

The One About Assessment

Becky: [00:00:00] Hi, I'm Becky

Wayne: [00:00:02] I'm Wayne

Mandy: [00:00:03] and I'm Mandy. And this is the two-year teaching and tech podcast. In each episode, we share tips and best practices for teaching in person and online, as well as how to effectively use instructional technology. In this episode, we're going to be talking about assessment at the college level.

So, Wayne and Becky, you guys know that I am our assessment person for our campus. And so today I wanted to just share a little bit of information about assessment in general, and, maybe try to dispel some myths that sometimes come up when I'm talking with folks about assessment. does that sound like a good plan?

Becky: [00:00:49] Sounds good to me.

Mandy: [00:00:51] All right. the first thing I'd like to do is define what I mean when I'm talking about assessment, because when we talk about [00:01:00] assessment, it can mean different things to different people. And there are different meanings for it, of course, but it kind of shifts as we talk about it from the classroom level to the institutional level. when we talk about assessment, I really like this definition that comes from Linda Suskie, who is my assessment guru. I got to meet her last summer and I've read her books. I really like the way that she talks about and presents assessment.

She's very practical in her thinking about it. And she says, assessment is deciding what we want our students to learn and making sure they learn it. And that's a straightforward definition which I appreciate. And then another great assessment person. Her name is Barbara Walvoord. She talks about assessment as being informed decision making. [00:02:00] those two definitions together, I think are really a good way to think about what assessment is. we're deciding what we want our students to learn, making sure they learn it. And then we're using that information to make good decisions based on what we've found out from our assessments.

the way I like to describe it is. Thinking about what do we want our students to know, apply, or be able to do after they've completed a learning activity and that could be an assignment or a unit, a course, or program. And then it's a process of gathering information and then using it to make decisions.

And another important thing to remember about assessment is that we need to identify learning goals. And then figure out how to help reach those goals. this is another definition thing that we should keep in mind. When I say learning goals, I'm using that term as [00:03:00] a synonym for outcomes or objectives.

something that happens a lot when I'm working with people on figuring out how to do some effective assessment or when I've trained our faculty on assessment processes in the past, people get really hung up on vocabulary. And, obviously, it's important to understand the words that you're using and why you're using them, but in recent years, the words, outcomes and objectives have come to kind of mean the same thing.

And I think that that's been a really big point of confusion for people. at one of the assessment trainings I attended. They just talked about it as just say learning goals. That's really what they are, they're goals for students, what we want them to learn. And, that can be used across the board from the assignment level all the way up to the institution.

So [00:04:00] there's our definition setting for our conversation today.

Becky: [00:04:04] Thank you, Mandy.

Mandy: [00:04:05] Yeah,

Becky: [00:04:06] I like those definitions. I do. I know, looking at it from a high school teacher's perspective, when I hear assessment, it's you just think of, Oh, it's the quiz that they take at the end of the chapter.

And then the semester exam they take at the end of the semester and really that is the extent of what assessment always meant to me as a K-12 teacher. And so now being in the higher ed setting, I see the necessity for it. And those definitions do help to change that understanding of it's not just a quiz.

So that makes sense.

Mandy: [00:04:41] Good. I'm glad. when I was coming out of K-12 also, that was kind of how I thought about assessment as well. I had gotten my master's degree in curriculum and instruction, so I knew a little bit about assessment, and I started teaching during the no child left behind era.

And [00:05:00] so, that kind of standards-based assessment. Was becoming a bigger thing. So when I came into the college, I was already kind of familiar with that concept and had started moving away from thinking about it as strictly just a test or a quiz or a paper or whatever, but it's, more and more confusing for a lot of people because just like the word outcome or the word objective gets used to mean different things to different people.

The word assessment gets used to talk about different things also. The quiz you give at the end of the unit is an assessment, but also, we have big picture holistic assessment, which is more what I try to focus on for our campus. it definitely gets confusing when you have these words, that mean different things in different contexts.

Yes. Yeah. before we start talking about some of the myths or [00:06:00] misconceptions around assessment, I wanted to also point out, we talked about what assessment is. But there's also some things that assessment is not. one thing to keep in mind is that assessment is not just reporting information without taking action.

something that, not just our institution, but a lot of institutions have run into, especially when regional accreditors started really demanding that institutions have some sort of an institutional assessment process I think a lot of schools kind of started focusing on reporting and that was one of the pitfalls that our institution fell into is we were doing a lot of reporting.

