HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

THE ASSESSMENT TIMES
NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
FALL, 2015

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FROM THE COMMITTEE

The HWC Assessment Committee is award-winning. It has been recognized internationally for its expertise in the assessment of student learning. Over the years, the committee has worked to build a college climate that includes a high level of participation within the faculty community. It is documented that the committee's work has influenced curricular changes. Most importantly, there is a body of work that demonstrates improved student learning outcomes both at the general education level and the department unit level.

This academic year began with announcements that several HWC programs will be consolidated and as a result leave our College. For example, the entire Applied Science Department will be dissolved due to all of its programs either sunsetting or leaving HWC. As a consequence, the Assessment Committee will lose valuable committee members who have been dedicated to the assessment of student learning for the past twelve years. The committee is concerned about this abrupt loss of institutional memory, momentum, and expertise. As HWC adjusts to mandates that are removing members of our community and dramatically changing the nature of the City Colleges of Chicago, the Assessment Committee members are working to cope with the loss.

The Committee

FROM THE CHAIR

This has been a very busy semester as you will see from the many interesting articles in this edition including: 1) various assessments being done at the unit level within departments, 2) our new natural science assessment tool that is being administered at the general education level as this newsletter goes to press, 3) the various speaking engagements of HWC Assessment ambassadors, and 4) the Closing the Loop special edition of the Assessment Times, which was delivered to your mailbox just last week. I continue to be amazed by the dedication of the HWC

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community to seek new ways of understanding student learning.

In October, Research Analyst Phillip Vargas and I traveled to Indianapolis to the [Assessment Institute](#) where we presented, "What does faculty-driven assessment look like?" to a packed house of over 500 participants. I explained the nature of our Assessment Committee such as how we meet every week as well as our general assessment calendar and various projects we are working on this year. Phil provided some statistics on our faculty participation with a breakdown of the work done during committee time as well as via release time over the past five years. It's clear that participants were impressed with our level of faculty involvement. After our talk, I had the chance to see presentations by leaders in the assessment world such as Peter Ewell, Trudy Banta, Mark Angelo, George Kuh, and Jeffrey Seybert. I was a bit star-struck! My favorite part was going to the conference book store and selecting various assessment readings for the academic year. Stay tuned for upcoming book reviews.

Please see page 17 for a preview of my forthcoming assessment reading recommendations.

Mike Heathfield was an invited guest speaker earlier in the semester at the Comité de Pares 8th Annual Meeting at the University of Guadalajara - the second largest university in Mexico. He presented for over 45 minutes on HWC's assessment culture and 2013 CHEA success. He attended both days of the conference where live translation services were provided for the three international guests. He lead off the international section of the conference on the first morning, followed by Dr. Jana Vice, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Eastern Kentucky University (CHEA 2014 winners) and Dr. Rochelle L. Williams from ABET, which accredits college and university programs in the applied sciences, computing, engineering and engineering technology. The audience were senior professors and administrators from Mexico's many accreditation institutions for higher education. The key leaders from Mexico's national accrediting agencies also presented on their successes and challenges in improving quality and success in many fields such as; doctors, nurses, engineers, architects and veterinarians. The presentation was very well received and many new connections were made. There were numerous questions afterwards with a great level of interest in the breadth and depth of our work. Since returning he has sent out over ten emails to conference participants who had requested more specific details of how we do our assessment work here at HWC. Our assessment work really is internationally recognized!

Carrie Nepstad, Applied Sciences

Assessment Committee members

Unit-Level Assessment: Humanities

After previous semesters running assessments on Music courses, including Music Theory courses and Applied Music (music performance) courses, the Humanities department decided it was time to involve other disciplines within our department in unit-level assessment efforts. The only programs leading to degrees or certificates in our department are in music, but two Fine Arts courses taught in Humanities are required for students completing an Associate in Fine Arts degree. FIN ART 107 and FIN ART 108 comprise the two-semester sequence in art and architectural history required for AFA students.

At the beginning of the semester, three returning instructors teaching Fine Arts 107 (survey from the Paleolithic through the Renaissance) and Fine Arts 108 (survey from the Baroque to the present) as well as Fine Arts 105 (condensed survey from the Paleolithic through the present) classes agreed to give a shared assessment in Week 13.

We considered the various student learning outcomes shared by these courses, and while all three of us agreed that the outcome related to analysis of an artwork's meaning or the ability to compare and contrast artworks was the most important, we decided that it would be best to work up to assessing that outcome by first focusing on how students recognize artistic styles and periods and then apply their knowledge to identify artworks they have not yet studied.

We opted to use images that none of us had explicitly covered in class for a couple reasons. First, to ensure that students understand this assessment is not tied to their

EVALUACIÓN INSTITUCIONAL

Educación superior lidera acreditación

Las Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES) son punteras en la evaluación y acreditación de sus procesos educativos en comparación con el sistema de educación básica, donde esto no ha podido institucionalizarse, afirmó el maestro Itzcóatl Tonatiuh Bravo Padilla, rector general de la Universidad de Guadalajara (UdeG).

Al inaugurar la 8ª reunión del Comité de Pares para la Autoevaluación Institucional, que empezó ayer y termina hoy, en la que participan representantes de todos los centros universitarios de la UdeG, afirmó que, aunque México "entró tarde como país" a la evaluación educativa, las IES han dado buenos resultados y avances en la materia.

"Somos punteros en procesos que, desgraciadamente para nuestro país, en la educación básica no han podido institucionalizarse de manera adecuada y les genera un conflicto mayor. El

> *Donde más énfasis tenemos que poner es en la perspectiva internacional"*
>
> **TONATIUH BRAVO PADILLA**
> **RECTOR GENERAL DE LA UDEG**

sistema educativo de nivel superior ha logrado permear de manera adecuada y correcta la evaluación y acreditación de programas. Eso lo tenemos a nuestro favor", dijo.

El rector general destacó el buen papel que ha desarrollado la UdeG en acreditar sus programas académicos, y consideró que la institución debe buscar la acreditación de sus licenciaturas ante organismos internacionales, como ya se ha hecho con la carrera de Negocios Internacionales.

"Donde más énfasis tenemos que poner es en la perspectiva internacional. Tenemos que considerar que por los tratados suscritos en México y el impacto de la globalidad, los profesionistas se van a desarrollar en un medio más relacionado con el mercado laboral de Estados Unidos, centro y Sudamérica y Europa. Tenemos que saber bajo qué indicadores lo vamos a ponderar", sostuvo.

Anticipó que también deberán de buscar la forma de que la

EVALUACIÓN. Es necesario incluir los conocimientos de los egresados.

acreditación incluya los insumos materiales y la calidad de los profesores, y que evalúe también los conocimientos adquiridos por los alumnos al final de su carrera. Para ello habrá que elaborar y aplicar un examen general de egreso de licenciatura, a fin de tener "una perspectiva del nivel que pudo haber adquirido con las competencias propuestas; además de medir elementos como el pensamiento lógico, la capacidad de comunicación, de síntesis y de expresión por escrito de sus conocimientos, y en esa área no tenemos los mejores instrumentos".

