

Simplified assessment process, holistic approach to faculty buy-in, and a perfect accreditation score at Augusta College of Education.



Recently, we sat down with Kristy Brown, assistant dean of accreditation of educator preparation and partnerships, and Bill Gray, manager of educational technology for the College of Education at Augusta University, to discuss their experience leading up to and including the achievement of a perfect accreditation score with help from Anthology Portfolio.

Below are highlights from our conversation that we hope will help you enhance your assessment practice and create a culture of assessment within your teacher preparation programs and beyond.

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INSTITUTION TYPE:

PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

LOCATION:

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

ORGANIZATION SIZE:

15,000 - 17,000



Q1: When considering the relationship between technology and efficacy, specifically pertaining to Anthology Portfolio and the College of Education, what are some of the key aspects of that relationship you both felt propelled your assessment practice forward?

A: There are many things about Anthology Portfolio that enable us to excel at our work, but the two “game-changers” we’d like to call out are Experiential Learning and Data Visibility and Engagement.

Experiential Learning: Anthology Portfolio’s Experiential Learning suite made setting up and managing all components of field placement so much easier than it used to be. We used to have three different systems that we set up and managed to facilitate field placement, and now we accomplish this with the same technology that supports our key assessments. Also, the ability to report on specific populations both at the student and district or partner level is key for us. Because of this functionality, we can compare population make-ups within certain districts or areas of the state and recommend any shifts or changes that need to be made, so our teacher candidates have a diverse experience. Experiential learning functionality is included in our Anthology Portfolio license, so we aren’t paying extra, but we are definitely seeing benefits.

Data Visibility and Engagement: Within Anthology Portfolio, we created custom file libraries for each program. These libraries are fully customizable, and we structured them to map out the program standards and the components associated with each standard. We’ve also mapped indicators from our six key assessments to specific standards, both in the file library and in the rubrics themselves. The faculty love visibility, as it’s easy for them to know where to find data, and after reviewing data collected in Anthology Portfolio, while they are assessing, it gives a picture of achievement and areas for growth. Having a location to share data within the same system that we are collecting results simplifies the process for the faculty, improves participation, and helps to drive a continuous improvement model around student learning, which is a fundamental component for CAEP accreditation.

Q2: When considering the relationship between technology and efficacy, specifically pertaining to Anthology Portfolio and the College of Education, what are some of the key aspects of that relationship you both felt propelled your assessment practice forward?

A: Always staying focused on how to make the experience more meaningful and relevant to faculty with less duplicative effort from them was essential for us. This helped faculty develop that connection between the work they do from an assessment standpoint and how that work impacts the overall learning experience and success of their students. At Augusta, we facilitate “Data Days” with each program. This keeps faculty updated on the process, standards, requirements, results, and any next steps. Collecting assessment results in Anthology Portfolio while faculty are assessing students in their class and reporting those results and sharing this information within the same system in separate files allowed us to shift our time from the coordination, collection, and dissemination of data to the interpretation, conversation, and actions that we as individual faculty and programs can take to improve student learning. Our current process led to improvement, and faculty saw where their involvement led to improvements in student learning.

Q3: How has the use of data and sharing of results positively impacted the College of Education at Augusta?

A: *We were excited about how much positive change we've been able to influence using the data and reports in Anthology Portfolio. This, combined with regularly meeting with programs to share and discuss assessment results, built that positive culture of assessment within the College of Education. We updated lesson plans and refined our rubrics based on the data in Anthology Portfolio and resulting dialogue. On the Experiential Learning, or field placement side, we were able to share data with our external partners and have since made program changes based on feedback from our partners. We are fortunate to have engaged faculty and partners in the field to create a culture of assessment and improvement as we all continue to leverage technology to facilitate students' learning and success.*

Q4: Based on your experience and success, what words of advice do you have for folks out there in a similar situation that could perhaps be looking for some guidance and ideas to progress their assessment efforts?

A: *It's all about planning and preparation. Construct a good plan around your assessment goals, including what you'd like to achieve and how you want to do that, while fully leveraging your technology, etc. Once your plan is laid out, engage with faculty, and start to build that buy-in and collective understanding. Keep asking yourself how to streamline processes— make use of all that faculty are already doing around assessment — and how to make assessment results and the data more meaningful and relevant to them.*

Our sincere thank you to Kristy Brown and Bill Gray for sharing their experience with us. There was a lot covered in the conversation, as you can imagine, but again we hope these highlights helped shine some light on any opportunities you may have to progress with your assessment practice. We are always happy to discuss how Anthology can partner with you on your journey.