

Overview of Assessment Methods and Criteria for Evaluation

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Workshop Learning Outcomes: Participants will be able to:

- (1) identify the difference between program goals, objectives, and learning outcomes.
- (2) explain why learning outcomes are important in higher education and student affairs/services.
- (3) identify the characteristics of an effective learning outcome.
- (4) write at least one measurable/identifiable learning outcome.
- (5) identify at least one method for assessing each outcome.





Presentation Overview

- Overview of Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA)
- Importance of OBA
- Reminders for Writing Outcomes
- Identifying how Outcomes are Delivered
- Identifying Evaluation Methods and Criteria
- Questions





Ask Yourself These Questions

- What decision did you make about your program last year?
- What evidence did you use to inform that decision?
- What was it that you were trying to influence about your program when making that decision with the stated evidence?



That is Outcomes-Based Assessment

- Most people do capitalize on their innate intellectually curiosity to find out what works
- Most people just don't articulate their intended end results (e.g., outcomes) ahead of time
- Most people don't document the decisions made based on their results
- Most people don't follow up later to see if their decisions made the intended improvement





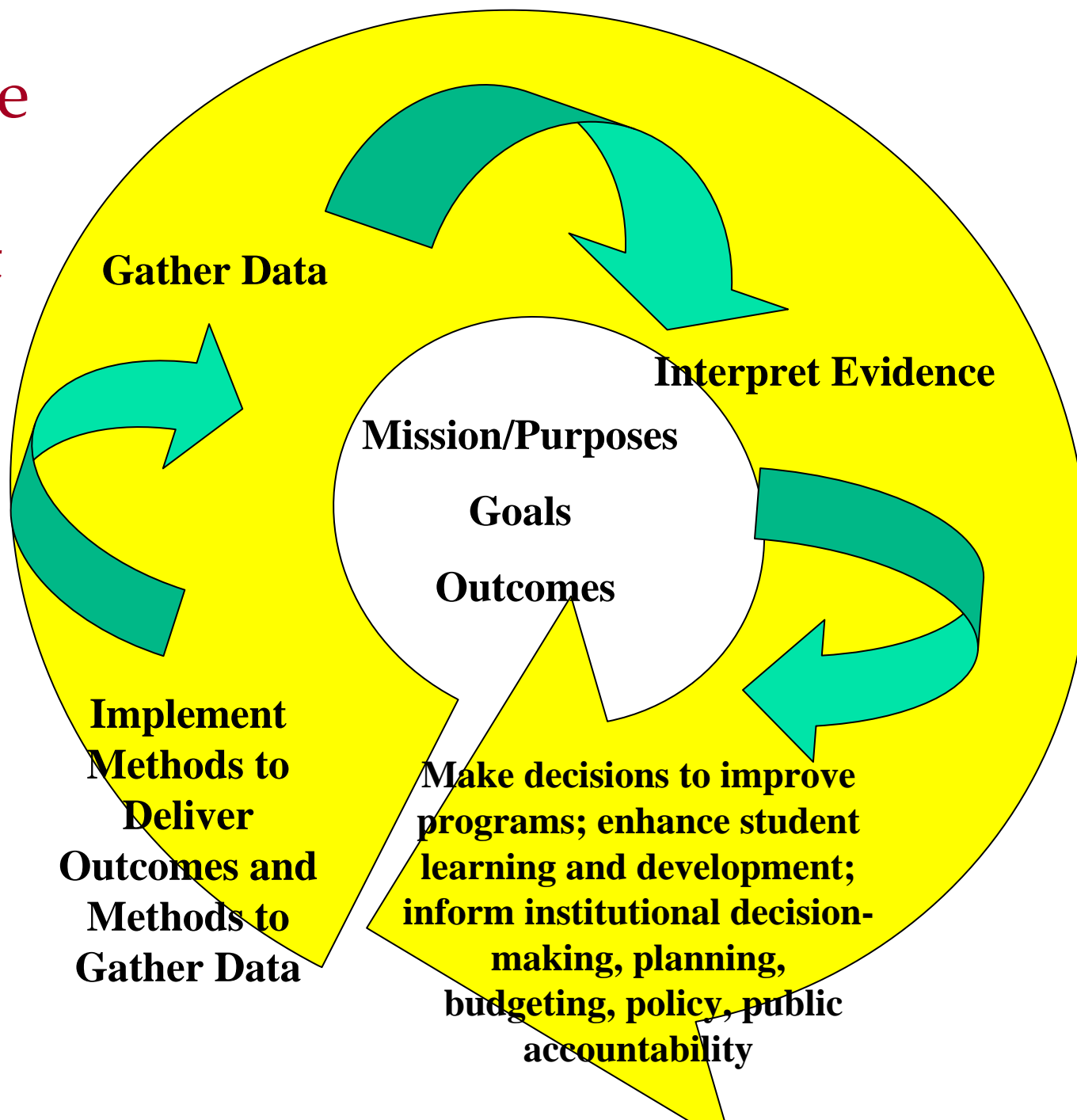
The Assessment Cycle (Bresciani, 2003)

