Fostering Faculty-Driven Assessment Practice:
A Peer-Mentoring Program of Outcomes Assessment in Major Fields

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Background

A good practice for assessing learning outcomes in major fields involves transferring ownership to all faculty. This presentation shares a peer-mentoring program designed to promote faculty-driven assessment in major fields and to provide faculty development opportunities.

❖ Five years ago, ONU's assessment focused mainly on promoting faculty participation in assessment activities and annual report submission, while the evaluation process of assessment reports appeared to have minimal impacts on improving assessment practices and student learning.

❖ In Spring 2014, ONU's assessment committee refined the evaluation process for increased credibility on evaluation results, effective feedback communication, and faculty training opportunities through peer-mentoring.

❖ The peer-mentoring program is an outcome from the University's continuous improvement initiatives for assessing student learning, and it has been implemented for the past three reporting years.

ONU Annual Assessment Cycle

❖ Each fall, the academic programs submit an annual assessment report for the previous academic year that addresses:

✓ Assessment plans (learning outcomes, assessment methods, alignments)
✓ Follow-up on last year's assessment
✓ Annual assessment activities (summary results, programmatic or operational changes based on assessment findings)
✓ Reflection on assessment practice

❖ The University Assessment Committee releases evaluation results each spring.

Implementation Strategies
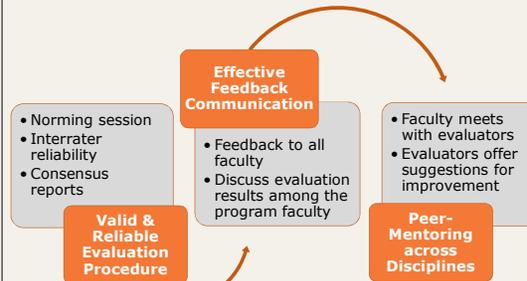
1. **Valid and Reliable Evaluation Procedure**: Following a rubric norming session among all peer evaluators, each of the paired evaluators independently reviews the assessment reports. Then the pair meets to resolve any discrepancies to improve interrater reliability and complete their consensus reports for the academic programs. A peer evaluator reviews his/her mentoring programs for three reporting years.

2. **Effective Communication of Faculty-to-Faculty Feedback**: The peer-evaluators' feedback on the assessment report is distributed to all faculty members in the program. The program chair or assessment coordinator facilitates discussions on the evaluation results with all faculty members. The program documents such activities in the next annual assessment report.

3. **Peer-mentoring across Disciplines**: As a follow-up on the evaluation results, the peer evaluators meet with programs scoring below acceptable thresholds on the evaluation rubric to discuss their concerns and to offer suggestions for improvement.

Outcomes

Tools for assessment reporting and evaluation processes were refined to maximize the impact of peer-mentoring program on assessment practices.

❖ Revised **assessment reporting forms** to better guide faculty in the use of assessment findings to improve student learning.

❖ Revised **evaluation rubrics** to effectively facilitate formative evaluation process involving qualitative feedback and peer-mentoring (Table 1).

It utilizes single-point rubrics (Fluckiger, 2010)[1] that only describe the criteria for meeting expectations; other columns (performance levels) are open-ended where the evaluators address areas needing improvement.

[1] Fluckiger, J. (2010). Single Point Rubric: A Tool for Responsible Student Self-Assessment. *Teacher Education Faculty Publications. 5.*

❖ Created a **Moodle site** that can serve as a repository of assessment reports and evaluation results. All faculty members in the academic program have access to the site.

Effectiveness

Quality of assessment practices in major fields improved as indicated in the evaluation results of annual program assessment reports (Table 2).

Table 2. Evaluation results of annual program assessment reports: Baseline vs. Peer-mentoring Program Year 1 and Year 2

Assessment Components	Baseline (AY 2012-13)	Year 1 (AY 2013-14)	Year 2 (AY 2014-15)
Learning Outcome Statements	3.5	3.7	3.5
Assessment Methods	2.9	3.2	3.3
Results	2.8	2.9	3.1
Adjustments to the Program	2.6	3.0	3.3
Reflection on Assessment Pratices	3.1	3.2	3.2
Overall	3.0	3.2	3.3

Note: The evaluation was based on a 4-point scale of the rubric (4=Exemplary, 3=Established, 2=Developed, 1=Undeveloped).

Future Directions

❖ Recruit more faculty members to serve as the evaluator and peer-mentor to reduce the service time commitment.

❖ Validate new evaluation rubrics and assess its effectiveness on the formative evaluation process.

❖ Offer a workshop to new faculty at ONU to introduce them to the campus' assessment culture.

Table 1. Single-point rubrics for reviewing annual program assessment reports (Sample)

Criterion		Meets Expectation (4 points)	Needs Minor Improvement (3 points)	Needs Major Improvement (2 points)	Missing (1 point)
II-A.1. Follow-up on Last Year's Action Plan	1	☐ Previous year's action plans were fully implemented.	☐	☐	☐
	2	☐ Progress obtained from action plan implementations is described.	☐	☐	☐
II-C. Reflection on Assessment Plan & Practice	9	☐ Critical evaluations of the effectiveness of the program's current assessment plan and practices are discussed.	☐	☐	☐
	10	☐ Proposed changes to the assessment plan and/or practices are relevant to the overall goal of improving student learning; Justifications are provided when no changes are proposed.	☐	☐	☐