Assessment in Action

November 2018

In Search of the Missing Link

Written by: Dr. Joseph van Gaalen

Michael Molloy
Professor of Audio Technology

"Assessment was the missing link." That's the way Professor Mike Molloy describes his experiences with assessment and perfecting his courses. If that sounds like a cliché, then just think about what it was that made you step back and reevaluate your classroom. Was it what you did in the classroom? Or was it the way your class responded, directly or indirectly, to what you did in the classroom? It's never what you did. It's always whether it was successful or not. Professor Molloy is right.

Mike Molloy is Professor of Audio Technology at FSW. He's also the author of the College Credit Certificate Program housed within the School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. His five course program begins by teaching would-be sound engineers how sound works, what sound waves really describe or mean, how to process and mix sound through the use of a digital workstation, and how to properly wire a studio for sound recording. A student who completes the program walks away with a comprehensive portfolio that speaks to the many skills, techniques, and practices that make a worthy sound engineer in the workforce.

All of this means that real-time reaction to what's happening in the classroom is important for the instructor. In the first year of the program, Professor Molloy spent a lot of time giving specific critique to students as they miked* a sound studio, or bounced# a song. After working with the Office of Academic Assessment, it became clear that approaching the process from a creative point of view meant that scoring or rating a strong candidate at the time of the recording or studio set-up/take-down, while straightforward for an expert, leaves little room for reflection. It would be easier, Professor Molloy supposed, to set up criteria (i.e., a rubric) ahead of time. With a little preparation, rubrics, would allow for that reflective thought later on. Did most of my students struggle with miking? Am I spending a little too much time on notation and not enough on resonance? Professor Molloy doesn't worry about these questions anymore because he immediately knows the answers after the last student finishes the project. "It influences my workflow in developing course content between Summer/Fall/Spring terms now. I get real-time response assessment now, and that's so important because that drives my instruction for the next project, which builds on the last," Professor Molloy said.
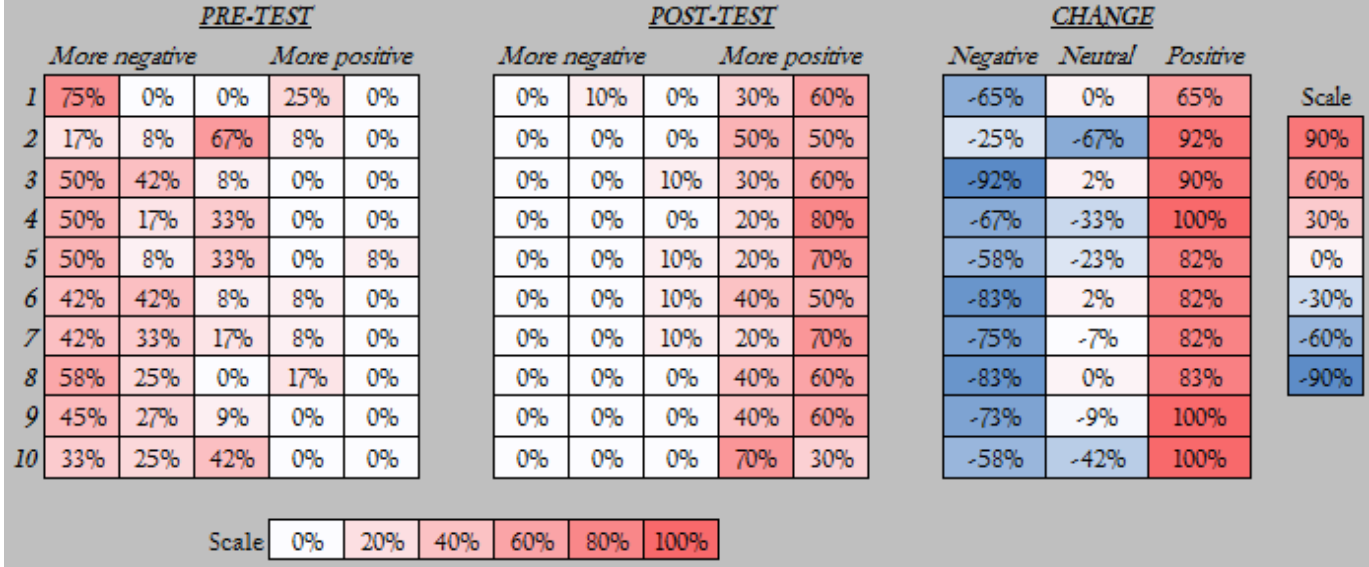
*Miked means setting a studio or stage with proper microphone hardware/software #Bounce essentially means you render a song from data into audio. In audio recording, you prepare a song by parts (guitar, vocals, etc.). So a recording studio, when ready, sums those parts into a whole, which is the song. They bounce it.

In Search of the Missing Link

Professor Molloy started with a Pre-/Post- disposition survey asking students to reflect on their comfort levels with topics or tasks that his courses cover (shown in Figure 1). The results from that report, and the successes Professor Molloy was able to examine, brought him to the most absorbing phase of assessment. It brought him to the point where any good faculty member asks, "What else can I do with this?" And now this story has gone full circle…or is it full cycle?