- The key questions...
 - What are we trying to do and why? *or*
 - What is my program supposed to accomplish? *or*
 - What do I want students to be able to do and/or know as a result of my workshop/orientation?
 - How well are we doing it?
 - How do we know?
 - How do we use the information to improve or celebrate successes?
 - Do the improvements we make work?



The Iterative Systematic Assessment Cycle

Adapted from
Peggy Maki, Ph.D. by
Marilee J. Bresciani, Ph.D.



Assessment (Bresciani, 2006)

- Most importantly, assessment should be
 - Understood = by professionals and students
 - Inclusive = involve as many professionals as possible
 - Meaningful = professional (i.e., expert) driven
 - Manageable = takes into account varying resources
 - Flexible = takes into account assessment learning curves
 - Truth-seeking/objective/ethical
 - Iterative and systematic
- Inform decisions for continuous improvement or provides evidence of proof
- Promote a culture of accountability, of learning, and of improvement

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What are you already doing that could be considered outcomes-based assessment?



Why is outcomes-based assessment important?





The Purpose

- Outcomes-Based assessment does not exist for assessment's sake
- It is taking what most of us already do, and making it systematic
- It is NOT personnel evaluation
- Planning is incorporated into it





The Purpose, Cont.

- Its purpose is to reflect on the end result of doing - - are we accomplishing that which we say we are?
- All types of assessment have value (e.g., needs, utilization, satisfaction, learning and development) but we have to pay attention to evaluating student learning





Purpose of Assessment, Cont.

By M.J. Bresciani

- 1) Reinforce or emphasize the mission of your unit
- 2) Improve programs and/or performance
(formative)
- 3) Compare a program's quality or value to the
program's previously defined principles
(summative)
- 4) Inform planning
- 5) Inform decision making



Purpose of Assessment, Cont.

By M.J. Bresciani

- 6) Inform policy discussions at the local, state, regional, and national level
- 7) Evaluate programs, not personnel
- 8) Assist in the request for additional funds from the University and external community
- 9) Assist in the re-allocation of resources
- 10) Assist in meeting accreditation requirements, models of best practices, and national benchmarks





Purpose of Assessment, Cont.

By M.J. Bresciani

- 12) Celebrate successes
- 13) Manage expectations
- 14) Reflect on the attitudes and approach we take in improving teaching and learning
- 15) Create a culture of continuous improvement
– a culture of accountability, of learning, and of improvement



Drivers of Outcomes-Based Assessment (Ewell, 2001)

- To improve the underperforming student
 - Competency Movement in Business and Industry
 - International Trade Agreements
 - Affecting higher Education - Competition for new providers in Postsecondary or Tertiary Education
 - Transnational Education or Globalism
 - Massification of Education





Drivers, Cont.

- Bologna Declaration of 1999
- Government Conversation, 1985
 - The Higher Education Re-authorization Act Testimonies in USA, 2002 and 2006
 - Response to NCLB Legislation
 - Regional Accreditation – flexibility
 - CRAC – 2003, 2004
 - Both documents focus on student learning





Drivers, Cont.

