

## **Tips for Faculty Giving Assessments**

### **Mesa Community College – Student Outcomes Assessment Program**

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Thank you for volunteering one or more of your class sections to give an assessment. It is this that helps make the work of our Student Outcomes Committee so successful.

In the past a number of faculty have had questions about giving assessments. Their concerns typically fell into two categories:

- Should we tell students about the assessment in advance and, if so, what do we tell them?
- Should we offer some kind of incentive for their participation?

SOC has no official or unofficial position on either of these questions. What occurs in the classroom is up to the individual faculty member, but to respond to concerns and perhaps give you some ideas, here are ways other teachers have approached assessment week.

#### **Preparing the Class:**

Some faculty felt that if they told their class ahead of time that they would be taking an assessment on a particular day, students may not show up. Other faculty have talked to their class about it extensively and had everyone show up eager to be assessed!

If you do want to talk with your students, you'll need to decide if you want to do it during the same class period you'll be giving the assessment (when they've shown up already) or prior to that. One consideration is that if you have a fifty minute class, you probably won't have time to do both in the same day. If you have a longer class period and the assessment only takes fifty minutes, then you would have time. A handout is available which you can either copy and distribute to your class or use on your own to help guide a discussion.

#### **Use of Incentives:**

Again, this is entirely up to you. Last year approximately 60% of those who gave assessments used incentives; 40% didn't. For those who did, most often it took the form of a 10-point quiz grade or some other type of extra credit.

*Here is one scenario that an instructor offered from her experience last year:*

I did not prepare them. Actually I did not tell them. On the day of the assessment, I announced that we had a special project to do that day and that it was voluntary but...I then explained the purpose of assessment, how it was confidential and anonymous, and that if they did not want to do it they did not have to do it; however, if they stayed to complete the assessment (math) they would get 10 points added as extra credit. Everyone stayed.

In the end, we want to stress that the decision to discuss assessment with your classes ahead of time or offer an incentive is entirely up to you. If you try something new and you liked the results, please let us know and we'll share it with others. A feedback form is enclosed with your assessment materials.