You know, everybody was reporting at the end of each semester. On their courses, but really no action was being taken or

Wayne: [00:06:57] like, based on these reports. Is that what you

Mandy: [00:06:59] mean?

[00:07:00] Right? Yeah. Or if action was being taken, it wasn't being documented.

I've come to really despise this term, but that's the whole closing the loop part of things.

Becky: [00:07:11] Well, that makes sense.

Wayne: [00:07:12] I think we had buttons at one point.

Mandy: [00:07:14] I think we did. We did have buttons at one point. Yeah. And not that closing the loop, isn't important. I mean, that's an important step in the assessment process.

But , I think that I just hate that term because it's been overused so much, but that's really the point where you've collected the information you've made decisions and then you act on those decisions and, then you look at what the results were of that action. That's that closing the loop part.

I think some people have felt like assessment is just a whole bunch of just reporting information which feels really pointless, but that really isn't what assessment is meant to be. it is meant to be a process. And, [00:08:00] it is also not intended to be a pointless exercise in compliance.

I know that that's been a perspective that I don't think. Is wrong. I mean, I think that there is a level of compliance because for our institutional accreditation, we do have to show that we have an assessment process and that we're looking at student learning at different levels.

And so, there is some compliance to it, but it definitely feels. Less meaningful. If the only reason you're doing any kind of assessment is just for compliance.

Becky: [00:08:38] well, you know what I think you've got to like as far as compliance, as important as compliance is, is also part of as an educator. But you still have to prove you're making a difference.

You still have to prove that what you're doing is effective and we've got federal money coming in. not to mention the students are paying for this in five [00:09:00] years for someone to come back and say, I didn't get an education. You didn't teach me anything. It's not pointless because then we have data to say, no our program is a good program.

It's a strong program. Our students are meeting those outcomes. And if you don't. Have any paper trail to prove that? I think that's a way to look at too, as far as being in compliance, it is because you have to prove to, if that makes any sense.

Mandy: [00:09:26] Yeah, that totally makes sense. And that actually leads to my next point about what assessment is not, is that it really isn't extra work beyond the scope of normal teaching responsibilities. Sometimes the reporting of the information can feel a little bit extra, but we're doing assessment all the time. even staff who aren't teaching are constantly doing assessment because when you put out information to people that's intended to help them understand or learn something and then maybe they don't learn it, or they don't understand it.

[00:10:00] And then you think about a different way to present it. That's part of that assessment process. it's an iterative thing where you're, using a strategy, getting information to people, seeing what happens with that. If they use it, if they're able to do what they need to do and then making changes in order to improve that that's part of that decision making and then seeing, okay.

Were the results better this time around. I think that the reporting part is what people sometimes get stuck on because that's the complex piece of it. But the actual process of assessment is something that we're doing all the time. I saw an analogy the other day talking about how assessment is kind of like cooking.

when you try a recipe, and you follow the directions and then maybe you taste it. And you're like, eh, I don't know. It's a little salty. then you want to try it again the next time. So, you [00:11:00] put less salt in it and see if your results improve. you have assessed that recipe and then made a decision to make changes.

Wayne: [00:11:09] It really is a good example. I was trying to teach a teenager how to sauté vegetables the other the other day. And I, I have the heat too high and I scorched the garlic almost immediately. So, I'm like, well, we just start over reassess, go.

Mandy: [00:11:25] There you go. Sometimes you scorch the garlic and you have to throw it out and you start over.

Sometimes you have a lesson that you think is going to be great and you scorch it and it's terrible.

Becky: [00:11:36] I love that analogy though. That's funny.

Mandy: [00:11:39] Yeah. I thought that was a good way to think about it. And the other thing is that assessment is not meant to be a one and done project. sometimes as a faculty member or even as a program or department, you might zero in on a particular problem or issue that you want to work on. [00:12:00] So maybe in a program, you have a low pass rate for a certification exam, for example, and you want to try to figure out how to raise the pass rate on that exam.

So that becomes your targeted project that you're working on, but that doesn't mean you fix that. And then you're like, Oh, okay, we're good. We're done. We don't have to do anything else ever again. It's more than that, you know, it's constantly looking at what you're doing and saying, is this working?

I know if it's not working, what am I going to do about it? If it is working, how do I keep it working? That's that continuous improvement idea that gets brought up sometimes.