National Commission on the Future of Higher Education

- Demand for Public Information about Performance
 - Transparency of outcomes and results
 - Comparable measures of quality
 - Demonstration of value-added of the entire educational experience





Drivers, Cont.

- Other Research on Collaborative/Integrated Learning
 - NSSE Deep Learning Project
 - Wabash Institute
 - Alverno College
 - National Research Council
 - AAC&U Greater Expectations
 - NASPA/ACPA Learning Reconsidered



Why is it so important to focus
on evaluating student learning?



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The Focus on Assessing Student Learning



“The concepts of learning, personal development, and student development are inextricably intertwined and inseparable.”
– The Student Learning Imperative



The Importance of Student Learning

“It is important for student development professionals to inform the academic side of the institution of their desire to establish, maintain, and assess functional collaborations. Among these should be collaborations that

- promote measurable student learning
- promote student engagement and socio-academic integration
- provide training to student affairs staff about learning environments and learning outcomes.”

-James A. Anderson
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Some Questions about Student Learning and Development

- What do you expect your students to know and be able to do by the end of their education at your institution?
- What do the curricula and the co-curricular “add up to?”
- What do you do in your programs to promote the kinds of learning and development that your institution seeks?



Some More Questions

- Which students benefit from which co-curricular experiences?
- What co-curricular processes are responsible for the intended student outcomes the institution seeks?
- How can you help students make connections between classroom learning and experiences outside of the classroom?
- How do you intentionally build upon what each of you fosters to achieve?



Questions that Direct the Development of Synergy between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

James A. Anderson, Ph.D.

- What is the thinking task, intellectual experience, and/or co-curricula experience that needs to be designed relative to the preparation level and diversity of the students at your institution?
- Can the interpersonal transactions that occur in the everyday life of the student and that reflect cultural orientations serve as a basis for potential new models of critical thinking? What curricular experiences will promote this skill development?



Questions that Direct the Development of Synergy between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Continued

James A. Anderson, Ph.D.

- What structures need to evolve to assure that students have the opportunity to enhance academic self-concept and understand their role in the culture of learning at your institution?





Reflection Questions

- How are you directly or indirectly contributing to student learning?
- How are you directly or indirectly supporting student learning?
- How are you directly or indirectly interfering with student learning?





So, what is required?

Well...

(insert technical disclaimer)



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Required?

- Comprehensive, systematic evaluation of student learning and development
- Integrated conversations of what is working and what is not
- Emphasis on how the data was used to improve student learning
- An ability to state clearly what is being learned and what is not

Eventually,

- Comparable indicators of learning and development but only if you can link them back to intended learning and development
- Demonstration of value-added of the entire educational experience, not just one program



Typical Components of An Outcomes-Based Assessment Plan (Bresciani, 2006)

- Program Name
- Program Mission or Purpose
- Goals
 - Align with your strategic plan, college goals, division goals, or department goals
- Outcomes
 - Student Learning and program
- Planning for Delivery of Outcomes
 - Concept Mapping
 - Your strategic plan objectives
- Evaluation Methods
 - With criteria for each outcomes
 - Add Limitations, if necessary
 - Link to Division Indicators

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Typical Components of An Outcomes-Based Assessment Plan, Cont.

- Implementation of Assessment Process
 - Identify who is responsible for doing each step in the evaluation process (list all of the people involved in the assessment process at each step of the process)
 - Outline the timeline for implementation
 - Identify who will be evaluated
 - Identify other programs who are assisting with the evaluation
 - Identify who will be participating in interpreting the data and making recommendations and decisions



Typical Components of An Outcomes-Based Assessment Report

- Program Name
- Outcomes
- Results
 - Summarize the results for each outcome
 - Summarize the process to verify/validate the results
- Decisions and Recommendations
 - Summarize the decisions/recommendations made for each outcome



Typical Components of An Outcomes-Based Assessment Report, Cont.

