

Data Sources for Assessment of Student Learning

The following suggestions for establishing a process for assessing student learning is based on the [Long Range Academic Planning](#) presented before. The information is organized in two subjects: a strategy for generating information for assessing student learning, and making sense of assessment data.

Information Sources and Students Learning Cycle

The process is built around a stylized learning cycle of a college student. Subsequently it identifies sources of information for each stage in the learning process. Information sources are classified into “existing data sources” (data is being generated) and “new data sources” (data to be generated). This classification seeks to minimize information costs. The following matrix, Information Sources and Assessment Instruments, is an important tool.

In this case, which is representative of many departments, it is possible to begin an assessment process based on data already generated within the Department. Few additional forms have been designed to serve the purposes of assessment. The student file content has been expanded with Form for Advisers’ Assessment of Economic Knowledge (see form). Another addition is the Exit Interview Form filled by graduating students (see form). These forms, in combination with other records about students, allow files to perform the function of portfolios. Their analyses will provide *indirect measurements* of student learning by objectives.

Teachers’ evaluations will be expanded to include questions that assess student learning in specific courses. The systematic analyses of this information will provide *direct measurements* of student learning, mainly for learning objective # 1.

The faculty will work on the standardization of grading rubrics for seminar level courses (400). This information will be used to assess students by learning objectives. The information will be processed by means of a relative-outcome analysis (trait-analysis approach). It will provide *direct measurements* of student learning.

The Economic Department will take advantage of the Alumni Survey administered by the office of Institutional Research, expanded it with additional questions. The information will be used to describe how institutional purposes are being achieved.

Students Economics Club will invite successful economics alumni. These alumni will make presentations about the knowledge and abilities necessary to develop a successful career as economist.

**Information Sources and Assessment Instruments
Within Student Learning Cycle**

Data Sources		Stylized Student Learning Cycle				
		FYE (200)	Learning Economics Foundations (300)	Working on a Concentration (300)	Culminating Experience (400)	Placement/ Alumni
Existing Data Sources						
	Student Files: Expanded		Form: Advisers' Assessment Adviser's informal notes	Form: Advisers' Assessment Adviser's informal notes	Form: Exit Interview Adviser's informal notes	
	Teacher Evaluations, with Additional Questions	Additional questions for Econ201 A/B	Additional questions for Econ304/5		Additional questions for 400 level courses	
	Grading Rubrics for Seminars				Assessment by Teachers - Standardized Format	
	Alumna Surveys – SSU Institutional Research					Additional Questions for Econ Majors
	Inviting Successful Alumni to make presentations in Economics Club					Presentation theme: Abilities for success in a career.
New Data Sources						
	Department Alumni Survey					Own Survey Administration
	Locally Developed Texts		Test		Test	
	External Auditor			Visit		
	Focus Groups				Focus Group: Administration & Interpretation	
	...					
...						

Data Validity and Reliability

Although in the future the Department may use statistical methods to investigate factors contributing to student learning, during the next years it will use the type of information above described. Nevertheless issues about data validity and reliability still stands. For this purpose the selected data is being judged in the following way: by means of face-validity and inter-rater reliability.

Validity—The faculty has confronted the question how meaningful are its indicators of student learning and of its explanatory factors. It has opted to determine if the results possess *face validity*. The faculty is satisfied if the rank order produced by its measures look reasonable to a knowledgeable observer.

Reliability—The faculty has confronted the issue about precision and stability of the scores. This question is particularly relevant when different faculty members are using similar rubrics to assess learning within different seminar level courses. This will also be the case when different student advisers fill the form “Adviser Assessment of Student Knowledge”. It has chosen to deal with subjective judgment by relying on *inter-rater reliability*. Inter-rater reliability indicates the extent of agreement among different reviewers. One way to reduce the influence of pure subjective judgment is to operate with a standard of reference. For example in the form “Adviser Assessment of Student Knowledge”, each adviser is asked to judge in reference to the “expected knowledge of a graduating major”; in the Exit Interview students are asked to consider the expectations of Teachers of 400 level courses.

FORM MODELS

[Adviser Assessment of Student Knowledge](#)

[Exit Interview](#)

ADVISER'S ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT KNOWLEDGE
Economics Department

Student Name: _____ Professor: _____ Date: _____

Student Level FR ___ SH ___ JR ___ SR ___

Approved Economics Courses: 201A ___ 201B ___ 304 ___ 305 ___ 317 ___
Other 300's _____
Other 400's _____

1. Taking as a reference the knowledge that we expect from a “B” **graduating senior**, and after exchanging ideas with the advisee, I think that this student,

Adviser Assessment of Student Economic Knowledge						
		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Has a good understanding of economic vocabulary and concepts					
2	Is able to compare and contrast competing theories for the same issue or policy					
3						
4						
5	Has a good command of mathematical economics and statistics (based on student information)					

2. This student has the potential and disposition to conduct graduate studies in economics.
Yes ___ No ___

3. This student has the potential and disposition to conduct graduate studies in Law
Yes ___ No ___

4. Action Item:

5. Follow up (date: - -)

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

EXIT SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to measure and evaluate student experiences in the Economics major. In completing this survey you will provide us with information about whether we are meeting our learning objectives as well as areas in which we might modify and improve our curriculum. Your careful reading and answering of all the questions will be much appreciated by faculty and will also help future students.

Background Information	Career Plans after graduation from SSU (choose one that best fit)
Concentration/Study Plan: _____	Will continue in your present job: Yes__ No__
Double Major: _____ Minor: _____	What is your present job?
Date Graduation (expected):	Pursue a Ph.D. in Economics? Yes _ No __
Years spent at SSU:	Pursue another Higher Degree than Economics? PhD__ MA__ JD__ MBA__ Other__
If employed while being student in Economics? Hours per week in average:	Seek a job in your chosen concentration or study plan? Yes__ No__
Were you an Economic Tutor? Yes__ No__	Have you find a new job? (Explain):

Based upon your participation in the Economics major, please assess your learning experience, by registering on a scale of 1 to 7 your relative agreement with the following statements.

		Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I have a good understanding of economic terms, concepts, and theories							
2	I have developed the ability to compare and contrast competing views within economics							
3	I have acquired the ability to research economic issues							
4	I have developed the ability to analyze and evaluate contemporary social issues, using economic theories and concepts							
5	I have a good command of Mathematical Economics and Statistics							