Becky: [00:12:42] Coming from a technology background. I totally can wrap my head around that because technology changes so often and there's always something better.

You're never just done. Once you mastered something, a new, better toy or tool comes along that can do something and it costs less money or whatever. [00:13:00] I can understand from my, where my content mastery area is, how it is ever changing. It's just like technology. But I could see how other subjects may not see it quite that same way.

Right.

Right. The struggle would be and more to understand. Well, it's the same thing. Why do I have to do it differently? So, I can see that.

Mandy: [00:13:25] But, you know, even if the content doesn't change, you know, I had a funny conversation with one of our math faculty the other day, about how math hasn't changed in hundreds of years.

And, no the basic concepts behind math are pretty static, but your learners change. And, you might have different strategies that you try to teach it. So even if the content itself isn't really dynamic, the ways that you present it sometimes need to change based on your learners and what their needs are.

And [00:14:00] so you're not always necessarily assessing is my content good, but more, is the way that this is being presented to my students. Are they able to learn it and demonstrate that learning or not?

Becky: [00:14:15] Yeah, that's a really good point. So, Mandy, there are a lot of different people involved in the assessment process.

Can your kind of maybe tell us about what their viewpoints are, how the assessment process affects them? Maybe just a little summary for. The, different components of people involved

Mandy: [00:14:35] sure. Yeah. as we talk about this, it's important to just think about, you know, when we talk about assessment, there are multiple stakeholders in assessment overall. And that ranges from students all the way up to community members. students are obviously really important to the education process cause they're the people that we're teaching, and they need to [00:15:00] know what they're supposed to learn and whether or not they learned it.

That's part of where assessment, obviously is super important. One of my big frustrations, especially in grad school is when I've received a grade on an assignment, and I have no idea

why I received that grade. In this class that I took recently, I was getting these like 0.9 out of 10 or 9.8 out of 10.

But I was like, well, why, first of all, why didn't I get a 10? And

what criteria were you using to assess my assignment that you took two tenths of a percent off? I don't understand why that happened. And then with my assessment hat on, I was thinking, well, were there some learning goals that I didn't meet on this assignment that I should have?

And that's why I got this arbitrary grade. I'll talk more about the difference between assessment and grading later, [00:16:00] but that's just something that I think is really important is students need to know why they're learning something for lots of reasons, for one reason, it's because if people don't understand why they're doing something, they're less likely to do it.

And if we really want students to engage in learning and really understand the information, we're trying to share with them. They need to know why. having really clear learning goals for assignments and then up through the course level and what they should be getting out of the course and helping students see how those things connect is really important.

that helps them monitor their own progress and their own learning. And it can provide a sense of motivation too, because if they know why they're doing something, then they're going to be more likely to engage with that. So, yeah. I mean, we've all been students. Right. And have you ever taken a class where you felt like I have no idea why I'm doing this, and it feels [00:17:00] really pointless.

Becky: [00:17:01] A few.

Mandy: [00:17:04] Yes, me too. I might not have liked it or appreciated it more, but I would have at least felt more motivated, I think, to do some of the work that I've done in the past, if I had known how it fit into the big picture.

Becky: [00:17:19] yeah, I agree. And I feel like. And come back to K-12.

But again, I think college students sometimes feel this way. I know I have felt this way as a college student before is why do I have to take this class? That is an absolute waste of my time and often the responses so that you're well-rounded. And so that you prove you can complete something that's difficult, but I feel like that is not a good enough reason anymore.

you know, if we're going to have these expectations on students, they've got to see that bigger picture and have some direction there and it can't just be, Oh, it's just good for you. they want to know why there has to be a better reason than just because I said so,

[00:18:00] **Mandy:** [00:18:00] right. Yeah.

It's like take your medicine cause it's good for you. That's not good enough anymore. the next group of stakeholders is the faculty obviously, because they are the people teaching. I

like to think about for faculty perspective, they need to know how well students are learning the material and then where changes need to be made.

I don't like to think about it from a deficit model point of view. I think sometimes when we talk about assessment and makes it sound like we think faculty are doing everything wrong and they need to keep working on it until they finally get it right. I think that's completely the wrong way to think about it, as a faculty member myself, when I have been presented with information, that way that's really turned me off because I work super hard. People trying really hard to help my students don't make me feel like I'm doing a bad job. I think maybe thinking about it as a form of troubleshooting, back to the technology analogy.

