

Reflecting on Assessment  
Course Learning Spring 2016  
John Weng  
San Diego State University

Author Note

John Weng is a second year Master's student in the Post Secondary Educational Leadership Program with a specialization in Student Affairs.

## Reflecting on Assessment

### **Introduction**

Having had the chance to work with the faculty for a semester already, I entered this semester with hopes to continue working on my assessment project and seeing through the assessment for the graduate assistantship program. While the course continued to provide content that filled the gaps from my practical assessment experience including topics such as survey design and data analysis, I think the most learning that I have gained is through personally conducting an assessment project and working closely with a group that is comprised of members who all work full-time. In addition, as I was personally a graduate assistant and am closely invested in graduate assistantship program that the program offers, I had to practice being content neutral in the process of conducting a qualitative assessment when it came to analyzing data. As such, this project has helped me learn how to engage in outcomes-based assessment while working with a diverse group (Program Learning Outcomes 5, 8) in addition to supporting my learning of how I might be able to better handle stress and better understand myself as a professional (Personal Goal 3 and Professional Goal 3).

### **Links to Program Learning Outcomes**

Through the assessment project, I have had an opportunity to directly engage in outcomes-based assessment, which contrasts the divisional-level work I previously engaged in. While my practical assessment experience provided a rich understanding of the role assessment plays and how the assessment cycle impacts an institution, through this course, I was able to directly engage in assessment practice myself. This process has also showed some of the challenges that professionals might face when conducting assessment. In this semester, our group conducted the data collection and analysis for the assessment project. Throughout this process, our group experienced difficulty in acquiring sign-ups for focus groups due to challenges with

scheduling between the group members and students of the first-year cohort. In this process, I found myself relying on others to assist in the recruitment of participants for the focus groups. Further, as we started analyzing the data, our group had a hard time identifying what constituted as successfully reaching an outcome and what was simply satisfactory. I realized that we had to work with the Program Coordinators to develop an understanding of what might constitute as the bare minimum for students in the program. Through this, I have learned the importance of sharing assessment results with key decision makers so that they can help advise in any changes that might need to be made to a program.

In working with a group of completely full-time professionals, I have had to work with the group members to develop a workflow that was conducive to collaboration. Our group determined that it was most beneficial to have ample time before project deadlines to meet and discuss any tasks that might needed to be completed. The group also utilized Google Drive to create to-do lists based off of checklists that were provided for the assignment.

### **Links to Personal and Professional Goals**

During the duration of the course, I was finishing an interim position at UC San Diego, conducting a full-time job search, and eventually transitioning into my first career-track position at UC San Diego. Needless to say, I was spending a large amount of time focusing on work and my professional development while attempting my last semester in the program. In this process, I have had to focus on my time management through the utilization of my calendar. I have had to learn how to become more firm with saying no and feeling okay to delegate tasks instead of feeling like I had to take on all of the components. Through this process of working with the group, I have also learned how I might communicate my workload and share responsibilities between tasks. I found myself asking everyone about their commitments and understanding what their workload might look like. In doing so, we were able to establish a mutual

understanding of capacity and I found myself emphasizing on this capacity of my peers instead of blindly dividing up work tasks.

### **Conclusion**

Through the assessment course, I have had an opportunity to continue working with my group from ED 795A to continue the assessment of the graduate assistantship program. In doing so, I feel that I have been able to continue to grow as a professional and understand how I might navigate the concept of work-life integration and honoring the different commitments that I have. I found myself developing a better understanding of road blocks that might occur in future roles where I will be conducting assessment and creating solutions for these issues. With the help of the assessment project, I feel that I have reinforced my set of assessment skills and I will be able to continue taking on assessment in my future roles as a professional.