

The Assessment Times:

Recipes for Learning and Fun

NOURISHING MINDS AND BODIES

by Erica McCormack, Chair of HWC Assessment Committee

There are two things we on the Assessment Committee love *nearly* as much as we love to talk about student learning: snacks, and metaphors. Our focus is always on better understanding and improving student learning, but we are confident that snacks help us do that (*this is one case where I'll ignore our committee rule about not confusing correlation with causation: snacks aid thinking and facilitate community, and I can't be convinced otherwise*).

Those of you like-minded colleagues who can appreciate some good food for thought, whether that's literal food for the body or figurative food for the mind, will find offerings to whet your appetite within these pages. Our members have generously shared the delicious *and* nutritious products of their kitchens along with their usual thoughtful reflections on our work. We'd love for you to join us in doing that work (*no such thing as too many cooks in this kitchen!*) as we continue to refine our special sauce in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Our committee is known for following a well-reviewed and reliable recipe in order to better understand student learning at all levels (from small units like multiple sections of a course to larger units, up to and including our entire institution). Yet we have also been busy renovating our kitchen and expanding our menu of assessment



offerings to better suit the array of student learning questions we investigate. We will continue to keep the community apprised of our evolving practice and are particularly looking forward to sharing what we've learned about student participation at the Institutional level during the Fall 2022 semester.

Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO)

PARTICIPATE: To participate constructively is to engage in action that facilitates progress toward shared ends and includes (but is not limited to) student effort put into group tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to group/team discussions; this objective includes civic engagement, understood as the ability to participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community and entails intercultural knowledge, understood as "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts."

TASTING MENU

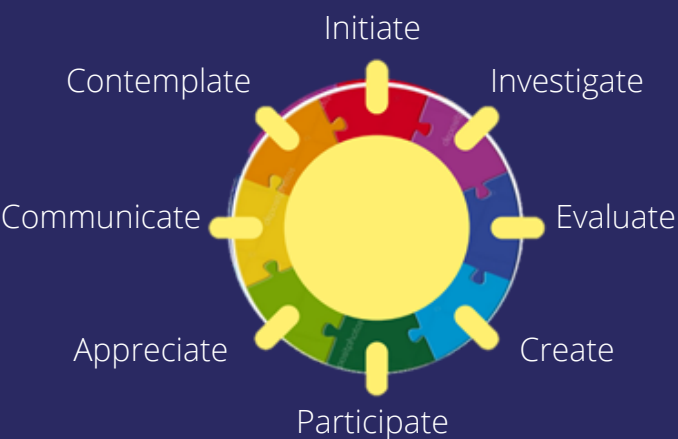
- 2 - Invitation to Fall 2022 Assessment Meetings
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You are Invited!
Assessment Committee Meetings will return in Fall 2022 to home base: room 1046. We'd love to share ideas (and snacks!) with you!
Meetings will also be accessible through zoom for those still working remotely (*link to be shared at the beginning of the academic year*).
We meet every Wednesday (*between weeks 2 and 15 of each semester*) from 3-4 PM



Please explore our other resources on the
[Harold Washington College Assessment Committee Webpage](#)



Student Capabilities and ILOs (Institutional Learning Outcomes)

What every student should be able to do as a result of their coursework and other experiences at HWC.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION (HLC) YEAR-4 ASSURANCE REPORT

By Carrie Nepstad, Social and Applied Sciences

As described on their [website](#), HLC “is an institutional accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to accredit degree-granting colleges and universities”. Each of the City Colleges of Chicago is independently accredited by HLC.

Harold Washington College (HWC) is part of the [Open Pathway](#) including an on-site [Comprehensive Evaluation](#) in year-10, and [Virtual Assurance Review](#) in year-4. HWC had its year-10 review in 2018, and was granted reaffirmation of accreditation with no interim monitoring. And now, in 2022, it's time for the year-4 Assurance Review!

How does this relate to the HWC Assessment Committee?

Part of the accreditation process is for institutions to demonstrate alignment with [HLC criteria](#). **Criterion 4 includes the assessment of student learning:**

- Criterion 1: Mission
- Criterion 2: Integrity, Ethical Responsibility and Conduct
- Criterion 3: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
- Criterion 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
- Criterion 5: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources, and Planning

Newsflash

"In whatever role(s) you serve, if you would like to share your updates from the past four years (new programs, initiatives, grants, projects, etc.) , please contribute to this simple and brief brainstorming survey or send your questions and suggestions to Carrie Nepstad" (cneptad@ccc.edu)

Criterion 4.B. The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.

The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

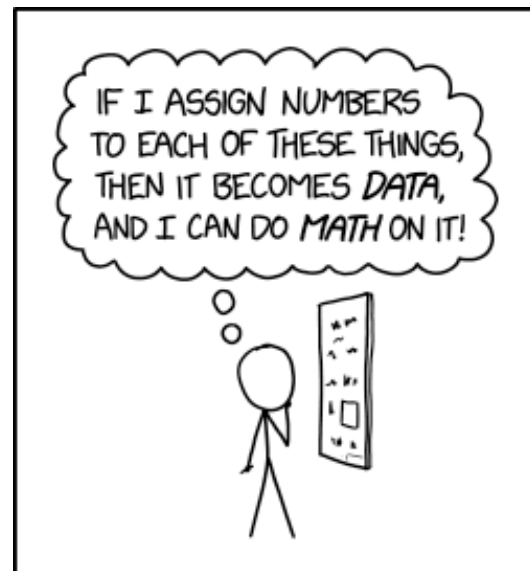
The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation and other relevant staff members.

