Sometimes the answer to program assessment is staring you right in the face!

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- **Problem:**
  - Accrediting agencies emphasize programmatic assessment that leads to program improvement.
  - Course assessment is no longer sufficient.
  - Our provost mandated integrated program assessment to be fully functioning by fall 2005.
  - Our department (which includes psychology, sociology, and criminology) developed a multi-method approach to assess the six learning goals of the department, however, implementing the assessment plan was sporadic, at best.
  - We needed a new assessment plan with the following qualities:
    - easily implemented,
    - good student and faculty buy-in, and
    - ability to provide data which could then be used to make changes in the department.

- **Solution:**
  - We asked students enrolled in our research methods classes to develop methods for assessing the department’s learning goals.
  - This approach afforded the following benefits:
    - The faculty learned what the students were and were not willing to do as participants in the assessment activities.
    - Students participated in an authentic, applied activity that required them to use the skills that they were building in their research methods courses.
    - Students reconnected with the learning goals of the department.

- **Department Goals Developed by Department Faculty:**
  - A broad and deep knowledge base within each specific discipline
  - Methodological competence in statistics, research design and assessment
  - Understanding different theoretical perspectives
  - Effective communication skills
  - Practical research, laboratory or field experience to generalize a scientific style of thought to the realm of application
  - Sensitivity to ethical issues
  - Recognition of ethnic, cultural, social and gender diversity

- **Outcome Measures:**
  - Assessment of written/oral presentations of empirical work
    - Addresses all goals
    - Serves as a measure of actual ability
    - Requires revision of assignment guidelines
  - Evaluation by internship supervisors
    - Addresses all goals
    - Provides input by external constituencies
  - Survey of graduating seniors
    - Addresses three goals
    - Completed during review audit with academic advisor
    - Provides input from all students
    - Serves as a measure of student attitudes

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