

Assessing Criminal Justice/Criminology Education

Assessing Criminal Justice/Criminology Education

A Resource Handbook for Educators
and Administrators

Barbara Peat

Laura J. Moriarty

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina

Copyright © 2009
Barbara Peat
Laura J. Moriarty
All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Peat, Barbara.

Assessing criminal justice/criminology education : a resource handbook for educators and administrators / Barbara Peat, Laura J. Moriarty ; with contributions from Douglas Davenport ... [et al.].

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-59460-530-7 (alk. paper)

1. Criminology--Study and teaching (Higher) 2. Criminal justice, Administration of--Study and teaching (Higher) I. Moriarty, Laura J. II. Title.

HV6024.P43 2009

364.071'1--dc22

2009002681

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS

700 Kent Street

Durham, North Carolina 27701

Telephone (919) 489-7486

Fax (919) 493-5668

www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

Dedication

To my children, Sam, Tyler, and Jordan—BP

To Mom and Dad—LJM

CONTENTS

Tables and Figures	xv
Preface	xvii
Acknowledgments	xxi
I Foundational Issues	
Chapter 1 Assessment: What is it?	3
Purpose of the Book	8
Brief Overview	9
Common Themes	9
References	11
Chapter 2 Assessment and ACJS Academic Certification	13
ACJS Certification Standards and Process	13
The Road to Certification	13
The ACJS Academic Certification Standards and Process	16
ACJS Section H Standards	20
Summary	34
References	34
Chapter 3 Using Institutional Assessment Data to Inform Program Assessment	37
Commercial Assessment Instruments	37
Direct Measures of Student Learning	39
Indirect Measures of Student Learning	39
Additional Sources of Information	40
Locally-Developed Assessment Instruments	41
Direct Measures of Student Learning	42
Indirect Measures of Student Learning	43
Using the Data: Ideas and Examples	44
Assessing Common Learning Outcomes	44
Student Perceptions of Their Learning	45
Assessing Faculty Practices and Attitudes	48
Conclusion	49
References	49
Chapter 4 Data Management and Data Management Tools	51
The Issue of Cost	53

The Issue of Integration	54
The Issue of Breadth	56
The Issue of Local Adaptability	57
The Issue of Depth or Level of Disaggregation	57
The Issue of User Friendliness or Ease of Use	58
The Issue of Interactivity	59
Additional Considerations	60
Strategic Planning and Data Management Systems: Closing the Loop	60
Curriculum Mapping	61
Web Functionality	62
Issue One: Client-side versus Remote-server Systems	62
Integrated Test/Survey Builders	64
Accreditation Compliance Features	65
Customized Reporting Features	65
Data Management for Criminal Justice Certification	66
References	68
II Putting Assessment into Context	
Chapter 5 How Do Social Scientists Assess Student Learning?	
The Case of Public Relations, Political Science, and Criminal Justice	71
A Brief History of Accreditation	71
Discipline-Specific Accreditation	73
Psychology	74
Social Work	75
Journalism and Mass Communications	77
Certification Standards	78
A Comparison of Public Relations, Political Science, and Criminal Justice	79
Student Learning Objectives	79
Assessment Instruments	81
Application of Learning Assessment Results	87
Case Study	88
Chapter Conclusions	89
References	90
Chapter 6 General Education Assessment	93
General Education Assessment: An Example	94
The Process	96
Implementation of the Plan	98

Findings	99
Lessons Learned	101
Conclusion	103
References	103
Chapter 7 Core Competencies	105
Illustration—Core Competency Assessment at VCU	106
Assessment Findings	108
Comparison Among Institutions	113
Conclusion	114
Notes	114
III Assessment Application	
Chapter 8 Steps to Building a Quality Assessment Protocol	117
Contextual Definitions	117
Purpose	117
University Accreditation	118
Discipline Specific Certification or Accreditation	118
Continued or Increased Funding	119
Recruitment and Retention of Students and Faculty	119
Continued Quality Improvement and Curriculum Changes	120
Allocation of Resources and Course Planning	120
Service Provision	120
Stakeholders	121
Students	121
Faculty	122
Administrators	122
Alumni	123
Employers/Internship Supervisors	123
Support Services	123
Method	123
How is data to be gathered?	124
When will data be gathered?	124
Who will be responsible for data gathering and analysis?	124
Measures	125
Surveys	126
Institutional Records	126
Curriculum Mapping	127
Tests	127
Portfolios	127

