

Supporting Student Learning: Assessing the Effectiveness of Our Work



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Presentation Overview

- Overview of how assessment enhances student learning
- Overview of assessment strategies and tools
- Overview of implementation of good assessment strategies into a learning environment
- Overview of tools to evaluate assessment
- Your Examples
- Questions

Applying Karl Weick's Concept of Small Wins to Beginning Assessment



- It seems useful to consider the possibility that social problems [assessment studies] seldom get solved [are undertaken] because people define these problems in ways that overwhelm their ability to do anything about them [conduct them].


A small win is a concrete, complete, implemented outcome of moderate importance. By itself a small win may seem unimportant. A series of wins at small but significant tasks, however, reveals a pattern that may attract allies, deter opponents, and lower resistance to subsequent proposals (assessment projects).

(Weick, K. E. [1984]. Small wins. [American Psychologist](#), [39](#), 1, 40-49.)

Thus instead of singular, large, specially designed and campus wide programs to achieve a particular institutional goal, efforts might more profitably focus on ways to embed the pursuit of that goal in all institutional activities...rather than seeking large levers to pull in order to promote change on a large scale, it may well be more effective to pull more levers more often.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). How college affects students. San Francisco:

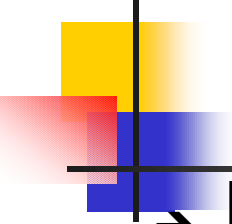
Jossey-Bass. (p. 655)



Stages in Addressing Mandated Assessment

- Denial
 - Resistance
 - Understanding
 - Campaign
 - Collaboration
 - Institutionalization
-
- FR: Wehlburg, C. (1999). How to get the ball rolling: Beginning an assessment program on your campus. [AAHE Bulletin, 51 \(9\), 7-9.](#)

How to Get Started


- 
- Pick an issue your supervisor is interested in
 - Start small and simple
 - Be willing to devote extra time
 - Choose a non-controversial topic
 - Keep costs to a minimum
 - Involve your supervisor in the study
 - Pick a study that will make you look good



Non Negotiable Issues with Staff

- **Assessment will be done**
- **Studies will have integrity**
- **Assessment will conform to institutional standards**
- **Multiple methods will be used**
- **Results will be reported**

Negotiable Issues with Staff

- 
- Purpose of the study
 - Who will be involved
 - Criteria for assessment
 - Who will do the study
 - Design of the study
 - Consultation needed
 - Interpretations of the findings
 - Recommendations for policy/practice



Typical Assessment Barriers

- **Lack of Assessment Expertise**
- **Lack of Commitment/Support from Leaders**
- **Lack of Staff Support**
- **No money**
- **No time**



The Assessment Cycle

Adapted From CUPR Guidelines

- The key questions...
 - ⑩ What are we trying to do and why are we doing it?
 - What do we expect the student to know or to do as a result of our program?
 - How well are we doing it?
 - How do we know?
 - How do we use the information to improve?
 - Does that work?

The Iterative Assessment Cycle

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



Purpose of Assessment

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) Reflect on the attitudes and approach we take in improving teaching and learning
- 14) Create a culture of continuous improvement – a culture of accountability, of learning, and of improvement



Why Move Away from Student Satisfaction Assessment?

- Student satisfaction, utilization, and needs assessment are very important.
- However, they don't help you understand the contributions of your program.
- They don't tell you how your program contributes to student development and learning.
- It seldom helps you make decisions for continuous improvement of your programs.



Why Move Away from Student Satisfaction Assessment? Cont.

- “The concepts of learning, personal development, and student development are inextricably intertwined and inseparable.” – The Student Learning Imperative
- “Good assessment is based fundamentally on collaboration among colleagues. And since student learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom, some of the most interesting and intellectually exciting work in assessment involves collaboration among faculty and student affairs professionals.” -Banta et alia.



Why Move Away from Student Satisfaction Assessment? Cont.

- “As resources decline and the competition for resources within institutions increases, every program and service must demonstrate its importance and worth.” - Upcraft and Schuh
- “...advances in the study of thinking and learning (cognitive science) and in the field of measurement have stimulated people to think in new ways about how students learn and what they know, what is therefore worth assessing, and how to obtain useful information about student competencies.” - National Research Council



Why Move Away from Student Satisfaction Assessment? Cont.

