Higher Ed Program Assessment Transformation and LOM Model Implementation: (Draft, v.4)

Program Assessment in Higher Ed is undergoing a significant transformation. In the past it was something basically related to how much students were learning as measured by how many were passing with good grades and completing the programs. Program Student Learning Goals (PSLG) were basically objective but general points of reference and in some cases even subjective intentions in the teaching/learning process related to the content, because of this, measures were basically content driven.

The new model of Program Assessment in Higher Ed calls for a more systematic approach, as such it calls for a model that is more objective, comprehensive and quantitative. In this model a Program SLGs are to be transformed into objective, specific and measurable Learning Outcomes, which will be measured and assessed through the course of the program by means of valid measures in the form of assessment artifacts (assessment tools) which can be projects, exams, research papers, professional portfolios, etc. designed and placed within the program to measure the students learning progression towards the program student learning goals following the different levels of content delivered and learned [e.g. introduced, reinforced, advanced]. Moreover, these assessment artifacts should work as measurable and valid learning INDICATORS of the students’ progress towards the program learning goals.

For this purpose, the assessment artifacts should provide not only general grades but rates that follow specific criteria and performance levels (in the form of Assessment Rubrics) tied to the program student learning goals (learning outcomes) which in turn will allow the collection of statistical data that will be used to evaluate program performance and also to produce the necessary and required quantitative program assessment reports that the state and also different accreditation agencies are currently requiring from all Higher Ed institutions.

Note: It is important to be aware that not all assignments in a program need nor should be used for the purpose of assessment at the program level, program assessments need to be designed for that purpose having one or more specific Program Student Learning Goals in mind; as such they work better when they are comprehensive tools that take into account the level of learning being assessed.