WELCOME TO THE LOOP!

A central part of our work as an institution of learning is to be a learning organization. This means constantly and actively reflecting on how our lofty visions are being translated into teaching and learning—in classrooms, offices, and co-curricular events. Assessment is, at its best, mindfulness in practice, and this newsletter is meant to be a forum for claiming this possibility for our community.

There is a lot going on at CIIS (and in the world) in the area of teaching, learning, and assessment that you need to know about. The pace of activity and news will only be increasing as our preparation for the next cycle of review by WASC kicks into higher gear. This periodic newsletter will be immediately relevant for faculty but will keep staff and students “in the loop” on this area of concern vital to all of us. Don’t stay out of the loop! Help us keep it fresh and real by sending in all your related news and events. (Please e-mail your feedback and ideas for stories or features to mbronson@ciis.edu).

NEW ASSESSMENT WEB SITE LAUNCHES—PROFILES OF A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Welcome to the CIIS Learning Outcomes and Assessment website.

This site provides information about assessment at CIIS and resources for programs to develop learning outcomes and assessment processes and plans. When the first phase of the project is complete, students, faculty, and others will be able to find the learning outcomes and assessment processes in place for all academic programs. As this is a work-in-progress, your comments and suggestions are most welcome. The value of all assessment resides in the quality of discussions it inspires and you are an important part of that process.

Sincerely,

Matthew C. Bronson, PhD
Director of Academic Assessment
mbronson@ciis.edu
(415) 575-6170
A pilot web site devoted to the display of academic programs’ information on teaching and learning can now be found at http://www.ciis.edu/Academics/Assessment.html. The ICP program and SUS have complete sets of materials posted and we congratulate them for the models they provide for the rest of us. PCC and EWP both have posted their outcomes and curricular maps after long and thorough deliberation on their content. All programs will shortly be showcasing their student learning outcomes, maps showing where these outcomes are addressed in the curriculum, assessment plans and processes, and, under password protection in the intranet, their yearly assessment reports.

This site was developed with the generous help of Toni Alejandria and Neil Freese on the web team and the Loop thanks them for their critical support. Please check out the useful links to assessment and evaluation resources (such as rubrics for many types of assignments). All faculty are strongly encouraged to keep up with what is going on in this area in their disciplines, their program, and at CIIS as a whole. By Fall of 2013 all programs and degrees will be represented on the site. Please be sure to keep this project on the front burner in your departmental and program meetings and let mbronson@ciis know if you have any questions or feedback on the site. This is just a beginning so your input is critical. It is designed to be a source of value for our learning community even as we meet the increasing requirements for transparency demanded by the accreditation process and the wider world.

WASC “PAPER” VISIT SET FOR SPRING 2016: REPORT DUE JANUARY 2016

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges will be back in 2016 to begin the next cycle of accreditation review. According to AVP Judie Wexler, the visit will be a “paper” or “offsite review” visit in lieu of the first-stage preparatory review under the previous guidelines which was on-site. As a result, our assessment processes “need to be more transparently documented; we need clear learning outcomes for programs and degree levels posted on the web and assessment data available on the intranet. All core faculty should be involved in program-level discussions (centered on developing and reviewing these materials) so that they are vital and meaningful. The real value of the inquiry derives from the discussion and subsequent action that it inspires.” AVP Wexler has set the goal of at least two to three full rounds of assessment of learning outcome effectiveness in CIIS programs by 2015--based on the evaluation of student work in their B.A./M.A. Capstones and other available data.

Every cycle of review should also result in “closing the loop,” where findings are turned into recommendations for practice. CIIS will need to show during this round of re-accreditation that decisions in academic programs are based on evidence and a transparent and systematic process of assuring student learning. WASC highlighted academic assessment as an area of concern that they would be focusing on in their next round of review (you can review the interim report and WASC’s response here.)

Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

The Academic Assessment unit is developing a process to routinely assess outcomes for the Ph.D at the SCT level. This will involve two points of assessment: the dissertation proposal (with the existing rubric) and the comprehensive examination papers. A new pilot rubric for assessment of comps is being developed with the collaboration of the ACS and TSD programs. A hearty thank you goes out from the Loop to the faculty of these programs and to all of you who are working on improving student learning at CIIS!
THROUGH THE LOUPE: CLOSE-UP ON INTEGRAL COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

The story of ICP shows what can happen when a program makes a sustained effort to build reflection on student learning into their culture. They have developed tools and processes for evaluating students’ skills and knowledge at key stages that are workable and useful for them. ICP is, in this, a model of an emergent culture of evidence at CIIS. It has required their joint commitment over the long haul to keep the inquiry alive and to claim for themselves the value of the time and energy involved.