There's [00:19:00] always going to be something that could be tweaked or changed. And most faculty do that automatically. You might deliver a lesson in class and your intentions were great, but then you can see that half your class did not get it for whatever reason. And I would say the vast majority of instructors would.

Leave that class and go back to their office or go home and say, okay, how do I improve this so that I can make sure that everybody understands that lesson. It isn't that we're doing a bad job. that continuous improvement idea isn't intended to make people feel like they're not doing what they're supposed to do.

It's more just recognizing, Oh, Hey. Something didn't go quite right with this lesson. Or I gave this test and a lot of students seem to have a hard time. What am I going to do about [00:20:00] it? And most people troubleshoot that and make changes so that they can ensure students are learning what they're supposed to learn.

And then, at the program level, it's where we're really looking at how well students are meeting the learning goals for the program, and that they're able to demonstrate them upon completion of their credential. if you're the director of the nursing program, you're going to be looking at the student learning outcomes for nursing and making sure that as students are in all of their classes, once they've completed everything that.

They can demonstrate those however many learning outcomes that are, are, and be able to go and get a job and do what they're supposed to do. And then at the institutional level, we're kind of looking at the same thing as programs, except we're looking at. More broadly. So, we're looking across the whole institution.

at our school, we have the three college learning [00:21:00] outcomes now, and those are the three learning goals that we want to make sure any student who leaves our campus with a degree or certificate can demonstrate those three really broad learning outcomes that they're able to do those things.

And then we have accreditors. So, we have regional accreditors, like Northwest is ours. And then many of the programs have different accrediting bodies as well. and what those stakeholders are really doing. Especially the regional accreditors.

That's a peer review process. And I know that in a lot of instances, it doesn't feel like it's peer review. It feels like they're the education police or something, but

Becky: [00:21:45] it's like an audit.

Mandy: [00:21:47] Yeah, it does. And it's kind of is an audit, but it's a peer-based audit. what the regional accreditors are really looking for is to make sure that our students are getting the experience that we say they're getting.

It [00:22:00] is meant to be, this kind of voluntary audit of our institution to make sure that what we say is happening is happening. And that we're doing things effectively. So, they're looking at it from a really big picture perspective. And I think that's kind of the same with the programmatic accreditors.

And then we have our external stakeholders. those are community members, parents who might be paying for their kids to go to school. spouses, whoever's not directly involved with the school, but has some sort of stake in it, whether it's. By providing donations or supporting a student who's coming here or even, industry who are hiring our students.

they want to know that the school is living up to the promise that it's made. we have a mission. We have a vision; we have these goals and. Our external [00:23:00] stakeholders need to know that we're actually living up to those promises.

Wayne: [00:23:04] Yeah.

Becky: [00:23:07] Mandy. I do have a question on the accreditors with the peer review process. So, the, when say we're Northwestern, when Northwestern comes in to do our accreditation, those peer reviewers are those employees with Northwestern that maybe used to be higher ed for it. Another, who is that? Who is the, are the peers?

Mandy: [00:23:28] Sure. That's a really good question. actually, the people who come and do the site visits and look at all of our material are actually people from other colleges and universities. I've never been on a site visit myself, but I went through the training to be a site visit person for Northwest.

it's people like, like us really. usually what they will do is they assemble a team and there is a lead person and, there's a [00:24:00] lead reviewer and then they try to have somebody who can be kind of representative of different areas of that campus. they'll have someone who is maybe a librarian who will come and be able to look at that perspective. I was selected because of my role as. An English instructor. So they must have needed some extra faculty type people to be able to go on site visits.

it depends on where the school is in the accreditation process, Which year they're on in their cycle and I'm not totally sure how else they decide who goes on the site visits, but that's what makes it a peer review process is that it's primarily people who are employed at other schools in the region.

Becky: [00:24:49] That makes sense.

That makes sense. That's really good. Thank you.

Mandy: [00:24:52] Yeah, for sure. do you want to talk about a few misconceptions?

Becky: [00:24:58] Yes, please.

[00:25:00] **Mandy:** [00:24:59] Okay. the biggest misconception, and this is also probably the most confusing one is that assessment and grading are the same thing and they are not the same thing

Wayne: [00:25:14] is this one of those things where like all grading is assessment, but not all assessment is grading.

