The Assessment Outlook in the Spring of 2010

Mary E. Yakimowski
Director of Assessment

Spring is in the air. Assessment is in the air.

About a week ago we had our Neag Assessment Committee and our Teacher Education Subcommittee meetings. Much was accomplished during these meetings including the alignment to Neag’s conceptual framework of the Neag alumni survey and the Common Exit Survey. Three of our colloquium sessions in the spring have already been held. Over the next two weeks, many stakeholders will share assessment-related activities and findings in relation to the upcoming NCATE visit.

Next month we will look forward to meetings held with other assessment subcommittees, hold three more colloquia, and administer end-of-semester assessments such as clinic, practicum, and internship evaluations using Checkbox. We will also administer the Common Exit Survey for the teacher education program to candidates prior to their graduation. Then, we look forward to completing the Year-end Progress Reports, OATS Assessment Plans, and administering the 2009-2010 Assessment Plan Review. It sounds like a lot, but we will get there. Just as the sun shines longer these spring days, assessment is getting better and better. That is what an assessment culture is. The Neag School is constantly striving for improvement in all areas and assessment data helps us move forward strategically.

There are some tidbits in this edition that might prove interesting. Enjoy!

Where Do Neag Education Alumni Work in CT?

John Harris; IB/M graduate student, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Are you interested in where our alumni are employed and in what positions within the Connecticut public schools?

We have been analyzing employments patterns of graduates of the Neag School of Education since 1986, who are employed within Connecticut’s Public Schools during the 2009-2010 school year. This includes teachers, related services staff, administrators, and superintendents, for a total of 3,094 Neag alumni working in Connecticut schools. How many districts in 2009-2010 employ our alumni?

There are 165 (out of 166) districts that employ our alumni. Derby is the only district that does not employ a Neag graduate in the 2009-10 school year.
Neag Alumni Information
Continued from Page 1

We can discover the demographics of the districts where the graduates are working, how each category of alumni is disaggregated by gender and race/ethnicity, and even which districts employ the most graduates from each field or concentration.

We are learning how to display this information visually, rather than through pages-and-pages of text and tables. To this end, the Office of Assessment has collaborated with the Mapping and Geographic Information Center (MAGIC) located in the university’s Homer Babbidge Library. Together with this center, we have developed elementary and secondary maps of Connecticut districts. Using ArcView mapping software, the Office of Assessment was able to generate maps which not only highlighted the towns in which various categories of graduates were employed, but in some cases, how many were employed in a given district. These maps make the massive amount of information contained in this report easily accessible; the audience will be able to quickly learn where the Neag graduates of any given field are working.

Many thanks to the CSDE and MAGIC for their assistance.

Some maps examples are provided in this edition of News Brief. Hopefully, what we have learned —where our graduates are working—will be a stepping stone to assessing the impact Neag graduates have on their students. For more information, please e-mail Mary at mary.yakimowski@uconn.edu.
Spring Assessment Colloquium Series

Wei Xia, Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment graduate student, Department of Educational Psychology

The Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System: Development, Implementation, and Future Directions

Mr. Gil Andrada, an expert in assessment from the Connecticut State Department of Education, gave a presentation about the Connecticut Benchmark Assessment System (CBAS).

Mr. Andrada discussed current educational assessments in Connecticut, including the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), College Entrance Examinations, National Assessment of Educational Progress, Advanced Placement (AP) Tests, and Connecticut Technical High School Tests. These are summative tests which can provide valuable information to guide program improvement and monitor group progress.

Mr. Andrada then introduced the CBAS, and the concept of the Interim Tests, which includes formative, diagnostic and benchmark tests. He indicated that the purpose of building CBAS is to provide a resource to aid in increasing student achievement in Mathematics and Reading Comprehension based on the CSDE Mathematics and Language Arts standards, and to develop large-scale online assessments. He illustrated how the CBAS fills the missing links of formative assessments used daily by teachers, summative tests such as CMT and CAPT, and the college entrance tests. The CBAS is low-stakes, is aligned to curriculum by CSDE content consultants, and is offered free of charge to all districts.

Those in attendance learned what is tested by CBAS, how it differs from the CMT, and how CBAS predicts CMT performance. To this end, he invited those interested in contacting him if interested in doing any analyses.

Finally, Mr. Andrada discussed future research by the Connecticut State Department of Education. This included automated content scorers and item bank development in CBAS. In the future, we may have a “computer,” not an individual, scoring open-ended questions in a manner similar to how technology is used for multiple choice questions.

Hierarchical Linear Modeling: A Brief Introduction

Dr. D. Betsy McCoach, associate professor in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Connecticut, gave a presentation introducing Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM).

Dr. McCoach briefly talked about the clustering and nesting problem found often in research that people within a particular group or context are likely to be more similar to each other in terms of an outcome variable than they are to people in a different group or context. The clustering and nesting problem might be problematic for violating the assumption of independence in traditional statistics.

Dr. McCoach talked about the historical approaches to solve the clustering and nesting problem. One of the methods is to disaggregate the data and make students from same school or same cluster get the same value for the macro level variable, which violates the assumption of independence and can inflate Type I errors. The other method is to aggregate the data and use school means, which measures the whole group instead of each individual and can lead to a Robinson effect. HLM, the multilevel data structure, was used to embrace effects at both cluster and individual levels.

HLM allows for an understanding of how individual level variables as well as cluster/group level variables can be used to explain an outcome of interest, and it can resolve aggregation bias issues and enhance the precision of an estimate according to Dr. McCoach. Several examples of how HLM models work in dealing with multilevel data. Questions and discussions followed.

All colloquium PowerPoint presentations are available on-line at:

http://www.education.uconn.edu/assessment/colloquia.cfm
Higher Education Assessment Bibliography

As educators, we can often take for granted the important role assessment plays in student learning. However, there is a significant body of research on the impact that having explicit objectives, formative assessments to measure progress towards those objectives, and summative assessments to see if they’ve been met has on student learning and achievement. What follows is an introductory selection of such research; thanks to Linda Suskie, Vice President of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, for these suggestions.


Office of Assessment
249 Glenbrook Road Unit 2064
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-2064
E-mail: mary.yakimowski@uconn.edu

Co-Editors: John Harris, Mary Yakimowski
### Upcoming Assessment Colloquia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applying Professional Competency Criteria in the Selection of Educators for Positions in Schools: What Are School Districts Looking for and How Can You Best Prepare for the Job Search</td>
<td>Thursday, April 1st</td>
<td>11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s and Boy’s Gender Role Conflict: Twenty-Five Year Research Summary Implications for Education and the Men and Boys in Your Lives</td>
<td>Thursday, April 8</td>
<td>11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R) Program</td>
<td>Thursday, April 29</td>
<td>11:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To register, please visit: [http://www.education.uconn.edu/assessment/colloquia.cfm](http://www.education.uconn.edu/assessment/colloquia.cfm)