Rubrics	128
Summary	128
Chapter 8: Case Study	129
Purpose	131
Stakeholders	131
Method	132
Measures	134
Chapter 9 Course-Embedded Assessment: Measuring Student	
Learning Outcomes	137
<i>What</i> to Assess	139
<i>How</i> to Assess	140
Scoring Performance	141
Value	144
Other Things to Keep in Mind	144
Application of Material	145
Chapter 9: Case Study	146
Checklist of the 4 Steps	147
Detailed Explanation of Assessment Strategies	149
Introduction to Criminal Justice	149
Crime Theory	151
Research Methods	152
Statistics for Crime Analysis	153
Policing	154
Corrections	155
Criminal Law and Courts	155
Capstone	156
References	157
Chapter 10 Rubrics as an Assessment Tool	159
Development of Rubrics	161
Applying Rubrics to a Variety of Assignments	166
Use of Rubrics for Course and Program Assessment	168
Conclusion	170
Case Study 1: Use of Rubrics for Assessment of Student	
Learning Outcomes for Grading Purposes	171
Oral Presentation Instructions	173
Position Paper Instructions	174
Commentary	175
Case Study 2: Use of Rubrics for Course Assessment	175
Commentary	177

References	177
Chapter 11 Testing as a Form of Assessment	179
Types of Tests, Questions, and Testing Protocols	180
Objective Tests	180
Forced-choice versus Open-ended Questions	181
Comprehensive Tests: Standardized versus “Homegrown”	182
Competency/Qualifying Tests	184
Testing Protocol Considerations	184
Tests, Course Objectives, and Program Goals	186
Tests and Assessment Purposes	188
Things to Keep in Mind	189
Students	189
Faculty	189
External Influences	190
Testing Protocol	190
Summary	191
Summary of Benefits of Using Testing as a Form of Assessment	191
Issues/Questions to Consider in Using Testing as an Assessment Strategy	192
Case Study 1: Using a Comprehensive Test for Program Assessment	193
Background Information	193
Assessment Plan	193
Analysis and Conclusions	194
Commentary	195
Case Study 2: Use of a Course-Embedded Assessment Strategy	195
Background Information	195
Assessment Plan	196
Analysis and Conclusions	197
Commentary	198
Chapter 12 Using Assessment Information for Development of Strategic Program Plans and Periodic Reports	199
Types of Reports	200
Type of Information Needed for Reports	202
Data Collection and Type of Analysis Used for Reports	204
Development of Useful Reports	205
Writing to the Audience	206
Being Clear and Concise	207
Closing the Loop	207
Summarizing Strengths and Weaknesses	208

The Many Uses of Reports	210
Strategic Planning	210
Recruitment	211
Retention	212
Summary	213
Case Study: Using Assessment for Strategic Planning	213
Background Information	213
Use of Assessment Results for Strategic Planning	214
Summary of Points from Case Study	217

IV Appendices

Appendix A General Education Rubrics	221
Appendix B Core Competency Examples	231
Example 1 Quantitative Reasoning	231
Virginia Commonwealth University Institution	231
Definition of Competency	231
Standards for Competency	231
Description of Methodology Used to Gather Evidence of Competency	234
References	235
Example 2 Critical Thinking	237
Virginia Commonwealth University Institution	237
Definition of Competency	237
Standards for Competency	237
Description of Methodology Used to Gather Evidence of Competency	238
Summary	239
Appendix C Steps to Building a Quality Assessment Protocol Checklist, Assessment Plan, and Curriculum Map	241
Getting Started: A checklist to Guide Discussions in Assessment Planning	241
Purpose	241
Stakeholders	242
Method	242
Measure	242
Criminal Justice Program Sample Assessment Plan	244
From Whom Will Data be Gathered	244
How and When Will Data be Gathered	244
Sample Curriculum Map	246

Appendix D Checklist for Selection of Course-Embedded Activities	247
Checklist of the 4 Steps Used for Selection of Course-Embedded Activities	247
Appendix E Checklist and Rubrics	249
Checklist for Development and Implementation of Rubrics	249
Appendix F Checklist for Testing	257
Testing as an Assessment Tool: A Checklist of Questions to Help Guide Discussions	257
Appendix G Checklists for Reports	259
Requirements for Assessment Reports: A Checklist of Questions to Help Guide Discussions	259
Annual Reports: A Checklist to Assist Development	260
Periodic Reports: A Checklist to Assist Development	261
Self-Study Reports: A Checklist to Assist Development	262
Appendix H Resources	265
Assessment Resources	265
Available Online	265
General Assessment Resources	265
Course Embedded and Classroom Assessment Resources	267
General Portfolio Resources	267
Selected Print Resources	267
Contributing Authors	271
Index	273