María de los Ángeles Ancona Valdez, coordinadora de la Unidad de Evaluación y Acreditación de la Coordinación de Innovación Educativa y Pregrado, explicó que esta reunión se fundó en 2007 para apoyar los procesos de acreditación en las licenciaturas de la UdeG.

Both images on this page highlight Dr. Mike Heathfield's invitation to be guest speaker at a conference in Mexico City

grade, we wanted to differentiate the assessment from students' final exams, which will take place a couple weeks after we run the assessment; and most importantly, we did not want to encourage "teaching to the test." We also thought it would be most interesting to learn whether and to what extent our students are able to take the information they have learned in class by looking at certain artworks and apply that information and those techniques in order to understand new artworks, just as they would if they wandered into a museum or gallery.

Each of the three faculty members suggested artworks that are similar to ones studied in class but that are not themselves included in class discussions. Once an array of 13 artworks representing diverse styles and periods was selected from the larger group of submitted images, the 13 possibilities were run by the three Fine Arts faculty for potential vetoes. All 13 images represented styles or time periods discussed in each faculty member's class, but one image of the original 13 had to be replaced since one faculty member included it in his lectures; it was removed from the array in order to not give his students an unfair advantage.

The assessment will ask students to describe some of the keywords that occur to them when they see each image and, based on those keywords, to identify the style, historical time period, and/or cultural tradition of each given artwork based only on the picture provided. Because the same assessment is being given to all FIN ART students, regardless of whether they are currently enrolled in the first or second half of the two-semester sequence in art history (or the condensed one-semester version), we expect that most students will be confronted with some images on the assessment that do not at all look familiar because they would have been discussed in the other semester of the survey course.

We are interested to see if students will acknowledge when they see something completely unfamiliar and also see how they draw on their art historical background to make sense of new images that resemble ones they have studied. Students will therefore be able to indicate on the form if they do not see anything familiar about the style or to briefly identify one or more components of the artwork (colors, composition, subject matter, etc.) that they would point to as evidence to support that style or time period identification. This should imitate the experience of a student walking into a museum or gallery for the first time and thinking about what they have learned in art history courses in order to make sense of what they are now viewing.

After the images were selected for the assessment, the accompanying PowerPoint and paper assessment were assembled. As this article is going to press, the instructions for faculty to provide when administering the assessment are being written, and the assessment will be run and data collected in Week 13.

In future iterations of the assessment, we would like to make the assessment more efficient by converting it into a multiple choice format and using Scantron to score the assessment, but we thought it was important to use the pilot phase of the assessment to help us gather information that would allow us to better select potential answers for the multiple choice version in the future and ultimately create a stronger assessment to help us understand as much as we can about our students' learning in art history.

Erica McCormack, Humanities

Program Assessment – A Closer Look at Youth Work and Social Work Program Learning Outcomes

In order to provide a context for the following assessment report, I asked Dr. Michael Heathfield to provide readers with a short history of the Social Work and Youth Work programs at Harold Washington College. According to Dr. Heathfield:

"The social work generalist program has been taught at HWC for decades. The youth work program began at Kennedy King in 2002 but moved to HWC in 2003 supported by a City of Chicago Community Development Block Grant through a partnership with the Chicago Area Project and HWC's Department of Public Agency and Special Programs.

The youth work specialism, within social work, built on an extensive community-based training program for youth workers established across the city. It was one of only two Associate's Degrees in the U.S. and, at the time, there were no specific youth work or youth development degrees in Chicago. The community-based training program, the city grant, HWC's Public Agency/Special Programs, and the Chicago Area Project (an 80-year old not-for profit) have now gone.

U.I.C. created a master's program in youth development a decade ago and this fall added a new bachelors with a youth development concentration - they planned an initial cohort of 25 but got 45 students. Social work degrees and certificates will now only be offered at Kennedy King and youth work will no longer be offered at

the City Colleges of Chicago."

Assessment Overview

The Youth Work and Social Work programs at HWC share several components of their respective curricula, faculty, and learning outcomes. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Applied Sciences Department agreed that designing an assessment to look closely at the student learning program outcomes in the shared capstone course would be an interesting place to focus our unit-level assessment efforts.

SocSer109	SocSer215	SocSer248	SocSer249
Relationships	Relationships	Relationships	Relationships
Advocacy		Advocacy	Advocacy
Evaluation		Evaluation	
Youth Voice, Choice, and Action		Youth Voice, Choice, and Action	Youth Voice, Choice, and Action
Reflection	Reflection	Reflection	Reflection

Table 1.1

The process began with a review of the course outcomes in the shared curricula. Using the four courses that all Social Work and Youth Work students complete, I mapped the SLOs looking for themes to emerge. Several ideas appeared in terms of broad expectations for student learning. Table 1.1 outlines the findings from the mapping process.

Using the common learning threads woven through both programs, I proceeded to examine the learning opportunities associated with the course SLOs. In Social Service 109, 215, and 248, students practice reflecting on their interactions, they learn about advocacy and becoming an advocate, and they explore the notion of "Youth Voice, Choice and Action" in their own practice as well as in evaluating the programs they study. Using the method employed during the college-wide Quality Review Initiative, these course-level outcomes became the basis for the development of the program outcomes. We then wrote, rewrote, reviewed, refined, and polished the language to capture the ultimate learning goals for Youth and Social Work. The final program SLOs are listed below. (Language specific to the Social Work discipline is in italics and parentheses).

1.   Initiate and develop strong relationships with youth (clients) in order to work effectively in a variety of youth (social work) settings.

2.   Build youth voice, choice, and action (voice for social work practices and policies).

3.   Describe young people, youth development, and youth work (clients) from a strengths-based perspective acknowledging the capacity of each individual person.

4.   Reflect and assess personal practice regarding adult relationships in the workplace, working with people in the community, management skills, and work ethics.

5.   Advocate for programs to be more "youth-centered" ("client-centered") in policy and practice.

In the capstone course for both programs, Social Service 249, students write four reports throughout the semester, using the same format with varying points of focus. These reports are the final products students produce before they complete their program of study. Using these assignments and the following assessment rubric, developed for this project, we collected the students' reports and submitted the data using a Google form, also developed for this project.