Mandy: [00:25:21] Sort of yes. and that's what makes it confusing, if we change the word grading to evaluation, just to make things a little bit more interesting, evaluation and assessment are connected, they're complimentary of each other, but they're not the same thing . The way that I think it can help to think about the difference between the two is that grades really focus on the performance of individual students.

You and I might take the same test Wayne, but you get your grade and I get my grade. And each of our grades tell us as individuals [00:26:00] about how well we did, but if our instructor looks at. The whole class's grades on that test then that information tells the instructor something different than just looking at my grade alone.

that's kind of where the grading and assessment overlap, because something can be learned from that. If you're looking at it from a whole group of students. the purpose of grades is really more to look at performance, particularly to individual students and then assessment. Like I was just saying really focuses on groups of students and what might be done to improve learning.

back to that example, if our teacher gives us a quiz at the end of the unit and half the class fails the quiz, then. It's probably worth looking at what happened that half the [00:27:00] class did not succeed on that assessment. So

Becky: [00:27:05] that tell if it's the individual person who's struggling or if it's the way that the information has been presented.

Mandy: [00:27:14] Right. in an ideal situation then if half the class fails a quiz, Then that instructor is going to go back and say, Oh, wow. Okay, what happened? What do I need to do to remediate some of that and make sure that. My students know this material. And so they might end up re-teaching some of that information.

They might look at specific questions on the quiz and reteach that information, whatever the process is for that particular evaluation. And, I also think it's helpful to think of that assessment as a more holistic process asking the question, are students learning what we need them to and how do we know?

whereas grades or evaluation, that's more specific. [00:28:00] how well did each student perform on the task? it isn't that they're completely unrelated, but they really shouldn't be looked at as the same thing. And I think that's where some of the confusion has come from in having these conversations on our campus too.

Because when we've done reporting for our assessment process, people were saying, well, 50% of my students got. An a, on this assignment. And that's how they said that the students were meeting or not meeting that particular learning goal for the class, but then there was no, okay. Only 50% of the students achieved this on this assessment. What did I do about it? And then what were the results? that's kind of where that was getting lost is. There wasn't that follow through.

Becky: [00:28:57] Okay.

Mandy: [00:28:58] another [00:29:00] misconception that I wanted to bring up is that when we talk about. Making sure that our learning goals are measurable. I think that a lot of people have taken that to mean that those learning goals have to be quantitative in some way. measurable doesn't mean that you have to necessarily have a number associated with it.

what I mean by that is that measurable is really. That you can point to a learning goal or outcome and show how the assessment demonstrates that goal. And it might be several different things put together. maybe you have three different activities that you're using to demonstrate that learning goal. And that can be measurable. I say qualitative data is just as valid as quantitative data. not everything has to have a number associated with it, but I think the word measurable causes problems [00:30:00] sometimes because then people immediately go to like a ruler and it has to have numbers associated with it.

Becky: [00:30:09] Qualitative data is a lot more fun too.

Mandy: [00:30:12] Some people feel like qualitative data doesn't give you enough hard and fast critical information, but sometimes it really can be more did the students perceive themselves as having learned this information because no evaluation is ever perfect.

you're never going to have the perfect quiz. You're never going to have the perfect essay assignment and you can't quantify everything. the other thing too, is that learning goals should really be written in a way that supports and directs the type of learning that's intended. are you trying to get students to demonstrate knowledge?

Do you want them to demonstrate reasoning? Do you want them to show a particular skill or do you want them to have a product? [00:31:00] the way that the learning goal is written should dictate what kind of learning you're looking for from the student. sometimes we just have really complex or badly written learning goals, and sometimes those are dictated to us and we can't do anything about that.

those learning goals might not be written in a way that's easy to measure. And then we have to unpack those and figure out how to do that and still make sure that students are getting that knowledge so measurable does not have to mean numbers all the time, unless it makes sense.

another misconception is to think about the differences and value between formative assessment and summative. over the last several years that I've been doing this, I think

there's a perception that using formative assessment to [00:32:00] demonstrate learning goals is not okay.

I think a lot of people feel like they have to have this summative big tests or big paper or some kind of large scale evaluation. And that's just a small piece of the puzzle. when we're talking about formative assessment, just so we're all clear on what I mean by that that is assessment for learning, making sure that along the way, students are learning what we want them to be able to learn. Maybe I give a lesson in class on thesis statements, and I have students complete an exit ticket before they leave class that day to tell me what did they get out of the lesson?