Does that sound familiar? The language in Criterion 4B shares many similarities with the HWC Assessment Committee's Mission and [Charge](#). With the work the HWC Assessment Committee does every semester to learn more about student learning, to share those results and recommendations with the community, and the resulting communications, documents, and reports it produces each year (including the *Assessment Times*) the Assessment Committee can serve as an authentic source of evidence for HLC Assurance processes.

Continued on next page

The HWC Year-4 Assurance Review is happening right now! Our final updated report is due in early fall. We are currently collecting sources of evidence from the Assessment Committee's work as well as all other HWC departments and programs.

In whatever role(s) you serve, if you would like to share your updates from the past four years (new programs, initiatives, grants, projects, etc.) , please contribute to this simple and brief [brainstorming survey](#) or send your questions and suggestions to Carrie Nepstad at cnepstad@ccc.edu



THE SAME BASIC IDEA UNDERLIES
GÖDEL'S INCOMPLETENESS THEOREM
AND ALL BAD DATA SCIENCE.

SOURCE: Randall Munroe. XKCD. "Assigning Numbers." <https://xkcd.com/2610/>



ASSESSMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (ACP)

By Carrie Nepstad, Social and Applied Sciences

City Colleges of Chicago is a member of the [Assessment Certificate Program](#) along with Loyola University and DePaul University.

ACP Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop strategies to strengthen assessment processes, planning, and data reporting that informs the CCC community about student learning.
2. Embed equity and inclusivity in the assessment of student learning
3. Administer an assessment cycle, including the collection and analysis of data.
4. Communicate assessment processes to various stakeholders to make evidence-based recommendations to improve student learning

All City Colleges faculty, staff, and administrators can take any workshops within the ACP.

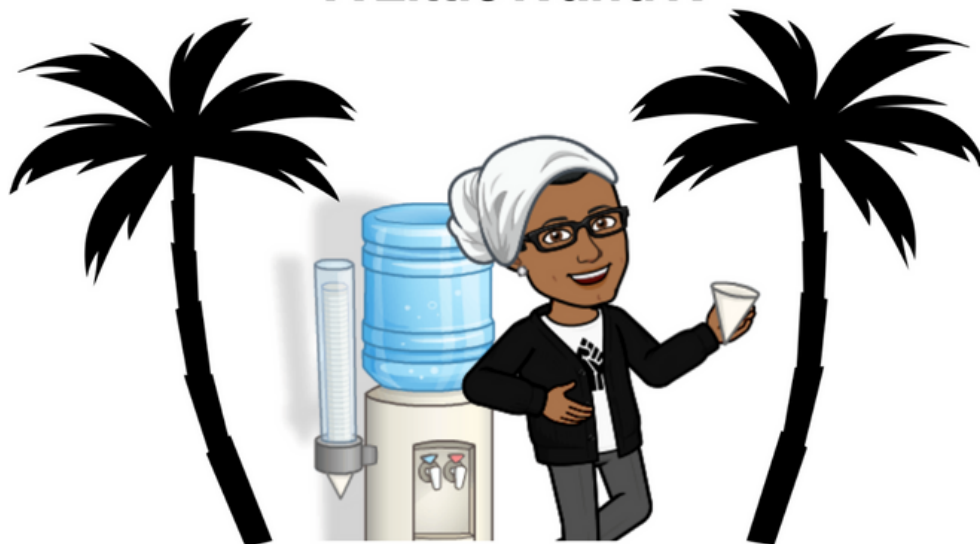
To earn the certificate:

- Attend CCC's online Introduction to Assessment Workshop
- Attend four core assessment workshops based on your interest and assessment needs
- Propose and complete a culminating project based on your assessment interests and conditions of your home institution.
- Attend a final workshop to present and discuss your completed culminating project

For more information about the ACP, contact:
District Director of Accreditation, Assessment, and
Faculty Development, Monica Freeland
(mfreeland@ccc.edu)

Stay tuned for an updated calendar of workshops for the 2022-2023 academic year!

A Little R and R



Reflecting and Reimagining Assessment
with Ukaisha Al-Amin

bitmoji by Ukaisha Al-Amin

REFLECTING AND REIMAGINING ASSESSMENT

By Ukaisha Al-Amin, Vice-Chair of the HWC Assessment Committee

Episode 2: Critical Thinking Across the College, and Food for Thought

Hello readers, and welcome back to a Little R and R. Last semester, we began discussing one category of learning outcomes: critical thinking. This learning outcome takes different shapes across the many disciplines we have.

Here are a few ways that professors are reflecting on and assessing critical thinking.

- "Critical thinking manifests in my Composition classroom by students proving that they not only understand the mechanics of writing (organization, grammar, formatting) but that they have unique perspectives to contribute to a conversation about a text--typically through analysis. When they are able to articulate their unique "reading" of a text, I know they have thought critically about a text." -Alisa Allkins
- "I try to offer my art history students ways of showing their critical thinking by using Classroom Assessment Techniques (at least ones that function on zoom) to reveal which features of an artwork the class as a whole is paying close attention to, and which ones are escaping notice. I ask "which of these doesn't belong" and have students vote for one of four artworks. Students then explain why they think someone might have voted for each option (not just the one they selected themselves) so they imagine what other people might be noticing and become more attuned to their own tendencies in analysis. Sometimes they're paying more attention to materials, or size, or subject matter, or a particular artistic style, or cultural context. These are all important components of understanding any artwork." -Erica McCormack

- Todd Heldt views information literacy as the nexus of research skills and critical thinking. To support the library's mission of teaching students information literacy skills, he and his colleagues have created Brightspace modules that include readings, exercises, and formative assessment tools. These modules can be created for virtually any class. Contact him with your ideas and questions!
- To see an example of assessing student's critical thinking when it is implied in a SLO rather than explicitly stated, see Zeke Yusof's piece "Assessing An Aspect of Students' Critical Thinking While Fulfilling A Learning Objective in Astronomy 201"

Whether we are assessing critical thinking or research skills, finding unique and fun ways to teach a learning outcome is sometimes the best part of teaching. I know I've spent ponderous hours creating an activity or choosing materials. At times, I know I am more enthusiastic about the activity or project than the student is, but come on; getting to decide which types of chips or cookies to use for an evaluation activity is a lot more fun than assessing a stack of exit exams. Let's keep it real. This got me to thinking: Why is planning the assignment easier than grading it?