TABLES AND FIGURES

Chapter 5 How Do Social Scientists Assess Student Learning? The Case of Public Relations, Political Science, and Criminal Justice	
Figure 5.1 A Comparison of Three Areas of Social Science Research	80
Figure 5.3 Comparison of Assessment Instruments	81
Figure 5.2 Comparison of Student Learning Objectives	81
Figure 5.4 Comparison of Applications of Learning Assessment Results	87
Chapter 6 General Education Assessment	
Figure 6.1 General Education Curricular Elements	96
Table 6.1 General Education Rubrics, Rubric Scales and Target Levels	100
Chapter 7 Core Competencies	
Table 7.1 Core Competency Definitions	108
Table 7.2 Method and Competency Measures	109
Figure 7.2 Holistic Rubric—Oral Communication	110
Figure 7.3 Holistic Rubric for Critical Thinking	111
Table 7.3 Results: Technology/Information Literacy	112
Table 7.4 Competency and Percentage Competent and Above	113
Table 7.5 Comparison of Findings Percent Highly Competent and Competent by Virginia Institutions	113
Chapter 9 Course-Embedded Assessment: Measuring Student Learning Outcomes	
Table 9.1 Examples of How to Assess Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Using Course-Embedded Strategies	142
Table 9.2 What and How to Assess Learning Outcomes in Required Courses	150
Appendix A General Education Rubrics	
General Education Humanities and Social Sciences Rubric	221
General Education Visual & Performing Arts Rubric	222
General Education Ethics Rubric	223
General Education Communicating (Oral Communication) Rubric	224
General Education Quantity and Form Rubric	225
General Education Communicating (Writing Competency) Rubric	226
General Education Critical Thinking Rubric	227

General Education Interdependence Rubric	228
General Education Science and Technology Rubric	229
Appendix E Checklist and Rubrics	
Oral Presentation Scoring Rubric	251
Position Paper Scoring Rubric	252
Capstone Course Scoring Rubric for Course Assessment	253
Rubric to Assess Computer Generated Presentation	254
Rubric to Assess Writing Skills	255
Rubric to Assign Score to Short Answer Essays	256

PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to provide the reader with information addressing a variety of issues dealing with assessment in higher education. To augment informational material we have included numerous developmental tools such as checklists intended to be used to organize structured discussions on a variety of topics such as assessment plans, course-embedded strategies, rubrics, testing, and reports. An example assessment plan is included in the appendix as well as sample curriculum maps. Many of the chapters include numerous examples pertaining to criminal justice courses and programs.

Although a chapter is included in the first section dealing specifically with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Standards and Certification process, the book material covers a broad span of information that all programs could use to assist in developing assessment protocols for a variety of purposes other than certification such as institution required annual reports, periodic reviews, and self-studies. The material included could also be used to assist in development of pedagogy, curriculum reviews, course evaluation, and strategic planning. Information can be applied to assessment of student learning outcomes from a single course, a program, general education, core competencies, and university-wide data management. The material included is applicable to those just beginning an assessment process as well as those who have established protocols.

We divided the material into three sections: (1) foundational information, (2) putting assessment into context, and (3) application specific to the field of criminal justice. Based on the titles used for the chapters as well as the brief overviews included in this preface, readers should be able to readily pick and choose chapters that provide information most relevant to their specific need.

Section One, *Laying the Foundation*, consists of four chapters. Taken in total, these chapters are meant to provide the reader with a better understanding of assessment in general, the ACJS standards and indicators, university-wide assessment activities, and data management tools. Chapter 1 includes definitions of assessment terms as well as an explanation of the common themes of the book. The information in this chapter provides the reader with the foundation for better understanding terms used throughout the book as well as continuity of focus throughout a number of the chapters. Chapter 2 provides a history of the development of the ACJS standards as well as an overview of the certification process. Examples of activities that can be used to address the

requirements of Section H are provided. Focus is placed on evidence that can be used as indicators used to meet the standards. Chapter 3 provides information about commercial assessment instruments and compares the key elements of these tools. The material also assists readers in gaining an understanding of the differences between direct and indirect measures of student learning outcomes, providing examples of each. Information is also provided on how to assess student perceptions of their learning as well as ways to assess faculty practices and attitudes. Chapter 4 provides a comparison of commercial versus in-house software used to manage assessment data. The information also explores the factors that should be considered in data management such as cost, integration of assessment data with existing data bases, and management of assessment data with other data driven activities of the university. Focus is also on the link between data management and strategic planning as well as the purpose of curriculum mapping.

