The Assessment Cycle[1]: Investigating Instruments

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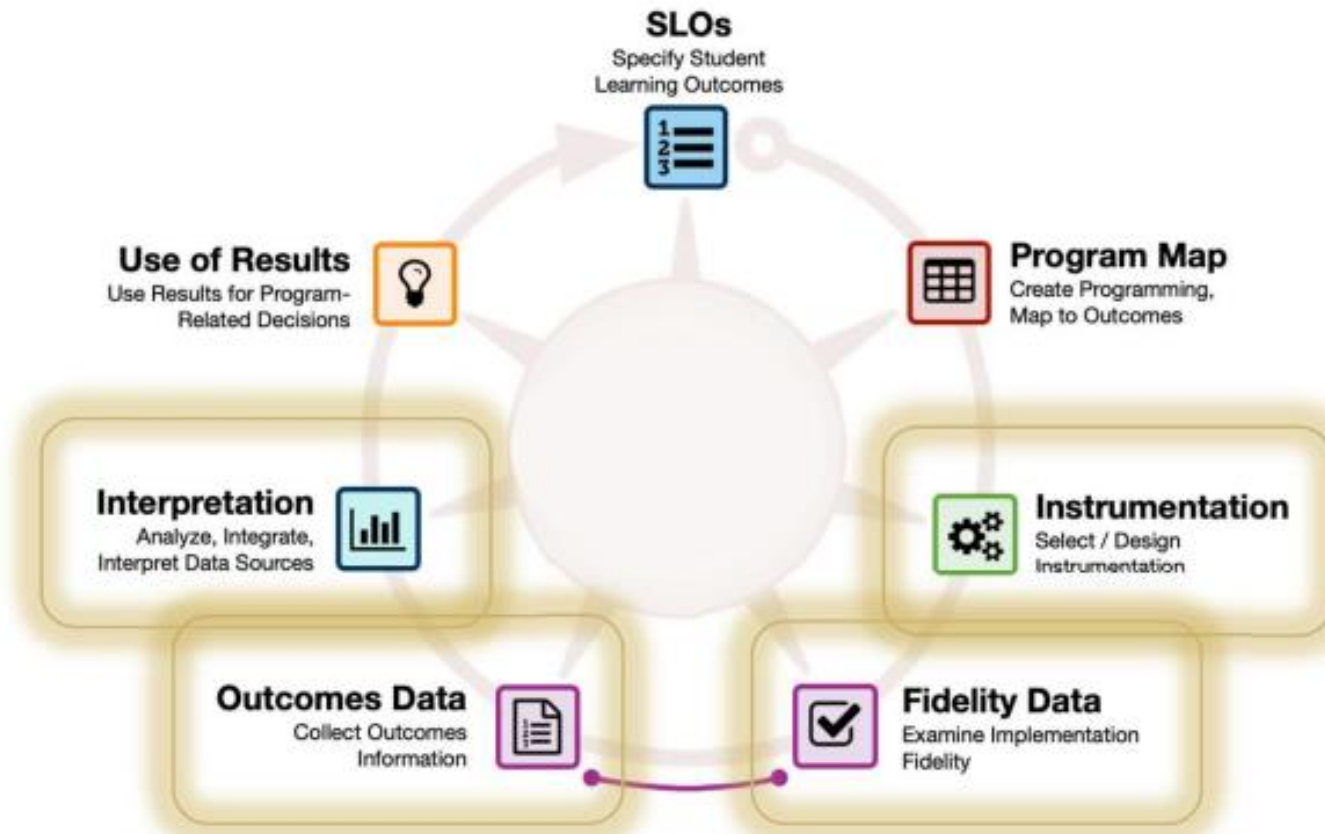
Assessment Series #2: Survey Creation

- As a result of participating in the second assessment series presentation, UCC staff members will be able to…

  - Describe the 4 steps to a survey participants response process

  - Identify at least 3 survey question types and when it is appropriate to use each

  - List 3-5 guidelines to consider when constructing an effective survey question

  - Construct a basic survey using at least 2 different survey question types

The 4 Step Response Process

- Outlines the stages for retrieval of and articulation of responses to noncognitive questions.

    1. Interpret the Question
        - What is the Question asking?

    2. Retrieve necessary Information
        - Recalling if you have any knowledge or experiences relating to the Question

    3. Use the retrieved information to form an opinion/answer
        - Based on recalled knowledge and experiences how do you feel about the Question?
            - Beliefs, Values, Opinions and Attitudes

    4. Record the Response/Answer

Practice makes Perfect:

Example:

You want to determine if a student can identify how their transferrable skills apply to their job search.

You ask the following question:

Please list your top dream job and 1-3 skills you have that you believe will make you successful in that job.

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The Response Process In Action:

1. Interpret the Question
   - What do I consider a dream job? What kind of skills are they looking for? I'm pretty outgoing, I like to talk to people, do those count? Should I provide silly examples or be serious?

2. Retrieve necessary Information
   - My dream job is a Park Ranger. I took a public speaking class, I have a job as a server, I got CPR certified last year, I also volunteer at the nature preserve and learned about the local plant species.

The Response Process In Action:

3. Use the retrieved information to form an opinion/answer

- A park ranger would probably need to be good at speaking to people and I learned how to project my voice better and use the storytelling method in Public Speaking. I also know that park rangers will sometimes have to rescue people who get hurt on the trails so being CPR certified would be helpful.

4. Record the Response/Answer

- My dream job is being a park ranger. I think that my skills in public speaking as well as my CPR certification would make me a good park ranger. I learned to use the storytelling method for public speaking, and I can project my voice to help people hear me. I also learned basic first aid skills in CPR which would be helpful for anyone who gets hurt while I am on duty.

