

Evaluation Capacity Building in College Language Programs: Developing and Sustaining a Student Exit Survey Project

Based on a chapter (co-authored by K. Kondo-Brown, J. McE. Davis, & Y. Watanabe) in *Issues in Language Program Direction: Innovation and Accountability in Language Program Evaluation* (AAUSC volume [2015], Ch. 1., Eds. J. Norris & N. Mills)

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Presentation at Language Program Evaluation Symposium
Harvard University
Friday, October 31, 2014

Student survey as an evaluation data collection tool

- A survey cannot and was not intended to evaluate all aspects of a given LLL academic program
- Faculty are generally interested in hearing from students about their program experiences
- Online surveys are logistically practical, inexpensive, and comparatively easy to administer and modify
- Surveys provide data that are comparatively easy to analyze, interpret, and report

Online Student Exit Survey Project at LLL: Impetus and the issue of ownership

LLL Dean's
office

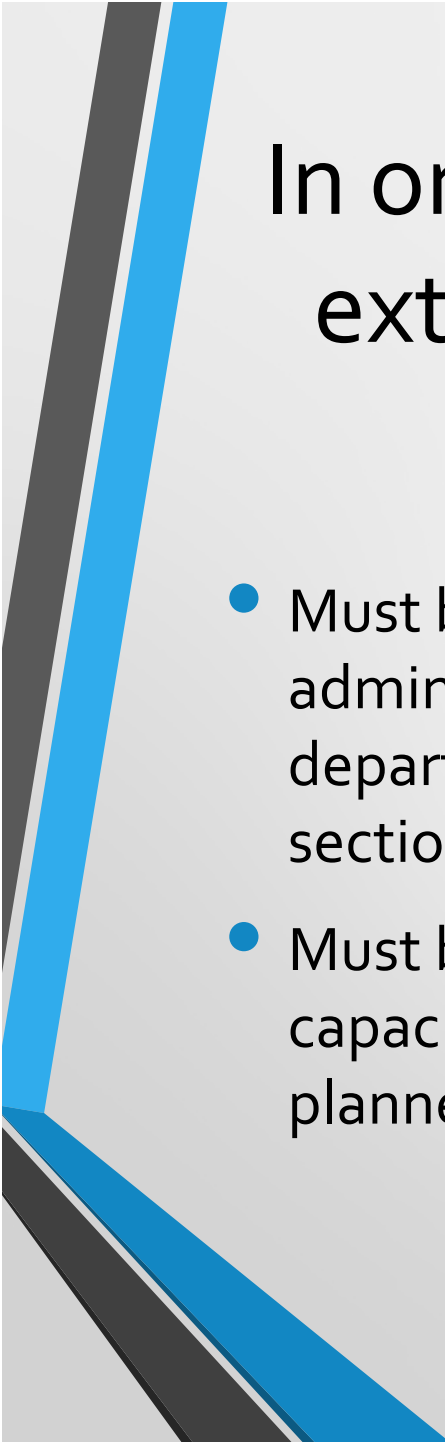
A "top-down" initiative (fall, 2008)

LLL
Departments

Impetus: No systematic method to get feedback from our graduating majors on their experiences in the program and its impact on their accomplishments & future plans that could be used to (a) better understand and improve our degree programs, and (b) help meet externally-mandated evaluation requirements

