Implementing Assessment Culture Continuing to Make Impact Slowly and Strategically

By Dr. Mary Yakimowski

In the first edition for this year of News Brief, I highlighted how we are continuing to move towards fostering a culture of assessment with the Spotlight on Assessment initiative. For example, we have very active participation from the Neag community on the Neag Assessment Committee and the TNE Teacher Education Assessment Committee exploring assessment topics, agenda items at department and faculty meetings that focus on assessment-related issues, the colloquia series on assessment-related topics, and our annual assessment conference. In addition, we have this News Brief and a bulletin board on assessment in the first floor of Gentry building that further disseminates assessment news. We kept in mind the characteristics of an assessment culture as presented in the first edition.

We have not forgotten our other activities. For example, 269 individuals attended our colloquia this fall. We will announce the spring series soon.

If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the assessment culture and perhaps strengthen our Spotlight on Assessment initiative, please let us know.

Partnership Survey Results Known

By Madeline Sedovic

A brief survey was administered to educators who had partnered with the Neag School of Education’s Teacher Education Program. These educators had worked with students during the 2007-2008 school year by providing students with clinical opportunities, student teaching, and/or internships in their classrooms. The goal of the survey was to determine the educators’ perspectives on their partnership with UConn. In addition, several questions were asked in order to determine the educators’ knowledge about various aspects of the Neag School, such as the conceptual framework and belief statements. Basic demographic information was also ascertained, as well as suggestions for improvement to the partnership and aspects of the partnership that they perceive to work the most successfully.

Continued on page 2
Partnership Results

Continued from page 1

The 29 educators who returned surveys represented a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. Their teaching experience ranged from six to more than 35. The number of Neag students they supported ranging from two to more than 20, and they represented seven different districts.

Overall, the educators seemed to feel positively about their partnership with UConn and the students they have mentored, but some offered a few suggestions for improvement. The suggestions given for enhancing the partnership included having cooperating teachers discuss classroom management and attend seminars, providing compensation, providing more opportunities to meet together, and making improvements in communication. The themes that emerged were to provide an orientation for new students and to provide students with the opportunity to observe classrooms and then, during internship/placement, to work with that same teacher and classroom. It is hoped that the results of this survey can help lead to improvements in this vital partnership, to the benefit of both our students and the teachers who mentor them.

Spotlight on Assessment Initiates Web Site

The Spotlight on Assessment initiative at the Neag School has a new integrated website, our Director of Assessment Dr. Mary Yakimowski has announced. This website has pertinent assessment topics in one location so that you only have to shop at one site. Appreciation is extended to Jamison Judd from Information Technology for his assistance getting this up-and-running. The website, which you can make as a “favorite,” is:

www.education.uconn.edu/assessment/

On the main page, you can select News, Colloquia, Conference, Reports and Links as noted in the graphic accompanying this article.

Under News, you will find the current edition and archived News Briefs. Under Colloquia, you can view upcoming sessions, register for these sessions, and view archived PowerPoint presentations. The same holds true with Conference. There are pertinent assessment reports and various links, such as the University of Connecticut’s assessment site and PeopleSoft.

What archives are available? The following are presentations now available:

Response to Intervention: Behavioral Assessment at the School-wide Level
Dr. George Sugai

How Do I Know If They Are Getting It? Measuring Student Responsiveness to Reading and Writing Instruction
Drs. Michael Faggella-Luby, Natalie Olinghouse and Michael Coyne

Response to Intervention: Overview and the Behavioral Domain
Drs. Sandra Chafouleas, Lisa Sanetti and Brandi Simonsen

What’s New in Connecticut’s Student Assessment Program
Dr. Barbara Beaudin

Information from the College Board on College Readiness
Dr. Thanos Patelis

Why Three is Better Than One: Assessing Across Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors
Dr. Scott Brown and Anthony R. Artino

Connecticut Achievement and Performance Test (CAPT)
Dr. Jeff Greig

How Does the Internet Impact Our Thinking About Effective Literacy Assessment?
Dr. Julie Ciore

The Electronic Portfolio at the Neag School of Education: Implications for Teacher Candidate Assessment
Drs. Michael Alfano and Marijke Kehrhahn

The BEST Teaching Portfolio: Is It Really a Professional Development Experience for Beginning Teachers and the Educators Who Score Them?
Dr. Gail Tomala

Creating Innovative Tests: Applying Universal Design to Assessment Practices
Dr. Manju Banerjee

Continued on page 3
Assessment News: Much Happening End of Fall

From November to the winter break we have been busy with assessment tasks such as:

- The US News & World Report survey was completed and submitted. This survey asks enrollment and faculty information, grant funding, and other related things. This survey will be used to develop our ranking.

