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ASSESSMENT: HOW IS IT PREPARING US FOR THE FUTURE?

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Kate Bohn-Gettler

Education Department



Kate Bohn-Gettler is a faculty member in the education department who has been exemplifying the CSB/SJU assessment ideals. Because of this, she has been chosen as our first faculty spotlight of 2019.

“Assessment is a broad term that encapsulates the practices we engage in to evaluate our students’ progress, to self-reflect upon our own practices, and to inform program and institutional development.

Additionally, she realizes that assessment is not simply a “boring” process which administration requires faculty to do every ten years. Rather, her philosophy is that “assessment is a daily practice. I engage in frequent formative assessments with students through conversations, carefully attending to discussions, exit tickets, course activities, assignments, and more.”

She further elaborates by advising “if assessment is used to simply monitor whether we “checking the right boxes”, it will most certainly be boring. However, if assessment is used to inform action and reflect upon and develop larger goals that are **meaningful** to programs, faculty, and students, it can be exciting and support faculty and student success.”

It is also important to realize that assessment is not just for faculty. Student feedback is also crucial to ensure that we are preparing them for the future. “Student feedback helps me more deeply understand what practices are and are not helpful for student learning and for establishing a positive classroom climate. I also note that, because assessment is ongoing in my courses, many students have already provided feedback prior to the end of the semester, allowing for ongoing changes to meet students’ needs.”

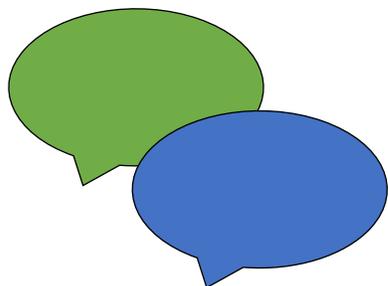
Students attend college to develop professional skills, study what they are passionate about, and find out who they want to be in the world. Assessment is a critical part of this process, according to Bohn-Gettler.

“Assessment can help students engage in self-reflection of their own work and understand the importance of building in assessment plans to evaluate progress on projects. Such ongoing support for metacognition can then transfer into future professional skills, practices, and life-long learning.”

In other words, if assessment is to be effective, we must realize that it is dealing with student lives and futures, not just statistics and numbers. It is essential that we assess our practices to ensure that students are getting the best possible education they can get before going out into a bigger world. Bohn-Gettler perfectly encapsulates this idea. “If this occurs throughout their college experience, it can lead students toward a culture of metacognition and self-reflection.”

Creating Space for Authenticity

Direct measures can answer the “what” questions, but indirect methods are needed to to answer the “why” questions and can elicit important information about student perceptions and behaviors. According to Linda Suskie, author of [Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide](#), there are **FOUR WAYS** you can “get honest, accurate information” from students. **First**, ask about both the pros and cons of an issue. **Second**, be aware of and avoid questions that are difficult to answer honestly. **Third**, phrase questions so that you elicit thoughtful replies. **Fourth**, if appropriate, let people admit that they do not know or do not remember (pp 188-189).



NOTES from the DIRECTOR



Updates and Innovations



OAAE continues to bring assessment best practices to CSB/SJU.



Here is an update of the many changes that have occurred in the office over the past 3 months:

TASKSTREAM

- We continue to create an infrastructure in Taskstream that will house all department missions, student learning goals/outcomes, and curricular maps; around 80% of this work is complete. In addition, Taskstream has provided the forum for creating a common assessment plan template. Many of you are probably tired of hearing about Taskstream and want to get in and check it out. This spring, we will begin working with departments to demonstrate the software, provide instructions for logging in and show you how to edit and update your assessment information, Look for an invitation from Holly sometime over the next 10 months. It is our goal to have all departments actively using the system by December 2019.

PORTFOLIUM

- At the recommendation of the Integrations Curriculum subcommittee on ePortfolios, CSB/SJU has adopted Portfolium as a platform to support students in their learning within the Integrations Curriculum and beyond. The ePortfolio subcommittee will receive training early this semester and will be working on a roll-out plan for faculty interested in using this product prior to the fall 2020 implementation of the Integrations Curriculum. Check out <https://portfolium.com> if you are interested in finding out more. If you search the site and request a demo, just let them know you are CSB/SJU employees and have already adopted the product (to avoid the sales pitch!).

PROGRAM REVIEW COHORTS

- Program review involves a year in self-study followed by a year in external evaluation and planning for program improvement. OAAE has adopted a cohort model to provide a forum for peer support and close OAAE guidance through program review. The first cohort (COMM, ESSS, and HIST) are well on their way to creating their self-studies, conducting student/alum surveys, identifying external reviewers, etc. Those programs scheduled to begin program review will be contacted in April for their orientation. We look forward to continuing the cohort model!



MID-CYCLE PROGRAM REVIEW

- OAAE is working on a process for departments to undergo a “mid-cycle” program review at year 5. What we have found is that 10 years is too long for some programs to wait to be responsive to student changing needs and trends in curricula, pedagogies, and staffing. More info to come as we talk with programs and create a plan for a streamlined (“program review lite”) option.



REPORTS ON AN ACTION PLAN

- May 31st is the deadline for submitting the 2018-19 RAPs (report on an action plan). We will be providing previous RAPs to departments for their reference and then working with each of you to assure that you know what is expected and how to meet those expectations. Trust me, it will be short and sweet.



INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING GOALS

- OAAE continues to work across CSB/SJU on assessment of the institutional learning goals. These goals are available for review on our website and we will begin the process of demonstrating student achievement over the next several months. Stay tuned!

**And remember, at the OAAE,
we are always here to help!!!**