Youth Work / Social Work Capstone Assessment Rubric

Dimensions of Program Outcomes	Exemplary	Accomplished	Developing	Beginning
Self - Reflection	Excellent reflection on own practice. Rethinks and refines personal learning goals.	Strong reflection on own practice. Rethinks and refines personal learning goals.	Beginning reflection on own practice. Does not rethink or refine personal learning goals.	Weak reflection on own practice. Does not rethink or refine personal learning goals.
Evaluation	Evaluates youth programs from a "youth-centered" perspective.(**"client-centered" perspective.)**	Evaluates youth programs partially from a "youth-centered" perspective ("client-centered" perspective.).	Evaluates youth programs with little consideration paid to a "youth-centered" perspective ("client-centered" perspective.)	There is no evaluation or the evaluation does not reflect a "youth-centered" perspective ("client-centered" perspective.).
Advocacy	Uses voice with strong conviction to advocate for youth-centered policies and practices *(for social work policies and practices)* appropriate to the context or audience.	Uses voice with moderate conviction to advocate for youth-centered policies and practices *(for social work policies and practices)* appropriate to the context or audience.	Uses voice with minimum conviction to advocate for youth-centered policies and practices *(for social work policies and practices)* appropriate to the context or audience.	There is no evidence of advocacy.
Articulation	Thoughtfully and thoroughly articulates an understanding of youth development, youth work, and young people *(social work processes and clients)* from a strengths-based perspective.	Articulates an accurate understanding of youth development, youth work, and young people *(social work processes and clients)* from a strengths-based perspective.	Articulates a partially accurate understanding of youth development, youth work, and young people *(social work processes and clients)* from a strengths-based perspective.	Articulates a rudimentary understanding of youth development, youth work, and young people *(social work processes and clients)* from a strengths-based perspective.
Writing	Writing is focused, organized, and free of any writing errors.	Writing is focused and organized, but has a few writing errors.	Writing is somewhat focused or somewhat unorganized, or has several writing errors that distract from the work.	Writing is unfocused, or unclear, or has so many writing errors that the work is incomprehensible.

Table 5

The Results

In spring 2015, 17 students were enrolled in Social Work 249, with just over half in Social Work and just under half in Youth Work. In total, 23 reports were collected from Youth Work Students and 21 were collected from Social Work Students. The

mean scores can be found in Table 1.3 and 1.4. Overall, Youth Work Students perform significantly better on this assessment than their Social Work counterparts.

Program	Mean Score (0-15)	n
Youth Work Student	8.39	23
Social Work Student	5.52	21

Table 1.3

These mean scores between youth work and social work students are not significantly different (p <.05) with youth work scoring 52.0% higher on average.
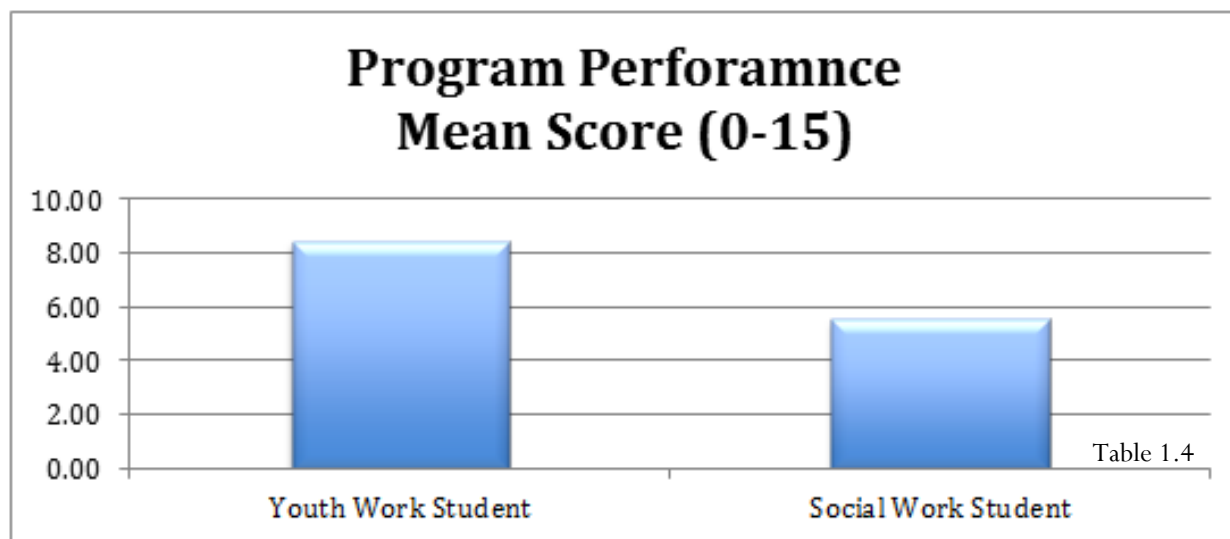
Program Perforamnce Mean Score (0-15)

Table 1.4

Tables 1.5 and 1.6 reveal the overall mean scores for each dimension of the rubric.

Dimension	Youth Work Student Mean Scores (0-3)	Social Work Student Mean Scores (0-3)
Self-Reflection	1.48	1.29
Evaluation	1.70	0.43
Advocacy	1.78	1.33
Articulation	1.43	0.90
Writing	2.00	1.57

Table 1.5

No significant differences were found between the different dimensions for either youth work students or social work students. However, when breaking the scores down by dimension it is clear that "Evaluation" is the largest contributor to these score differences between these groups.
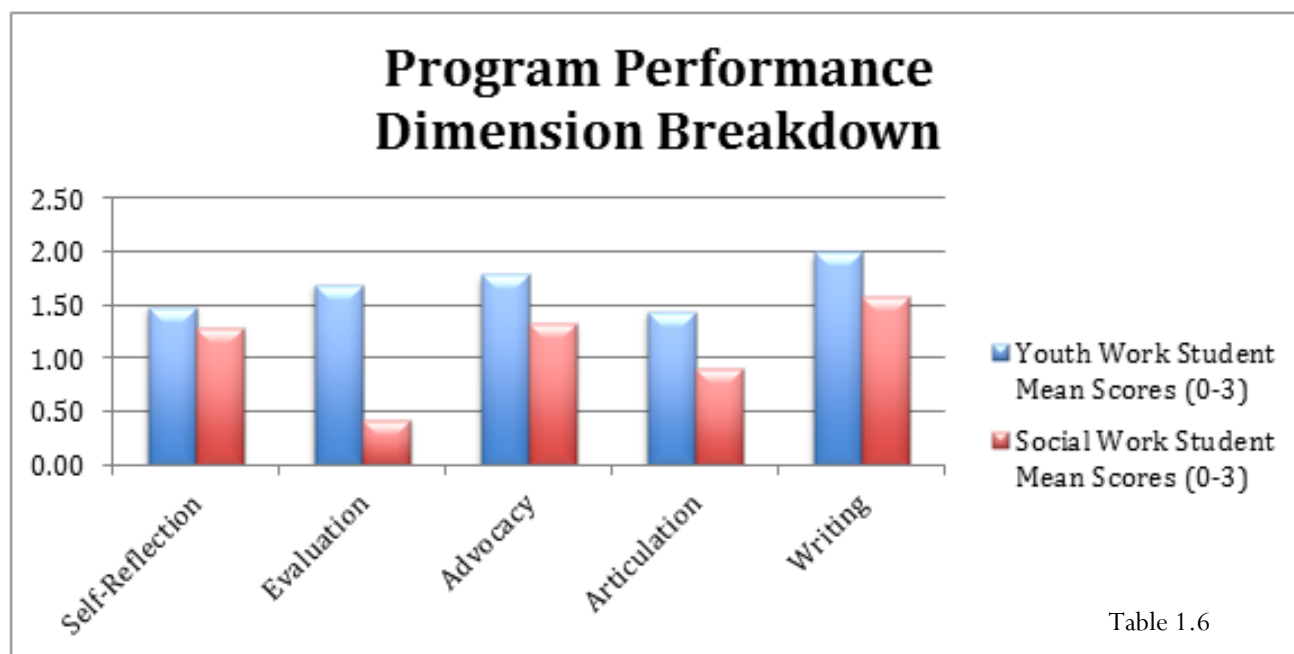
Table 1.6