Not a faculty-initiated, bottom-up project

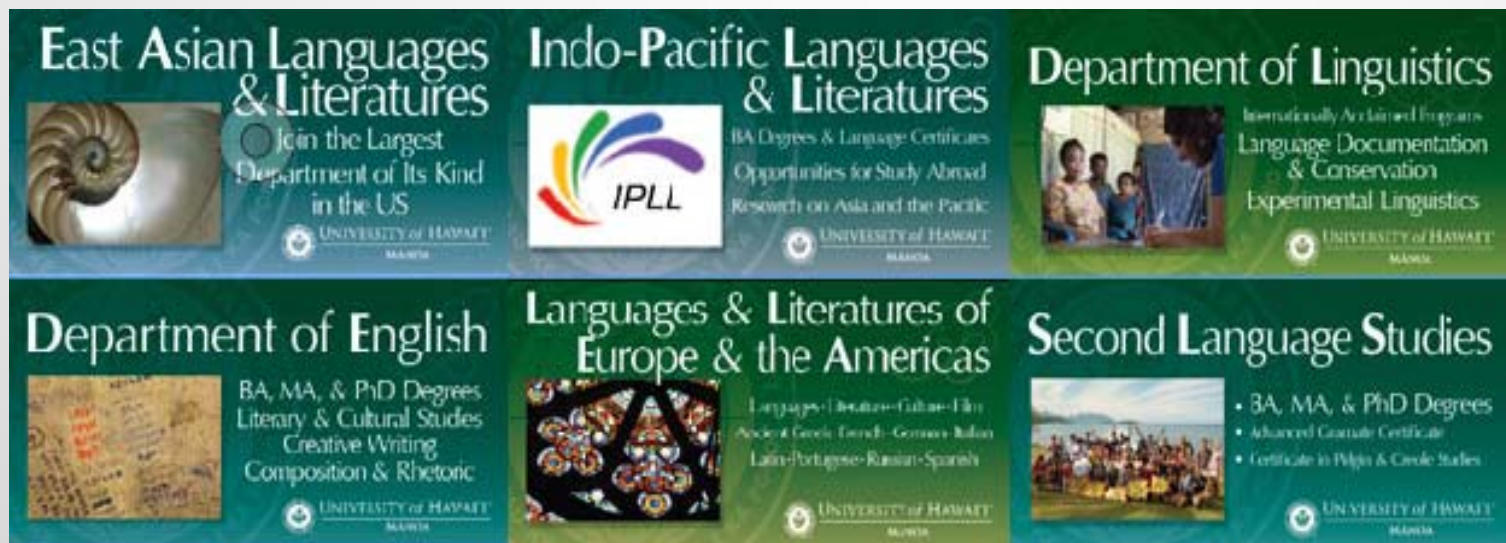
→ How to foster a sense of ownership and gain evaluation buy-in?



In order to successfully conduct an externally-mandated evaluation initiative. . . .

- Must balance the evaluation needs of college/university administrators with the needs of stakeholders within departments (e.g., department chairs, program heads, section coordinators, etc.)
- Must be accompanied by some kind of evaluation capacity building that will help faculty engage in the planned evaluation activities

College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature (LLL) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM)



- 25 degree programs, from BA to MA and PhD programs
- 800 undergraduate majors and 350 graduate majors in LLL fields

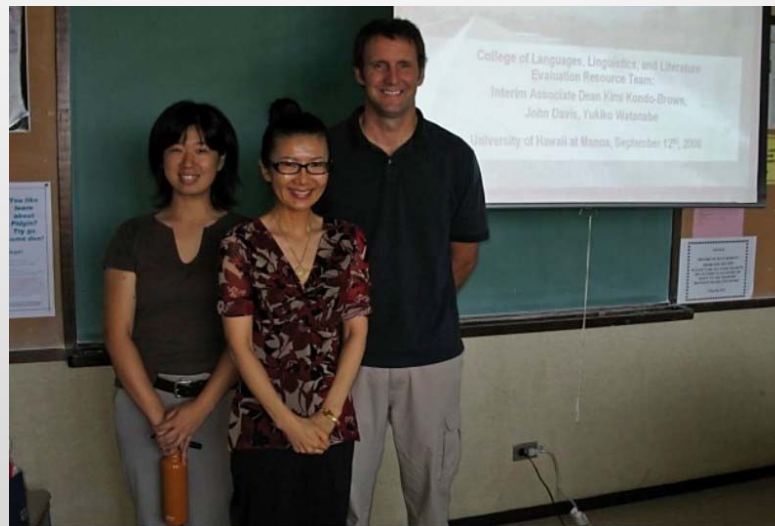
Concerns related to budget and faculty workload