Continued on next page

The most obvious answer is that the stakes are still low. We have the learning outcome and we come up with a way or multiple ways to teach it. Easy peasy.

However, somewhere along the way, maybe during an exit ticket, or some other classroom assessment technique, we start to realize that students are not quite grasping the concepts or we notice they are dreading turning in the final assignment, so we start to dread reading/grading the final assignment. The classroom begins to reek of what the 'quagmire of doom' would smell like—if it wasn't in the ocean and fictional

But usually, we push on. We add in another teaching moment, or we do another review of the material, or we have students write meta-cognitively about how they are feeling about the assignment. Then the day comes.

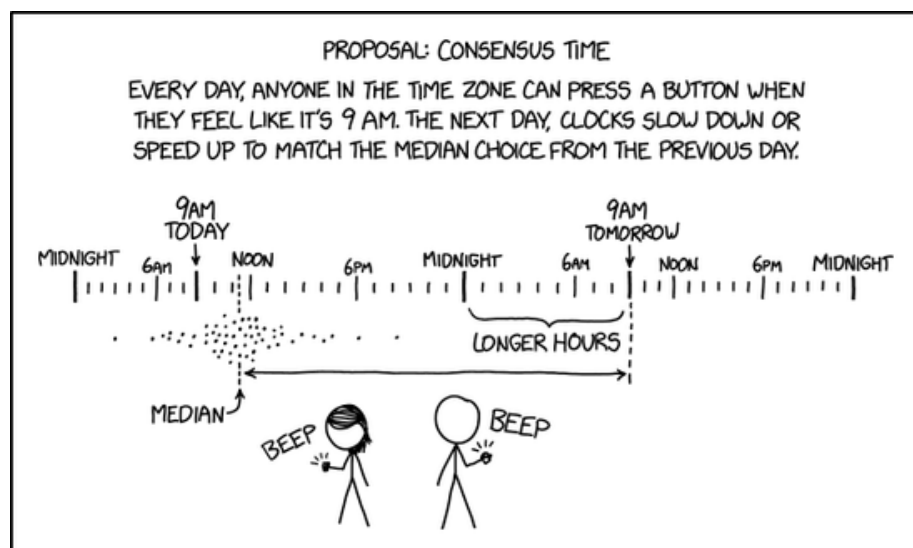
Imagine this: the Brightspace folders are all filling up, and it is time. But first, you have to grab a snack. The fruit strips from your kids' lunches are looking really tasty, and so is that trail mix with the dark chocolate that you were kind of saving, but really you noticed the ratio is off, so you were waiting to mix it with another bag of almonds before eating it. It doesn't stop there. After opening your laptop or sitting at the computer, you look at the TurnItIn scores, and realize you need tea or coffee or both.

After a trip to the kitchen to brew the Mahogany roast, or boil water to steep some green tea with ginger and lemon, you realize you kind of want toast, or a bagel, or an English muffin with jam. If you've been fasting all day and still need to grade, you try not to eat the whole plate of Biryani or Jollof Rice because then you would just be too full. Or maybe you are still on campus and pull out a breakfast biscuit, or a pack of plantain chips, or a piece of fruit. You try to estimate how long it would take to run and grab something to eat from the closest restaurants in a one-block radius. If you order ahead, it will take 15 minutes.

I know, many of you were like, 'Wow, that was very specific'. This is because we've all had these moments. The point is that assessing high stakes assignments can be stressful. You could have the best rubric, methods of offering feedback, and the right kind of questions on your test and there could still be moments where you worry that it was all for naught.

It is my opinion that we need snacks to do this work. But also, if you are worried about whether students are learning and to what extent, you are on the right track. This means you care, and as long as you continue to reflect on how you are assessing students and changing gears when you see the need, you are helping students learn.

Ukaisha Al-Amin's
"Food for Thought"
Recipes for
Oatmeal Cranberry
Cookies and for Jollof
Rice can be found on
pages 7-8



SOURCE: Randall Munroe. XKCD.
"Consensus Time." <https://xkcd.com/2594/>

"FOOD FOR THOUGHT" RECIPES FROM UKAISHA AL-AMIN



photo courtesy of Ukaisha Al-Amin

Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies: Instructions

- 1. Prep:** Chop cranberries, measure out ingredients, melt butter.
- In a medium bowl, mix together oats and melted butter. Let sit for one full minute.
- Add brown sugar and stir until combined.
- Add flour, cinnamon, salt, and vanilla.
- Add milk and stir until combined.
- Mix in chopped cranberries. The dough should come away from the bowl clean.
- Using a tablespoon, scoop cookie balls onto a cookie pan lined with parchment paper. These cookies spread! Place at least one inch apart.
- Wrap remaining dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies (Makes 24 cookies)

Ingredients	Utensils/Supplies
1 cup Old Fashioned Oats	Medium mixing bowl
1/2 cup butter/margarine/ vegan stick	Wooden spoon
1 cup brown sugar	Cookie sheet
1 cup flour	Parchment paper
1 tsp baking soda	Measuring spoons and cups
1/4 tsp cinnamon	Plastic wrap
1 tsp vanilla (small batch or paste)	
1/2 tsp salt	
1/4 cup milk	
1 cup of chopped dried cranberries	



THE BEST PRANK YOU CAN
PLAY ON PSYCH MAJORS IS
JUST TO OFFER THEM A SNACK.