- “To assure that students have sufficient and various kinds of educational opportunities to learn or develop desired outcomes, faculty and staff often engage in curricular and co-curricular mapping” – Peggy L. Maki
- “The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students.” – SACS Core Requirement #10



Expectations Are Set

- Student affairs professionals are partners in learning and development.
- As educators, student affairs professionals are expected to assess the development and learning outcomes of their programs.
- *AAC&U's Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* calls for conversations about learning competencies or shared institutional learning goals .



Take Some Time to Draft

Some Opportunities to
Assess Student
Learning and
Development in Your
Programs

Typical Components of An Assessment Plan

by Bresciani, M.J.

- Mission
- Objectives or Goals
- Outcomes
- Evaluation Methods
 - With criteria and by Outcomes
- Implementation of Assessment
 - Who is Responsible for What?
 - Timeline
- Results
- Decisions and Recommendations



Mission Statement

- Can come from your strategic planning initiatives or from your Division, institution, etc.
- Can also come from your professional organization
- Brief statement about your program's purpose.



Write Down the Appropriate

Mission Statement for
Your Program

Objectives or Goals

From CUPR Common Language doc

- 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 evaluated directly or indirectly by measuring specific outcomes related to the objective.
- They are related to the mission and objectives of the department and college in which the program resides, and to the mission and objectives of the University.

Questions to Ask About Each of Your Objectives or Goals

by Bresciani, M.J.

- 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?



Example Program Objective/Goal

- To provide students with opportunities to develop their organizational skills



Other Examples

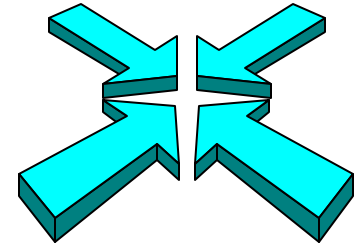
1. Expand the academic emphasis in the residence halls.
2. Provide prompt response to students' work orders.
3. Facilitate personal safety practices in the residence halls.



Write or Refine At Least

One of Your
Objectives or Goals

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. It is not what you are going to do to the student, but rather what you want the student to know or do.
- They use active verbs such as demonstrate, articulate, illustrate, conduct, etc

Questions to Ask Yourself About Outcomes

by Bresciani, M.J.

- Is it measurable?
- 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?



Example Outcome

Students will demonstrate responsible organizational skills by planning and implementing a successful event that their group's membership deems important and relevant to the university community .



Other Example Outcomes

Students will be able to evaluate their level of organizational skills and will be able to identify a plan to improve their skills.

Students who live in the residence halls will be able to articulate an understanding of safety practices. (knowledge)

Students who live in the residence halls will demonstrate an understanding of personal safety practices. (behavior?-do you really want to be responsible for student's behavior)

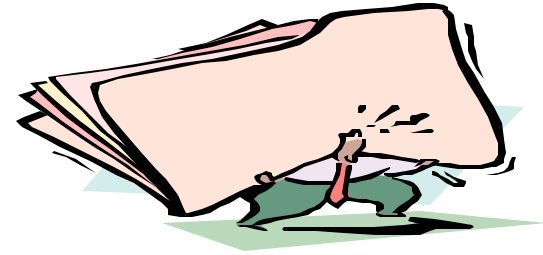


Write or Refine At Least

One of Your
Objectives or Goals

Meaningful Use of Data

from Peggy Maki, Ph.D.



- Collect data from different sources to make a meaningful point (*for example, program samples and other samples of student work*).
- Collect data you believe will be useful to answering the important questions you have raised.
- Collect data that will help you make decisions for continuous improvement.
- Organize reports around issues, not solely data.
- Interpret your data so that it informs program improvement, budgeting, planning, decision-making, or policies.

Some Methods That Provide Direct Evidence



- Student work samples
- Collections of student work (e.g. Portfolios)
- Capstone projects
- Project-embedded assessment
- Observations of student behavior
- Internal juried review of student projects
- Evaluations of performance

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

Some Methods That Provide Indirect Evidence

from Peggy Maki, Ph.D.

- Alumni, Employer, Student Surveys
- Focus groups
- Exit Interviews with Graduates
- Graduate Follow-up Studies
- Percentage of students who go on to graduate school
- Retention and Transfer Studies
- Job Placement Statistics



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

Questions to Ask About Choosing a Measurement Tool

by Bresciani, M.J.

- 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?

