Assessment

Definition

“a rich conversation about students and student learning informed by data.”
(adapted from Ted Marchese - AAHE)

...the systematic collection, review, and use of information about programs/services undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.
(adapted from Palomba & Banta, 1999)
What is Assessment?

- A systematic process of gathering information upon which to make decisions.
- Using information to determine what is working and what is not.
- An evaluation of effectiveness.
- Systematic feedback.
- An integrated and circular process.
Assessment

Why?

- To improve student learning in essential areas (e.g., leadership, health).
- To improve programs and services.
- To ensure that students are learning that which we intend.
- To focus efforts.
- To inform decision-making and clarify intentions.
Assessment

And then there is this... .

- Accreditation.
- Administrative mandates.
- Accountability.
- Spelling Commission report.
- Expectations from professional organizations.
- Another thing to add to an already busy schedule.

This is important—do it...!
Benefits

- Keeps the focus on students.
- Provides systematic information to guide program development.
- Can transform collaborations between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.
- Fosters improvement.
Limitations

- Outcomes being measured may not reflect the true impact of a program or service.
- Probably will not prove that your program alone caused the outcome.
- Will not answer every question you may have.
- May take longer and need more resources than you expect.
Types of Assessment

- Need
- Satisfaction
- Output/Service Outcome
- Learning Outcome

Sanderson, 2007
Needs Assessment

- Needs of students in general
- Needs of particular student sub-set
- Needs of staff/student workers
- Needs of multiple constituencies
- Needs of . . . ?
Satisfaction

- Satisfaction with service providers, program, services
- Satisfaction with service from perspective of various users
- Satisfaction of staff/student workers
- Satisfaction of multiple constituencies
Service Outcome Assessment

- Things you can count (also called outputs)
- Number of:
  - Client/patient visits
  - Number of allergy shots given
  - Number of specific diagnoses
  - Number of brochures produced
  - Number of workshops given
  - Amount of money spent per program
  - Characteristics of Patients
  - Number of . . .
Learning Outcome Assessment

- Focus is on results of our education
  - Based upon departmental/program descriptions of what they expect students to
    - Know (cognitive)
    - Do (skills, behavior)
    - Think (attitudes, habits of mind)
Logic Model

Mission: Describes the purpose of the organization and the constituents served. It clearly relates to the Oregon State University and the Division of Student Affairs Missions.

Goals: Broad general statements of what a department wants its constituents to know or do. Goals generally describe what the program is trying to accomplish. Typically only 4-6 goals for a department.

Programs: Sets of related activities and outcomes that consume a meaningful portion of the departmental resources (persons, dollars, time, etc.) and that are designed to support the department’s goals.

Inputs: Resources dedicated to the program: e.g., Money, Staff, Time, Equipment.

Constraints on the program: e.g., Laws, Regulations, Policies.

Activities: Activities done to deliver the program: e.g., Provide workshops, Advise students, Distribute brochures, Develop handbook, Teach classes, Provide training, Give tests.

Service Outcomes: Products from the activities: e.g., Number of workshops, Number of people advised, Types of brochures produced, % served, % satisfied, Amount of money collected.

Learning Outcomes: Benefits for participants: e.g., Gained new knowledge, Increased skill, Modified behavior, Improved their condition, Positively altered their status.
What level of outcome do you have the resources to measure?

What level of influence do you believe your program will have?

How is this linked to what we know about student learning?
Basic Learning Outcome Assessment Questions

1. What are we doing and why are we doing it?
2. What do we expect a student to know, to think, or to do as a result of our program?
3. How well are we doing it?
4. How do we know?
5. How do we use the information to improve?
6. Does that work? (Bresciani, 2002)

Sanderson, 2007
Assessment Planning

- Successful assessment finds that a written assessment plan is essential.
  - To think through assessment needs and capture agreement about what matters.
  - To give direction for action—To know who, when, where, what.
  - To provide a means to determine if progress is being made.
Elements of Assessment Planning

- Department or Program Mission
- Goals
- Intended Student Outcomes
- Methodology
- Implementation
- Results
- Decisions/Recommendations
Mission

- Describes the purpose of the organization and the constituents served
- Should be able to state the mission in less than 25 words
Goals

- Broad general statements of what a program wants its constituents to know or to do. Goals generally describe what the program is trying to accomplish.
  - It is not a “to do” list.
  - Is aligned with university goals and the departmental mission
  - Provides departmental focus
Learning Outcomes

- Detailed and specific statements derived from the goals. They are specifically about the intended end results of your program efforts and typically use active verbs such as: arrange, define, explain, demonstrate, etc.

- Levels of learning or mastery—Bloom.
Methods

The criteria, process, and tools used to collect evidence and to determine the degree to which the intended outcomes were reached.

Assessment methods include:

- the target audience,
- the methods and tools for data collection,
- criteria or targets that tell you when the outcome has been met, and
- how the data will be analyzed.
### Implementation


- Often a matrix is used for this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>1.B</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>Nov. 15, 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>1.B</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>Rose and Henry</td>
<td>May 12-15, 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>1.D</td>
<td>Performance Rubric</td>
<td>Dean and Joe</td>
<td>March 1, 2008</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Results

- **Data Analysis**
  - Dictated mostly by the type of data you collect
  - Frequency distributions, some measure of central tendency, and may want to compare means or look for significant differences where applicable

- **Depiction of information**
  - Graphs, tables—**pictures** can be very helpful in explaining data

- **Reporting**
  - **Do report** and may need to produce more than one report depending on number of different audiences
Decisions/ Recommendations

(Closing the Loop)

- Now that we know--What are we doing about it?
  - Celebrate
  - Initiate changes
  - Study further
  - Enlist others to help with making further meaning of the data
  - Add to or take away from X
  - Revise assessment methods

- When will we look at this again?
Questions/ Comments

It's QUESTION TIME!!

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