- Decisions and Recommendations, Cont.
 - Identify the groups who participated in the discussion of the evidence that led to the recommendations and decisions
 - Summarize the suggestions for improving the assessment process
 - Identify when each outcome will be evaluated again (if the outcome is to be retained)
 - Identify those responsible for implementing the recommended changes



Which steps do you already have
in place?

You have outcomes that need to
be refined slightly, and a learning
outcomes worksheet





Mission Statement

- “In just a few sentences, a mission statement needs to communicate the essence of your organization to your stakeholders and to the general public.” - Fund Raising Made Simple
- It can come from your strategic planning initiatives or from your Division, institution, or unit plan
- It can also come from your professional organization (e.g., ACUHO-I, ACU-I, CAS)



Goals

- They are broad, general statements of [1] what the program wants students to be able to do and to know or [2] what the program will do to ensure what students will be able to do and to know.
- They are not directly measurable. Rather,
- They are evaluated directly or indirectly by measuring specific outcomes related to the goal.
- They are related to the mission and goals of the department and college in which the program resides, and to the mission and goals of the University, District, and/or System.





Example Program Goals

- To provide students with opportunities to develop their leadership skills (Links to College Goals A, B, E)
- Communicate, understand, and interpret ideas and information using written, oral, and visual media (Links to College Goal C)





Other Examples

1. To encourage life long learning (Links to College Goals A, B, E)
2. Students will appreciate their diverse environment (Links to College Goals C, D, E)
3. Students will learn sound study skills (Links to College Goals A, B, F)





Other Examples, Cont.

- To provide students with opportunities to develop their communication skills.
- To provide students with opportunities to develop ethical decision making systems.
- To provide students with opportunities to develop global and cultural awareness.





Other Examples, Cont.

- To provide quality services
- To provide responsive services
- To provide excellent customer service
- To be attentive to parental requests



Ask these Questions about your Goals

- Is it meaningful?
- Is it important?
- Is it a broad, general statement of either what the program wants students to be able to do and to know or what the program will do to ensure what students will be able to do and to know?
- Is it related to my department or program mission and objectives?
- Is there an accompanying outcome to measure this objective?





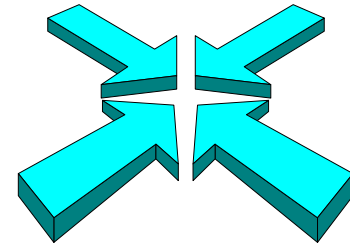
With which goal(s)

Do your outcomes align?



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Outcomes



- Outcomes are more detailed and specific statements derived from the goals.
- These are specifically about what you want the **end result** of your efforts to be. In other words, what do you expect the student to know and do as a result of your one hour workshop; 1 hour individual meeting; website instructions; etc.
- **It is not what you are going to do to the student**, but rather it describes how you want the student to demonstrate what he or she knows or can do.



Additional Assistance

Constructing Learning Outcomes: Bloom's Taxonomy

- Outcomes use active verbs such as articulate, illustrate, conduct, synthesize, analyze, construct, etc.
- Depending on what level of learning you expect from your learning delivery method.
- <http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/researchskills/dalton.htm>
- http://www.kent.wednet.edu/KSD/MA/resources/blooms/teachers_blooms.html
- <http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/bloom.html>





Outcomes, Cont.

- Make a conscious decision to articulate outcomes that infer pre- and post-tests
- Make a conscious decision to be held responsible for behavior
- Remember that your outcomes may look different for your various constituents - - you may want to start with your more manageable population first, such as your Para-professionals





Outcomes, Cont.

- You may also want to start with outcomes that are more manageable. For instance, articulate outcomes for your outreach programs first; then later, move to your individual consultations; than your information pieces, if at all.





Outcomes, Cont.

- Regardless of whether your goals are top down – the outcome is where you operationalize the goal. Therefore, the outcome or end result of the doing allows you to “personalize” the goal to your own program.





Example Outcome

Students will demonstrate responsible leadership by organizing a successful event that their group's membership deems important and relevant to the residential community .





