Conducting a Course-Level Assessment of Selected Common Core SLOs
What are the Steps in a Course-Level Assessment?

• A course-level assessment should contribute to an established assessment plan
• People should know why they are assessing a course before the work begins
• It’s always a good idea to create a micro assessment plan for each individual assessment exercise with specific dates and goals for each team member
Preliminary Steps

• Once a course has been scheduled for assessment and the Common Core SLOs selected, the work begins
• An assessment team should be assembled
• An assessment team might include
  – The person responsible for General Education at the college
  – Any dedicated assessment or OIR staff
  – The faculty member who submitted the course or who wrote the common syllabus
  – Teaching faculty (adjunct faculty should be encouraged to participate and paid for their time)
  – Any needed support staff
Preliminary Steps

- Team members should agree on which specific sections to include in an assessment.
- Ideally, multiple sections of the same course taught in different semesters should provide the source of student papers.
- The prompts should be as similar as possible to permit a broad assessment across multiple sections.
- It is not necessary to over-burden the assessment team.
- A quality assessment does not have to have more than 50 student papers total.
Preliminary Steps

• If prompts are too dissimilar across multiple sections to permit an assessment using the same team and the same materials (such as rubrics) it is advisable to stop the assessment.

• At that point, faculty can be recruited to a shared prompt for a single assignment to aid in a future assessment.

• This is part of the process and is worthy to be included in any resulting assessment report.

• It is not a failure but a step towards success.
Preliminary Steps

• Team members should work together to assemble:
  – The CCCRC submission form
  – The sample syllabus
  – All syllabi used in the selected sections
• The CCCRC submission form and sample syllabus can be used to identify an assignment to be used in the assessment
• Once an assignment is identified, student papers should be collected, anonymized, and given a simple code to use during analysis
Preliminary Steps

• Sometimes, extra codes can be used to identify College Now, ASAP, Winter Intersession, Fully Online and other special types of courses in order to compare data across modes and so on
  – A General Education program might want to determine if a course offered in the Winter Intersession is as effective as one offered during the regular term
  – The important thing to remember is that we are never assessing faculty performance
  – Courses and SLOs are assessed
Preliminary Steps

• In addition to the student papers, prompts should be collected.
• The next step is for the team to select a rubric to be used in the assessment.
• There are many rubrics available, even for CUNY Required and Flexible Core courses.
• It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel.
• Some assessors favor 4-point Likert Scale rubrics in order to force a choice during the assessment.
Preliminary Steps

• The full assessment day package should contain:
  – The CCCRC submission form
  – The sample syllabus
  – All taught syllabi for the selected sections
  – All prompts for the selected sections
  – Anonymized and coded student papers
  – A rubric for the selected SLOs
  – Any required tally sheets
  – Extra copies of two randomly selected student papers to use in norming
Assessment Day

- It usually takes 5 people approximately 4 hours to assess 50, 5-7 page student papers
- The assessment begins with norming
- Usually two student papers are scored by all team members and the results are discussed
- The rubric may need to be adjusted
- Issues with the prompt may be identified even at this point
- It is very common for an assessment to determine that the prompt was inadequate or confusing or lacked specificity
Assessment Day

• The goal of norming is for all team members to agree as closely as possible when scoring a paper
• Agreement within 1 point on a 4 point scale is the minimum standard the team should try to meet
• If issues arise during real scoring, the assessment should be stopped and team members should discuss problems. All issues and problems should be documented for the assessment report
Assessment Day

• Each student paper should be read by two team members who blindly score the paper so as not to be influenced by each other’s scores
• Team members should remember that the papers are being scored, not graded
• It should not take a long time to score a paper if the rubric is sound
• After all papers have been scored the assessment is over
The Next Step

• Following an assessment exercise, the person responsible for the assessment should take steps to preserve the anonymized student papers
  – These papers may be reused in a different assessment exercise or they may become part of a much larger assessment
  – The tally sheets should be entered into a spreadsheet
  – Faculty should be provided with a letter for their files thanking them for participating in the assessment

• The next step is to draft the assessment report