Comparing and Contrasting Qualitative and Quantitative Research Strategies

Qualitative

- *The purpose is to explain and gain insight and understanding of phenomena through intensive collection of narrative data*

Approach to Inquiry

- Inductive, value laden (subjective), holistic, process oriented

Hypotheses

- Tentative, evolving, based on particular study

Review of Related Literature

- Limited; does not significantly affect particular study

Research Setting

- Naturalistic (as is) to the degree possible

Sampling

- Purposive: Intent to select small, but not necessarily representative sample to acquire in-depth understanding

FR: Borland, Jr., K. W. (2001). Qualitative and quantitative research: A complementary balance. In R. D. Howard & K. W. Borland (Eds.), Balancing

Quantitative

- *The purpose is to explain, predict, or control phenomena through focused collection of numerical data*

Approach to Inquiry

- Deductive, value free (objective), focused, outcome oriented

Hypotheses

- Specific, testable, stated prior to particular study

Review of Related Literature

- Extensive; does significantly affect particular study

Research Setting

- Controlled to the degree possible

Sampling

- Random: Intent to select large, representative sample to generalize results to a population

Qualitative and quantitative information for effective decision support (pp. 5-13. New Directions for Institutional Research no. 112. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Comparing and Contrasting Qualitative and Quantitative Research Strategies

Qualitative

Measurement

- Non-standardized, narrative, ongoing

Design and Method

- Flexible, specified only in general terms in advance of study
- Nonintervention, minimal disturbance
- All descriptive---history, biography, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study (hybrids of these)

Data Collection Strategies

- Document and artifact collection
- Observation (participant, non-participant)
- Interviews/focus groups ([un-]structured, [in]-formal))
- Open ended questionnaires
- Extensive, detailed field notes

FR: Borland, Jr., K. W. (2001). Qualitative and quantitative research: A complementary balance. In R. D. Howard & K. W. Borland (Eds.),

Quantitative

Measurement

- Standardized, numerical, at the end

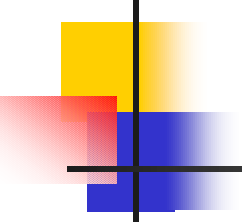
Design and Method

- Structured, inflexible, specified in detail in advance of study
- Intervention,, manipulation and control
- Descriptive--
 - Correlational, causal comparative, experimental

Data Collection Strategies

- Observation (non-participant)
- Interviews and focus groups (semi-structured, formal)
- Administration of tests and questionnaires

Balancing Qualitative and quantitative information for effective decision support (pp. 5-13. New Directions for Institutional Research no. 112. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



Comparing and Contrasting Qualitative and Quantitative Research Strategies

■ Qualitative

Data Analysis

- Raw data are words
- Essentially ongoing, involves synthesis

Data Interpretation

- Conclusions tentative, reviewed on an ongoing basis, generalizations speculative or nonexistent

■ Quantitative

■ Data Analysis

- Raw data are numbers
- Performed at end of study, involves statistics

Data Interpretation

- Conclusions and generalizations formulated at end of study; stated with predetermined degree of certainty
- FR: Borland, Jr., K. W. (2001). Qualitative and quantitative research: A complementary balance. In R. D. Howard & K. W. Borland (Eds.), Balancing Qualitative and quantitative information for effective decision support (pp. 5-13. New Directions for Institutional Research no. 112. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



Six Factor Comparison of Locally and Commercially-Developed Instruments

Local

- Purpose

Allows thorough diagnostic coverage of local goals and content

- Match

Tailored to local goals and content

Commercial

- Purpose

Allows for comparison to national norm group

- Match

Usually provides incomplete coverage of local goals and content

Local

■ Logistics

Availability: Takes time/resources to develop

Prep Time: Considerable amount of time for development

Expertise: Takes content and measurement expertise to develop instrument

Cost: Development costs

Scoring: Immediate

Commercial

■ Logistics

Availability: Only if the purchase price can be met

Prep Time: Short

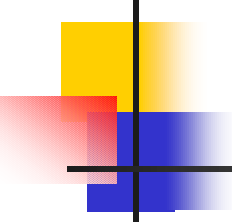
Expertise: Can be administered after reading manuals

Cost: Purchasing/scoring/reporting

Scoring: Can be delayed if scored off campus

Local

Commercial



Testing Time: Flexible

Test Type: Built for local needs

Ease in Administration: Flexible

Norms: Allows for intra-institutional comparison

Reporting: Built for local needs

Testing Time: Fixed

Test Type: Restricted to commercial availability

Ease in Administration: Requires standardized administration

Norms: Allows for national and inter-institutional comparisons

Reporting: Restricted to commercial availability



Local

- Institutional Acceptance

- ✓ Local development can encourage local ownership and acceptance
- ✓ Quality concerns may interfere with acceptance