Examples of Outcomes, Cont.

1. Students will be able to identify their disabilities and explain their functional limitations.
2. Students will be able to extrapolate what penalties will befall them should they violate behavioral policies as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
3. As a result of utilizing the resources developed by the Articulation Officer, students will demonstrate the ability to use the tools to develop an accurate educational plan for transfer.





Refining Outcomes

As a result of participating in a Resume Development Workshop, students will develop a professional resume and gain the skills needed to update it independently in the future.





Refining Outcomes, Cont.

As a result of participating in a Resume Development Workshop, students will **draft** a **professional** resume and **apply** the **skills needed** to update it independently in the future.





Refining Outcomes

Students who participate in the “College For Kids Program” will acquire and develop skills in the areas of academic, the arts, and recreation.





Refining Outcomes, Cont.

Students will be able to analyze and explain appropriate and effective methods for mentoring foster youth.

Or

Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate and effective methods for mentoring foster youth.





Refining Outcomes

As a result of participating in the EOPS/CARE Orientation and Advisement Session, students will **comprehend** the matriculation process and **become aware** of educational options offered at SCC as it relates to their intended academic goals.





Refining Outcomes

As a result of participating in the EOPS/CARE Orientation and Advisement Session, students will be able to **explain** the matriculation process and **identify relevant** educational options offered at SCC **that** relate to their intended academic goals.

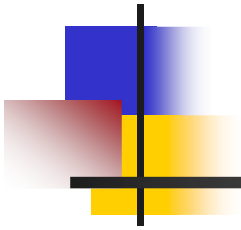


Questions to Ask Yourself About Outcomes

- Is it measurable/identifiable?
- Is it meaningful?
- Is it manageable?
- Who is the target audience of my outcome?
- Who would know if my outcome has been met?
- How will I know if it has been met?
- Will it provide me with evidence that will lead me to make a decision for continuous improvement?



Articulate your Outcomes:



Refine At Least
One of Your
Outcomes



After you have articulated
your outcomes...

Make sure You have a program
that can actually deliver the
outcome

e.g., planning



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Before Choosing an Assessment Method...

- Think about what meeting the outcome looks like
 - Be sure to describe the end result of the outcome by using active verbs
 - This helps articulate the criteria for identifying when the outcome has been met
- Describe how your program is delivering the outcome
 - There may be clues in the delivery of the outcome that help you determine how to evaluate it





Determine how you are delivering your outcome

- Is the expected end result (e.g., outcome) realistic with how you are delivering the outcome?
- Are you expecting too much or too little from the student?
- What method of delivering the outcome could also be used as a method for evaluating the outcome?



Before Choosing an Assessment Method, Cont.

- Think about collecting data
 - from different sources to make more meaningful and informed decisions for continuous improvement (*e.g., surveys, observations, self-assessment*) and for triangulation of data
 - that you believe will be useful in answering the important questions you have raised
 - that will appeal to your primary constituents or to those with whom you are trying to influence



Measurement Methods

(Palomba and Banta, 1999)

- Evidence of learning- basically two types
 - Direct-methods of collecting information that require the students to display their knowledge and skills
 - Indirect- methods that ask students or some one else to reflect on the student learning rather than to demonstrate it



Another Way to Look at It (Ewell, 2003)

- There are **naturally occurring assessment techniques** (e.g. project-embedded assessment methods such as essays, observed behavior, student interactions, student debates)
- There are those **designed** as a means to evaluate (e.g., surveys)



Some Methods That Provide Direct Evidence



- Student work samples
- Collections of student work (e.g. Portfolios)
- Capstone projects
- Project-embedded assessment
- Course-embedded assessment
- Observations of student behavior
- Internal juried review of student projects
- External evaluations of student performance
- Document analysis (e.g., meeting minutes, policies, handbooks)

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Direct Evidence Cont.

from Peggy Maki, Ph.D.

