Assessing Your Assessment: Strengthening the Assessment of your Programs

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Goals for this session

Participants will be able to:

• Identify strategies for engaging faculty in program-level assessment planning, work and discussions

• Outline an assessment project for their program in academic year 2016-17.
I think...

• Students in research course appear to struggle to apply basic statistical concepts
• Students in introductory course do not demonstrate knowledge of key historical events as well as you would expect
• Some students do not effectively organize content for an oral presentation
• Students are able to present philosophical arguments but papers contain what seems to be higher than usual grammar and formatting errors

Add an “I think” of your own:
Get a closer look...

• Develop a rubric to grade research papers
• Develop a test blueprint for midterm exam
• Have students’ score presentations using a peer assessment tool
• Use a rubric that includes criteria on grammar/mechanics/formatting to grade papers

How might you assess your “I think?”
Make some changes...

• Modify the sequence of sophomore and junior level courses
• Adopt a new textbook for the introductory course in major
• Add a new elective in public speaking
• Start requiring students to submit rough drafts of paper

How do you know if these changes are having an impact on student learning?
Getting started

• Consider assessment tools already “in stock”
• Focus on the most significant student learning outcomes
• Look at known trouble spots
• Identify opportunities where you already talk about teaching and learning
Be on the lookout for...

• Focusing solely on a capstone or culminating experience
• Values that are mistaken for student learning outcomes
• The temptation to survey everyone and everything
• An assessment plan that doesn’t identify:
  • When data will be analyzed
  • When results will be discussed
  • Settings for sharing results
  • Possible actions
Places to Discuss, Share and Showcase

• Assessment committee meetings
• Department / College meetings
• Annual assessment events
• Newsletters or e-blasts
• Websites
• Conferences
Address Disappointments

• What results were expected?
  • Pleasant surprises
  • Unanticipated areas of “bad” results
• Trends v. new findings
• Where do we go from here?
Improve Curricula and Pedagogy

• Does the curriculum adequately address each learning goal?
• Are we using the right methods of instruction to maximize learning?
• Are courses sequenced in a way to maximize learning?
• Are we placing students properly?
Improve Advisement & Support Services

- Tutoring
- Library services
- Academic advisement & counseling
- Technology infrastructure
- Co-curricular opportunities
Enhance Assessments

• Poorly written and misinterpreted?
• Match key learning goals?
• Too difficult for most responsible students?
• Benefits worth time and money invested?
Revisit Learning Goals

• Too many goals?
• Goals need to be clarified?
• Goals inappropriate or overly ambitious?
Baker’s Dozen: Engaging faculty

• Use converts as change champions
• Talk about the benefits of assessment as well as the results
  • Rubrics reduced the time it takes me to grade
  • Peer assessments made students more comfortable with the editing process
• Invite faculty to share student work
• Be transparent
• Recognize contributions