

# UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

## OCTOBER 2017

Dr. Kolitsch and Ms. Flowers recently attended the 2017 Assessment Institute at IUPUI in Indianapolis. While there, we participated in a half-day workshop on Transparency Across the Curriculum: Assignments, Alignments, and Learning Outcomes. We plan to share more about transparency in the January Assessment Workshop. We also attended several sessions on rubrics, building them and using them. This topic will also be part of the January Assessment Workshop. We hope you are making plans to attend on **January 8**.

NILOA, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, has a number of *FREE* resources available to assist with assessment of learning. One such resource is the Assignment Library, <https://www.assignmentlibrary.org/>. The Assignment Library is an online, searchable collection of high quality, peer-reviewed assignments linked to critical student learning outcomes. The ongoing work with assignments and the site are designed to:

- Develop resources that aid in the design of more intentional, effective assignments—including examples, templates, guidelines, and collections of existing research.
- Advance the practice of student learning outcomes assessment as integral to the regular, ongoing work of teaching and learning, where improvements must happen.
- Build leadership for ongoing work to improve student learning.

### **Why assignments, you might ask**

Assignments provide authentic evidence of student accomplishments, mitigating issues about student motivation to do their best work in assessment settings. More importantly, intentionally designed assignments – transparent about purpose, task, and criteria for evaluation – lead to greater student success, *especially for those who are underserved* (Winklemes, et al., 2016).

You can find out more about transparency and the ongoing research supporting it at the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TiLT) website:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>.

### **Upcoming Due Dates!**

Administrative support services reports are due December 15, 2017, and student support services reports are due January 15, 2018.

### **Additional resources**

NILOA has created a toolkit of materials and resources that can be found at

<http://degreeprofile.org/assignment-design-work/> .

To see what's new regarding the DQP/Tuning, go to

<http://degreeprofile.org/new-to-the-dqp/>. As you know, the DQP outlines

a set of reference points for what students should know and be able to do upon completion of a degree.

These reference points can be adjusted to fit our campus' needs and mapped to our curriculum. The DQP focuses on building the degree from the ground up and across the curriculum. Tuning, on the other hand, focuses on building the majors. You can learn more about Tuning and related resources here:

<http://degreeprofile.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/What-is-Tuning.pdf>

### **From Data to Decisions**

In the College of Business and Global Affairs, **Marketing** reports a need to examine MKTG 301. Based on feedback from students, they are considering introducing a simulation to all sections of 301 which focuses on "why" they make decisions. They are researching simulations or other instructional methods that aim for higher student engagement that would be implemented across *ALL* sections of MKTG 301.

In **Psychology**, faculty standardized the instructions for a Lab Paper to better align with intended outcomes and the benchmark was more easily met. For a different outcome, faculty discovered that instructions concerning the assignment were given differently in different sections. They standardized the instructions but once again missed the benchmark. They plan to collect one more years' worth of data to increase their sample size and determine whether and where instruction needs to change.

In **Geology** 450, the major capstone course, students conduct a constrained, independent field research project that culminates in a term paper synthesizing their results in a professional manuscript style and a professional-style class presentation to their peers and faculty. Rubrics from the student presentations and papers have been, and will continue to be, used to identify areas in which the students need improvement and the course content and/or delivery has been and will continue to be adjusted to meet the needs of the students.

In **English**, in order to increase the sample size and produce more accurate results for English majors, instructors for Upper Division courses have been asked to assess *all* final papers for the assessments instead of a percentage and to assess *all* Upper Division courses each semester instead of doing some in Fall and some in Spring.