

Assessment Newsletter

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Special points of interest:

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education Reviews Neumann Assessment
- Metacognition and Student Learning: The Connection
- Reading is Key to Student Success

Inside this issue:

Neumann Student Profile: Class of	2
Neumann Expands Use of ETS Major	2
Faculty Development and NULearn	2
Core Assessment 2012-2013: Focus	3
Reading is Key to Student Success	3
Update from NU Learning Outcomes	4

Middle States Commission on Higher Education Reviews Neumann Assessment

Most Recent Commission Action:

November 15, 2012:

To accept the monitoring report and to note the visit by the Commission's representatives. To request a progress report, due April 1, 2014, documenting (1) further support and collaboration of faculty and administration in assessing student learning and responding to assessment results; (2) further evidence that assessment results provide sufficient, convincing evidence that students are achieving key institutional and program learning outcomes; and, (3) further use of student learning assessment results, in all pro-

grams including general education, to improve teaching, learning and resource allocation (Standard 14). The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2015-16.

The small team visit by MSCHE occurred at Neumann from September 19-20, 2012. A follow up report from the visit was

sent to Neumann University. The official action of MSCHE is as stated above.

Our gratitude to all Neumann faculty and staff who articulated assessment efforts both personal and collegial. Our MSCHE visitors found a thriving culture of assessment at Neumann University.



Metacognition and Student Learning: The Connection

On February 7, 2013 Neumann hosted three colleagues from the SEPCHE institutions for a workshop on Metacognition. Leslie Wilson from Chestnut Hill College, Leanne Owen from Holy Family University, and Melissa Terlecki from Cabrini College

shared both research on the science of metacognition and the actual praxis of brain-based learning. Participants used a "speed learning" activity similar to speed dating to learn and share a technique based on metacognition strate-

gies. The program was video taped to allow for future workshops to allow for virtual presentations at the other SEPCHE institutions. Materials and handouts from the February 7th workshop are posted on the NU Learn Faculty Development site.

Neumann Student Profile: Class of 2013



Neumann students who enrolled in Senior Seminar classes took the online version of the ETS Proficiency Profile. For some students, this was the third evaluation of this measure of general education knowledge and skills. The results of this survey test will better inform the Neumann community about the effectiveness of its general education curriculum and the profile of its students at the beginning of their

college career, midpoint, and conclusion. Growth over time can be judged as well as how many students meet the proficiency standards of college education as they progress through their college programs.

What are these proficiency levels and what do they include? Students are tested in the skills of Reading, Critical Thinking, Writing, and Mathematics. They are also tested in

their understanding of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences in the context of given reading passages.

For a complete listing of the test's content, go to the [ETS Proficiency Profile Test website](#).

Results of the testing of Neumann students can be found in the Faculty Development course on [NU-Learn](#).

Neumann Expands Use of ETS Major Field Tests

As programs developed their assessment plans, there was discussion on the use of standardized major field tests. These tests are used regularly by the Business Division to assess the Business Administration knowledge and skills of its graduating seniors, as well as the effectiveness of the common Business core courses.

During the 2012-13 academic year, the major field tests were also given to graduating students in the majors of Criminal Justice and Political Science.

The results of these tests are used to evaluate current coursework and program sequence in the major. In addition, Neumann students' results can be compared to stu-

dents in similar programs elsewhere.

The major field tests provide valuable direct evidence of student learning within their chosen program of study. They also direct the faculty in course evaluation and relevance.

For more information on the ETS Major Field tests go to the [ETS website](#).



Or navigate directly to

neumann.dcollege.net

Faculty Development and NULearn

Where is the water cooler for impromptu faculty discussions? At Neumann it is a virtual water cooler – the [Faculty Development course](#) on NU Learn.

In this BlackBoard course, faculty can find various resources related to teaching and learning. They can also review the materials used for various

faculty development workshops.

This “course” is open to all faculty by an automatic process of course enrollment. Faculty are free to just browse the course for resources or may use any of the tools offered within BlackBoard Learn.

