Writing a Great (and simple) Assessment Report

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What you said . . .

- Learn aspects of preparing the plan and what to keep in mind when writing the report and what information is useful
- Report formatting and structure
- Help others with their report once their data analysis is done
- Ability to write a clear, concise report for several different audiences
- Pull together our activities and thinking into one coherent plan that addresses what we want and is easily explained to others outside our unit

Sanderson, 2011
More of what you said . . .

- Improve our assessment report so it reflects accurately and completely the findings from our various information collection systems
- Learn how to write-up what I learned in the first workshop
- How do I fit all that we do into a grand but tractable plan?
- Gain a better understanding of assessment and how to incorporate it into my work

Sanderson, 2011
The “Perfect” Report

- aesthetically pleasing,
- clearly written,
- based on perfect statistical analyses,
- contains appropriate tables and graphs,
- provides incisive and correct interpretations of findings, and
- includes wise and feasible recommendations and actions to take.
A Great Report is often in the eye of the beholder . . .

- Know your audience
- Know your data
- Write clearly and simply
- Get feedback
- If Format available—follow it
- Consider that you may need multiple report formats after the first one (PowerPoint, executive summary, newsletter, etc.)
The “NSSE”

- Report 1—written, long, comprehensive
- Report 2—oral, PowerPoint—3 slides (~8 minutes)
- Report 3—oral, PowerPoint—27 slides (~1 hr)
- Report 4—oral, PowerPoint—24 slides (~1 hr)
- Report 5—written newsletter—3 columns
- Report 6—written newsletter—2 pages
- Report 7—written—focused on special analysis
- Report 8—written—focused on special analysis
- Report . . . Likely on short versions of 7 & 8

Sanderson, 2011
Great and Simple

- Clearly written
- Follows format, if available
- Gives enough detail for reader to understand what was done, what was discovered and what is next
- Defines terms that reader may not know
- Writes out all abbreviations: AAC, UCSEE, SARE, EM, CTL, ASC, SAAC, etc.
- Written in sections with headings
- Serves as the basis for other kinds of reports (PowerPoint, newsletters, etc.)
- Clearly closes the assessment loop

Sanderson, 2011
Purposes of Assessment Reports

- Historical Record
- Support for planning and decision-making for improvements
- Public relations
- Information dissemination
- Document your contributions to the learning environment
- To see how your efforts mattered
Student Affairs Assessment Report Format

- Unit Information
- Statement of Mission
- Goal 1
  - Outcome 1.1
    - Methodology 1.1
    - Results 1.1
    - Decisions/Recommendations 1.1
  - Outcome 1.2
    - Methodology 1.2
    - Results 1.2
    - Decisions/Recommendations 1.2

Name of Department
Department Head
Assessment Contact
Phone, Email
Dates Report Includes (FY 2010)

Continue with Goal 2, Goal 3, etc. in same manner

Sanderson, 2011
Telling Your Assessment Story

- **Mission and goals** = sets the context
- **Outcomes** = what you want to have happen as a result of your efforts
- **Methodology** = way you are going to gather information to see how well outcomes were achieved
- **Results** = what you discovered and its meaning
- **Discussion/Summary/Actions Taken**
- **Follow-up** = when will you see if your actions made a difference

Sanderson, 2006
Mission: The office of Disability Access Services provides services and promotes a supportive, accessible, and non-discriminatory learning and working environment for students, faculty, and visitors in the Oregon State University community.

Goal 1: Provide effective accommodations for students with disabilities based on law and/or current best practices.

- Learning Outcome 1.1: Real-time transcribers will produce an accurate, clear, complete, meaning-for-meaning interpretation of class lectures/discussions that is an equivalent accommodation to word-for-word transcription.

Sanderson, 2011
Methodology

- Describes how the data was collected, the timeline and instrumentation

- Descriptive information about the sample (who, how obtained)

- For focus groups, how obtained, who interviewed, questions asked, etc.

- May include a section within methodology that includes Data Analysis (description of what analyses were done)
Methodology (Examples)

- **Learning Outcome 1.1:** Real-time transcribers will produce an *accurate, clear, complete, meaning-for-meaning interpretation* of class lectures/discussions that is an equivalent accommodation to word-for-word transcription.