Once the semester was over, we compiled the data from all four reports. The report comparisons are detailed in 1.7 and 1.8.

Report Comparison

Report	Mean Score (0-15)	n
2nd	6.31	16
3rd	7.14	14
4th	8.15	14

Table 1.7

Although there is a clear increase in the progression of theses reports, this increase is not significantly significant. With an average N of 15 per group this low sample size is most likely the reason it is not significant.
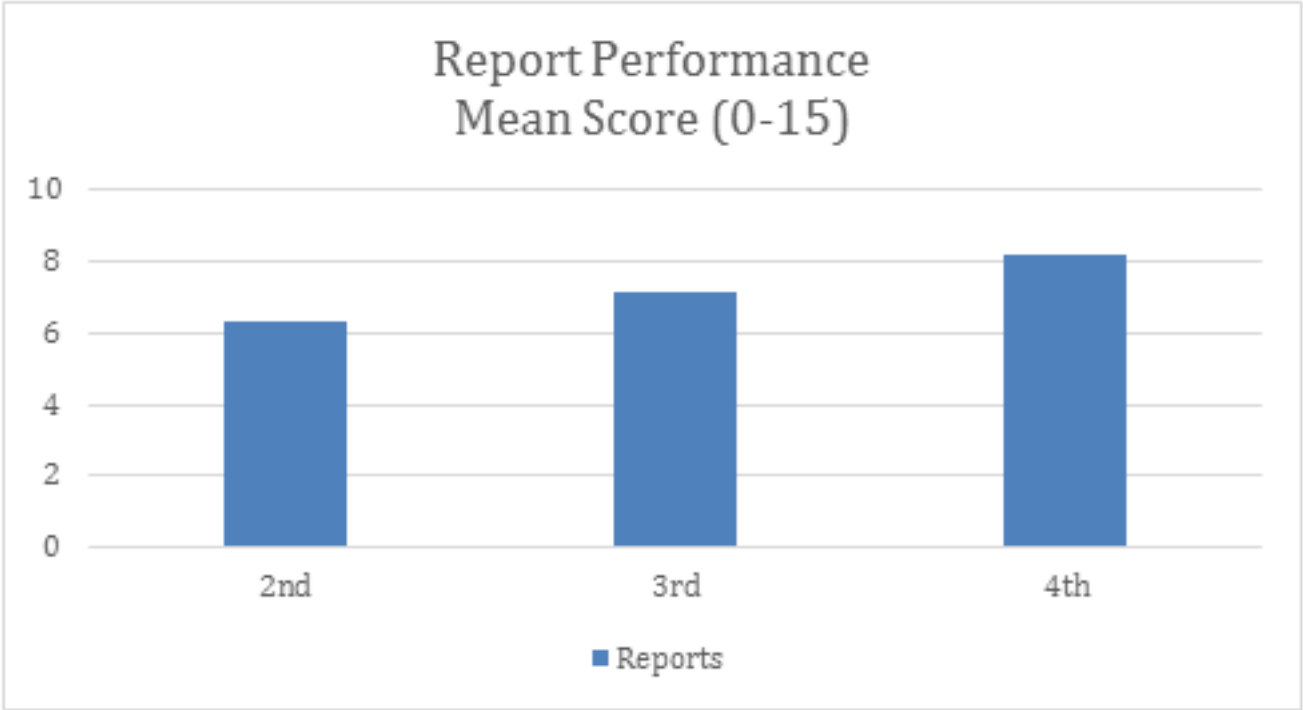
Report Performance
Mean Score (0-15)

Table 1.8

Finally, each dimension of the rubric was compared. This data is detailed in Table 1.9 and 1.10

Report	2nd Report Mean Scores (0-3)	3rd Report Mean Scores (0-3)	4th Report Mean Scores (0-3)
Self-Reflection	1.44	1.43	1.38
Evaluation	1.00	0.93	1.46
Advocacy	1.56	1.50	1.77
Articulation	0.81	1.21	1.69
Writing	1.50	2.07	1.85

Table 1.9

When breaking down the scores by dimension, articulation is the main contributor to this increase. However, this increase is still not significantly significant.
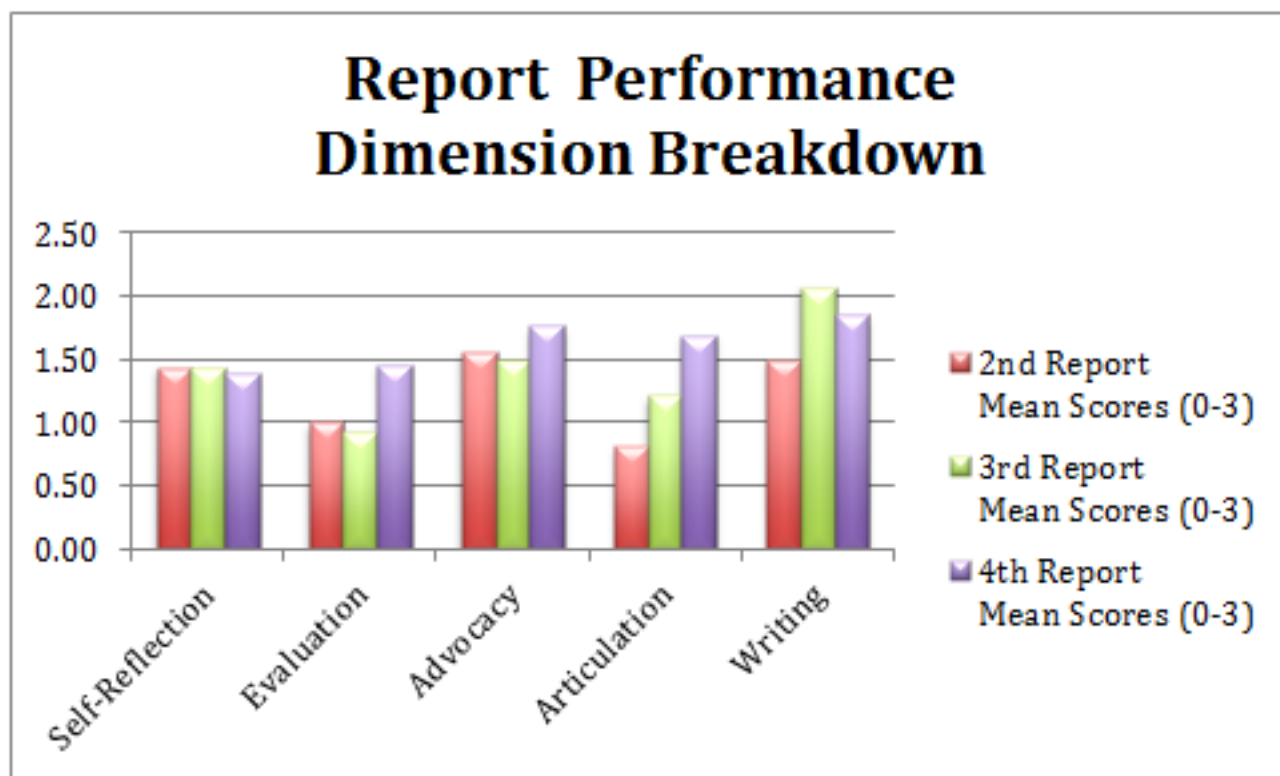
Report Performance Dimension Breakdown

