

# THE ASSESSMENT CHRONICLES

OF LANEY COLLEGE

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## **DAVID MARSHALL, PhD, Ruler of the Universe and Assessment Guru** by Cheli Fossum

Last month, David Mitchell and I went to an ACCJC-sponsored workshop on assessment. We especially liked the presentation by David Marshall, PhD, from CSU San Bernardino. He started off his talk with the statement “I actually don’t care about accreditation” – this at an ACCJC workshop! It got everyone’s attention.

He then went on to explain about the two different ways of thinking about assessment. One perspective is from the “**culture of compliance**”, which is mostly concerned about trying to follow the rules, and assess just because that’s what accreditors will be judging us on. The other perspective Marshall called the “**culture of intentionality**”. In this perspective, we do assessment for our students. We seek information on how well students are learning, we reflect on our teaching, we accept some responsibility for student learning, and we experiment with new strategies for student success. As you might guess, the culture of intentionality gives us a much more meaningful and motivating way of thinking about assessment.

Here are some of the other highlights from his presentation:

- Clear student learning outcomes offer students clear goals. Students then don’t have to guess or intuit what learning the teacher is expecting. Lots of studies show that if you tell learners from the outset what you want them to learn, then they learn better.
- In the culture of intentionality, SLOs and assessment are used for ongoing conversations about teaching effectiveness. We need to create spaces and times for these conversations to occur. And then faculty will need to show up for the conversations!
- We can think of assessment as a little research project, to answer questions about teaching and learning that we’re genuinely curious about.

- “Closing the loop” (using the results of assessment for improvement) is actually another separate research project. It takes time, reflection, and discussion to come up with ideas and then decide which improvements to pursue.
- In order for meaningful change to occur, faculty must be the driving force and they must work collectively.
- The administration’s role is to create space for the work and discussions to occur, and to foster the culture of intentionality.
- We shouldn’t have to apologize for bringing up assessment: for being learning and thinking people who are striving to try new things to help students learn better.

Let’s all pursue the “culture of intentionality” around assessment!

If you’re interested in learning more or seeing the presentation slides, just drop David or me a line to let us know.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup> has been officially designated as “GET HELP DAY”! The Learning Assessment Committee and the Curriculum Committee are having a work session in F-170C that afternoon. From 1:00 to 3:00, members of the Learning Assessment Committee will be on hand to help with mapping courses, creating SLO assessment plans for this semester, entering data left over from last semester, or any other TaskStream needs you have. Members of the Curriculum Committee will be in the same room between 2:00 and 4:00 to assist with all things Curricunet. Be sure to stop by. Where else can you get help with your work—FOR FREE????

## GETTING IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK FROM YOUR STUDENTS

After teaching a class, have you ever wondered, “Did my students understand what was important? Did they really get what I wanted them to get?”? Here are some simple Classroom Assessment Techniques that help you find out what your students got out of that day’s class.

**1. Minute Paper:** Stop the class 2 or 3 minutes early and ask students to write a response to questions like: *What was the most important thing you learned today? What specific questions do you still have? What explanations/examples were helpful/unclear?*

- 2. E-mail Minute:** Similar to the Minute Paper, but students respond to your question(s) via email.
- 3. Muddiest Point:** Stop the class 2 or 3 minutes early and ask the students to respond to: *What was the muddiest point in the lecture/discussion/assignment/activity?* to find out what students didn't understand.
- 4. One-Sentence Summary:** Students write a one-sentence summary on a particular topic or passage so you know if they've identified critical points in the lecture/reading/discussion.
- 5. Word Journal:** Students summarize an assignment/article/lecture/discussion in one word, and then write a paragraph explaining why they chose that particular summary word.
- 6. Direct Paraphrasing:** Ask students to paraphrase part of a topic/concept/lecture/article to show how well they can use their own words to explain what they've understood or learned.
- 7. Application Cards:** After students have heard or read about an important principle/theory/concept/ procedure, hand out index cards and ask students to write down one real-world application for what they've just learned.

In order to use these Classroom Assessment Techniques effectively:

**Step 1:** Decide which CAT you want to use depending on the information/feedback you're interested in getting. Each CAT has been designed to give you somewhat different information.

**Step 2:** Implement the CAT—come to class prepared with note cards or paper.

**Step 3:** Important!! Respond to the students' feedback directly and fairly quickly by giving them a summary of the results. Explain what changes will be made based on the input students gave you.

Adapted from: Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses by Mary Huba and Jann Freed