- External juried review of student projects
- Externally reviewed internship
- Performance on a case study/problem
- Performance on problem and analysis (Student explains how he or she solved a problem)
- Performance on national licensure examinations
- Locally developed tests
- Standardized tests
- Pre-and post-tests
- Essay tests blind scored across units

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Some Methods That Provide Indirect Evidence

adapted from Peggy Maki, Ph.D.

- Alumni, Employer, Student Surveys
- Focus groups (depending on the interview protocol, this could be used as direct evidence)
- Exit Interviews with Graduates
- Graduate Follow-up Studies
- Percentage of students who go on to graduate school
- Retention and Transfer Studies
- Job Placement Statistics

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Indirect Evidence Cont.

- Faculty/Student ratios
- Percentage of students who study abroad
- Enrollment trends
- Percentage of students who graduate within five-six years
- Diversity of student body
- CAS Standards





Choosing A Tool

- It is important to choose tools based on what you are trying to assess, not on what tool is most appealing to you
- Consider what will influence your constituents
- Consider what will provide you with information to make decisions
- Be able to justify your choice of tool and method





Things to Consider When Choosing an Instrument

- What outcome(s) are you measuring?
- What criteria will determine if the outcome is met?
- Who is being assessed? How often do I have access to them? Do I know who they are?
- What is my budget?
- What is my timeline?
- What type of data is most meaningful to me: direct/indirect and qualitative/quantitative





Things to Consider, Cont.

- Who will analyze the data and how?
- Who needs to see this data?
- How easily can I fit this method into my regular responsibilities? (every day, week, semester, year)
- Who needs to make decisions with this data?
- How will I document the evidence and the decisions made from that evidence?





Example Outcomes

- Students will be able to articulate the steps of ethical decision making
- Students will be able to identify the challenges to making ethical choices (via case studies)
- Students will be able to evaluate their own choices and identify where they excelled in their own ethical decision making (via journals)





Possible Assessment Tools

- Quiz
- Essay
- Journal
- Case Study
- Observation
- Peer Evaluation with criteria or rubric
- Professional Evaluation with criteria or rubric





Choose an Outcome and

Work through this Process



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Questions to Ask About Choosing a Measurement Tool

- How is this outcome delivered/implemented?
- What is my budget?
- What is my timeline?
- What are my analysis capabilities?
- Who needs to see this data?
- How easily can I fit this method into my annual responsibilities?
- Who needs to make decisions with this data?
- Will this kind of evidence help me make the decisions I need to make?
- How will I document the evidence and the decisions made from that evidence?





Re-Casting Services

- In some cases, you may need to re-cast your services so that you can provide that which delivers the end result or provides the opportunities to assess student development and learning.
- Or you may just need to sit down and articulate the criteria that describes that which you want the student to demonstrate (i.e. What does problem solving look like?)





Closing the Assessment Loop

- Briefly report methodology for each outcome
- Document where the students are meeting the intended outcome
- Document where they are not meeting the outcome
- Document decisions made to improve the program and assessment plan
- Refine assessment method and repeat process after proper time for implementation





Reporting Strategies

from Gary Hanson, Ph.D.

- Know your data
- Know your audience
- Tell the story
 - Identify meaningful indicators to shape the story
 - Examine indicators for patterns
- Begin with the end in mind
- Involve the end users in the process



Take-Home Messages

- You do not have to assess everything you do every year.
- You don't have to do everything at once-start with 2 or 3 learning outcomes
- Think baby steps
- Be flexible
- Acknowledge and use what you have already done.
- Assessment expertise is available to help - -not to evaluate your program
- Borrow examples from other institutions to modify as appropriate
- Time for this must be re-allocated
- We allocate time according to our priorities

Resources

- Each Other
- University Planning and Analysis (UPA) Assessment website
 - <http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/>
- Undergraduate Assessment website
http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/assess.htm
- Higher Learning Commission Website
<http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/>



Questions?



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One Minute Evaluation

- What is the most valuable lesson that you learned from this workshop?
- What is one question that you still have?
- What do you think is the next step that your division/program needs to take in order to implement systematic program assessment?



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