Table 1.10

Conclusions

The data from this assessment clearly illustrates that learning takes place over time and through repeat experiences. Not only did students perform better overall over time, they performed significantly better at the end of the semester than they did at the beginning. There are slight dips in performance on the third report in both Advocacy and Evaluation and students' skills in Self-Reflection neither deteriorated nor improved over the semester. This finding would/should lead to a recommendation of developing more learning opportunities to practice this skill both in the capstone course as well as throughout the program. However, there will not be an opportunity to make recommendations as these programs will no longer be available at Harold Washington College beginning the fall of 2016.

It should be noted that a careful review of this assessment reveals teaching and learning processes grounded in best practices, focused on learning skills associated with the art of serving other humans, and dedicated to the furthering of community-based education.

Unfortunately, this is not the data that our District is interested in because it does not reveal the numbers of graduates or employment statistics about earning potential. This data says a lot about the work that has gone into developing these programs and preparing students to go out into the workforce in a nurturing profession. Students who have had the honor and distinction of studying Social and Youth Work at Harold Washington College over the years, are now out in our communities doing great work because they had great training. It is a shame that future students will not be afforded this opportunity and that our communities will suffer as a result.

Jennifer Asimow, Unit-Level Liaison, Applied Sciences

The Natural Science Tool

Last spring the Assessment Committee developed a tool for assessing student learning outcomes in the natural sciences. This tool was piloted to the assessment committee last spring and to students over the summer. Reflecting on the feedback from these pilots, multiple refinements were made to the tool. The assessment committee is excited to say it is polished and ready to be administered to the student body this fall.

This will be the first college-wide assessment that is designed to work in conjunction with Openbook. This will significantly reduce the length of the survey which should increase participation and reduce testing fatigue. With these modifications to the development and with the administration through Google forms we are hoping this will be the smoothest survey rollout.

The assessment tool incorporated many ideas from multiple areas of STEM education research at the national level as well as questions tailored to HWC student learning outcomes that span our general education science courses. Using these sources the tool is designed to assess three areas: the physical sciences, the life sciences, and attitudes toward the sciences. This assessment should give the assessment team a clearer picture of our students' scientific literacy as well as their perception of its influence in their lives.

Phil Vargas, Physical Science

Assessment Committee members

Unit-Level Assessment in Business

The Business department has two assessment exams that are used for the Accounting discipline. The assessment exams provide quality assurance data for the Associate of Applied Science in Accounting. The information is reported every two years in our Quality Assurance report to the Accreditation Council for Business School Programs (ACBSP).

The chair of the department recommended an upgrade to the assessment exams for Financial Accounting (BUS181) and Managerial Accounting (BUS182). In the Spring of 2015, the assessment exams were revised, re-written and ready for pilot testing.

The Business department chairperson enthusiastically undertook the pilot testing of the BUS 181 and BUS 182 assessment exams over the summer of 2015. Our chair encouraged the adjunct professors to participate in the pilot testing of the assessment exams as well. Two units of the BUS 181 assessment exam were administered on paper using the Scantron answer sheets. One unit of the BUS 182 assessment exam was administered online in Blackboard.

The assessment exams were designed to be a random, unbiased selection of questions from learning objectives in Financial Accounting and Managerial Accounting. The pilot was designed to identify any weak or underperforming questions so that a committee of faculty from accounting could collaborate on replacements or revisions.

The results from the assessment exams were compiled, and all questions with a score of 50% or less were reviewed in a departmental meeting. Those questions were examined to determine if they represent a learning objective that is not currently delivered in the course but should be, a poorly worded question, or some other test bias. The intention is to improve student learning as measured by questions that have no bias. In questions that are deemed to be replaceable, we will select a replacement by agreement from test bank material provided by the textbook author.

In summer 2015 the Financial Accounting assessment exam was administered to 59 students via Scantron. The results of the compilation indicated that nine test questions out of 40 scored lower than 50%. In other words more than 30 students out of 59 missed that question.

The Managerial Accounting assessment exam was administered to 23 students via Blackboard. An examination of the test indicated that test pilot print version had data that failed to import into the Blackboard exam. The results of the pilot in Managerial Accounting indicated some corrective action needed to be done

when using imported tests.

The accounting faculty members of the Business department met and reviewed and discussed the revision or replacement of questions. We have replaced two questions from the pilot. Those questions were replaced with a better worded question from the same learning outcome and ACBSP category. We also revised the wording in some questions to better match the vocabulary utilized in our HWC courses. Both pilots are concluded, and revised assessment exams are ready to be administered in the Weeks 14-16 of the Fall 2015 semester. After making the changes and working together to build a valid reliable assessment test, the Business department has a durable exam with which to measure student-learning outcomes in the accounting technical knowledge areas for ACBSP on an ongoing basis for the next three to five years.

Theresa Campbell, Business Department

Assessment Committee members

Unit-Level Assessment in Mathematics

The Mathematics department unit-level work began in the Spring 2015 semester. Prior to that term there had not been structured assessment activities. Since our department lacked a foundation to build upon, faculty agreed to focus on piloting an assessment based on student learning outcomes from Calculus and Analytic Geometry I (Math 207). This pilot assessment tool was developed during the spring 2015 and administered to a couple of sections of Math 207 during the closing weeks of the semester. A scoring rubric was also developed alongside the tool. It is hoped that this first pilot will lay the foundation to future assessments in our department.

