Student Learning Analysts: Actively Engaging Undergraduates in the Assessment Process

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Presentation Agenda

• Student Learning Analysts (SLA)
• Timeline of the Project
• Lessons Learned
• Program Strengths
• Tips for Implementation on Your Campus
• How to Adapt the SLA Program on Your Campus
Learning Outcomes

Following this sessions, participants will:

• Identify the process of developing and implementing an undergraduate student peer assessment project

• Discuss possibilities on how to adapt a similar program on their campuses

Student Learning Analysts Concept

• Researched building a culture of assessment – Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (IE)
  • Identified involving students as a key component
  • Wanted to be intentional about student involvement
  • Secured program funding from the Provost

• Operationalized program - Associate Director of Academic Assessment and Graduate Assistant for IE
  • Researched other programs
  • Identified focus and developed learning outcomes
Discussion

How many of you have students involved in assessment activities?

If so, what are they doing?

Student Learning Analysts

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Students who serve as a student learning analyst (SLA) will:

- Design assessment projects to investigate topics identified by the Learning Analytics Workgroup
- Create reports analyzing and summarizing assessment findings
- Present findings from assessment project(s) to the BGSU community in a variety of formats

**Primary Duties:**

- Investigate (i.e., design, conduct, and analyze) projects related to student learning experiences
- Create written and verbal summaries of assessment data
- Collaborate with peers and supervisor on assessment projects
- Participate in bi-weekly Student Learning Analyst team trainings
Spring 2016 – SLA Prep

**March 2016:**
- Vice Provost of IE develops proposal for undergraduate student involvement in assessment process

**May 2016:**
- Associate Director for Academic Assessment begins new role and Graduate Research Assistant for IE is hired to support program
- Completed benchmarking and research on similar programs

Timeline

Spring 2016 – SLA Prep

**March 2016:**
- Vice Provost of IE develops proposal for undergraduate student involvement in assessment process

**May 2016:**
- Associate Director for Academic Assessment begins new role and Graduate Research Assistant for IE is hired to support program
- Completed benchmarking and research on similar programs
Summer 2016 – SLA Prep

June 2016:
• Created position description, learning outcomes, training schedule, and topics
• Gathered the Learning Analytics Workgroup to explore student learning analytics and potential strategies to increase student success
• Shared goals of the SLA program with the Learning Analytics Workgroup and identified initial learning topics

July 2016:
• Posted SLA position on University’s student employment database

August 2016:
• Reviewed applications, interviewed candidates, and hired 8 SLAs

Fall 2016 – SLA Pilot

Bi-weekly group training throughout the semester

September and October 2016:
• Developed protocols/questions aligning with high impact practices topics

End of October 2016:
• Conducted focus groups

November 2016:
• Transcribed data, identified themes, coded data, and developed report draft

December 2016:
• Created executive summaries, infographics, and final reports
• Presented findings and process to administrators
Spring 2017 – SLA Pilot

Bi-weekly group training throughout the semester

January 2017:
• Explored new topics aligning with National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) institutional data and created corresponding focus group questions

February 2017
• Conducted focus groups

March 2017:
• Transcribed and analyzed data
• Developed and implemented surveys
• Presented focus group findings at the Teaching and Learning Fair

April/May 2017:
• Created executive summaries, infographics, and final reports

SLA Infographics

Four Themes Emerged:
- Impact
- Understanding
- Self-Reflection
- Application

Main Topic Discussed: Diverse Perspectives

Student Definitions of Critical Thinking
- "Efficient cognitive reasoning"
- "Finding the best answer"
- "Open-minded"

Learning Strategies
- Reflection
- Application

Influences on Learning
- Physical Space
- Technology

Student Engagement
- Active Learning vs. Non-Active Learning
- Group Dynamics

Higher Order Learning
- Teaching Methods
- Discussion

Reflective & Integrative Learning
- 4 Focus Groups
- 21 Participants
Fall 2017

*Bi-weekly group training throughout the semester*

**August**
- Returning SLAs assisted with training the new hires
- Explored new topics and created corresponding focus group questions

**September**
- Collaborated with campus constituents on focus group protocols

**October**
- Facilitated focus groups
- Transcribed and analyzed data

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SLA Experience
SLAs Discuss Their Experience

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEp0STY2z2Q&feature=youtu.be

Lessons Learned

- Recruitment
  - Position description
  - Interview questions
- Training
  - Timing
  - Groups
- Mentoring
Program Strengths

• Support from senior University leadership
• Collaborative process with University stakeholders
• Undergraduate student ownership of projects
• Focus on campus learning issues
• Exploring institutional assessment data – NSSE

Tips for Implementation on Your Campus

• Start with a manageable number of students
• Involve students throughout the process: topic selection, assessment design, data collection, analysis, and reporting
• Apprenticeship model of training
Adapting the SLA Program on Your Campus

What will work for your campus?

Do you think this would work on your campus? Why or why not?

- What would the focus of your program be?
- How will you recruit your students?
- What will the training look like?
- Who will be involved?