- In the fall of 2008, UH- Mānoa was undergoing deep budget cuts due to a severe state government budget shortfall
- The UH- Mānoa central administration's academic program prioritization initiative sparked fear and resentment throughout the campus
 - In order to get faculty support for LLL's exit survey initiative, we needed to convince them that the project had *nothing* to do with the academic program prioritization process.
- Faculty perception of institutional evaluation demands as a bureaucratic burden and something that increase workload without benefit
 - A low-cost project beneficial to the programs
 - No excessive increases in faculty workloads

Concerns related to budget and faculty workload (Cont'd)

How did we get the project started?

- Hired two quarter-time graduate assistants (.25 Full-Time Equivalent [FTE] x 2) , who were then being trained as professional evaluation specialists, for the initial year of the project





Our evaluation approach and philosophy: Patton's (1997, 2008, 2012) framework of utilization-focused evaluation

We conduct **useful and meaningful program evaluation** by:

- Ensuring that the voices of various stakeholders are reflected in the designing of evaluation
- Consulting with and providing support to faculty in planning, conducting, and sustaining evaluation activities
- Making evaluation planning and processes feasible, sustainable, and transparent
- Facilitating decision-making by providing evaluation findings based on systematic collection and analysis of evidence

Ad-hoc LLL Assessment Committee and the initial planning

- Formed an ad-hoc LLL Assessment Committee that includes department chairs and two faculty members with evaluation/assessment expertise
- In September of 2008, met with the committee to propose the project and get feedback
- Requested each department chair to (a) communicate about the project to faculty, (b) appoint an assessment liaison for each academic program, (c) identify who in the department (e.g., faculty, student representatives, and staff advisors) would provide input, and (d) schedule an individual follow-up meeting with the GAs

Development of survey questions

- To develop common questions, review literature on student survey as well as example exit surveys used at other institutions
- Create an online instrument that included a number of draft common items and ask faculty to rate the items for inclusion/exclusion with comments
- The common questions include: (a) background information, (b) awards and other accomplishments, (c) satisfaction with overall program experience, (d) satisfaction with courses, (e) satisfaction with institutional resources, (f) immediate and long-term plans after graduation, and (g) opinions of program value
- Asked departments to submit any program-specific questions they wanted to include in their surveys.

Sample common questions for Numerical data

1. Overall satisfaction with the program

	Very <u>d</u> issatisfied 1	Somewhat <u>d</u> issatisfied 2	No opinion 3	Somewhat satisfied 4	Very satisfied 5
1. Availability of program information (website, brochure)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Academic standards and expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Relevance of program to academic/professional goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Appropriateness of degree requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Faculty mentoring and advising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Extra-curricular activities (e.g., cultural activities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Student morale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Research opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Professional training opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Faculty's ability to keep pace with the field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings above if any.

Sample common questions for Narrative data

Please tell us what you think of our program.

1. What are the strengths of the program?

2. What recommendations do you have to improve the program?

3. Did the program increase your job prospects?

Definitely not Maybe not Neutral Maybe yes Definitely yes

Please provide comments that will help us understand your response if any.

Sample questions about student learning outcomes (SLOs) (BA in Korean for professionals)

1. The following statements are student learning outcomes for your degree program.

To what extent can you do the following?

	Not at all 1	2	Adequately 3	4	Very well 5
1. Engage in oral communication in Korean in various social contexts, in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Express opinions and ideas by using professional-level vocabulary and formal expressions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Read and comprehend professional-level Korean materials from a variety of genres and contexts (e.g., newspaper or internet articles, books, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Listen, comprehend and analyze Korean audio/video materials from a variety of genres and contexts (e.g., news, documentary, talk shows, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Apply critical thinking and rhetorical skills to produce coherent written works and presentations in Korean only	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Use a variety of Korean reference works and sources, including dictionaries and encyclopedias both in book form and on the Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Conduct independent research on students' major-related topics in Korean, and effectively communicate the results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings above if any.