Figure 1

	PRE-TEST More negative			More positive		POST-TEST More negative			More positive		CHANGE Negative	Neutral	Positive		Scale
1	75%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	10%	0%	30%	60%	-65%	0%	65%		90%
2	17%	8%	67%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	-25%	-67%	92%		60%
3	50%	42%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	30%	60%	-92%	2%	90%		30%
4	50%	17%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%	-67%	-33%	100%		0%
5	50%	8%	33%	0%	8%	0%	0%	10%	20%	70%	-58%	-23%	82%		-30%
6	42%	42%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	10%	40%	50%	-83%	2%	82%		-60%
7	42%	33%	17%	8%	0%	0%	0%	10%	20%	70%	-75%	-7%	82%		-90%
8	58%	25%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	60%	-83%	0%	83%		
9	45%	27%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	40%	60%	-73%	-9%	100%		
10	33%	25%	42%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	70%	30%	-58%	-42%	100%		

Scale | 0% | 20% | 40% | 60% | 80% | 100%

Comparison of responses to disposition questions in MUM 2601C Recording Techniques (II) survey prompt asking students to reflect on statements about experience or knowledge on topics covered in the course. Questions from left to right (More negative to More positive) reflects the ordinal options "Disagree", "Somewhat Agree", "Agree", "Moderately Agree", and "Strongly Agree." Questions 1 through 10 ask about: (1) Mixing console, (2) Recording equipment to hard drive and DAW, (3) Acoustics, diffusion/absorption, (4) Tonal quality, (5) Vocal tracks miking, track capturing, (6) Acoustic guitar miking, track capturing, (7) Bass guitar miking, track capturing, (8) Drum miking, track capturing, (9) Electric guitar miking, track capturing, and (10) microphone types.

Online Resources for Your Use

Dr. Caroline Seefchak
Professor of Education
and LAC Chair

Whether you are new to the College, or you are a veteran professor, keeping up to date with assessment and student learning is continually in the forefront of what you do. Florida SouthWestern State College, in its Academic Assessment Mission, is focused on assessment and on advancing student learning at all levels: course, department/program, and institutional. As a College, we see assessment as a means by which to measure achievement, inform improvement, and make decisions regarding our programs and curriculum in a continuous cycle of data-driven innovation.

For faculty at FSW, there is an abundance of information on assessment available online at https://www.fsw.edu/facultystaff/assessment. At this site, there is access to Learning Assessment Committee information; Course Level Assessment, including annual Course Level Assessment Plans; general Education Assessment, including current and previous General Education Assessment Plans; General Education Competencies, including rubrics that may be used in their entirety or in parts: Communications and Presentations, including many of the PowerPoints shown, published reports, and back issues of DataVersed and other newsletter publications; Program Reviews; and a page with Terms and Definitions. The material available on the Academic Assessment pages on the FSW site is regularly refreshed.

FLORIDA
SOUTHWESTERN
STATE COLLEGE

🔒 Portal   🖥 Canvas   📞 Directory $ Give to FSW   🔍 Search...

A-Z INDEX   ABOUT   ACADEMICS   ADMISSIONS   FOUNDATION   ATHLETICS   TUITION & FINANCIAL AID   QUICK LINKS

Home ❯ Faculty & Staff ❯ Academic Assessment ❯ Course Level

Academic Assessment Home ❯
Committee ❯
Course Level ❯
General Education ❯
General Education Competencies ❯
Communications and Presentations ❯
Program Reviews ❯
Terms and Definitions ❯

Course Level Assessment

At Florida SouthWestern State College, faculty engage in course-level assessment to inform improvement, measure achievement and make curricular and programmatic decisions.

Curricular Assessment

- Determining achievement of student learning outcomes and success of courses
- Choosing instructional methods and strategies
- Deciding whether to increase or decrease time or emphasis on student learning outcomes
- Selecting texts or material
- Determining a focus for professional development
- Improving assignments to better align with stated outcomes

Programmatic Assessment

- Determining course sequence and necessary prerequisites
- Demonstrating preparedness of program completers
- Determining budgetary focus
- Measuring achievement of stated goals and outcomes and demonstrating efficacy of courses and programs

Annual Course-Level Assessment Plans

AY 2017-2018 Course Level Assessment Plan
AY 2016-2017 Course Level Assessment Plan
AY 2015-2016 Course Level Assessment Plan
AY 2014-2015 Course Level Assessment Plan

Learning Assessment Committee
AY 2018-2019

Patricia Arcidiacono	Health Professions		Dr. Lisa McGarity	Science
D'ariel Barnard	Academic Assessment & Effectiveness		Barb Miley	Accountability & Effectiveness
Andrew Blitz	Computer Science & Construction Tech		Colleen Moore	Health Professions
Leroy Bugger	Business & Accounting		Dr. Kristi Moran	Mathematics
Jane Charles	Library		Dr. Katie Paschall	Speech
Dr. Marius Coman	Science		Dr. Jennifer Patterson	Business & Tech
Dr. John Connell	Speech & Foreign Language		Dr. Elijah Pritchett	Humanities & Fine Arts
Dr. Mary Conwell	Paralegal Studies		Dr. Caroline Seefchak	Committee Chair
Dr. Eileen DeLuca	Academic Affairs		Dr. Eric Seelau	Social Sciences
Thomas Donaldson	Social Sciences		William Stoudt	Mathematics
Dr. Rene Hester	Student Life Skills		Dr. Amy Trogan	English
Dr. Julia Kroeker	Education		Dr. Joe van Gaalen	Academic Assessment & Effectiveness
Margaret Kruger	Health Professions		Dr. Richard Worch	Criminal Justice & Public Safety
David Licht	Mathematics		Dr. Denis Wright	Health Professions
Fernando Mayoral	Foreign Language		Terry Zamor	Mathematics

FSW