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What's with Cognition?
Cognitive vs. Noncognitive Items

- Cognitive skills
  - Involve conscious intellectual effort, such as thinking, reasoning, or remembering
    - Selection items
      - Multiple choice
      - True/false
      - Matching
    - Supply items
    - Performance assessments

- Noncognitive skills
  - Associated with an individual's personality, temperament, and attitudes
    - Single items
    - Scale items

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Common Ways to Assess Learning

Formal

- Tests/Exams
  - Pre/Post Tests
- Assignments/Projects
  - Essays & Reflections
- Rubrics
- Surveys
- Focus Groups

VS.

Informal

- Polls
- Concept Maps
- Gamification
- Muddiest Points

Choosing an Instrument

Things to consider:

- Timeline
  - How long do you have with the audience?
  - Is the assessment done during or after your strategy/intervention?
  - When do you need the results by?
- Mapping to Learning Outcomes
  - How will the assessment reasonably measure the established learning outcomes?
  - What are you assessing in terms of skills, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge?
- Intention with Results
  - How are you planning to use the results
    - Providing feedback to students
    - Informing office change
    - Sharing information with stakeholders vs. Internal use only

Becoming Survey Savvy

- Take this time to show office staff various survey tools available for your University

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Guidelines for Survey Creation

- Common Considerations

  1. Language

 2. Structure

  3. Meaningful Measures
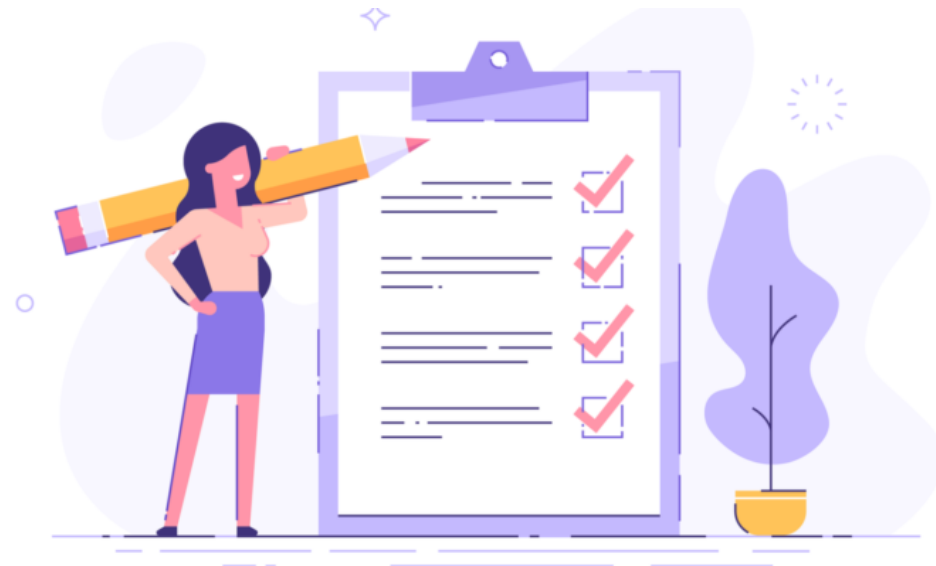
Guide to Language

- Creating a meaningful scale
  - Inclusion of a neutral option
    - What is a respondent's neutral opinion telling us?
  - Distinguishing between response options
    - What is the difference between "Somewhat Satisfied" and "Satisfied"?

- Guidelines for language
  - Avoid double barreled items
  - **Emphasize** negative words
  - Avoid absolutes (*all, always, never, none*)
  - Use qualifiers (*only, some, just*) with care
  - Simple, clear, and direct language

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Guide to Structure

- Cognitive fatigue
  - Survey length
  - Ease of completion
  - Flow

- Guidelines for structure
  - Item length
    - 5-7 scale levels
    - 20 words or less
  - Least possible number of questions
  - Page breaks

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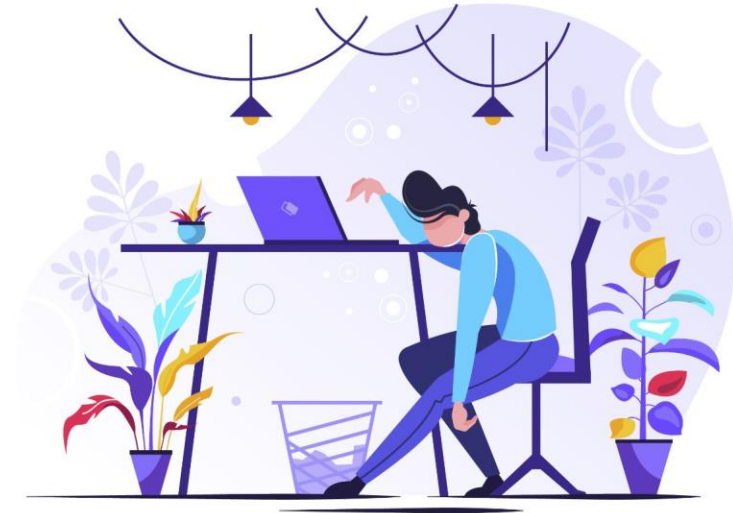
Guide to Meaningful Measures

- **First ask yourself**: *What information do I want to know?*
  - Program theory
  - Learning outcomes
  - Metric outcomes
- **Next ask yourself**: *What are we going to do with this information?*
  - Questions that inform:
    - Future programming
    - Implementation of current programming
    - Mapping to learning outcomes

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Let us know what you think!

- Create some examples of poorly constructed survey questions and have participants take the survey so they can see what it's like