

Cooperative Education Assessment Project Report

Submitted by Tamara Pinkas, June 5, 2006

Introduction

Lane offers Cooperative Education in all professional/technical programs and in most transfer areas. All students who enroll in and complete a cooperative education course are evaluated by their supervisor at the work site. A standard form entitled "Supervisor Evaluation of Student" is filled out by the student's immediate supervisor and returned to the Co-op Coordinator for use in grading. Many of the questions on the SES form directly relate to the general education core abilities (see attached) that Lane would like documented. In addition, the questions on the form document the level that professional technical students met outcomes related to their specific certificate or AAS degree. Over 2,000 student evaluation forms are completed every year, representing work at more than 800 employers.

Information provided on the SES allows faculty to gauge how well an individual student met core abilities and P/T program outcomes. However the data is in hard copy form and filed alphabetically by student name and is therefore not easily available for aggregate analysis.

The six objectives of the Cooperative Education's assessment project were:

- 1) Determine to what extent cooperative education students have demonstrated, in work settings, general education core ability outcomes.
- 2) Determine to what extent students, specifically in the transfer area cooperative education courses (psychology, sociology, geography, science) have demonstrated, in work settings, core ability outcomes.
- 3) Determine to what extent student in professional technical cooperative education have demonstrated program outcomes in the work setting.
- 4) The examination of the current SES to better assess core ability and program outcomes.
- 5) Creation of a data base of appropriate information for further research projects.
- 6) Research and evaluation of options for converting the SES to an electronic format that would begin adding data to the newly created data base.

Process

To begin the assessment project Mary Brau was consulted and from these discussions it was decided that an Access data base should be created to organize and report the SES data. A cooperative education student was to be hired to do the data entry. It proved to be very challenging to actually accomplish these two actions for the following reasons: 1) none of the project team had any expertise with Access so development of the database was significantly delayed and 2) layoffs of classified staff during the initial phase of this project created confusion about whether or not a co-op student could be hired thus delaying the entry of data.

Methods

Data Collection – Foundation for Project Objectives 1 through 5

Multiple data sampling techniques were considered and most were eliminated because they did not provide the depth of data needed to meet project objectives. Based on the recommendation of Sylvia Sandoz it was decided that using all co-op students from spring terms of 2004 & 2005 would offer the best data set. Sylvia agreed to develop the Access data base and data entry form. Her participation in the project meant that the selected co-op student information would be downloaded from Banner thus reducing the amount of data entry that needed to be done.

Methods (continued)

Data Analysis -- Project Objectives 1, 2, & 3

This phase of the project has not begun.

SES Redesign – Project Objective 4

Originally the plan to redesign the Supervisor Evaluation of Student was for the project team to revise the current form utilizing Lane's core abilities as a guide and then take the proposed new form to the whole division for discussion and additional revision in fall 2006. This plan changed due to a connection made with the Culinary program during participation in the Program Assessment Seminar. This program became very interested in the data analysis Co-op was doing of the Culinary students so the assessment project coordinators from Co-op and Culinary met. From this meeting it was decided to have the Culinary faculty review the SES and make recommendations for how the form could better offer information of use to the program before a redesign would be done. Feedback from the Culinary faculty would also provide indications of whether or not additional programs should be consulted.

SES Electronic Format – Project Objective 6

Several criteria were established as necessary for the creation of an electronic format of the SES. These criteria included: 1) The data must be secure since it would include personal student data and 2) the method employers would use for entering the data needed to be a) visually appealing (all documents employers receive/use create an image of Co-op and Lane), b) create no barriers for employers to enter the data (for example use of an "L" number creates multiple problems – employers would need to be issued "L" numbers and then remember their "L" numbers and c) the method needs to be very easy to use from any computer.

To determine the feasibility of an electronic SES multiple computer experts on the Lane campus were consulted. Individuals consulted included two of the three Faculty Webmasters, Craig Taylor of IRAP, Mark Williams of CIT and Chuck Appleby.

Results

Data Collection – Foundation for Project Objectives 1 through 5

Currently close to one third of the data has been entered into the data base.

Data Analysis -- Project Objectives 1, 2, & 3

As previously stated this phase of the project has not begun.

SES Redesign – Project Objective 4

Feedback from the Culinary faculty is expected shortly and their comments will be considered during the first from redesign process.

SES Electronic Format – Project Objective 6

It became clear from the information received from the computer experts consulted that with sufficient resources an electronic version of the SES that meets the criteria is feasible. However, given Lane's current fiscal situation it does not seem to be an appropriate project to take on at this time.

Discussion

The Co-op Team's experience with this assessment project seems to suggest that, from the beginning of a project such as this, there is a need for more than financial support from the college. Specifically, lack of data base expertise, easy access to necessary student data from Banner, and assistance with the navigation of college policy all emerged as barriers to successfully beginning the project. Once these needs were met, Co-op's assessment project was able to move forward. Additional data base support is still needed from college staff to generate the variety of reports required for analysis once the data entry has concluded.

Given the current pace of data entry, it is expected that this phase of the project will be complete by the end of June. Every summer the Co-op Team has a retreat in mid July and it is at this time that the data will be reviewed to meet our project objects 1- 5. A summary of the data review and analysis will be prepared for division and college use.

Participation of a Co-op Team member in the Program Assessment Seminar had a positive impact on the Co-op Assessment project. Through discussions with colleagues attending the seminar, additional uses of the co-op data by other programs were identified. The broadened understanding of the potential value and use of the data has changed the way the Co-op Team is thinking about revising the SES. A revised SES draft will be brought to the Co-op Division's fall in-service for discussion, further revision and adoption by the end of fall term 2006. Use of the new SES would begin when the current supply of printed forms has been exhausted.

An interesting and unanticipated result grew out of participation in the Program Assessment Seminar. One of the seminar topics was the use, benefit and development of rubrics. During a meeting between the Co-op and Culinary Assessment Project coordinators the topic of rubrics arose. The Co-op project coordinator shared with Culinary a new vision for the creation of a rubric that would be given to employers to assist them with filling out the SES. The Culinary project coordinator immediately saw the value in this and came up with the idea of customizing the rubric for each program as a way to help collect the type of data that would better facilitate student and program assessment.

As expected, the creation of the data base has implications for future research and assessment. Conversations with co-op office staff are underway to develop a process for continuing to both obtain new student information from Banner for inclusion in the data base and on-going data entry of the information from the SES.