

You're Teaching...

What are your Students Learning?

Marilee J. Bresciani, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President for Institutional Assessment
Texas A&M University
mbresciani@tamu.edu
979-458-2913





Presentation Overview

- Overview of Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA)
- What OBA is really trying to accomplish
- The Importance of OBA
- 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

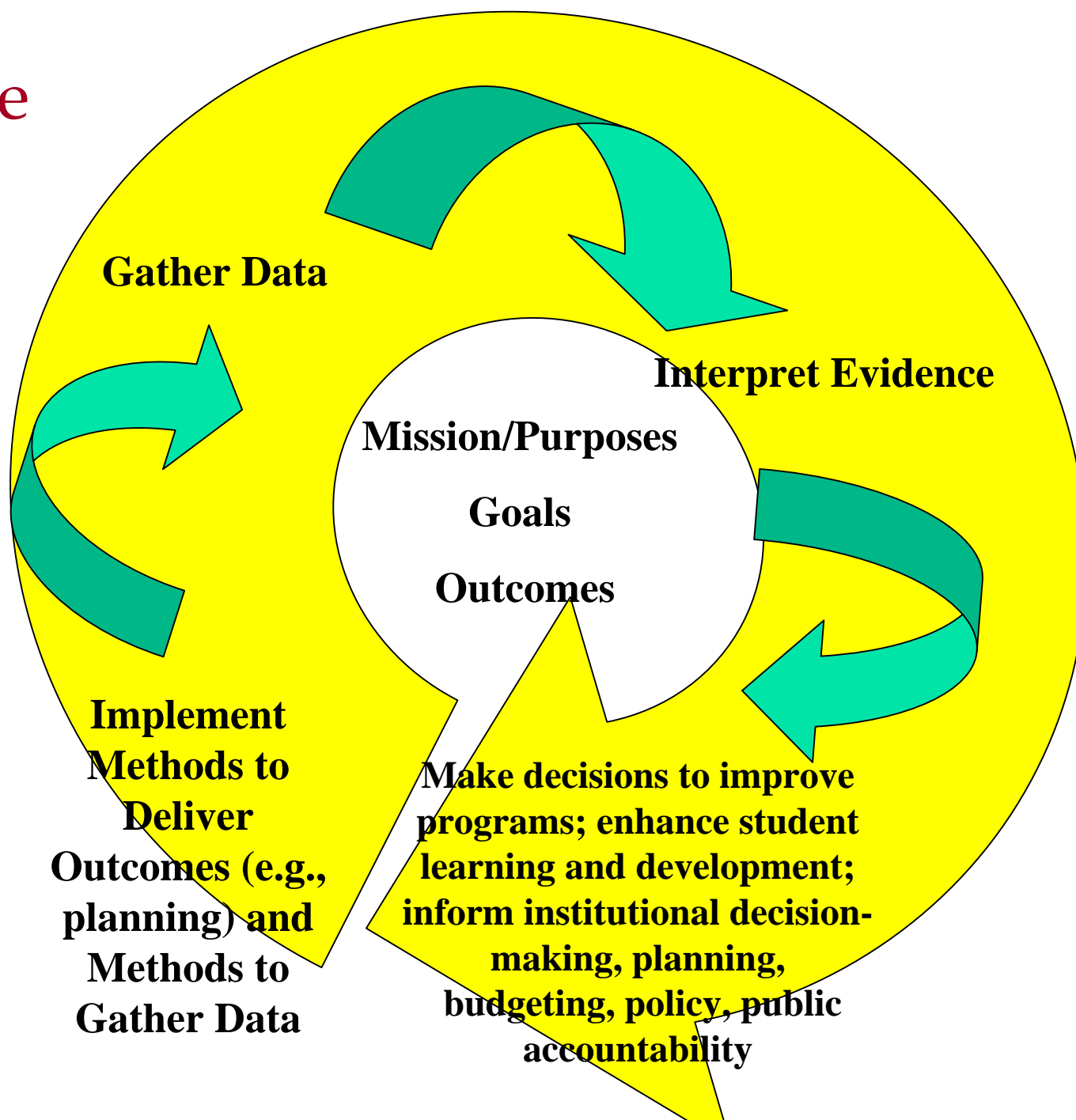


The Assessment Cycle (Bresciani, 2003)

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





Ask Yourself These Questions

- What do you want your students to know and why? or
- What are your students supposed to learn?
- How well are they learning it?
- How do we know?
- How do we use the information to improve the learning or celebrate successes?
- Do the improvements we make work?

Assessment (Bresciani, 2003)

- Most importantly, it should be
 - Understood = by faculty/professionals and students
 - Inclusive = involve as many faculty/professionals as possible
 - Meaningful = faculty/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



The Purpose

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



The Purpose, Cont.

- It's 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
- It has many uses including managing expectations



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.

- Federal 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
- Public Information about Performance
 - Transparency of outcomes and results



Drivers, Cont.

- Bologna Declaration of 1999
- Other Research
 - NSSE Deep Learning Project
 - National Research Council
 - AAC&U Greater Expectations
 - NASPA/ACPA Learning Reconsidered
 - Sweden and Norway

Typical Components of An Outcomes-Based Assessment Plan

- Program Name
- Program Mission or Purpose of Course/Activity
- Goals
- Outcomes
- Evaluation Methods
 - Insert appropriate definitions
 - With criteria for each outcomes
 - Add Limitations, if necessary

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)
 - Outline the timeline for implementation
 - Identify who will be evaluated
 - Identify other programs who are assisting with the evaluation
 - Identify who is the intended user of the data that will be collected

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



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?

The Sixth Annual



E x a s A & M
A s s e s s m e n t
C o n f e r e n c e :

Putting Assessment to Work!

February 23- 25, 2006

At the Hilton of College Station

Featured Speakers

Mr. Ralph Wolff

Executive Director for the Western Association of
Schools and Colleges

Dr. Marcia Mentkowski

Professor of Psychology and
Director of Educational Research
and Evaluation at Alverno College

Dr. Gary Hanson

Research and Policy Analyst for the
Office of Institutional Studies and
Policy Analysis at
The University of Texas System

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

References

- Bresciani, M.J. (September, 2002). *The relationship between outcomes, measurement. and decisions for continuous improvement.* National Association for Student Personnel Administrators, Inc NetResults E-Zine.
<http://www.naspa.org/netresults/index.cfm>
- Bresciani, M.J., Zelna, C.L., and Anderson, J.A. (2004). *Techniques for Assessing Student Learning and Development in Academic and Student Support Services.* Washington D.C.:NASPA.
- Ewell, P. T. (2003). *Specific Roles of Assessment within this Larger Vision.* Presentation given at the Assessment Institute at IUPUI. Indiana University-Purdue University- Indianapolis.
- Maki, P. (2001). *Program review assessment.* Presentation to the Committee on Undergraduate Academic Review at NC State University.

References, Cont.

- NC State University, Undergraduate Academic Program Review. (2001) Common Language for Assessment. Taken from the World Wide Web September 13, 2003:
http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic_programs/uapr/process/language.html
- Palomba, C.A. and Banta, T.W. (1999). Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing and improving assessment in Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- University of Victoria, Counseling Services. (2003) Learning Skills Program: Blooms Taxonomy. Taken from the World Wide Web September 13, 2003:
<http://www.Coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/loom.html>