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Using Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning for Program Improvement and Evaluation

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Using Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning for Program Improvement and Evaluation

Collaborative Analysis of Student Learning (CASL) is the process by which a group of instructors collaboratively analyze student work from a course assignment to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the student responses, determine whether students have met course objectives, and identify implications for course and program improvement (Langer, Colton, & Goff, 2003). The CASL process includes selecting the student work to be reviewed, determining a focus for the analysis, working individually to make observations about the student work, and working collaboratively to analyze the data. Instructors look for “clues in the work” (Langer et al., 2003, p. 34) that can provide helpful information for data informed decisions about the course and, ultimately, the program.

The purpose of this presentation is for chairpersons to learn the process of CASL, how to effectively facilitate instructors engaged in this process, and the role of CASL in course and program evaluation and improvement. As noted by Reeves (2007), there is a “call for a redirection of assessment to its fundamental purpose: the improvement of student achievement, teaching practice, and leadership decision-making (p. 1).” In this results-oriented era of accountability, chairpersons are called upon to foster individual and collective responsibility for student learning, produce data related to program and departmental outcomes, and focus on improvement. Therefore, it is important for chairpersons to use evaluation methods and tools that can support these goals. At the course level, CASL assists instructors in better understanding student learning resulting from course assignments, identifying areas for improvement, and reflecting on practice. In addition, instructors can use CASL to examine the alignment among course goals and objectives, instruction, and assessment (Langer et al., 2003). At the program level, CASL can be used to determine how student learning outcomes in one course contribute to the desired student outcomes within a program. Data from multiple sessions of CASL, collected over time, can provide evidence beneficial for course and program improvement.

The chairperson’s role in facilitating CASL includes aiding in the selection of appropriate student work, facilitating the group as they answer key questions during the process, and encouraging the group to reflect on their own professional development as well as improvements for the course and program (Langer & Colton, 2003). This presentation will describe CASL theory and process, offer insights from the authors’ experiences, provide guiding questions to be used by collaborative groups while analyzing student work, and suggest guidelines for chairs as they facilitate faculty engaged in this process. Participants will work in small groups to design key questions to be used by faculty in the CASL process and critique guidelines for facilitating faculty engaged in the process of examining student work.

Langer, G., Colton, A. & Goff, L. (2003). *Collaborative analysis of student work: Improving teaching and learning*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Alexandria, VA.

Reeves, D. (2007). From the bell curve to the mountain: A new vision for achievement, assessment, and equity. In D. Reeves (Ed.), *Ahead of the curve: the power of assessment to transform teaching and learning* (pp.1-14). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.