- All five departments are working on the OATS systems to enter their objectives and measures for NEASC assessment.

- The SPA reports are being submitted as part of NCATE accreditation. This includes all fields in teacher education, UCAPP and Executive Leadership.

- At the fall meeting of the Neag Assessment Committee members agreed to have School Psychology, Athletics Training and Physical Training programs develop, administer, and analyze employer surveys in the spring. They also were given the final version of the Neag Assessment Plan and will be speaking to all department members in October/November about this plan. The committee was given an overview of the alumni survey results. The committee also saw the preliminary results of the school climate survey and discussed the findings.

- The Title II report for those in Teacher Education was submitted to ETS. This was computerized some more this year.

- We are piloting a new web-based software for surveys. The first survey that we will roll out using this new software in November will be for School Counseling faculty.
By Dr. Melissa A. Bray

School psychology students learn how to conduct an academic assessment using standardized and criterion-referenced testing, dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills, curriculum-based assessment and measurement, direct observation, interviewing, and review of permanent products/portfolio assessment. Particular emphasis is placed on the diagnosis of learning disabilities, intellectual deficiency, and giftedness.

Specifically with respect to learning disabilities, school psychology students are taught basic assessment procedures as well as discrepancy analysis as an option in diagnosis. Also, learning disabilities are covered within a response to intervention model as another method of assessment and treatment. The school psychology students are instructed that testing should directly lead to the design and implementation of school-based effective interventions and accommodations addressing academic areas. Furthermore, they are exposed to the special education process as it relates to the diagnosis, classification, and placement procedures used for students with academic difficulties. Finally, writing Psychoeducational reports containing the results of an academic assessment is covered with the school psychology students.

By Dr. Sandra M. Chafouleas

In our school psychology program, students learn about and gain applied experience with assessment using a problem-solving framework. In a problem-solving model, routine purposes for school-based assessment include a) problem identification, b) problem definition, c) design interventions, d) monitoring intervention effects, and e) evaluating outcomes and solutions (Deno, 2005). Thus, our students utilize assessment practices that link data collection and interpretation to appropriate intervention strategies, and then also use data to evaluate intervention effectiveness.

This perspective extends a definition of “assessment” beyond sole focus on traditional diagnosis to assessment practices driven by treatment utility. Related to this perspective, our students are taught to be data-based problem-solvers within a multi-tiered prevention framework (e.g., RtI) given multiple criticisms of a traditional “wait to fail” approach to servicing students at-risk for school difficulties (see Gresham, 2008).

Consistent with best practices in assessment, students are taught to utilize a multi-method, multi-source, multi-setting approach to guide decisions. However, rather than cast a “wide net” across all assessment situations, we teach students to think through a series of questions to guide selection of an efficient yet effective battery of assessment tools. As noted in Figure 1, the guiding questions focus on a) why data are needed, b) which data are needed, and then c) which tools can provide those data. When answering why data are needed:

Decision-making Process for Selecting School-based Assessment Tools

![Decision-making Process for Selecting School-based Assessment Tools Diagram](image-url)

Continued on page 5

Adapted from Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Sugai, 2007
needed, students are asked to consider at which level (i.e. RtI tier) and for what purpose assessment efforts are focused. When answering which data are needed, students consider three areas: a) technical adequacy, b) contextual relevance, and c) usability.

Technical adequacy refers to understanding appropriateness in relation to available psychometric evidence (reliability, validity) and normative samples.

Contextual relevance refers to whether the tools are well-matched to the assessment situation. For example, relevance is probably low when using teacher-completed rating scales for attention-deficit disorder to assess disruptive behaviors displayed by a group of students at bus time.