Use of this resource also

allows faculty members to explore the structure of BlackBoard Learn as a student, becoming familiar with its format. As NU Learn was initiated in fall 2012, the faculty development course is seen as a teaching tool to assist faculty in becoming facile with its components.

Core Assessment 2012-2013: Focus on Communication

The assessment focus for 2012-2013 has been oral and written communication and information literacy skills. During the Fall semester volunteer faculty and staff members visited nine classes and completed an assessment of the oral communication skills of 51 students. Faculty members also submitted samples of student papers demonstrating achievement in written communication and information literacy. Assessments of oral presentations continue with classroom visits scheduled during the coming weeks.

At the end of the semester, faculty members will submit samples of student work products in information literacy and written communication. During a Core assessment week in late May or early June, all work products will be assessed.

The Core Task Force will also collaborate with Sr. Janet Thiel and Melissa Thorpe to analyze relevant sections of the ETS Proficiency Profile and student surveys. The Task Force will then invite conversation to engage the Neumann community in how we can best “close

the assessment loop” by developing strategies to improve communication skills.

The Task Force continues to investigate appropriate expectations for Neumann graduates in the area of technology competencies. This has proven more complex than anticipated. Expect an update from Core Task Force members in the coming weeks.

To review the Core Communication Assessment Plan and related rubrics, please visit the [Core Experience website](#).



Reading is Key to Student Success

Neumann students are equally likely to be placed into Developmental Reading as Developmental Mathematics upon college entry. These developmental courses are now being linked with another course (History, Psychology, English) so that the student receives support in learning to read for actual college coursework.

While this supports the students who enter college not ready to read at the appropriate level for success, one course is not a magic bullet in reading college material. The students still need guidance from instructors at

all levels of the discipline.

How should faculty address student reading development as a teacher trained in a particular discipline, but not one trained to teach reading? It really is not that hard. Here are some suggestions.

Prepare a reading log to accompany any required reading assignment. Write down for the student the questions that you would normally ask in class to generate understanding and discussion of the assigned reading. Give these questions to the student to guide their

reading of the material to prepare for class. Include some questions of analysis and inference, not just questions related to the facts of the reading assigned. Use these questions as a quiz if students need a motivation to do the assigned reading. Let them use notes taken on the reading log.

Post some of the above reading log guide questions on the discussion board of NU Learn. Ask or require students to answer these using some arguments or facts presented in the assigned reading.

Web-based Support for College Reading

[Myths and Strategies for College Reading](#)

[Understanding the Reading Process](#)

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Catholic Education in the
Franciscan Tradition

Neumann University, founded and sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, is a Catholic co-educational institution of higher education in the Franciscan tradition. As such, the University promotes the following core values consistent with its identity and mission: Reverence, Integrity, Service, Excellence, and Stewardship (summarized campus wide using the acronym RISES).

Neumann University focuses on learning in the liberal-arts as a basis for professional and career preparation, readiness for graduate school, and preparation for socially responsible living. The University's physical campus is located in Aston, PA.

www.neumann.edu

Update from NU Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee

The LOAC has met twice so far this semester and will continue to meet monthly as the semester progresses. Highlighting the LOAC's efforts, committee member Albert Tay has been working with Lisa Roberts-Cadorette on developing an assessment website. The LOAC also recently reviewed major programs' assessment progress reports. Finally, the LOAC plans on meeting in early June to review work group assessment reports for the 2012-2013 academic year. These reports should be emailed to [Ryan Savitz](mailto:Ryan.Savitz@neumann.edu) at no later than Wednesday May

22nd. We hope that the LOAC is a resource for all faculty, staff, and administration assessment issues. Toward that end, please contact any member of the committee if we can be of any assistance.

Report forms and major program assessment plans can be found on Neumann's [Sharepoint](#) folders: Under the AA tab and the Assessment folder in that Library. Go to sharepoint.neumann.edu

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