

Assessment Grant Final Report
Assessment Grant awarded in 2005

Grant Project: Course Embedded Assessment Strategy using Pre and Post Testing of Course Objectives

Department: SPEA Criminal Justice

Principle Faculty: Barbara Peat

Summary of Project: SPEA Criminal Justice faculty met several times to develop course objectives for the eight required core courses of the BSCJ. They also constructed short multiple choice tests (except for the J439 – Crime and Public Policy class which used a short answer format) to be administered the first day of class and toward the end of the semester. The questions were directly related to the objectives. The pre/post tests were administered in the fall and spring semesters of the 2006-07 academic year.

Results of the project: The goal of this project was to assist faculty in determining whether course objectives are being met for the eight required core courses as demonstrated through significant improvement in test results from pre to post. The results indicated, overall, that course objectives were being met. However, the results also provided us valuable information on where some weaknesses exist in conveying information in a manner that improves student learning outcomes. For example, in two classes the test results indicate that student learning is not accomplished for one of the course objectives.

Use of Results: Having this information we will now engage in a review of the results to determine if the course objectives, class assignments, text required, and/or the test questions need revisions. In a broader sense, this project has provided valuable information relevant to pedagogy. For example, in comparing the results from one semester to another we were also able to examine the impact of other variables that may influence learning including class schedule (day versus night class and two day a week versus one day a week format), assignment protocol, testing protocol, class size, and course text used.

It is through our review of the results of this project that we are able to assess our teaching strategies and make needed modifications to improve expected student learning outcomes.

Continuation: We are planning to continue this project in the 2007-08 academic year. It is expected that there will be some minor changes to the course objectives, the test questions, text, and/or the assignments required in the courses based on the results of the project from the previous year. The results of the coming year will be compared to the previous year and will allow us additional opportunities to explore ways in which we can improve student learning outcomes.

Sharing of information: All criminal justice faculty and the Dean were given the complete report including question by question analysis, objectives analysis, and comparison of fall and spring semesters. The complete report is available to all IUSB faculty upon request. The strategy used and results will also be presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences professional conference in March of 2008 and plans have been developed for a publication in a book on assessment in higher education.