Finally, usability encompasses considerations such as the efficiency of data collection and interpretation, resource allocation, and relevance of outcomes toward effective decision-making. For example, in the behavior, social, and emotional domain, although many available assessment tools may meet requirements related to technical adequacy, limited attention has been specifically directed toward utility (see Chafouleas, Riley-Tillman, & Sugai, 2007; Severson et al, 2007). However, usability in school-based settings (e.g., feasibility, acceptability, utility for service delivery, transportability) must be considered when advocating use of particular assessments. As noted by Severson and colleagues (2007), approaches that are more likely to be accepted by educators are those that are cost efficient, solve a high priority problem, do not require extensive effort, and are fundamental to the mission of schooling.

In summary, in our school psychology program, we emphasize a problem-solving approach to assessment which provides a link from assessment data to informed decisions about instruction and intervention. Within this approach, “client” is defined broadly to include focus on the individual student, group of students, entire class, and/or school, depending on the identified problem (why data are needed).

Select References


Assessment of Bilingualism Coming to Neag School

This course in the spring will be offered by Dr. Elizabeth Howard.

Course Description: Principles and purposes of assessment for bilingual learners will be introduced, with an emphasis on the assessment of skills in the areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and the academic content areas. Participants will be able to identify a variety of assessment tools that are used to evaluate bilingual learners in different contexts (e.g. bilingual, ESL, mainstream classes) and for various purposes (e.g. screening, placement, evaluation).

Participants will use critical thinking skills to discuss and write about the factors that educators must consider when choosing, using, or designing assessment measures for bilingual learners.
All students in the United States must be proficient in mathematics, reading, and science by the year 2014, according to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. Being only six years away from the deadline, do you think that goal is within our reach? All states are working overtime to try, explained Dr. Barbara Beaudin.

Dr. Barbara Q. Beaudin, our first presenter at the 2008-2009 colloquium series, serves as the Associate Commissioner of the Division of Assessment and Accountability for the Connecticut State Department of Education. She was introduced by Dr. Thomas DeFranco, the Neag School’s Associate Dean.

Dr. Beaudin’s colloquium session began with a focus on different student assessments in Connecticut including the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). Currently, the CMT is used to assess elementary and middle school students’ academic progress and the CAPT is used to assess high school students’ academic progress. Other assessments administered in the state include the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

With each state’s adaptation of NCLB legislation continually being updated each year, it is important to stay current on what your state is doing in response to schools not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP).

State assessment in Connecticut and its relationship to NCLB legislation was the largest part of Dr. Beaudin’s presentation. Discussing both the CMT and the CAPT, she provided information on what is reported to schools regarding NCLB. According to Dr. Beaudin, performance levels and summaries of content and subgroups are just some of the information that is provided to schools.

School districts are now being held accountable for their students not meeting AYP on the state-mandated testing. In terms of accountability at the district and school level, Dr. Beaudin spoke about AYP and the state’s 2008 status. In total, she reported that 25% of school districts did not meet AYP for this year. To deal with this problem, the Connecticut State Board of Education established 3 priorities: early childhood assessment initiatives, closing the achievement gap, and high school reform (all detailed in the slides).

Dr. Beaudin concluded that her presentation was aimed at increasing the knowledge of what is being done at the state level regarding NCLB and AYP, that will affect those at the school and district level.

The full PowerPoint presentation from this colloquium can be found at: http://www.education.uconn.edu/events/soa/0809archive.cfm
IB/M students in Dr. Jason Stephens class were recently asked to think about being a teacher and what kinds of assessments they would use. Their answers are provided below.

**Student “Apple”**

If I was a teacher, I would allow the students to decide how they want to be assessed. I would give them the options of writing a paper, making a video, creating a visual, or another creative written document like a song or poem. Each student has a way of learning that is best for them and clearly shows if they understand the material or not. Some students might have a hard time expressing themselves if I limit the assessment to one type of project and, therefore, I might not see if they did their work or not. This way the students can be comfortable with the way the information is being presented.

