**Using the ITAA meta-goals for outcomes assessment and program improvement**

Summary of Special Session

Barbara Frazier, Western Michigan University

Friday, November 13, 2015

Panelists
Barbara Frazier, Western Michigan University
Kim Hiller, Kansas State University
Mariana Mitova, Bowling Green State University
Anupama Pasricha, St. Catherine University
Katy Polston, University of Nebraska
Virginia Wimberley, University of Alabama
Beth Wuest, Texas State University

The purpose of this special session was to share best practices in using the ITAA meta-goals to develop student learning outcomes for assessment and program improvement. The desired outcomes of this session were to 1) identify forces behind the assessment movement in higher education, 2) discuss the importance of faculty involvement in assessment, 3) identify characteristics of effective learning outcomes, 4) share various approaches to using the ITAA meta-goals in program assessment, and 5) engage session participants in a discussion on assessment in textile and apparel programs. The session topic related to the conference theme "Celebrating the Unique" by offering an opportunity to share unique ideas and distinctive approaches to assessment and program improvement from both public and private institutions located in multiple regions, as well as programs of varying size and curricular focus. The session was presented at the 2015 Annual Conference of the International Textile and Apparel Association, and organized by members of the Curricular Development and Review Committee.

**Assessment climate in higher education.** Beth Wuest presented an overview of the assessment climate in higher education. Several forces are driving the assessment movement, including expectations from the U.S. Department of Education and regional and professional accreditation bodies, and public demand for accountability of institutions of higher education. Assessment is driven by several broad educational initiatives, including Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP), Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), and individual university efforts to define discipline specifications. Assessment is important to faculty in textile and apparel programs for several reasons. First, faculty involvement in assessment places learning in the

hands of discipline experts. Second, involvement in assessment encourages faculty engagement in intellectual thought and discussion necessary for improvement of teaching and learning. Third, involvement in assessment provides relevant data to make informed decisions about curricular and instructional decisions. The ITAA meta-goals provide relevant and current competencies endorsed by a professional organization, and are a starting point for discussing and identifying student learning outcomes, benchmarking and serve as a stimulus for curricular and instructional innovation.

**Background on the ITAA meta-goals.** Virginia Wimberley reviewed the development and purpose of the ITAA Meta-goals. The ITAA meta-goals are a set of recommended core competencies endorsed by ITAA membership. The meta-goals specify competencies that textile and apparel graduates of four-year institutions need to become effective professionals, including: industry processes, appearance and human behavior, aesthetics and the design process, global interdependence, ethics, social responsibility and sustainability, critical and creative thinking and professional development. The meta-goals were developed and endorsed by ITAA membership in the 1990s, and were revised in 2008. The ITAA meta-goals are available on the ITAA website.

**Writing SMART learning outcomes.** Mariana Mitova led a discussion on how to write learning outcomes in measurable language using the SMART approach (specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented and time-bound). Writing an effective learning outcome involves multiple steps. The first step is to review existing learning objectives and critically analyze according to the SMART framework. Faculty should then identify desired attributes for graduating students, based on industry and academic standards and revise/develop objectives. Learning objectives should also take into consideration accreditation and institutional prerogatives. Generation of data to measure attainment of learning objectives, analysis of results and development of action plans completes the assessment process.

**Senior exit survey based on ITAA meta-goals.** Barbara Frazier described a student exit survey used at Western Michigan University as one example of application of the meta-goals in student learning outcome assessment. Assessment best practices advise use of multiple measurement tools to assess student learning. WMU uses curriculum mapping, course-embedded assessment tools and the student exit survey to assess learning. The exit survey is comprised of 47 competency statements based on the meta-goals. The survey is administered (paper and pencil) in senior level courses at the end of each semester. An example of how survey results are measured, analyzed and used in assessment of students' achievement of professional development competence was presented.

**Using the ITAA meta-goals in assessment planning: Kansas State University model.** Kim Hiller shared the approach used by faculty at Kansas State University to incorporate the ITAA meta-goals into assessment of student learning. KSU has adapted meta-goal competencies to fit the program's academic vision. Several examples of how the ITAA meta-goals are incorporated into KSU courses were shared, including assessment tools and various direct and indirect measures used to assess learning.

**Using the meta-goals in program revision**. Anupama Pasricha described how the ITAA meta-goal framework was used in conjunction with an analysis of industry needs and input from alumni and employers to inform a major program revision at St. Catherine University. The meta-goals were used to identify gaps in the existing curriculum, and to develop strategies to improve the curriculum. The analysis and resulting discussions resulted in the development of new courses, revision of existing courses, and development of new learning objectives for the program.

**Interactive exercise to apply session concepts.** Katy Polston led session attendees in an activity to apply session concepts. The audience was split into two large groups. Teams within one of the groups were assigned a meta-goal and tasked to develop a learning objective and a class activity or project to measure the objective. Teams within the second group were assigned a meta-goal and asked to interpret from educator and student points of view. Several teams shared their results. The session concluded with measurement of participants' achievement of the learning objectives for the session.

The session was attended by 37 ITAA members. Four attendees requested the session PowerPoint after the session.