

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY
*Data-based Assessment Activity Report
for Informed Decision-Making*

Department Name: Management – Human Resource Development Program

Chair: Dr. Jeff Haldeman

Assessment Coordinator: Dr. Nick DiMarco

Key Contact Person: HRDV Program Leader, Jeff Haldeman

Observation:

- The HRDV 5630 Organization Development, course was selected to be assessed. It was successfully assessed during the Fall 1, 2006 session and the Spring 1, 2006. Feedback from the instructors include the following summary points:
 - The Rubric was straightforward and easy to use to measure performance of each student.
 - Some faculty at the Webster campuses outside Saint Louis found the concept of a multiple choice test to measure learning outcomes at the graduate level, inappropriate. However, since this was the strategy we had employed to measure mandatory topics in all of our programs, they were eventually able to see that with some many programs and sites, we were forced to utilize a more streamlined approach.
 - The instructors liked the case study element of the assessment tool and found it appropriate for assessing the advanced conceptual analysis and synthesis aspects of the Program Outcomes for the HRDV Program.
 - They provided feedback on minor errors on the multiple choice test, and we incorporated these into successive versions of the multiple choice tool.

Action:

- Another assessment is planned for the same course in the Spring 2, 2007 session. The plan is to continue offering the course each session through the end of the 2007 calendar year.
- We are looking at the results of the use of the tool in Spring 1, 2007. Fifty percent of all instructor aggregated data is currently in and has been summarized by the Institutional Academic Affairs Office.
- Faculty content experts are examining the results to determine what changes need to be made to the tool and what the data is telling us about dimensions of the course that instructors need to pay more attention to in the classroom.
- Following that, in April/May of 2007, the Program Leader and his Faculty Associate will present feedback to the Department of Management fulltime faculty along with recommendations for change.
- Once the Department has been consulted with, the Program Leader and Faculty Associate will work with the Assessment Coordinator to get feedback and recommendations to individual instructors to the field. This will occur during July and August of 2007.
- We will emphasize helping them to teach to the dimensions where students scored in the low and poor categories on the assessment tool.
- By looking at trends each session the course is taught, we will know whether we are improving performance against the outcomes and can continue to provide feedback to close the learning loop.

Results:

- In the dimensions that measured understanding of the mandatory topics in the course, there was a fairly broad spread of scores across the four categories: Good, Moderate, Low, and Poor. (See the attachment of scores that are included).
- The fundamentals of Organizational Development seemed to be understood by many students.
- The same could not be said of the variety of OD interventions. These can be fairly complex and difficult to understand because they are designed for different organizational problems and performance issues.
- The lesson seems to be that instructors need to spend more time on the interventions, giving plenty of examples from their own experience and possibly even using moderately complex cases to help students to see how they apply in the real world.
- In regard to the Program Learning Outcomes measured by the case, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the students who took it scored in the good to moderate range on the ability to apply relevant theories to the analysis of the facts of the case. Most of the remainder were in the low category.
- These results suggest that overall, students are able to apply theory to analyze real world situations. If instructors are able to improve their knowledge of the mandatory topics, they are likely to do even better in this section of the assessment tool.
- As it stands, the case tool does not require as much detailed knowledge of a broad range of topics; it measures the student's ability to understand selected models and theories well enough to apply them well in a limited context.
- In the dimension of analysis called, "supports conclusions with relevant facts", 2 out of 3 students scored in the low or poor category on the rubric. This suggests that while they are able to use relevant theories to analyze the facts of a case, overall, they are not able to use those facts to support whatever conclusions they might draw. In that sense, it becomes a somewhat sparse analysis, drawing on just a few relevant facts to draw some fairly sweeping conclusions.
- Almost 2 to 1, they were able to synthesize or integrate multiple concepts in order to generate solutions to the organizational problems they saw in the case. This makes some sense because in most cases they are students who work fulltime, and they are asked to take relatively complex dilemmas or issues at work and develop solutions to them. They are likely to have practice here.
- Finally, they have little experience evaluating projects in which they may be involved, using either quantitative or qualitative indicators.
- So to evaluate the effectiveness of OD interventions in a case situation, they will need a lot more exposure and practice built into the course by the instructor. That is what the case is telling us.