**Student “Beet”**

I would try to use as many different types as possible. I will definitely incorporate the traditional test, but I realize that not everyone is a good test taker. They may very well understand the content, but the anxiety that comes with test taking may overwhelm them. I would also assess understanding through projects. These are a way for kids to be creative so they make take more pride in it and enjoy it more. I would also do group assignments because it allows them to build their own knowledge from that of their peers.

**Student “Carrot”**

If I had no administration or state mandated procedure for testing, I would administer oral exams. I would ask the students questions and they would answer them using what they learned and I would let them use figures or physical examples if they so choose. I believe for science, this type of testing is a better indicator of what students understood rather than multiple choice exams where students are just asked to regurgitate facts.

**Student “Date”**

I would use surveys, interactive quizzes, and tests. If it were a physical learning activity (tying a shoe, using the bathroom), I would ask them to perform the task or go through the steps to prove or disprove what my students have learned. I feel pre-assessment surveys would also benefit my classroom to see what their prior knowledge is and where I should start off teaching to benefit the most.

**Student “Eggplant”**

In my content area of English, I plan on employing reading quizzes that will test their ability to summarize or find key concepts from the assigned reading.

The types of assessments I will employ are ones that demonstrate when and how to use the knowledge I have taught them. I think that by giving examples and having the students relate them to specific concepts taught shows their use of conditional knowledge.

**Student “Fig”**

Because I think individualized assessments are so important, I would like to test my students in areas they excel at for the purpose of having them have something to achieve/set goals/grow.

**Student “Grapes”**

I would employ assessments that go beyond standardized tests and allow for creative freedom – like projects, creating web pages, doing presentations for the class. I would assess the students in this way because I have found in my experiences as a student that this type of assessment is not only more enjoyable than tests, but also more memorable.

**Student “Tomato”**

In my opinion, assessments should not be long, they should be purposeful. I would prefer giving an assessment with 5 questions and the students explain why they answered in such a way. Also, I would not call them “tests” because I know the anxiety that goes along with that word and I find it to be unhealthy and unnecessary.

**Student “Lettuce”**

As a teacher I would like to have the flexibility to assess my students in various ways. For example, I strongly believe that progress should be considered when assessing whether or not someone has learned something. Also, as a teacher, having a variety of work will be more fun to evaluate. Giving tests is sometimes necessary, but there are many ways to assess otherwise.
Response to Intervention (RtI) seems to be the hot topic around schools these days. The main use of RtI in schools is to address the academic problems of students. But what can be done for those students that are having no academic trouble, yet are constantly being referred for social-behavioral problems? Fortunately, RtI can be implemented for those problems as well, using the same tiers and principles as with academic problems.

On October 2, Drs. Lisa Sanetti, Sandra Chafouleas and Brandi Simonsen gave a presentation on Response to Intervention (RtI) and its role in School Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) and for social behavior assessments as part of our series on assessment colloquium.

Dr. Sanetti began the talk with an explanation of RtI, which is “an assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making data-based decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services.”

RtI has been implemented due to several recent legislations which encourage schools to have a preventative focus (rather than a reactive one) for supporting students. RtI, when used as a behavioral intervention, targets students at three levels: primary, which encompasses all students and aims to prevent problem behaviors; secondary, which targets only students not responding at the primary level, who endorse some problem behavior; and tertiary, which is meant to reduce the intensity and severity of the most serious and resistant cases.

Dr. Simonsen then discussed social behavior outcomes, specifically with regard to Positive Behavior Support. Although the main goal for students is for academic achievement, behavior support is critical in order for this success to come about. The four critical elements for positive behavior support are: asking schools to identify desired outcomes; using data to support the decision-making; using practices that support student behavior; and using systems that support staff behavior.

Dr. Chafouleas concluded the presentation in her discussion of social behavior assessment within an RtI model. Data is vital for the steps of assessment, (screening, progress monitoring, diagnosis, and evaluation) and observing its efficacy. Various types of obtaining data for use in assessment include using extant (data sources that exist within the setting), behavior rating scales (which rates the behavior of another person based on past observations), systematic direct observation (data collected over a longer period by an observer who watches the environment or student), and making direct behavior ratings (brief ratings of a target behavior after a specified period of observation).