"FOOD FOR THOUGHT" RECIPES FROM UKAISHA AL-AMIN

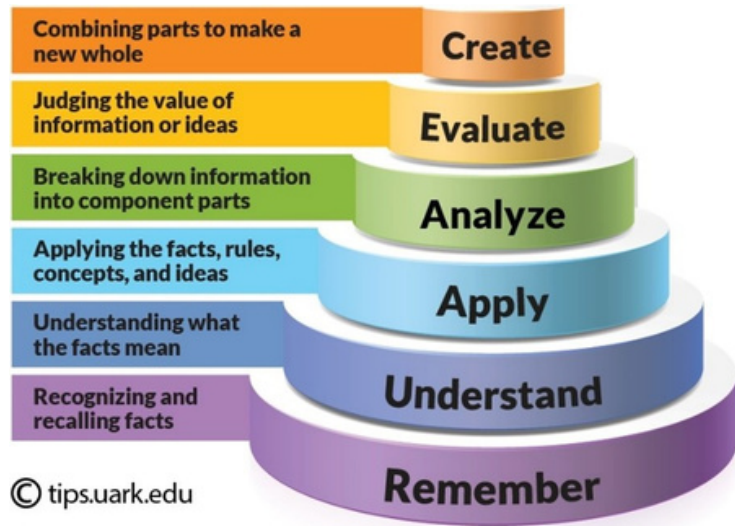
Ingredients for Quick Jollof Rice--for when you have too many papers to grade.

(If you would like the weekend Jollof recipe, just let me know)

TOMATO & PEPPER STEW BASE (OBE ATA)	CHICKEN
2 cans stewed tomatoes	3 lbs boneless chicken legs (<i>cut into medium pieces</i>)
1 can tomato paste	1 small onion
1 med. size red bell pepper	2 tsp smoked paprika
2 med. size yellow onions	RICE
2 scotch bonnet peppers (<i>see footnote 1</i>)	2 cups golden rice (long grained, parboiled)
2 Tbsp of ginger and garlic paste (<i>see footnote 2</i>)	3 cups water
1 Tbsp thyme	UTENSILS/SUPPLIES
4 Tbsp Jollof seasoning (<i>see footnote 3</i>)	Blender
1 box (2 cubes) chicken maggie (<i>see footnote 4</i>)	Large pot and mixing spoon
1 cup vegetable oil	Spatula
salt to taste	Aluminum foil
Footnotes 1. Most stores carry this pepper, but you will definitely find it at any Cermak Foods, Petes, or stores on Devon. 2. This is a combined paste. Lazzat or Shan brand. If you want, you can use 2 cloves of garlic and 1 tablespoon of minced ginger root or paste. 3. Iya Foods is sold at Marianos or local grocery stores 4. Maggie is chicken stock cubes. They have the Halal versions on Devon.	Frying pan

Quick Jollof Rice: Instructions

- Prep:** Wash rice. Cut onions and bell pepper just small enough to be blended. Chop small onion. Season chicken with salt and smoked paprika.
 - Into a blender, add both cans of stewed tomatoes, cut onions, cut bell pepper, and scotch bonnet peppers (*without the seeds unless you like it very spicy*), and ginger/garlic paste. Blend until smooth.
 - In frying pan, use some of the oil to pan fry the chicken. When half way done, add chopped 1 small onion. Finish cooking together.
 - In the pot, add rest of oil. When oil is hot, pour stew base into the pot. Mix it. Add can of tomato paste. Add Jollof seasoning, Maggie cubes, and thyme. Let cook until half reduced and oil sits on top of stew. Stir occasionally.
 - Take the chicken out of the pan and set to the side. Scrape the onion and the oil from the pan into the pot. Stir. Taste. If needed, add salt. Cook until fully reduced.
 - Add water to reduced stew. Stir, then add the rice. Stir, then cover. If your pot lets out too much steam, use aluminum foil to cover the pot then put the lid on. You want the rice to absorb all the stew. 30 minutes
- Note:** The rice will probably stick to the bottom of your pot and scorch. That is okay. That creates a smoky flavor.
- Serve with the chicken on top.



Bloom's Taxonomy Rainbow Cake

Image credit Jessica Shabatura

<https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/>

ASSESSING AN ASPECT OF STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING WHILE FULFILLING A LEARNING OBJECTIVE IN ASTRONOMY 201

by Zeke Yusof, Physical Science

SLO

Describe the daily, monthly, and yearly motions of the sun, moon, planets, and stars as seen from Earth. Changes in the positions of these objects with respect to time should be noted.

BACKGROUND

The prerequisite for this course is: "Eligibility for ENGLISH 101 based on prior coursework or CCCRTW, ACT, SAT, GED, or HiSET test scores, or Consent of Department Chairperson.

IAI: P1 906 GE: Physical Sciences

For the class involved in this assessment, the overwhelming majority of the students were not STEM majors or intended-majors.

A method of assessing if the students had fulfilled this SLO item was via a Brightspace discussion topic related to the understanding of the cause of various Moon phases as seen on Earth. The students had already been introduced to the origin of the Moon phases and thus, they understood why we see them.

