Everybody Plays a Role in Assessment

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Overview

- Context of Higher Education Assessment
- Assessment Concepts
- FOCUS: Getting Involved in the Assessment Process
- Use Data for Continuous Improvement
- Discussion
Context of Higher Education Assessment
Accountability

- Rise of accountability measures since 1990s
- Increase in college costs over time
- Many claim there has been a decrease in evidence of student learning
- Misunderstanding, by some, of what is actually done in higher education

(Bresciani, 2009; Palomba & Banta, 1999; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996)
Stakeholders

Internal

- Students
- Parents/Families
- Faculty
- Administration
- Others?

External

- Professional associations
- Accreditors
  - Some discipline-specific organizations
- Grantors
- Local/National News Media
Considerations

- Student Affairs staff are experts on the out-of-class learning process

- Our work must be steeped in proper research practice in order to be understood in the academic arena

- How can we best share our work with these internal and external constituent groups?

- How can we all be involved in this communication process?
Assessment Concepts

An Overview
Quiz: What is Assessment?

A. An instrument used to measure behavior
B. An educational evaluation tool
C. A tax
D. A field of study involving the analysis and reporting of a wide variety of data sources used for improvement in education.
E. All of the above...and more
What is Assessment?

“Assessment is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, divisional, or agency effectiveness” (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 18).

Effectiveness relates to:

- Learning Outcomes
- Cost Effectiveness
- Satisfaction
- Alignment with Standards
- Needs
- Benchmarking
What is Evaluation?

0 “Evaluation is any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, departmental, divisional or institutional effectiveness.” (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 19).

0 “Assessment describes effectiveness; evaluation uses these descriptions to improve effectiveness.” (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001, p. 4)
“Research seeks to prove. Evaluation seeks to *improve.*”

(Patton, 2002)
Three Assessment Questions

1. What is the *purpose* of the assessment? WHY?

2. What is the *level* of assessment? WHO?

3. WHAT *specifically* is to be assessed?
   - Knowledge
   - Skills
   - Attitudes and values
   - Behaviors

(Terenzini, 1988)
Simple Assessment Cycle

Plan

Implement

Collect Data

Analyze & Report

Improve
How can I help?

Everybody Plays a Role...
Involvement in Assessment

Planning

0 Assessment should be as routine in your program-planning as choosing the right date, reserving the space, ordering food, etc.

0 What should students learn from interacting with your programs and services? What new skill(s) will they develop?

0 How will you know if students learned?
Involvement in Assessment

**Implementation**
- Continue your stellar work!

**Data Collection**
- Spend time on developing measures of effectiveness
- Collaborate on data-collection tools (surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.)
Involvement in Assessment

Data Analysis
0 Always ask WHY.
0 Dig deeper
0 Involve each other, and students, on interpretation of results

Reporting/Sharing
0 Student involvement
0 Write multiple reports for multiple audiences
Use for Improvement

Everybody Plays a Role in Assessment...
Enacting the Culture of Evidence

- Collaborative
- Transparent
- Action-oriented
- Improvement-oriented
USE the data...

...to celebrate accomplishments!
...to discuss improvements.
...to make plans for the future.
...to improve the work we do, together.
Don’t fear the data.
You can’t improve a [class/program/service, etc.] just by assessing it.
Close the Loop

Share Results
- Web, reports, PR campaigns
- Town-hall meetings, retreats, brown-bags

Seek Feedback
- Internal from students, faculty & staff
- External from stakeholders

Determine Actions
- Improvement-oriented
- Collaborate

Set Timelines
- Short-term for low-hanging fruit
- Long-term for obtaining resources, plans, etc.

Report Progress
- Communicate
- Collaborate
References


Discussion/Questions
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