Overall, the hope of the presentation was to inform and familiarize the attendees with various types of social behavioral assessments across a wide range of student needs, to understand various challenges that can arise in integrating assessment options in an RtI framework, and the importance of data in the implementation and use of behavioral assessments.

What is RtI?

- An assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making data-based decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services

RtI: Defining Features

Examples of school-based DATA sources for social behavior

Supporting Social Competence

The full PowerPoint presentation from this colloquium can be found at: http://www.education.uconn.edu/events/soa/0809archive.cfm
Employer Survey Results: What Do Employers Think of Our Teachers, Physical Therapists, Counselors School Psychologists, Administrators?

The Neag School periodically gathers information from various stakeholders to obtain information that allows us to evaluate what we are doing well, and what areas need to improve. Our stakeholders include faculty, staff and administrators; current and past students; those that supervise our students in their clinical experience, practica, and internships; and the employers.

During the spring of 2008, we embarked on developing, administering and analyzing the employer surveys. The employers are in a position to report on the accomplishments of our graduates and what could be done to enhance their training while at UConn.

For the 2007-2008 school year, both the Neag Assessment and TNE Teacher Education Assessment committees, overseen by the Director of Assessment, were “charged” with developing and administering an employer survey. The committees used the 2005 employer survey as a model for the 2008 version. The last time the Neag School had an employer survey (in addition to one for accreditation purposes) was 2005.

Results showed that 67% of immediate supervisors rated their UConn graduate teachers in the top 20% with respect to teaching performance when compared to teachers with similar teaching experience. Ninety-four percent rated them within the top 40%. In addition, 95% of responding immediate supervisors reported feeling that their UConn graduate teachers stand out in a positive way among teachers in their school district.

The assessment committee members wanted an employer survey that went beyond teachers. As a result, the previous survey was rewritten. Some questions were reworded or completely removed to make the survey more focused on what the assessment committee desired to know about Neag School graduates.

The result of this process was the development of three forms of the employer survey. Form A was given to superintendents so they could share their perspective on teachers, school counselors, school psychologist, intermediate administrators, and executive administrators (i.e., superintendents). Immediate supervisors of teachers and physical therapists received Form B and Form C, respectively.

The survey was distributed from March to May of 2008. Although the due date was in the spring, many surveys were received during the summer and are included as part of the analyses. A total of 28 superintendents, 99 immediate supervisors and 8 physical therapists return completed survey.

Teachers

When asked how UConn teachers in their schools rated in terms of teaching performance relative to teachers having similar teaching experiences, 76.9% of the responding superintendents and 80% of the immediate supervisors of teachers rated Neag School graduates in the “top 20%” or the “top 5%.” Eighty-eight percent of responding superintendents and 89% of immediate supervisors indicating “yes” to the question, “Do you feel they stand out in a positive way among teachers in the school?”

Superintendents and immediate supervisors were asked to rate graduates of the Neag School’s teacher preparation program on different characteristics. Overall, the results were positive with the highest ratings in the categories “use of ethical standards to make evidence-based decisions” and “curiosity and intellectual enthusiasm for continued learning.”

Superintendents and immediate supervisors were also asked to rate graduates of the Neag School’s program on different attributes. Results indicate that superintendents were more likely to rate their teachers lower than the immediate supervisors. Overall, positive results were seen, with most ratings falling in the “very good” to “excellent” range.

School Counselors

When asked how Neag School counselors rated in terms of counseling performance, the 10 responding superintendents rated 80% Neag School graduates as being in the “top 20%” or “top 5%.” In response to the question, “Do you feel they stand out in a positive way in the school/district?” 80% of responding superintendents answered “Yes.”

Superintendents were asked to rate graduates of the Neag School’s school counseling program on different attributes. All categories received average ratings between “very good” or “excellent.”

School Psychologists

When asked how Neag School psychology program graduates in their schools rated in terms of school psychology services, the 6 responding superintendents rated 100% of Neag School graduates as being in the “top 40%” or higher, with 83.3% being in the “top 20%” or “top 5%.” In response
Employer Survey, continued

Continued from the previous page

to the question, “Do you feel they stand out in a positive way in the school/district?” 83% of responding superintendents answered “Yes.”