Section Two consists of three chapters which provide the background for putting assessment of student learning outcomes into the context of higher education courses and programs. The information presented in the chapters is based on three separate studies. Chapter 5 entails an exploration of how three disciplines in the social sciences—political science, public relations, and criminal justice—approach assessment of student learning. Focus is on several key learning concepts including critical thinking, research skills, and communications. A comparison of assessment instruments used in the three disciplines is provided. Chapter 6 focuses specifically on assessment of general education. The information presented is based on one school's experience in developing an assessment plan for general education focused on what are termed "guiding principles." The process of how the institution developed its assessment plan is explained in detail and serves as an excellent resource for others involved in a similar process. Example rubrics related to the learning elements in general education are included in the appendix. Chapter 7 explores ways to determine the core competencies of undergraduate students at point of graduation. Information is provided on six competency areas. Definitions of these areas are provided as well as an explanation of the methods used for measurement of student learning.

Section Three consists of five chapters that focus specifically on applying assessment to criminal justice higher education. Case studies are used throughout the chapters to illustrate main points. Supporting documents, such as plans, checklists, and curriculum maps, are included in the appendices. Chapter 8 focuses on information useful to building an effective assessment protocol. The purposes for conducting assessment are explored. Also included are

many suggestions for measures and methods for gathering assessment data. Chapter 9 focuses on the development of course-embedded measures for assessment of student learning outcomes. Detailed information is provided on the steps involved in developing course-embedded strategies including what to assess, how to assess, how to score, and what value to place on the activities. The case study is used to emphasize the linkages between program goals, major specific required courses, and course-embedded strategies chosen. Chapter 10 focuses on the use of rubrics as an assessment tool. Information is provided on what needs to be considered in developing a rubric, how to use rubrics for various assessment methods, and how they can be used not only for evaluation of individual student performance but also for assessing courses and programs. Numerous examples of how rubrics can be used for specific criminal justice course activities are provided. The linkages between rubric use, assignment given, and course objectives is discussed. Chapter 11 explores various testing methods that can be used as a tool for assessment of student learning outcomes. Included in the chapter is information about types of tests, questions, and protocols. The linkages between test choice, course objectives, and program goals is explored. Various factors that should be considered in the use of testing for assessment purposes are discussed. Chapter 12 provides information on how to report assessment data and analysis results as well as how to use assessment results for strategic planning. Focus is placed on three types of reports—annual, periodic, and self-study. Detailed lists are provided relevant to the type of information to consider including in each type of report.

Special thanks are extended to Douglas Davenport, Jennifer Jenkins Garrett, R. Stephen RiCharde, and Mittie Southerland for their valuable contributions to the material contained in this book. We also want to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the many experts in the field of assessment on whose excellent tutelage we depend. While we both have extensive involvement in assessment in criminal justice higher education, having attended numerous workshops and conferences on the topic, being well-read in the field, having facilitated professional development seminars and presented papers as part of panel discussions, we acknowledge the great debt we owe to the many experts in the field who have been the forerunners in developing assessment materials and providing excellent resources on a broad span of topics. Their work is included in the list of references or in the resources provided in the appendices because we, in no way, claim to have originated these ideas. The ideas included in this book are the compilation of the assessment activities that we have undertaken. We have taken classes with some of the most notable assessment gurus in the field. And from these training sessions where we participated in state-wide,

regional and national workshops, we have developed our own assessment activities having conducted assessment workshops locally (at our institutions), regionally (at other institutions), and nationally (at ACJS annual meetings). Each time we have engaged in any assessment activities, we have learned something new and innovative. And we have tried to implement that new concept or initiative at our own institutions. Some things work for us, while others do not. This book then is our best advice about how to do assessment in the criminal justice higher education arena. Our hope is that you can learn from us, as we have learned from countless others, and that you will be successful in defining your own assessment goals and strategies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge Keith Sipe and Beth Hall from Carolina Academic Press who took a chance on this book and who have always been very supportive of our projects. Also our co-authors and co-contributors who have been our friends for years and who are experts in the field—we appreciate each of you taking the time to contribute to our book. Also, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) and in particular President Wes Johnson and Executive Director, Mittie Southerland, for allowing us to publish the ACJS Certification Standards verbatim and the resources found on the Assessment Webpage. In the preface we mention those authors who came before us who have provided us with the knowledge that is contained in this book—too many names to list here but again we acknowledge those who have trained us, those who conducted workshops, wrote excellent assessment articles, and had lively discussions with us about new ideas and how to use them at our institutions. All of this mentoring and tutelage has led us to a place where we feel very comfortable with assessment and where we wanted to share our experiences with the reader. Finally, we thank our institutions for allowing us the opportunity to work on this book and for the support and encouragement to attend these aforementioned assessment workshops/seminars and for also giving us the chance to be more involved in assessment at our institutions.

Barbara Peat
Laura J. Moriarty