This semester, the unit-level work focused mostly on the analysis of the data gathered from the pilot assessment. The preliminary analysis provided us with several useful insights. Based on these results, a few revisions to the pilot were made in order to improve instructions. Also, the scoring rubric was slightly modified to account for students' solutions that are correct but do not quite follow the methods they were instructed to use.

The data also suggests that students tended to struggle more with applied problems than with pure mathematical problems. This is an interesting finding that we would like to explore further in future assessments. Faculty are interested in the incorporation of OpenBook student data into the analysis. This additional analysis should be completed by the end of the semester and will provide valuable insights into the possible use of OpenBook in our later assessments.

Finally, the Mathematics department has been having some conversations this semester regarding the possible disappearance across the district of the developmental classes (Math 98 and 99). In order to prepare for such a change, we may develop some tools aimed at assessing essential student skills in those classes. Therefore, the unit-level assessment activities in the upcoming semester will likely now focus on student learning outcomes from developmental math classes.

Fernando Miranda-Mendoza, Mathematics

Assessment of Online Learning at Harold Washington College

The "Wild-Wild West" era in online education might be coming to an end, but there is no end to the numerous questions and concerns regarding its quality. One thing is certain: online education is here to stay. Moreover, it is likely to expand: according to the Sloan's Foundation 2011 study, a majority of college presidents foresee an increase in online offerings by their institutions. A traditional way to address the quality of an institution's educational offerings is accreditation. For online education, one of the safest routes is to house the virtual courses under the roof of an established and accredited brick and mortar institution. As Harold Washington College is settling into the role of such an institution (through becoming an overseer of all online courses offered by Chicago City Colleges), we are facing the task of expanding our assessment strategies to the online courses.

I have asked our own Harold Washington College assessment experts, Carrie Nepstad and Jen Asimow, to share their ideas about assessment of our online offerings.

Q: Currently, we are in the process of aligning course goals and student learning outcomes (SLOs) between face-to-face and online versions of the same courses. Would you expect our online student population to become a seamless addition to the consistently assessed face-to-face population or will it require additional and/or alternative assessment approaches?

Jen: In other words, will the online courses seamlessly become a part of our larger assessment efforts? There are several ways that our current approaches to assessment at HWC will translate to the online format. The larger, general education assessments that have been completed over the past 3-4 years have already included opportunities for online learners to participate and captured that data successfully. The Assessment Committee will have to consider how online learners are like and unlike face-to-face learners and make some big decisions about how to incorporate this new facet of HWC completely into our current practices.

Carrie: At this point, I anticipate that assessment practices will align between face-to-face courses and their online counterparts. The whole point for writing course level SLOs is to articulate learning expectations in such a way that we are able to formally assess them, knowing full well that there are many layered learning outcomes that occur which are not assessable. If the SLOs are the same between face-to-face and online courses, then the assessments which are designed to assess those SLOs should also be the same or similar. For example if an SLO includes students presenting a speech, an instructor may use an oral communication rubric in class during the speech, or while watching a videotape of a student who recorded a speech for an online course. The outcome is the same. The rubric can be the same as well, but may include adjustments based on the delivery system. For example, a face-to-face instructor may focus on the student's ability to make eye contact with audience members while the online instructor may focus on the student's ability to look into the camera. The outcome is the same and the rubric is the same, but the way in which a student meets the outcome may be slightly different based on the course delivery system.

Q: According to some, all approaches used in an online teaching can be viewed as assessment strategies, do you agree with that statement?

Jen: I am not sure… I would say, that learning opportunities are not assessments, but they may be assessable.

Carrie: I'm not sure of the context for this statement, but I can see how people may view online teaching as a form of assessment because in an online format an instructor is collecting so much information from students which could be perceived as assessment data. The goal of assessment is to collect data in order to improve student learning, but I am concerned at the low level of information that is potentially collected. For example, an instructor can examine the student's dashboard to see how often the student logs in to the course and may "count" that as participation, but this does not reflect the quality of a student's participation. The same is true for a face-to-face course and attendance. Attending a course session does not equate with deep engagement with the material. I think the allure of data collection from an online course, just because we can, should be cautioned with reminders of the overall purpose of assessment which is to collect data about student learning in order to improve it. Online learning is not the answer to the assessment puzzle. It is just another format where it is possible to collect lots of data. The key is not to collect more data, but to be intentional about the data we collect by reflecting on how it relates to the stated SLOs and considering how the data helps the instructor and the department understand student learning in that unit of study.

Q: Your department (Applied Sciences) and, specifically, the child development program, has an extensive experience with offering the same courses in face-to-face and online formats. Have you attempted to compare student performances in these two different course delivery formats and if you did, what were your findings?

Jen: After a few semesters of offering our online courses, we realized that assessing those courses should be a component of our program assessment system. In CD, we use the same rubrics throughout the program to collect data from our "Key Assessments." Instructors have a lot of freedom and flexibility in how they use the rubrics, but we do ask that certain rubrics be used in specific courses. The assignments vary, but the outcomes remain consistent. I am currently analyzing the data to determine if there are differences between online learning and face-to-face learning.

Carrie: I am very interested in this question, but a bit cautious about comparisons between the two delivery systems because I think it is difficult to control for variables in the comparison. In other words, I am cautious about concluding that differences between data collected in online courses compared to face-to-face courses would

be attributed solely to the delivery system. It's something I would like to study further to see how this has been explored in the assessment literature. The Assessment Committee is starting to ponder this question and will be collecting general education assessment data from all formats: face-to-face, online, and hybrid. However, I suspect we will get better results at the departmental unit level rather than the general education level because within departments we may be able to control more variables between multiple sections of the same course as we are doing in Child Development. We really are at the beginning stages of this inquiry. I guess this question as a to-be-continued response!

Q: Jen, in the recent "Closing the loop" edition of the HWC Assessment Times you mention that assessment can frequently "support what we see in the classroom," do you have any consistent observations in your online classrooms that you would have liked to check through a large-scale assessment?

Jen: Anecdotally, I have noticed that my online students (the ones who persist and stick with the courses until the end) tend to be more academically prepared that my face-to-face students. They tend to write better, have stronger technological skills, and frequently have degrees and are coming back for additional training. Often, these students prefer the online format because of their very busy schedules. They are confident about putting their writing out there, for all to read (in terms of the Discussions) and need less instruction about assignments and course expectations.

Yes, I would like to see if these trends persist throughout the college. I am especially interested in writing skills as I see this as one of those questions that can be answered through good assessment. If our most recent assessment of Effective Writing revealed "students who were assigned more writing, performed better than those who did not" then it stands to reason that the persistent writing required in online formats supports this developing skill. However, it may be a "chicken and egg" scenario, in which students who are already good writers, self –select for online formats, and weaker writers do not. Unfortunately, this might tell us that those who need this "persistent writing" in their courses, may not be getting it as needed.