Sample program-specific questions (BA in Second Language Studies)

3. Satisfaction with the capstone course (Professionalism in SLS)

	Very <u>d</u> issatisfied 1	Somewhat <u>d</u> issatisfied 2	No opinion 3	Somewhat satisfied 4	Very satisfied 5
1. Coverage of aspects of professionalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Increasing student awareness of being a developing professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Development of a professional philosophy statement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Development of a professional portfolio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Increased student confidence as a developing professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please provide comments that will help us understand your ratings above if any.

From data collection to data use

The College of LLL Dean's Office

Data
Collection



Data
Analysis



Reporting
the results
back to the
department

- * Sending students personalized invitations to complete the exit surveys
- * Sending out brief reminders to students, stressing the importance of the survey,
- * Asking program heads and advisors to encourage students to respond, and so on.

Response rate: 50% for
BA surveys and 65% for
MA/PhD surveys

- *quantitative results (descriptive statistics)
- *qualitative data (easy-to-read formats)

From data collection to data use (cont'd)

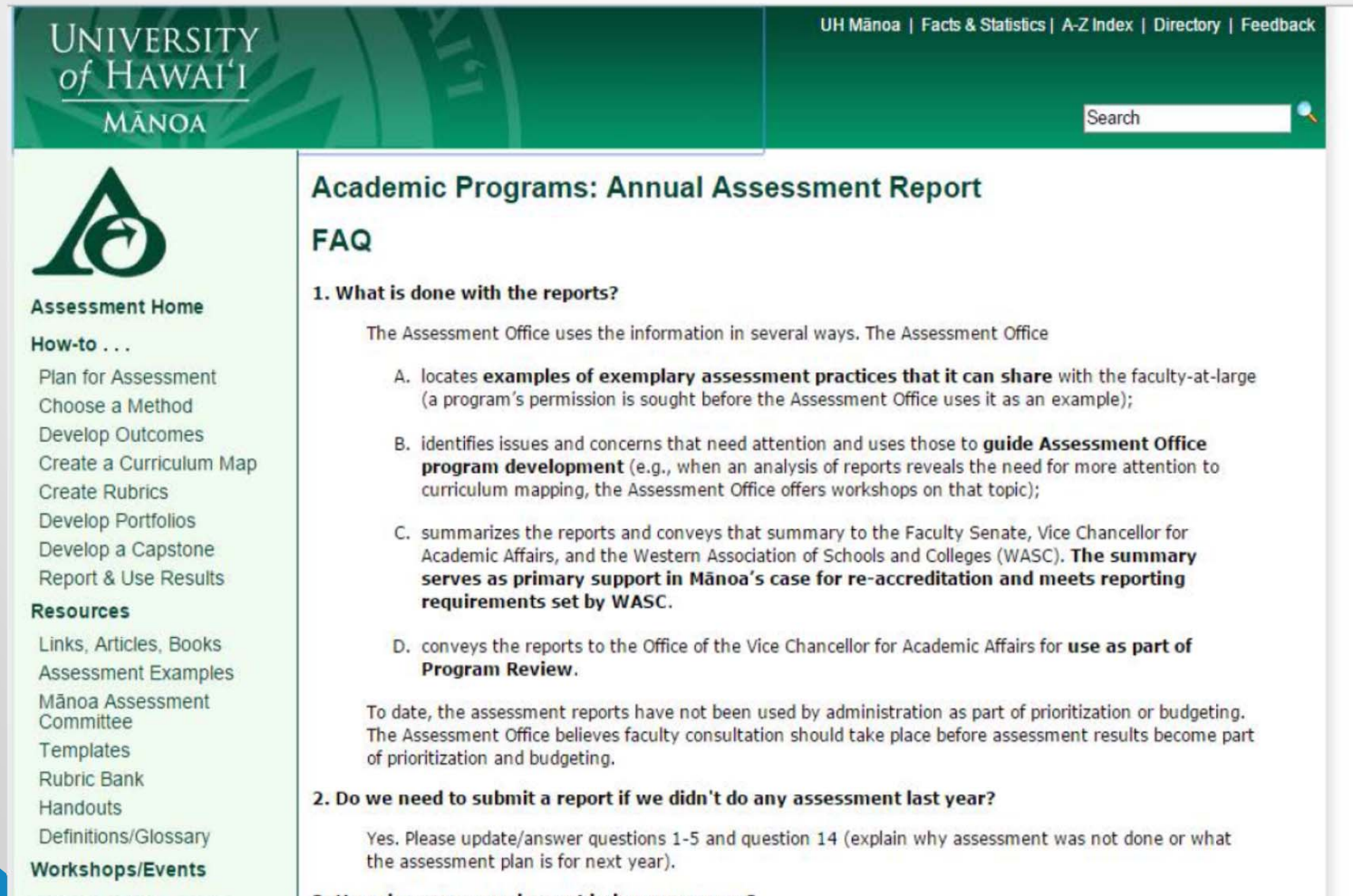
In the department



Share the results with all faculty members in the program or with those in a relevant committee in the program

- Confirm and reconfirm the strength and value of their programs
- Help them identify areas needing program-level improvement such as modifying graduation requirements, revising curriculum, developing new courses, modifying course offering frequencies and schedules, etc.

Mandatory annual assessment reports to the Mānoa Assessment Office



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Academic Programs: Annual Assessment Report

FAQ

1. What is done with the reports?

The Assessment Office uses the information in several ways. The Assessment Office

- locates **examples of exemplary assessment practices that it can share** with the faculty-at-large (a program's permission is sought before the Assessment Office uses it as an example);
