Implementing an Assessment Cycle…

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Presentation Overview

- Building on the Previous Presentations
- Overview of Evaluation Methods
- Overview of Closing the Loop
- Questions

The Assessment Cycle (Bresciani, 2003)

- The key questions…
  - What are we trying to do and why? or
  - What is my program supposed to accomplish?
  - 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 EBDM Cycle

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

After you have articulated your outcomes…

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

e.g., planning

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

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)

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

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

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

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 Revisited

- 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

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?

Choose an Outcome and

Work through this Process

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

Other Items to Note and Report

- Unexpected/Unintended outcomes
- New data collection methods, including different times, student groupings (e.g., various ways you may separate the cohorts or groups of students to gather more meaningful data), and different methods
- Recommendations for other programs

Other Items to Note and Report, Cont.

- Recommendations to repeat the assessment process prior to making any decisions
- Maintaining status quo
- Be sure to note the time when you will go back and re-assess

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

Reporting Strategies

- Identify the values of your constituents and find out how your constituents prefer to see data and reports.
- Students (or those whom you evaluated) can be extremely helpful in your writing and dissemination of results and decisions made.
- Be sure to link the data and decisions made to the outcome and the program being assessed (Maki, 2001).

Reporting Strategies, Cont.

- Timing is everything when delivering results and decisions.
- Prepare to defend your outcome, your evaluation method, your results, and the decisions made based on those results.
- If you need help interpreting the data, get it.

What to Do with Your Mounds of Data?

- After you have articulated your outcomes, you can sift through the mounds of data more readily to determine what information can help you.
- Don't be surprised if you don't find any pre-existing data that will help you determine the effectiveness of your program.

What to Do with Your Mounds of Data?, Cont.

- Most benchmark instruments help you identify where you are doing well and where you may have problems.
- That helps you prioritize your assessment work, but it may not help you with decisions for improving your program or for informing policy.

What to Do with Bad Data?

- Report that you have inconclusive data.
- In your recommendations section, explain what you think may have gone wrong and what you will change next time.
- Be sure to include recommendations for refining outcomes, evaluation methods, criteria, and data analysis and interpretation methods.
- Can you make any recommendations for the program even though you have "bad" data?

Resources

- Your own website – http://assessment.udel.edu
- Each Other
- University Planning and Analysis (UPA) Assessment website
  - http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/
- http://assessment.tamu.edu

Questions?

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 department/program needs to take in order to implement systematic program assessment?

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Dr. Marilee Bresciani
Visiting Associate Professor and Assistant Vice President for Institutional Assessment

For more information and Registration

http://assessment.tamu.edu/conference.html or assessment@tamu.edu

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