Q: One of the main goals of assessments is course improvements, do you think that the assessment-based course improvement process will happen in a similar way in face-to-face and online courses?

Jen: I would substitute "course improvements" with "improving student learning…" and it is hard to say. Before

we can consider whether or not online assessment can lead to improving student learning at HWC, the college needs to determine how to provide excellence in online learning, quality design, and superior access to resources. This has yet to be seen.

Carrie: I want to be careful about the language here. The goal of assessment is not to improve the course. The goal of assessment is to improve student learning. If to improve student learning the faculty determine that a course should be changed, then that is how assessment can inform curricular decisions. It's a subtle, but important distinction. I do think that assessment can inform curricular decisions related to course delivery, but only if faculty keep student learning at the center of their reflections about the assessment process. Right now, I think there is a lot of emphasis on accountability measures in online learning – are the students who they say they are, are the students cheating, is there a way to assure that the student is the person doing his/her work and not someone else? These are important questions to consider, but they are not necessarily part of the assessment process. Rarely considered is the link between SLOs and the design of learning opportunities within the course. Good course design suggests that SLOs should directly link to the learning opportunities in all courses whether they are face-to-face or online. For example, how does an assignment provide opportunities for students to achieve a particular SLO? If course design considers SLOs in terms of learning opportunities, assessment will naturally follow. However, I think we have a long way to go to get to that point in any course we offer regardless of the learning delivery system.

Jen Asimow and Carrie Nepstad, interviewed by Yev Lapik

Assessment Committee members
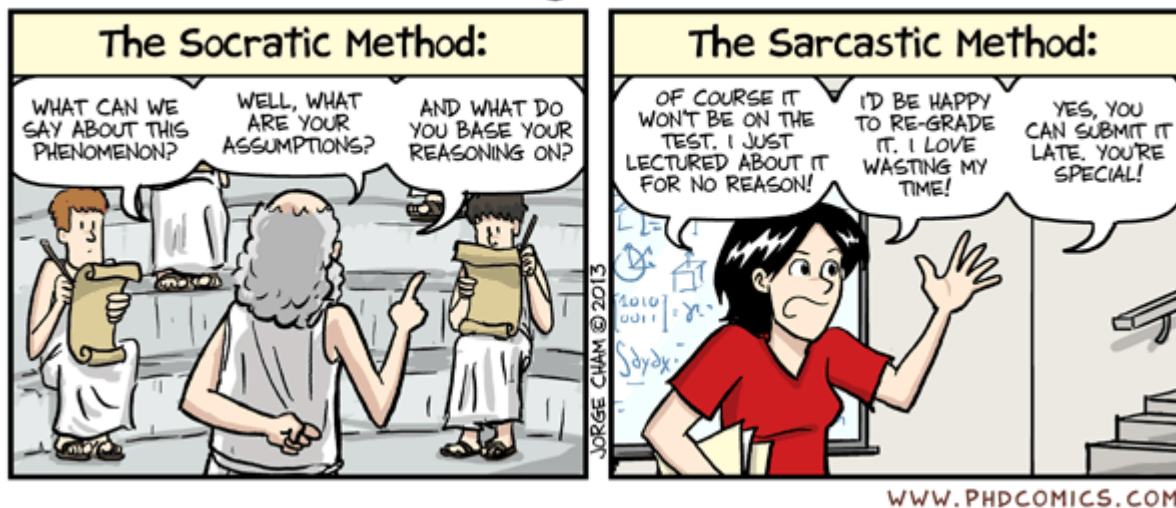
Assessment Progress in the Physical Sciences

After spending last year choosing assessment tools that best matched our departmental needs, this year the department finally rolled out its assessment plan for most of its classes. With the exception of a handful of courses, every class has a pre- and post-test chosen, and the pretests have been given at the start of the semester. The departmental faculty, both adjuncts and fulltime, have been very supportive of these efforts and willing to sacrifice their class time administering these assessments. Thanks, everyone!

The preliminary results are already proving to be interesting. The data from General Chemistry I have been the most thoroughly studied, since this is the class with the most sections. The pretest that was chosen, the Toledo Exam from the American Chemical Society, has sixty total questions divided into three sections. The first twenty questions cover basic math skills, while the second twenty test "general" chemical knowledge and the last section covers "specific" chemical knowledge.

The second and third sections confirmed that students enter general chemistry with very little prior chemical knowledge. This is despite the fact that there are chemistry prerequisites for the class (either Chemistry 121 or one year of high school chemistry). On average, they understand the distinction between chemical and physical changes, can use the density equation in calculations, and can read a chemical formula. However, relatively basic questions about topics such as balancing equations or predicting chemical reactivity were missed by the majority of our

students.

Students scored the best on the section on math skills – on average, students scored a 70% on the first part of the test, compared to 46% on the second and 35% on the third. This is interesting because chemistry faculty often report that a lack of basic math skills is hampering many students as they try to master chemistry concepts.

Does the Toledo Exam do a poor job assessing either the depth or breadth of the math skills that are needed in chemistry? Or is it that a poor math background is not usually the biggest barrier to success in a chemistry course? Clearly, further investigations are needed.

Allan Wilson, Physical Sciences

Unit Level Assessment in Art and Architecture

Unit level assessment takes place in the Department of Art and Architecture at the individual course level for the AFA Studio Art Degree. This Fall marks the 7th consecutive semester that Art 144, (Two Dimensional Design) and Art 131, (General Drawing) have been assessed.

The assessments measure the level of command with skills introduced to students during the semester. The assessed skills are being applied and utilized with their projects in relation to meeting the syllabus outcomes.

Art 144, 2D Design

In 2D Design, the results over the last seven semesters

have proven steady and encouraging. The use of 1-point perspective, 2-point perspective and Isometric projection are areas of sustained strength. These are key skills needed in the 2D studio courses that follow this course sequentially. Command of linear perspective allow students to accurately depict space and depth in a composition and is a foundational skill for all drawing, painting and printmaking courses.

Value is a skill that has been part of the assessment for just two semesters and has al-ready shown growth. This is another key skill students need for 2D studio courses that follow this course sequentially. The ability to create value through shading and hatching gives shapes a sense of form, volume and mass. These are areas for growth, but have already shown an increase in command in just the two semesters value has been assessed.

A goal for the Art 144 assessment has been to add more skills to be measured. Color theory will be added next, and discussions are currently under way with Art 144 instructors regarding the measuring tool. The hope is to have it included in the Fall 2016 Assessment. Once the new skills are added, the Art 144 shared vocabulary list will also be updated to reflect the specific color theory terminology covered.

