2015 University Assessment Symposium
Poster Presentation Abstract

TITLE: “More Complex than I Imagined” – Programmatic Reflections on Admission Essays

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ABSTRACT:
Critical inquiry and opportunities for reflective questioning as students near the end of their graduate program can provide rich qualitative feedback for graduate programs. This poster presentation provides an overview of how one online graduate program asks students to reflect on their admission essays in their final course to assess student learning related to program objectives. Toward the end of Capstone, the final course of the program, students are asked to reflect, in 500 words or less, on their original admission essay, in which they addressed a health care ethics issue of their choice. An external committee analyzed essays for themes and rich quotes. From two years of data collection, 52 students submitted reflection essays describing how their thinking, perspective, or attitude had changed, if at all. Themes that emerged suggest students recognized an increased understanding of complex ethical and social justice issues, affective growth in their appreciation of ethical issues impacting vulnerable populations, and improved ability to articulate and engage in critical dialogue.