Superintendents were asked to rate graduates of the Neag School’s executive leadership program on different attributes. All categories received average ratings between “very good” or “excellent.”

Intermediate Administrators

When asked how Neag School intermediate administrator graduates in their schools rated in terms of administrator leadership, the 17 responding superintendents rated 76.5% of Neag School graduates as being in the “top 20%” or “top 5%.” In addition, 12% of Neag School graduates were rated in the “bottom 5%.” In response to the question, “Do you feel they stand out in a positive way in the school/district?” 94% of responding superintendents answered “Yes.”

Superintendents were asked to rate graduates of the Neag School’s intermediate administrator program on different attributes. All categories received ratings between “very good” or “excellent.”

Executive Leadership

When asked how Neag School executive leadership program graduates in their schools rated in terms of executive leadership, the 22 responding superintendents rated 72.7% of Neag School graduates as being in the “top 20%” or the “top 5%” as shown in Table 10. In addition, 14% of graduates were rated as being in the “bottom 5%.” In response to the question, “Do you feel they stand out in a positive in the school/district?” 88.20% answered “Yes.” In response to the question, “Do you feel this graduate stand out in a positive way among peers?,” 100% of responding immediate supervisors answered “Yes.”

The immediate supervisors of Neag School physical therapy program graduates rated their attributes and abilities. Positive ratings of alignment with program standards were received with 8 of the 22 categories being unanimously rated “excellent.” Positive ratings of graduate attributes were received as well, with 8 of the 11 categories being unanimously rated as “excellent.” Overall, all categories received average ratings between “very good” or “excellent.”

Finally, immediate supervisors were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with Neag School graduates on an A through F scale. Over 95% rated are graduates A or B.

![Immediate Supervisors' Ratings of the Neag School Graduates](image)
There is a need for quality for assessment. As we discuss grading practices within this evolving assessment environment, we must bear in mind our six specific standards of communication quality. If we are to communicate effectively via grades, we must start with the following:

- Clearly articulated and appropriate achievement expectations
- Quality assessments capable of accurately reflecting student proficiency
- The accumulation of a reservoir of dependable information regarding the achievement of each individual student
- Clearly articulated and agreed on reasons for communicating achievement results
- A shared language for message sender and receiver to use in passing information
- An opportunity to share information—a time, place, and set of circumstances when message sender and receiver can attend to the information being shared.

### Links between Achievement Targets and Assessment Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target to Be Assessed</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Mastery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selected Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Essay</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Performance Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Personal Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasoning Proficiency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selected Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Essay</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Performance Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Personal Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selected Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Essay</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Performance Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Personal Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to Create Products</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selected Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Essay</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Performance Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Personal Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dispositions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selected Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Essay</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Performance Assessment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Personal Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“No Child Left Behind in higher education,” exclaimed Michele Femc-Bagwell “is here and will stay.” Michele presented at a symposium at the New England Educational Assessment Network fall conference on November 7th. The session offered participants a view that in learner-centered environments, teaching and assessment are not episodic events, but activities focused on what student are learning by providing continual and interactive feedback. This presentation shared diverse yet integrated perspectives on how UConn’s assessment system works for the improvement of learning at the university, school/college, program, and student level. This was the first presentation that representatives from the Neag Assessment Committee participated together.

The first presentation by Dr. Eric Soulsby, Assistant Provost, began by sharing information on the drive to bring the university to conduct student learning outcomes assessment for improvement. He shared information on UCONN’s implementation of an Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS). Tied directly to meeting the NEASC expectation of an ongoing, systematic, approach to student learning outcomes assessment, as well as, providing the university with information for continuous improvement efforts, OATS provides the ability for school/college degree programs to document ongoing assessment activity in an annual reporting framework comprised of the program mission, goals, objective/outcomes, methods, results, and actions.