What questions do they still have? Sometimes people call it a muddiest point, exercise, whatever you call it. But it's just a really short formative assessment to find out. Did students learn [00:33:00] what they needed to learn that day? And those are just as valuable and can provide just as much rich information as if I gave them a 10 point multiple choice quiz.

And sometimes you get better information out of these formative kinds of assessments. formative assessments can provide feedback for students and instructors and can help instructors plan for further instruction and can also help develop interventions. So that's where a muddiest point exercise might come in.

And if only three out of my 20 students, Can tell me what a thesis statement is after having a lesson on it, I'm probably going to need to plan an intervention for the next class so that we can make sure they have that essential information. formative assessment is really good for deciding if you need to change something in the curriculum and it can also.

Give an opportunity for self-assessment [00:34:00] both for faculty and students and for goal setting. formative assessment is a huge , important part of education. Whereas summative assessment is the assessment of learning. that's really where that evaluation comes in where you determine grades and evaluate the effectiveness of a program or a course or whatever it is you're evaluating. formative assessment is definitely valuable, especially when we're looking at an assessment process. If you're making changes, those are usually coming from formative assessments and those are the things you want to be documenting.

Becky: [00:34:42] That makes a lot of sense that that really does. Thank you for explaining that.

Mandy: [00:34:48] Absolutely. another thing that I've noticed is that there's been a bigger push in assessment literature to include more student generated assessment. [00:35:00] getting students to do some self assessment is a really big part of having a strong assessment process because even though, as faculty we're the experts in this subject area and the content, we can't look inside our students' heads and know if they understand what it is that they're supposed to understand, or we might. Want them to be able to demonstrate something, but maybe the way they envisioned demonstrating it and the way we envision them demonstrating it is not exactly the same. getting that additional perspective matters.

Becky: [00:35:37] So Mandy, what would a student assessment like a student self assessment look like?

Mandy: [00:35:43] Sure. It can, it can look like a lot of different things.

in my writing class, I have students do a reflection paper at the end of the class, telling me what they learned. what changed about their writing process and what they [00:36:00] plan to do to continue learning after they finish my class? that would be one type of student assessment doing reflections.

I know in some of our health science programs, they actually give students the course outcomes, but I think they also, in some of the programs, give them the program outcomes and actually have students assess themselves saying this is how I met this outcome. And here's how I know that I did it.

Oh,

Becky: [00:36:27] okay. That makes sense.

Mandy: [00:36:28] It can be structured like that where you actually give them the outcomes and say, all right, prove to me, or tell me how you're able to demonstrate this. Or it could be something a little bit more loosey goosey. Like what I do where it's just like, Hey, tell me what you learned.

Becky: [00:36:47] When I did my master's program, we had to, at the end of each class to do what these are, this is what I was supposed to meet. These are the learning outcomes for this course. This is how I met it. This is how I know when we had to attach examples of our work to it. and it [00:37:00] really was beneficial because then I knew what I needed to do.

And I knew how I did it. And I knew what I knew when I knew why I knew it. And you know, so I do, I like that idea of student self-assessment like that.

Mandy: [00:37:14] Yeah, I like that too. I think some people might feel a little bit uncomfortable with that because maybe it feels like that's taking some control out of the faculty's hands, but to me, it's just an additional piece of the puzzle.

I'm thinking about my recent experience in these classes I took this summer. I got good grades on my assignments, but I don't really feel like I would be able to adequately demonstrate what I was supposed to have learned. we didn't really do any kind of self assessment, but just my, own self assessment, I feel like there's a lot more that I needed to learn or that I could have done.

if we were to have gone through that process of [00:38:00] looking at the course outcomes, if I had to use a Likert scale, I would not have given myself more than a middle of the road score on any of those things, but that would have been additional information for my professor who could have then seen.

Oh, okay. So this person who. I was giving these arbitrary 9.9 9.8 scores on their assignments, only rates themselves at a three out of five for knowing this information. I wonder what's up with that. that could give an additional perspective.

Wayne: [00:38:40] Can I ask a question about that? Yeah. Okay. I have no, no data to back this up, but for some reason, I feel like I've read, or maybe it's just me on doing these things myself.

I don't know. But I feel like I've read that, people will typically score themselves lower than you would . [00:39:00] So is that an accurate assessment? If they're doing a self assessment, knowing that they might score themselves lower?

Mandy: [00:39:08] I think that's a really good question, Wayne and I think you're right.

