High-Quality Activities/Abilities Capacity

“to what extent...?”

- **is SLOA done for requirements (m)**
  - 10% 17% 69%

- **is SLOA ongoing, cyclical (j)**
  - 10% 13% 29% 49%

- **do faculty seek out SLOA info (q)**
  - 23% 40% 26% 11%

- **communicate to audiences (r)**
  - 23% 51% 17% 10%

1 = not at all  2  3  4 = a lot
SLOA Thinking/Attitudes Capacity

“to what extent do a majority of your colleagues…?”

- think SLOA improves learning (b)
  - 12% 25% 36% 27%
- see a need for SLOA (e)
  - 14% 27% 38% 20%
- proactively do SLOA (c)
  - 24% 26% 32% 18%
- think SLOA scholarly work (a)
  - 25% 31% 20% 24%

1 = not at all, 2, 3, 4 = a lot
Leadership Capacity

“to what extent do leaders in your department/program...?”

- **encourage SLOA participation (f)**
  - 13%
  - 23%
  - 23%
  - 43%
  - **most**

- **participate actively (b)**
  - 18%
  - 20%
  - 33%
  - 30%

- **publicly recognize/respect faculty (i)**
  - 40%
  - 25%
  - 20%
  - 15%
  - **least**

- **address threats/barriers (h)**
  - 35%
  - 30%
  - 28%
  - 8%
  - 1 = not at all
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4 = a lot
**RQ2:** What are the SLO assessment capacity needs of language educators in community college WL programs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1 = not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 = A lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inst. governance</strong></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructures</strong></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inst. support</strong></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program support</strong></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality activities/conditions</strong></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pro-SLOA attitudes</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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1 = not at all, 2, 3, 4 = A lot
RQ2: What are the SLO assessment capacity needs of language educators in community college WL programs?

Results: Comments Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of respondents providing comments</th>
<th>71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total comments</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean comments per person</td>
<td>4.42*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

*10 open-ended questions
### Results: SLO Assessment Needs

<table>
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<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Training/professional development</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment experts (external/internal)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct instructors</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
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**Part-time, adjunct instructors**

- "Better training for adjuncts - compensating them for their time to be trained to see the importance of this task."
- "Most instructors are adjunct, so "buy-in" is based on requiring them to participate."
- "Since part-time instructors are not as vested in the college, their willingness to take on assessment activities are not automatically embraced."
Results: SLO Assessment Needs

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Seeing what others are doing; examples

- “We tend to be so isolated. Hearing what other colleges are doing and results they're getting would be very helpful. In the CC system, there is often a sense (and tendency) of reinventing the wheel!”

- “Communication among institutions of higher education could provide new ideas, information to improve data analysis and create solutions/ideas.”
Results: SLO Assessment Needs

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<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment experts (external/internal)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration valuing SLO (besides for accreditation)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single instructor; small department</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Single instructor; small program

- “As a WL dept., we are not actively involved with group assessment. Each instructor works on his/her own.”

- “I am the only foreign language instructor at my school. It would be nice to be able to collaborate with other teachers at meetings.”

- “It is difficult to do these as I am a department of 1 and I only have 2 adjunct faculty members, both of whom have a full time job outside of teaching part time at my school.”
Discussion

Patterns of capacity

• Some, but uneven, institutional support
• Little support at program-level
• Plenty of governance, oversight
• Dedicated faculty
• Ambivalent SLOA attitudes
• Quite a bit of high-quality practice

SLO assessment needs

• Prof. development, training, SLOA knowledge, skills
• Outside help, expertise, advice
• Strategies for adjunct buy-in & participation
• Collaboration, dialogue with peer institutions/colleagues
• Reducing isolation of single-instructors, small departments
• Useful methods (accurate, trustworthy, effective)
Thank you

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/aelrcdc