- identifies issues and concerns that need attention and uses those to **guide Assessment Office program development** (e.g., when an analysis of reports reveals the need for more attention to curriculum mapping, the Assessment Office offers workshops on that topic);
- summarizes the reports and conveys that summary to the Faculty Senate, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). **The summary serves as primary support in Mānoa's case for re-accreditation and meets reporting requirements set by WASC.**
- conveys the reports to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for **use as part of Program Review.**

To date, the assessment reports have not been used by administration as part of prioritization or budgeting. The Assessment Office believes faculty consultation should take place before assessment results become part of prioritization and budgeting.

2. Do we need to submit a report if we didn't do any assessment last year?

Yes. Please update/answer questions 1-5 and question 14 (explain why assessment was not done or what the assessment plan is for next year).

3. How does an annual report help my program?

Issues and challenges

- Engaging faculty in a program-level evaluation initiative like this one is a challenge to do well
- It requires leadership and cooperation from both students and faculty
- Obtaining high survey response rates for all programs
- Sustaining administrative support
- No executive administrator is permanent

Conclusion

- Abandoning new evaluation initiatives will come quite easily unless we keep putting energy into sustaining our effort, motivation, and support
- In order to engage faculty in sound and functional program-level evaluation practices, such practices must be useful and meaningful for both internal and external stakeholders.
- The institution needs to invest in assessment and evaluation capacity building.



Thank you!

References

- Link to the College of LLL Student Exit/Graduation Survey:
<http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/index.php/program-review/assessment/lll-student-graduationexit-survey-2008-present/>
- Kondo-Brown, K., J. McE. Davis, & Y. Watanabe (January, 2015). Evaluation Capacity Building in College Language Programs: Developing and Sustaining a Student Exit Survey Project. In J. Norris & N. Mills (Eds.), *Innovation and accountability in foreign language program evaluation*. In J. Norris & N. Mills (Eds.), *Innovation and accountability in foreign language program evaluation, chapter 1*. AAUSC Series Issues in Language Program Direction. Boston: Heinle.