With that knowledge, they were given this topic to analyze and discuss:

Many people incorrectly guess that the phases of the Moon are caused by Earth's shadow falling on the Moon. How would you go about convincing a friend that the phases of the Moon have nothing to do with Earth's shadow? Describe a common observation that you could invoke to show that Earth's shadow can't be the cause of Moon phases. Please note that in this discussion, you are to describe an observation and argue why it is inconsistent with the notion that the Earth's shadow is the cause of Moon phases. Please use diagrams and sketches if it will make your explanation clearer.

This discussion topic assesses two major understandings that are part of the SLO: (i) the phase of the Moon during any part of the Moon phase cycle; and (ii) where in the sky and at what times such a phase can be observed. However, beyond the explicitly-stated SLO, there is a secondary but equally important critical thinking skill involved in tackling this topic, which is the ability to falsify an idea.

Continued on next page

The students already understood the cause of Moon phases, but in this discussion, they were being asked to falsify the claim that these phases are caused by the Earth's shadow on the Moon. This falsification must be convincing by using a common observation that could have been seen by anyone.

It was, therefore, rather surprising that approximately three-quarters of the students addressed this topic by providing the explanation for the cause of Moon phases. Instead of falsifying the claim, they instead provided an alternative, albeit the correct, explanation for why we observe Moon phases here on Earth. These students did not offer any argument and evidence on why claiming that the Moon phases due to Earth's shadow is incorrect.

In the ensuing discussion, I asked how they would react if they were given such a response. Would this type of argument cause them to change their minds? After all, all that was done was to provide an alternative explanation for the phases of the Moon. The original claim had not been shown to be incorrect. Why then would someone abandon such a belief?

Most of the students realized that they had not satisfied the original task of the discussion topic, i.e. they had not falsified the erroneous claim.

Upon further discussion with the students, I deduced two possible reasons for this:

(i) Since they already knew the reason why we see Moon phases, they simply concluded that offering the correct explanation was sufficient and convincing enough. They did not realize that offering an alternative explanation is not the same as falsifying a claim.

(ii) They were not aware of any common observation that could easily falsify the claim*.

There was another interesting outcome of this discussion. I pointed out to the students that in falsifying this claim, one did not have to subscribe to or even understand the correct explanation. Showing why the original claim was wrong did not require one to already have an opinion or acceptance of another explanation.

All one had to do was to show why the claim was wrong without any need to offer an alternative or correct explanation. Falsifying an argument and providing an alternative or correct explanation are two separate entities. It would be more convincing if one could offer both, but that was not required here.

My assessment at the end of this discussion topic was that the students had fulfilled part of the relevant SLO on this topic. They knew the explanation of why we see phases of the Moon. However, it showed a weakness in critical thinking. In this case, analyzing the claim and being aware of what was needed to fulfill the task were challenging to most of them. The dichotomy between falsifying an argument and providing the correct explanation appeared to be blurred, resulting in the erroneous perception that offering the latter implied that the former had been accomplished. In an exercise to assess their understanding of the material, I managed to get a glimpse of the students' analytical and critical abilities.

**A very common observation to falsify the original claim is the fact that one can see the crescent phase of the Moon, for example, during the day. This means that the Sun and the Moon are on the same side of the sky. In this configuration, since light travels in a straight line, it is impossible for the light from the Sun to hit the Earth and then cast a shadow on the Moon.*



ACADEMIC SUPPORT, FORWARD MOVEMENT

**By Veronica Villanueva,
Coordinator of Cocurricular Assessment**

During our Spring 2022 semester, we started to see more students coming into tutoring in-person since we made the transition back to campus. Currently, all of our tutoring services are offered virtually and in-person. This also includes all embedded tutors, who are embedded in some in-person courses and virtual courses. Academic Support will continue to offer both modalities as we see our students utilizing virtual services that are more flexible for their schedules.

Academic Support recently acquired room 408 and transformed the space into a collaborative learning space. The purpose is to merge support with active learning. This type of space will increase student utilization as well as effectiveness of academic support, it is excellent for fostering student efficacy in learning, such as in the development of reading and writing skills.

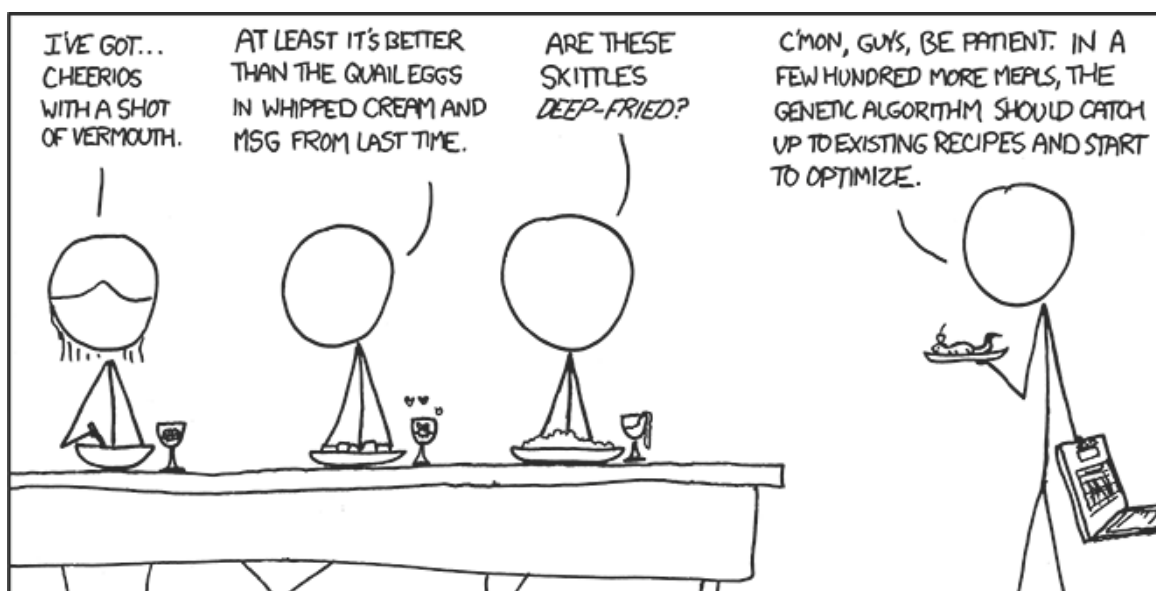
As Academic Support makes forward movement, they will be hiring more tutors in various disciplines, work-study front desk staff, and a new Coordinator of Academic Support!

