

Colorado Northwestern Community College –Assessment Plan

Area:	Responsible Person:	Semester(s): Year:	Deadlines: Yellow - September 30; Green - May 31 Format: 11 point Times New Roman, not to exceed 2 pages	
Form A. Instructor Assessment Plan				
CNCC Assessment Goal(s) being assessed:	Communication Skills		Critical Thinking	
Departmental Objective:				
Measure(s):				
Why was this measure chosen?				Why?
Assessment Process:				How?
How will data be measured? recorded? Stored? When will data be collected?				When?
Form B. Instructor Assessment Report				
Results (fill out at end of year):				
What were the results of the assessment process?				

Assessment at CNCC Of Wombats and Web Forms



You are doing assessment. . .
Right?!?!?!?

Once Upon a Time . . .

- In the beginning, there was the law (Colorado House Bill 1187). And the law demanded "Higher Education Accountability."
- And CNCC set forth to comply with the law, and so created . . . a wombat!
- (Why a wombat? According to wombat hunter Todd Ward, in ages past, when the time came to name some vast, all-encompassing project, there was stunned silence until someone finally said "Call it a wombat and be done with it." Thus the wombat came to symbolize any project that was difficult to describe succinctly.)

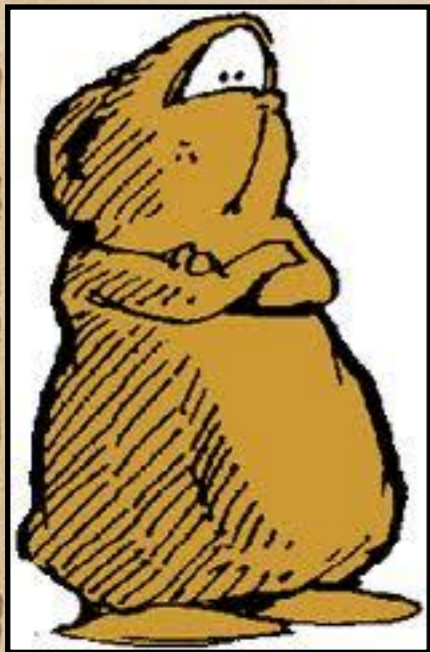
Once Upon a Time . . .

- Thus became the wombat! And then the law was no more, and everyone assumed the wombat would live, and so promptly ignored it.
- And lo! The self-study of 2003 loomed, and it was *very* motivating. And the college was distraught to find that the wombat birthed so zealously in the 1900s was not the Great Marsupial they had hoped for. It was in fact, um, dead.
- Turns out you actually have to feed a wombat to keep it alive. Who knew?

More Seriously

- CNCC recognized the need for assessment as part of the previous self study, and began to make steady progress towards an assessment program, including the formation of an Assessment Committee.
- The Assessment Committee identified two key areas to evaluate:
 - 1. Effective communication
 - 2. Critical Thinking.

Recent Wombattiness



- The Assessment Committee knew there had to be data gathered, forms to collect the data on, tests to evaluate students, and so on, and so a new wombat was born. This is the marsupial of today, of A/B forms and C/D forms, bi-annual reports, and the amazing TER (Test of Everyday Reasoning).
- We thought we had this wombat licked, until trouble appeared in TERville. We offer a musical summary in regard to these problems.

**The TER – Idea from Tom Chaplin, Lyrics by Judy Allred,
Performed by “Buffalo Joe” Sears.**

Get ready for work, let assessment begin
The pain overwhelms and the work never ends.
It's filling out forms and reporting at best
And getting our students to just take the test.

The HLC team must know that we strive
To follow the rules; we just want to survive.
Critical thinking and writing their best
Will all be measured if we just give the test.

We work to compile the data we mine
Making no sense of the numbers we find.
We write our results and send to the rest
And wait for next year to give them the test.

Work, work, and as you assess
You'll learn we learn nothing from giving the test.

Testing is good and it has its own place.
But proof of real learning has not shown its face.
Forgotten and lost and even worse yet
Assessment of learning is not on the test.

Teaching's important. It's good to know how.
And someday you'll learn to but someday's not now.
Assessing is key; we must all do our best
To never teach concepts; they're not on the test.

A Moment Of Revelation

- The Assessment Committee recognized we weren't getting the kind of data from the TER we wanted. Then the light went on, and we asked whether or not we had ever assessed the rest of the assessment process.
- In other words, how did we know what we think we knew?
- That's at the heart of the matter.

Assessment Is and Is Not:

- ◆ Assessment is asking how you know what you think you know, and then deciding what to do differently if what you think you know turns out not to be true, or what to keep doing if what you know turns out to be true.
- ◆ Assessment is NOT:
 - ◆ a club to beat you over the head with,
 - ◆ a sword of Damocles threatening to fall,
 - ◆ a factor in job evaluations,
 - ◆ something extra do to.