- Quality

Lack of professional quality may affect results and influence institutional acceptance

Commercial

- Institutional Acceptance

- ✓ Professional quality and national use may enhance acceptance
- ✓ Failure to completely cover local goals and content may inhibit acceptance

- Quality

Professional quality may compensate for incomplete coverage of local goals and content

Local

■ Student Motivation

Local instrument may not “impress” or provide incentives for responding

Source: Ory, J. C. (1994).
Suggestions for deciding
between available and
locally developed
assessment instruments.
In J. S. Stark & A. Thomas
(eds.), Assessment &
Program Evaluation (pp.
597-602). ASHE Reader
Series. Needham Heights,
MS: Simon & Schuster.

Commercial

■ Student Motivation

Can provide incentives such
as a national comparison or
practice for a future
administration



Possible Assessment Tools

- SA professionals and possibly student leaders develop a rubric or checklist (or use a published one) that illustrates steps and levels of leadership in organizing a successful event .
- SA professionals will apply that rubric to the leader's organization and implementation of the event.

Possible Assessment Tools, Cont.



- Self-report standardized or institutionally developed survey
- Student self-assessment of leadership skills
- Peer-assessment of student's leadership skills
- Simply checking off whether the student has organized an event



Re-Casting Services

- In some cases, you may need to re-cast your services so that you can provide 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



Choose an Outcome and

Work through this
Process



Share Examples



Example of Satisfaction to...

- 97% of the career service participants will agree or strongly agree that career service programs provided information and assistance that were helpful to their preparation to leave the University.



...Development and Learning

- Students will demonstrate appropriate interview skills during video-taped mock interviews.
- Students will articulate where they are in their career decision choice and what their next steps should be.
- Students will document their qualifications for a position in their resume and performance portfolios.



Compare Assessment Methods for Satisfaction

- Self-report satisfaction survey
- Maybe interviews
- Maybe observations



Compare Assessment Methods for Dev. and Learn.

- Self-report Survey
- Interviews based on criteria
- Observations based on criteria
- Standardized career service assessment instruments
- Student Portfolios
- Peer evaluation
- Self evaluation
- Evidence of knowledge of discipline in portfolio



Questions to Ask Yourself

- Which outcome and assessment methods will help me understand what it is that I am doing that is leading to the outcome?
- Which outcome and assessment methods help me understand why I am doing what I am doing?
- Will this kind of evidence help me make the decisions I need to make?



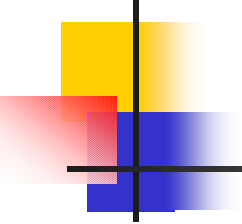
Re-Casting Services

- In some cases, you may need to re-cast your services so that you can provide opportunities to assess student development and learning.
- For example, moving from several career services programs to a career services curriculum model.



Interactive Time

What are Your Examples?
Draft Them Out



Another Example of Satisfaction to ...

- 85% of the student recreation participants' needs for recreational activities will be satisfied.



... Development and Learning

- Students completing the wellness class will demonstrate proper use of the cardiovascular and weight lifting equipment.
- Student workers will articulate 7 safety tips and 8 equipment checks to ensure student participants' safety and wellness.
- Graduate students will demonstrate responsible recreational management skills at the end of semester facilities evaluations and undergraduate student performance evaluations.



... Development and Learning

- Student recreational center users will exhibit respect for the recreational center equipment.
- In partnership with student health, student participants in the jointly offered workshops will articulate an awareness of nutrition and stress' impact on wellness.



Compare Assessment Methods for Satisfaction

- Self-report satisfaction survey
- Self-report needs survey
- Utilization statistics
- Maybe interviews
- Maybe observations



Compare Assessment Methods for Dev. and Learn.

- Self-report survey
- Utilization statistics
- Interviews based on criteria
- Observations based on criteria
- Performance reviews
- Student portfolios
- Peer evaluation
- Self evaluation
- Student essays



Questions to Stimulate

Your Thinking

Some Questions about Student Learning and Development

Adapted from Peggy Maki, Ph.D

- 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

Adapted from Peggy Maki, Ph.D

- 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?



Questions?

http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/files/presentations.htm



One Minute Evaluation

- What is the most valuable thing that you learned from this workshop?
- What is one question that you still have?