Newsflash

*"If you are interested in having an embedded tutor in your course, we invite you to reach out to the Director of Academic Support, Kimberly Valenza!"
(kvalenza@ccc.edu)*

In addition, we hope to increase more embedded tutor utilization for the upcoming semesters. If you are interested in having an embedded tutor in your course, we invite you to reach out to the Director of Academic Support, Kimberly Valenza!

We hope that the growth of spaces and staff will allow for more classroom visits and for our students to continue to interact with embedded tutors in the classroom.



WE'VE DECIDED TO DROP THE CS DEPARTMENT FROM OUR WEEKLY DINNER PARTY HOSTING ROTATION.

AN EVER-EVOLVING RECIPE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

by Carrie Nepstad, Program Assessment



After a renewal process that spanned two years, with various extensions that were granted and a complete rewrite of its Key Assessments, the "Child Development: Pre-School

Education Associate of Applied Science" degree was granted a renewal of accreditation for seven years by the Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Yay! Let's celebrate with cake!

Hold on. Within one week of HWC being granted this renewal, NAEYC held a webinar to announce the rollout of its completely redesigned and updated accreditation standards and publicized the timeline for all programs to convert to this totally new system. Our HWC accreditation renewal stands until 2028, but we still have to rewrite our Key Assessments and Learning Opportunities in order to align with the updated standards, which we will need to report on regularly between 2023 and 2028 when we must go through the full renewal again.

Ha ha ha! Sob. We are fine. Everything is OK.

The good news is that the redesign of the NAEYC standards represents a profession-wide, national revision process; and City Colleges Child Development faculty, along with colleagues across the country, played a role in that revision by providing input and feedback. The new standards are improved, including a new position on Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education and other important updates in the Early Childhood Educator profession.

With that in mind, it will benefit our students to update Key Assessments and align our Learning Opportunities with the newly updated standards. Our students need the most up-to-date information about the field, and as an accredited program we must be nimble enough to adapt to those updates. Our recipe needs adjusting all the time!

One pillar of the early childhood profession is to focus on the process, and this fits well with assessment of student learning. Assessment is a process. We write outcomes and assessments. We collect data. We analyze that data and think about what that tells us about student learning. We make recommendations. We make changes. We observe and reflect, and then we assess again - add a dash here and a sprinkle there, and adjust the recipe.



WORKING TO IMPROVE ONE'S COOKING IS KIND OF LIKE ASSESSMENT!

By Carrie Nepstad, Social and Applied Sciences



A few years ago I transitioned to a plant-based diet. This meant that I needed to learn a new way to prepare food for myself and for my family. I've never been much of a cook. I knew a few basics, and the food I prepared was mostly edible. I wondered why my dishes were so, "blah". I really wanted to improve the experience.

Finally, I decided to take an online, plant-based cooking course. I learned how to use all of my senses to collect information as I cooked - to look at how the onions are browning, to listen to how the vegetables are sizzling in the pan, to smell the soup as it simmers, and to taste the food throughout the cooking process.

I learned various techniques for chopping and dicing things and when to add them to the pan or remove them from the heat. It's hard to understand now, but in the past I never did any of this! I never really looked at the food carefully, and I rarely tasted it before I put it on the table.

Now that I think of cooking as more of a sensory experience, it's really changed my relationship with food. I've improved the way I cook in terms of the various processes food must go through for a given dish. I now understand how to enjoy the process, to use various techniques, to collect information and adjust things as needed, and to present the meal in a pleasing way on the plate. In the end, I can say that the taste of the food has improved, and so has the whole experience of preparing and eating it!

I think this process is a bit like assessment. Sometimes we just do it and the result is kind of "blah". I think, like cooking, assessment of student learning works best when we are really engaged in the process - we pay attention to the ingredients and the techniques for preparing things, we pay attention along the way and make adjustments as needed, and we pay very close attention and work hard to present the assessment recommendations in a way that will be palatable to our friends and colleagues.

Sharing food together is a community building experience. It is a way to communicate with each other, to share space together, and to nourish ourselves. Maybe this is why, in the past, snacks were such an important part of the Assessment Committee weekly meeting. Assessment can be a community building experience too. We come together to share ideas, to digest them. It's committee work, to be sure, but it can also be an intellectually nourishing experience, and I've really come to appreciate that.



RECIPE FOR A HEALTHIER CAKE

By Farah Movahedzadeh, Liaison to Biology

As we get older, and hopefully wiser, we begin to assess what to eat in relation to our health. New Year's resolutions often become faded within a couple of months and disappointment remains.

There are certainly some foods that we cannot deny are satiable and crave them often, such as breads or desserts. Here is a recipe for a cake that I have been making for several years that has been a particular hit for those with a sweet tooth, but who don't want to feel the guilt of a rich and decadent treat.