Taking the perspective from the school level, Dr. Mary Yakimowski spoke how OATS is integrated with the assessment system developed through the Neag School of Education’s Assessment Plan (NSEAP). She shared information on how the NSEAP incorporates a system which provides information meeting accreditation (NEASC, NCATE, APA, etc.) requirements, can be used to assess progress and areas for continuous improvement, and allows for identification of performance indicators of various units. The system employs multiple measures of assessment to monitor student progress at various key points of their educational processes – borrowing from the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE), the NSEAP uses transition points at entry, during the program, immediately prior to program completion, and post graduation follow-up. This system was developed collaboratively across multiple stakeholder groups by faculty, administrators, and students with input from alumni, employers of graduates, and clinical and field experience of teachers/supervisors.

Dr. Mike Alfano, in his capacity as Director of the Neag School of Education Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates (TCPCG), shared program information about the implementation of an Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS). Tied directly to meeting the NEASC expectation of an ongoing, systematic, approach to student learning outcomes assessment, as well as, providing the university with information for continuous improvement efforts, OATS provides the ability for school/college degree programs to document ongoing assessment activity in an annual reporting framework comprised of the program mission, goals, objective/outcomes, methods, results, and actions.

Taking the perspective from the school level, Dr. Mary Yakimowski spoke how OATS is integrated with the assessment system developed through the Neag School of Education’s Assessment Plan (NSEAP). She shared information on how the NSEAP incorporates a system which provides information meeting accreditation (NEASC, NCATE, APA, etc.) requirements, can be used to assess progress and areas for continuous improvement, and allows for identification of performance indicators of various units. The system employs multiple measures of assessment to monitor student progress at various key points of their educational processes – borrowing from the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE), the NSEAP uses transition points at entry, during the program, immediately prior to program completion, and post graduation follow-up. This system was developed collaboratively across multiple stakeholder groups by faculty, administrators, and students with input from alumni, employers of graduates, and clinical and field experience of teachers/supervisors.

Dr. Mike Alfano, in his capacity as Director of the Neag School of Education Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates (TCPCG), shared program information about the implementation of an Online Assessment Tracking System (OATS). Tied directly to meeting the NEASC expectation of an ongoing, systematic, approach to student learning outcomes assessment, as well as, providing the university with information for continuous improvement efforts, OATS provides the ability for school/college degree programs to document ongoing assessment activity in an annual reporting framework comprised of the program mission, goals, objective/outcomes, methods, results, and actions.
Bottom-Up and Top-Down: Assessment as a System Working at All Levels

Continued from previous page

Tied to the NSEAP. The format has proven to be a useful tool for assessing both candidate performances while in process (i.e., formative assessment), as well as, overall program related outcomes (i.e., summative assessment). Attendees were presented with an overview of the TCPCG’s electronic portfolio format with specific attention to how the electronic portfolio is used to assess student progress within the program, and how it has been used to improve the overall implementation of the program’s curriculum.

Dr. Michele Femc-Bagwell presented how the assessment system must ensure that there is alignment between standards, curriculum, and assessments. She shared information on how the NSEAP provides such assurance. She provided how curriculum mapping is used to identify and align standards and assessments for each of the University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program (UCAPP) course offerings. Through the mapping process, faculty members are able to spiral the curriculum and use common assessments for evaluating students’ preparedness as future school leaders. Curriculum maps are the foundation for program improvement as they serve as the connecting documents for ensuring program consistency among 32 faculty (who are mostly adjuncts) and 120 students in eight cohorts across Connecticut.

The student level was presented by Dr. Manju Banerjee who shared research findings and faculty perspectives on the use of universal design in student assessment. In recent years, an approach to student assessment that has generated much excitement in the postsecondary teaching community is universal design. Undergirding the concept of universal design in assessment is the belief that student assessment should be constructed from the start to incorporate the growing diversity of the postsecondary student population. Dr. Banerjee talked about research findings that blend universal design in assessment with construct validity of test design, and faculty member experiences in implementing principles of universal design in core special education courses.

Through these presentations, attendees received an overview of assessment new terminology (e.g., e-portfolio) and components. The presentations also describe how concepts and systems of assessment may translate to other disciplines beyond those within education. Most important, they saw how the university, school, program, and student levels worked together in an assessment system. Following the presentation, individuals were asked to write up the presentation in a new journal on institutional effectiveness.