I think I have read something about that as well now. Yeah, I know it's totally anecdotal here. I have no data to support this either, but, I would say again, anecdotally, most of the time people are not going to self assess themselves higher than what their ability level is.

some people tend to be really accurate in assessing themselves. And then some people tend to score themselves lower. my experience with having my students tell me, you know, what did you learn? What do you think you got out of this? Generally has been pretty consistent with where I felt like they were, I've only had a couple students who were like, I am amazing at this.

And I'm like that you actually are not [00:40:00] amazing. I'm glad you feel that way.

Wayne: [00:40:04] Totally kidding.

Mandy: [00:40:06] No, but maybe, maybe it's true. We are also not licensed to analyze people that way .

I think you're right. That you have to be cautious. I would not feel good about basing an entire student's grade in my course, strictly on their self evaluation. That would probably result in some really funky grading happening.

Wayne: [00:40:29] Sure. But as a piece to the whole that's okay. I see.

Mandy: [00:40:33] Yeah, for sure. Because it could be, my own anxiety over my ability to do educational statistics probably was coloring my self assessment of what I actually know. But I think that in a perfect situation or an ideal situation, if an instructor were going back to those course outcomes, [00:41:00] the learning goals for the course and saying, okay, Hey, so this assignment connects to this course outcome.

Look at what you have been doing all along. Look at what you have already demonstrated. You're learning more about this . I think showing those connections and showing the why might actually improve students' ability to self assess too, because then they're actually able to say, Oh yeah, I did learn this thing because I used this particular

assignment, or we learned about this over these different assignments. And that's how I know that I am able to do this thing. So it is definitely I think a holistic thing to consider.

Wayne: [00:41:48] Sure. Okay .

Mandy: [00:41:50] my last misconception that I wanted to talk about is curriculum mapping, which I have to admit, I love curriculum mapping, [00:42:00] but, I am a giant nerd about this stuff too. I think it's really fun. it is, mentally taxing sometimes to do it and it can be very, very hard. I'm not trying to say that it's easy by any means, but I enjoy it because it feels like you're putting together this really complicated puzzle.

And I like that sort of thing. this conception that I wanted to talk about is that some people see curriculum mapping as busy work. it can certainly feel that way. And maybe sometimes it is, but the goal is not for it to just be busy work. I think curriculum mapping is really important because it can help us understand better where the learning goals are being addressed throughout the curriculum.

with that, you can see where there are gaps or where there's over coverage of something. when I'm working with our program directors to get some curriculum maps made one of the goals that I have for them is to show [00:43:00] where these different program outcomes are being met throughout their courses, to make sure that there isn't one.

Program goal that is only addressed in one course at the end of the program, for example, or it's only addressed once at the beginning of the program and then they never talk about it again. those are some of those gaps. Conversely, there might be a program outcome that gets addressed in every single course.

Is that necessary? Maybe it is. But maybe it's not. being able to look at it from a broader perspective, I think is really important. And it's also a way to communicate to stakeholders, how each level of learning is connected from the course level through the institution level. back to our external stakeholders, like our regional accreditors, having a solid curriculum map is one good way to communicate to them that, yes, we [00:44:00] do know what's going on.

We know where these things are being met. And this is how we know. when we say these program goals are met in these courses, and then we drill down to the course level and say these outcomes are being met through these assignments. That's how we can demonstrate to our accreditors during that peer review process that we actually know where this learning is taking place and how it's happening.

It gives students of why. It's good to have a why, for sure. So friends, that's what I know about assessment.

Becky: [00:44:39] I'm sure, you know, a lot more than that about

Mandy: [00:44:43] okay.

Becky: [00:44:43] But those are really good overview of it. I understand it much better now than I, than I did before. And. Kind of the point of it and, you know, one of those necessary evils to some people I'm sure, but, but it is [00:45:00] necessary.

And I think that something, we just all need to keep in mind that it is necessary, whether we like it or not, and we do get some really good information out of it. And so thank you so much for sharing all of your knowledge about that today. It was very interesting.

Mandy: [00:45:15] Yeah. Thanks guys. For letting me talk about it.

She did like a little dance there. Yeah,

that's right.

Alright. Well, I hope you guys have a great day.

Becky: [00:45:28] Yes. Thank you to our listeners for joining us and thank you, Mandy and Wayne, and we'll see you next time.

Mandy: [00:45:37] Bye bye.