- How to measure this?
- What data do we need?
- How do we get it?
Methodology

- Real time and in class, speech to text service
- Equivalent accommodation
- Word-for-word vs. meaning-for-meaning
- Clear, accurate, complete

Sanderson, 2011
Methodology 1

1. Direct observation by experienced mentor
   - Use of rubric
     - Skill in use of technology system
     - Transcriber lag time
     - Ability to “chunk” information
     - Language processing skills
     - Professionalism
     - Observer assess class content, speed and style of transcriptionist

Sanderson, 2011
Methodology 2

2. Work sample comparisons

- Audiotape class lecture
- Assign word-for-word and meaning-for-meaning to same class
- Collect unedited transcripts from both
- Compare for accuracy and completeness
- Highlight inconsistencies between the two work samples
Methodology 3

3. Review transcripts with professor
   - Professor reviews both transcripts and clarifies with evaluator
   - Professor determines whether all important points of the lecture were captured completely and accurately

No one method could provide enough information to assess the outcome of “accuracy, clarity, completeness, and meaning for meaning” in real time communication access.
Implementation

How to implement the plan so that it can eventually be added to with results, discussion, recommendations, actions for the report?

- What is first?
- What can be done realistically?
  - Time
  - Money
  - Expertise
  - Successfully

- START SMALL—one piece at a time
- Important to BEGIN even though imperfect

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Sanderson, 2011
Follow the plan

- Pick one thing and follow it through
- Learn from the experience
- Make it better the next time
- This is about improvement
- It is a process with multiple products

Sanderson, 2011
Milestones

The Plan
- Mission, Goals, Outcomes, Methods

Milestone 1
- Determine timeline for administration and who

Milestone 2
- Develop or secure instrumentation

Milestone 3
- Collect the data

Milestone 4
- Summarize and analyze the data
Results

- What did you find out?
- What does the data tell you?
- Description of results
  - For survey results (the return rate)
  - Description of participants including number
  - Type of data collected
    - Survey, interview, focus group, etc.
    - Qualitative or quantitative
- Description of data analysis and interpretation
- For many this is the heart of the report

Sanderson, 2006
Turning Data into Information
(Analysis)

Data Points

Levels
Categories
Observations
Scores
Ratings

Information

Sanderson, 2011
Results

- Report what you discovered
  - Including things that went wrong
- Summarize the data
- Visuals are good
- Know your audience

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1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Always

Response Rate: 12% Pre
Response Rate: 42% Post

Sanderson, 2011
Results

- **STATISTICS**
  - Fancy not always needed

- **Summarize your data**
  - Means
  - Frequency Distributions
  - Percentages
  - Graphs
  - Divide the results into sections
  - May want to put extensive tables or graphs in appendices so that flow of reading is not interrupted

Sanderson, 2011
Summarize and Discuss your thinking about what you learned
Share with others
Determine actions to take
Make recommendations
Take action
Set timeline for when to look at this again

Sanderson, 2011
Choices

1. **Report format**
   - If format available—use it. AND may need other forms of report: Written, oral, PowerPoint, newsletter, memo, formal or combinations?

2. **Decide how to depict data and information.**
   - Type depends a lot on the data
   - Can do narratives, tables, figures (charts), combinations

3. **Produce the report**
   - Perform data analysis and interpretation of data
   - Prepare charts, tables, exhibits, appendices
   - Determine binding, cover style, paper
   - Prepare visual aids, handouts
   - Electronic reports best converted to PDF format
Choices

4. Disseminate report

- Who should receive it and in what format?
- Does a memo need to be attached?
- How should it be disseminated? Web page, campus mail, at a meeting or event

Most frustrating aspect of assessment

- Seeing work go unused-

- Is it understandable to the audience
- **Is it data or information—there is a difference** (data is just data—information is data set in a context)
- Is the report timely—if not it will not be used
“Cone of Experience”

- People generally remember:
  - 10% of what we read
  - 20% of what we hear
  - 30% of what we see
  - 50% of what we see and hear
  - 70% of what we discuss with others
  - 80% of what we experience personally
  - 95% of what we teach someone else

Final Thoughts

- Get feedback on your reports
- Different audiences will want to see different things
- You are the only one that knows the entire picture
- Sometimes small sub-reports can be more effective than long ones
- Pictures are worth a thousand words
- The report is the key to making data-driven decisions—it is the show and tell of the assessment project
Questions

Comments

Thoughts
Your Feedback

Three Question Assessment?

- What is the most important thing you learned?
- What are you still unclear about?
- What would make this presentation better?