

# Did You Know?

**FSW uses a wide variety of tools for course level assessment.  
As of Fall 2017,**

**60%** of course level assessment utilized a common multiple-choice exam or quiz.

**25%** used a common rubric-based assessment that had been calibrated and normed by department faculty.

**15%** of course level assessment was done by a disposition survey aimed at gauging student concept maps from beginning of semester to end.

**10%** utilized an external benchmark.

**5%** utilized a focus group of some sort.

**\*Note that these percentages add up to greater than 100% as some departments used more than one approach.**

**So what works best for your department? What would work best for your department?  
Is the answer one in the same?**

**Consider these ideas as a means of utilizing this information:**

- Common multiple choice exams are great for quantitative data, and that means they are great for longitudinal studies, too. The weak link here is that they often can have data that are reflective not only of learning but also external conditions unrelated to learning (e.g., a lengthy question measures reading comprehension, not just content).
- Rubric-based assessments are also great for quantitative data. Data can speak to a number of strong/weak points that the assessment measures, but only if the rubric itself has been properly vetted and thoroughly calibrated by those using it.
- Disposition surveys are also good collectors of quantitative data. In this case, because the survey is self-report, a fair amount of time needs to be invested by department developers in how to word the questions. You can avoid external factors that the aforementioned assessment tools face head-on like test anxiety but you do so at the expense of the reliability of the result. How can you be sure the self-report is reported fairly and accurately? This takes time in developing the wording of the prompt.
- External benchmarks are great for data collection and great for determining where your department stands with respect to departments external to FSW. However, while they may be a reliable and valid tool, that doesn't mean they are reliable and valid for what you want to measure or for your particular demographic.
- Focus groups make for wonderful feedback forums on what works and what doesn't in the classroom. They also aren't great at quantitative data collection which can hinder if not block any longitudinal studies.

*(Gardner, et al, 2014)*

**Have you noticed changes in your students, colleagues, or yourself? Let us know about it. Reply via email to Allison Studer ([astuder@fsw.edu](mailto:astuder@fsw.edu)) and give us your feedback!**

**Best wishes!**

**Office of Academic Assessment**

**References:**

Gardner, M.M., Kline, K.A., Bresciani, M.J. 2014. Assessing student learning the community & two-year college. Stylus Publishing, Sterling, Virginia, 192 pp.