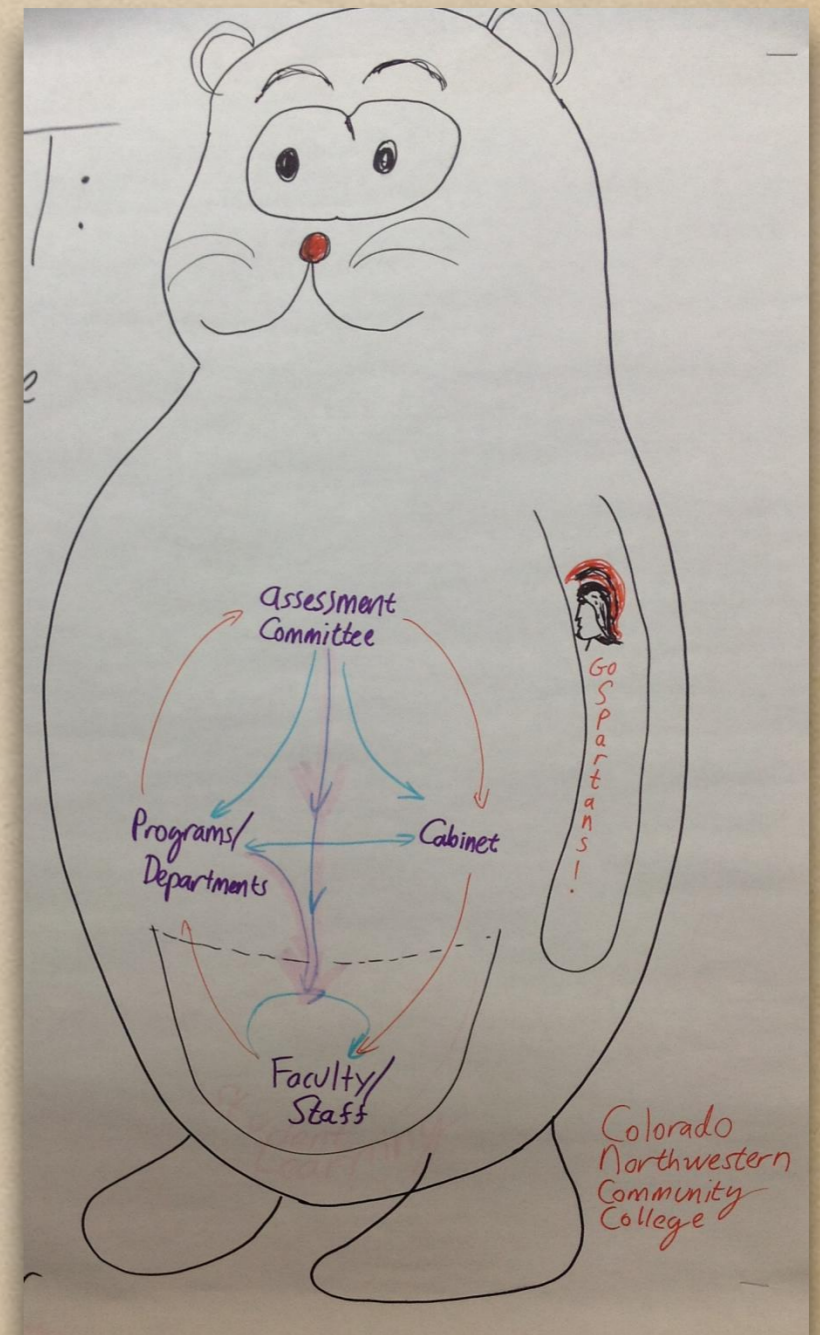
Assessment Now



- We ARE NOT arbitrarily throwing out the system we have been using. However, change MAY be coming.
- CNCC is participating in a four-year program with the Assessment Academy, a regional agency that helps colleges evaluate their own assessment systems to help them get better.

Feeding the Wombat

CNCC learned we have to feed the wombat, but we have to feed it the right diet. The goal of the project over the next four years is to not just create a culture of assessment on campus, but to complete the whole assessment cycle vision so that the data from assessment is meaningful, simple to collect, and actually drives the decision making process from the faculty level all the way up to the cabinet.



Starting Point

- We have an assessment system now.
- What we can not say with certainty is what works in that system, and what doesn't.
- The goal for the first part of our Assessment Academy project is to determine what we as a college know and do about assessment.
- Once we know that, it is possible to make meaningful adjustments, connect pieces that need to be connected and build or adapt new pieces as needed.
- We want to complete the cycle. That's the goal.

Key Points

1. CNCC knows we don't know how effective our assessment cycle is right now. Through the Assessment Academy project, lovingly known as Feeding the Wombat, we are going to begin to change that.
2. The goal is a complete assessment system and cycle that drives decisions using data that is useful, accurate, and easy to obtain and manage.
3. The process does not involve the wholesale removal of existing systems, but involves the careful analysis of what we have in place, and then appropriate development or change based on the needs that data shows us.
4. Assessment is not something to bludgeon people with, threaten them with, or include as part of job performance reviews. It is a means of asking ourselves how do we know what we think we know, and how do we use that information to get better at what we do.