This cake is an excellent source of fiber and is also gluten-free. The cinnamon provides a dose of strong antioxidants, has anti-inflammatory properties, and can even help to **lower** blood sugar levels.

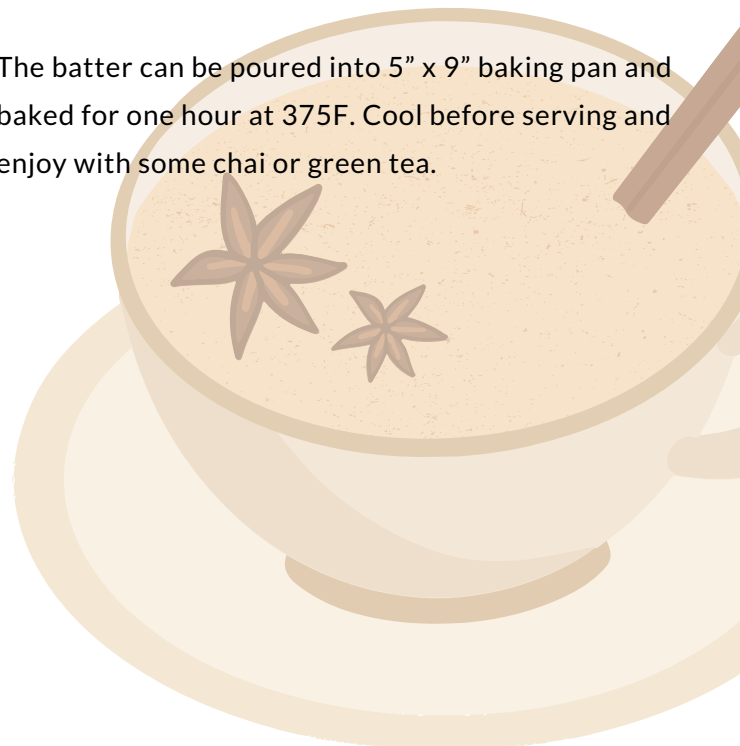
Ingredients

Two cups of oatmeal flour (*you can make it from scratch by grinding oatmeal*)
Pinch of baking powder
Pinch of salt
1 Tbsp of cinnamon
1 Tbsp of olive oil
2 eggs
1 Tbsp honey or brown sugar
3 bananas (preferably ripe and soft)
Dried berries (cranberry or raisin), or frozen blueberry

Instructions

In a large mixing bowl, combine and blend well the oatmeal flour, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon. Then mix in the olive oil and eggs, whisking the mixture well. Using a large metal fork or whisk, beat in the soft bananas and honey. Finally, stir the berries evenly through the mixture.

The batter can be poured into 5" x 9" baking pan and baked for one hour at 375F. Cool before serving and enjoy with some chai or green tea.



ASSESSMENT: YOUR RECIPE FOR CONNECTION

By David Richardson, Vice-Chair of the HWC Assessment Committee

If you are a longtime reader of the Assessment Times, you've seen a version of what I'm about to say, and probably more than once, but it bears repeating, especially as we emerge again from a pandemic winter: If you are in search of ways to connect or reconnect to your own enthusiasms and those of others, you should show up at an Assessment Committee meeting.

For years now, my committee colleagues have made the case in our accreditation argument, in "State of the College" and CAST presentations, in meetings and newsletters that Assessment Committee activities have been and continue to be a profound and effective form of professional development, so there's no need to rehearse the details here. Instead, I want to provide two disparate examples of assessment activities leading to both new learning (for me) and new connections. This semester I have served as Vice Chair of Unit Assessment, and so been meeting with our department liaisons, throughout the semester, including meeting with some members of the Business department who needed some help getting unstuck from a circumstantial conundrum and some others with Paul Wandless of the Art department for some discussions borne of a gift.

Our Business folks found themselves at a bit of an impasse after each of various attempts at measuring student learning in relation to their multiple programs were disrupted by calamities of the usual sort, such as faculty and administrative departures, and of the unusual and rare kind, such as the shift from Blackboard to Brightspace and then the pandemic.

Like all assessment projects, their work began with some conversations and questions: What do we want to know and where will we look for the information that will help us know? Bridgette Mahan, the Business department liaison, talked through some initial possibilities, which led—as often happens—to expanding the conversational circle. She invited Professors Brandon Pendleton and Adam Callery to our next meeting for more detailed discussion about their learning outcomes and assignments for Business 111, which is an entry course for all of their department programs.

In that conversation, we found a possible data source—both instructors use the same Pearson text and assign work from the text's MyLab companion software, but we all realized we needed to learn more about the software and what it might tell us. Brandon volunteered to set up a meeting for the four of us with the Pearson representative, and the next week we met, along with a consulting faculty member from another community college to learn about the software and its assessment potential. A few weeks later, we had pilot results, a plan for going forward, and a lot of excitement. In just about eight weeks, one interdisciplinary conversation between two faculty members, turned into four, including a colleague I had never previously had the pleasure of meeting, much less working with, which expanded beyond the college walls and left us with new, exciting possibilities.

Along the way, I met new people, learned all about a class that many of my students have or will take, explored some exciting and new (to me) learning technology, and built new connections both inside the college and beyond.

It was, in terms of the details, an entirely new experience, and also, in terms of the pattern, an entirely typical one.

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Over a decade ago now, I enjoyed a similar kind of experience working with Paul Wandless and learning about assessment in the Art department when we were first exploring the possibilities of doing unit assessment. Today, Paul runs ongoing assessments of student learning in two-dimensional and three-dimensional art that have yielded both interesting results and useful class-related initiatives, as his past Assessment Times contributions enumerate. When I asked him how I could support his work this semester, he said he had a gift for me and a homework assignment.