Art 131, Beginning Drawing

In Beginning Drawing, the results have also been steady and encouraging. This assessment is an observational drawing of a still life that should demonstrate an understanding and command of various observation skills and underlying foundational skills. The assessment has consistently revealed that the overall scores are impacted by the amount of previous Art courses completed by the student. Although Beginning Drawing is considered a studio class, it does not have a prerequisite of the foundation class, 2D Design.

The sequence of classes should be that students take the 2D Design (foundation class) before taking Beginning Drawing. Due to how schedules are made across District and how prerequisites would have a negative impact on some CCC Colleges, 2D Design cannot be a prerequisite at this time. Not all CCC schools offer both courses every semester, so enrollment would be impacted at those schools. In light of this being a recognized problem, the hope is to have 2D Design as a "recommended" class for Beginning Drawing. This still would not require students
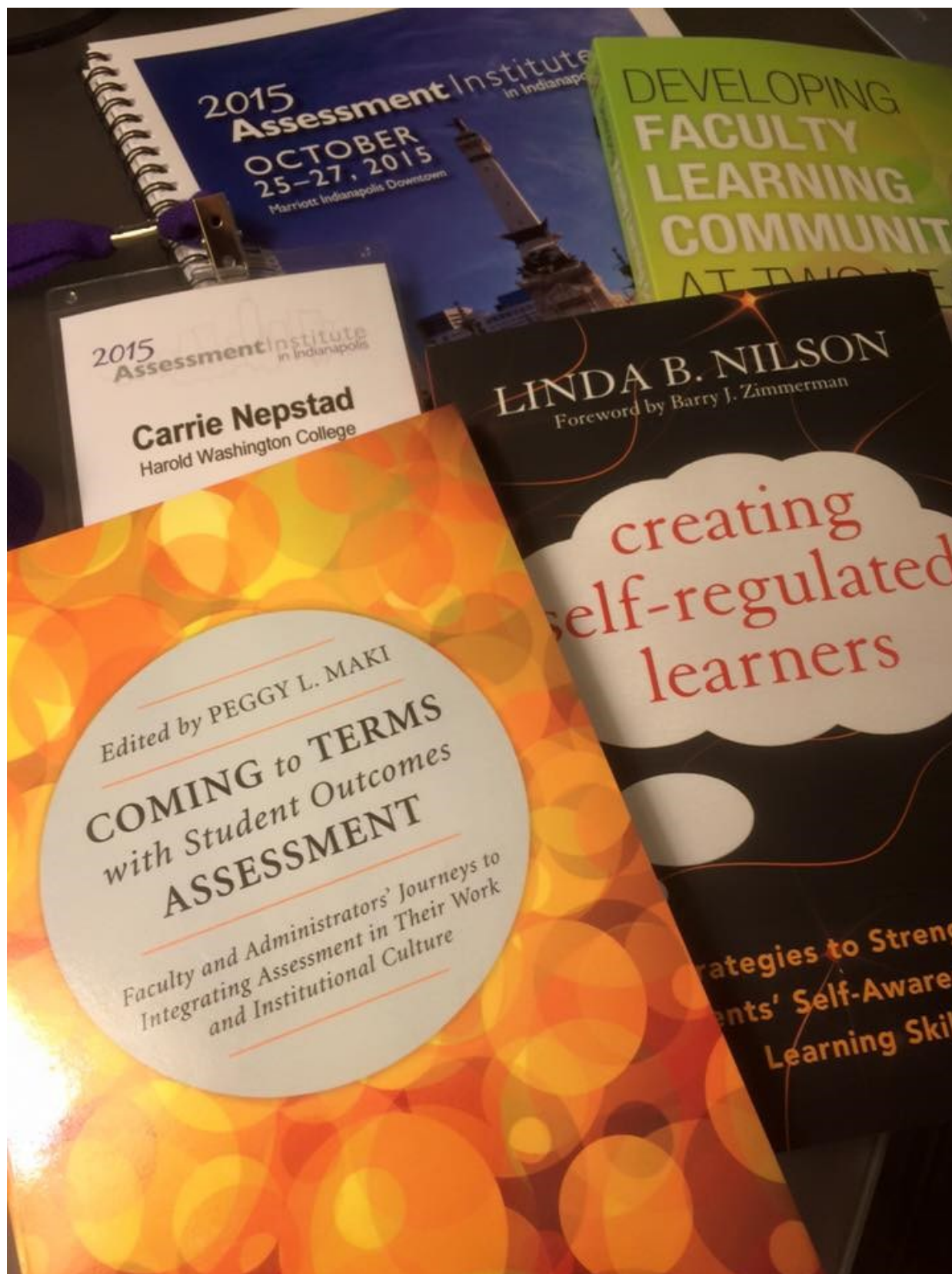
In the spring newsletter I will provide you with some tips for assessment readings
that I picked up from attending the Assessment Institute in October. -- Carrie

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ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE CHARGE

The HWC Assessment Committee is dedicated to the improvement of student learning through the meaningful utilization of assessment data in an effort to support the HWC community towards the evolution of college curriculum. As outlined in this charge, the HWC Assessment Committee is committed to defining assessment at Harold Washington College, as well as establishing and ensuring that appropriate assessment procedures and practices are followed in collecting, reviewing, analyzing and disseminating information/data on assessment. Finally, the HWC Assessment Committee is responsible for providing a forum for dialogue regarding assessment issues to support a college culture, which includes the assessment process.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

We are always looking for new faculty, students and staff to join in our exciting work. We meet every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in room 1046. All are welcome to join us. The Committee Charge states that there can only be two voting members from each department, but we are happy to involve as many people in our work as possible. If you want to discuss what this might involve or ask further questions, please contact Carrie Nepstad (see contact info at left).

to take the classes in sequence but would demonstrate the importance of doing so and hopefully encourage at least the students at CCC schools that offer both classes every semester to take them in proper sequence.

With sequential matters in mind, the overall performance on the assessment is meeting expectations within the context of the experience students have coming in to the course. The observational drawing skills introduced in the course are strengths demonstrated by the students, and the foundation-based skills are the ones that are sometimes inconsistent and show room for growth. This usually depends on whether they have previously taken 2D Design or not.

Recommendations that are going to be put into practice in the future should help address the areas for growth. A shared vocabulary will be distributed to all instructors at the start of the semester to reinforce key terminology supporting the assessment. General resource handouts for some of the foundational skills will also be provided to instructors to disseminate as they feel appropriate to supplement their course materials.

AFA Studio Art Degree Assessment has proven to be a valuable tool that enables instructors to receive tangible insights in Art 144 and Art 131. These insights on student performance help to strengthen and reinforce what is going on in class every semester. The ability to assess, recognize trends and immediately adapt the next semester benefits the overall success of the students, instructors, and the AFA Studio Degree.

Paul Wandless, Art and Architecture

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