Under direction of Program Chair Barbara Morrill, the program has realigned its curriculum with new BBS requirements (the agency that authorizes all of MCP’s MFT and LPCC pre-licensure degrees) in collaboration with MCP colleagues. They have completed a major self-study of its residential and intensive formats that made extensive use of data (supervisor reports, rubrics, etc). The program has deepened a commitment to the use of evidence throughout, while reaffirming their inclusion of spirituality and personal transformation as essential in the preparation of therapists. Assessment Liaison Philip Brooks reports, “years ago our assessment efforts were almost wholly focused on problematic students.” Through the self-study process, the program identified key contact and assessment points that would provide both an early-warning system and a profile of achievement of the program in aggregate.

ICP Assessment Liaison Philip Brooks, Ed.D. (preparing for a challenging assessment meeting?)

Their recent reviews of student capstone integrative papers and presentations suggested that their students’ “greatest strength is in terms of empathy, and their greatest weakness comes in being able to integrate our diversity education into their clinical work.” The program plans follow-up inquiry and review of how to integrate cultural humility and capacity for working with difference more effectively throughout the curriculum.

As Dr. Brooks reports, it is no easy matter organizing all the materials, people, and processes required for effective and meaningful assessment. However, “we are all interested in how we are doing,” and he shares some satisfaction in the fruits of his attempts to keep these issues before his faculty as the inquiry has matured. “I realize how far our assessment and evaluation efforts have come in the last 5 years. And I’m looking forward to building on our successes to have a truly integrated assessment model in ICP.”

STARTING THE LOOP: SOMATIC PSYCHOLOGY GETS ITS ARMS AROUND BODY LANGUAGE IN SELF-STUDY

SOM professor Ian Grand has informed the Loop that he and his colleagues “are using their self-study process to develop a community of assessment that will contribute to the creation of modes of more effective education for somatic
Assessment of evidence is central to this endeavor. But there are few current evaluation tools to use that focus upon non-verbal and experiential processes essential in training therapists who can work effectively in a somatic mode. Professor Grand writes, “SOM faculty are considering ways to think about and document experiential learning, the use of experiential learning in the development of therapist self-knowledge, and the analysis of therapist effectiveness in doing dyad practice in simulations and actual sessions.” The Somatic Psychology program is also taking a unique approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the program by looking at student-to-student, student-to-content, and student-to-faculty interactions. They are “looking beyond the syllabi and student tests to look at what is actually occurring in the classroom.”

“(We are)...looking beyond the syllabi and student tests to look at what is actually occurring in the classroom.” -Prof. Ian Grand, Somatic Psychology.

This original approach to reviewing student learning is promising for both the program and the wider world. Higher education generally is replete with standardized tests and instruments, but many doubt that they are measuring what really matters, or are actually predictive of capacity for future learning and success. It is difficult to evaluate any learning accurately—much less learning that is not inherently “fact-based,” but rather resides in the interpersonal realm. This area of assessment, focusing on such competencies as “non-verbal language” and “empathy,” is underdeveloped. Yet, these competencies have never been more important in a world where difference and shifting contexts are the norms. By focusing on developing their own tools for embedded assessments of these “soft skills” (evaluations of work in classes that can also be used for program-level review), the program is forging new ground. We anticipate publications and presentations in scholarly forums resulting from this ongoing inquiry. Special thanks and recognition are due to faculty members Anne Krantz and Mark Ludwig who have been working tirelessly for months assembling their program's self-study. Their painstaking efforts have resulted in a revitalized curriculum and approach to assessment in SOM. (Stay tuned to the assessment web site as we post their materials).

IN THE LOOP, UPCOMING ISSUE (MAY 2013) : WHAT ARE WE LEARNING FROM ALL THIS ASSESSMENT? CLOSE-UP ON SUS. WHAT DOES A CIIS DEGREE MEAN IN A CHANGING WORLD? HOW TO ALIGN OUTCOMES, SYLLABI, & ASSIGNMENTS.

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