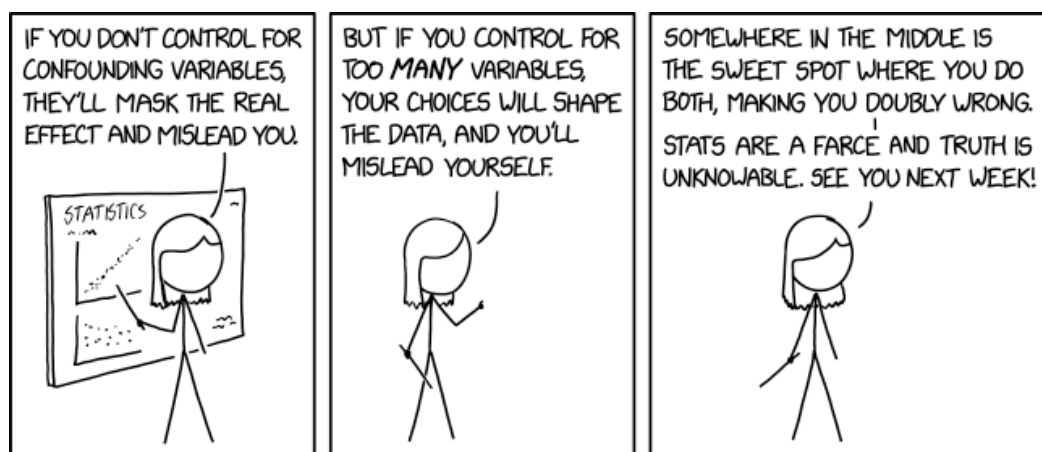
He had found a book called *Heidegger Among the Sculptors* and wanted to talk about it. I don't know much about aesthetics, but Paul and I had had conversations about reading and analyzing philosophy after he had assigned a short text on the nature of art to one of his classes, which eventually turned into a recurring element of his teaching. He also knew I had some background in existential philosophy and Heidegger because a few years earlier we had talked in the stairwell on our way down from the 10th floor after an Assessment meeting about Heidegger's essay, "On the Origin of the Work of Art." He was particularly interested in Heidegger's ideas about sculpture because it is both his specialty and rarely the primary focus of a kind of theoretical treatment.

So, Paul and I met to have book talks, which turned into new readings—Heidegger's "Art and Space," some secondary discussions of Heidegger's metaphysics and career by Patricia Altenbernd Johnson and Sarah Bakewell—and more discussions.

It felt a little bit like being in graduate school again, when a surprise meeting or chance encounter, sometimes literally bumping into someone and their interests, more often than not led to new pathways of exploration for both parties. How long had it been since I'd sat and worked through a philosophy text for myself rather than for a class? How long since I'd talked about Heidegger's thought for more than 45 seconds? Two decades, at least. And it was wonderful.

They were the kinds of conversations that I once thought would be a typical part of my professional day rather than the rarity they have proven to be amid the daily grind of emails and class preps and LMS reminders.

The point is, though I cannot promise you discussions of the intricacies of Dynamic Study Modules on Branding and Human Resources, nor conversation and inquiry about Heideggerian theories of being and space (which is maybe a relief for most of you?), I can promise you that if you decide to start showing up at Assessment Committee meetings with your enthusiasms in tow, you'll soon find them leading you to new encounters, new enthusiasms, and new connections. And after the last two years, who among us doesn't need more of all of those? And you don't have to do anything more than decide to show up.



SOURCE: Randall Munroe. XKCD.

"Confounding Variables" <https://xkcd.com/2560/>

Thank you to everyone who has contributed!

We'd love to count *you* among our members too.

We meet every Wednesday

(between weeks 2 and 15 of each semester) from 3-4 PM

Assessment Committee Meetings will return in Fall 2022 to room 1046. We'd love to share ideas (and snacks!) with you! Meetings will also be accessible through zoom for those still working remotely (*link to be shared at the beginning of the academic year*).

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS & MEETING ATTENDEES IN SPRING 2022

Ukaisha Al-Amin (English, Speech, Theater & Journalism)

Viggy Alexandersson (MXC, English)

Samar Ayesb (Physical Science)

Nancy Barrera (Student Government Association)

Evan Boyle (Student Government Association)

Ainka Clepper (Assoc. Dean, Advising & Transition)

Alysandra Cruz-Bond (Advising & Transition)

Juanita Del Toro (Social & Applied Sciences)

Ellen Goldberg (Transfer)

Ignatius Gomes (Biology)

Todd Heldt (Library)

Joseph Hinton (Assoc. Dean, Careers)

Aimee Krall-Lanoue (Dean of Instruction)

Yev Lapik (Biology)

Chao Lu (Mathematics)

Bridgette Mahan (Business)

Erica McCormack (Humanities & Music)

Luvia Moreno (Assoc. Dean, Student Services)

Farah Movahedzadeh (Biology)

Carrie Nepstad (Social & Applied Sciences)

David Richardson (Humanities & Music)

Amy Rosenquist (English, Speech, Theater & Journalism)

Hamed Sarwar (Biology)

Ashley Stokes (Erikson Institute Grad Student)

Phil Vargas (Physical Science)

Veronica Villanueva (Academic Support)

Loretta Visomirskis (English, Speech, Theater & Journalism)

Sandy Vue (Research & Planning)

Paul Wandless (Art & Architecture)

Catherine Willis (Social & Applied Sciences)

Matthew Williams (ELL & World Languages)

Zeke Yusof (Physical Science)

