DEVELOPING AN ASSESSMENT CULTURE:

STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN ASSESSMENT

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Participant question

• At your institution, what is the single biggest barrier to developing a positive assessment culture?

• Write the answer on one side of the index card on your table

• Briefly share with others at your table
Institutional barriers

• Lack of expertise
• Lack of resources
• Faculty hostility
• People too busy (not a high priority)
• Misalignment with external mandates & internal priorities

• What else?
Workshop Agenda

- Introduction: Investigating Assessment Quality
- Using Assessment Results for Improvement
- Faculty Development
- Group Activity
- Resource Sharing
- Develop an Action Plan
- Discussion
Learning Outcomes

As a result of this workshop, participants will:

- Identify the six steps in the **assessment model** and explain how **quality can vary at each step**
- Identify where **faculty members** stand in their assessment development progress and what faculty development and resources are best-suited for faculty members at that stage of development
- Identify **faculty development opportunities** they can immediately offer
- Explain how institutions can strategically **enhance assessment culture** through faculty development and support
- Synthesize **ideas about how an institution can use assessment** to provide evidence for **impact on student learning**.
Why practice assessment?

• Accountability

• Program Improvement

• Recruitment
Quick Survey

• Where are you in the SACSCOC Cycle?

• Visit within this year
• Writing report within the next 18 months
• Approaching 5 year interim
• 5-10 year period, nothing due
Assessment is Cyclical

NEW: Section #8 Student Achievement

2. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:
   a. student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs. (Student outcomes: educational programs)
   b. student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education)
   c. Academic and student services that support student success. (Student outcomes: academic and student services)
Assessment Improvement

• Assessment is increasingly practiced

• Expectations of quality assessment are less common

• Why does quality assessment matter?

• How to use assessment results to improve student learning
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>B.A. program in NFL History</th>
<th>B.A. program in 80s Pop Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well defined objectives</td>
<td>Well defined objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives mapped to</td>
<td>Objectives mapped to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>curriculum</td>
<td>curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses an alumni survey to</td>
<td>Uses at least one direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assess all objectives and</td>
<td>measure to assess all objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>one senior satisfaction</td>
<td>(100% response rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survey (15% response rate</td>
<td>Makes curricular changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on each)</td>
<td>based on assessment results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes curricular changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>based on assessment results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment Quality

- Enables one to trust inferences made from results
- Is necessary if assessment is to lead to program improvement
- Can we gauge assessment quality?
MEASURING ASSESSMENT QUALITY
“Meta-Assessment”

- “Meta-Assessment” - assessing the assessment cycle (Ory, 1992)

  - Specifically, assessing the quality of assessment
Meta-Assessment Research

• Over 50 institutions practice “meta-assessment” (Fulcher, Swain, Orem, 2012)
  • Typically a rubric is used to evaluate an assessment report

• Assessment coordinators who utilize resources and consultation improve assessment quality (Rodgers, Grays, Fulcher, & Jurich, 2012)

• Programs who more frequently consult have higher assessment quality (Fulcher & Bashkov, 2012)
Advantages of Meta-Assessment

- Identify individual program assessment strengths and weaknesses

- Allows for a common reporting mechanism across the university

- Allows institutional view of assessment quality
  - Via aggregate data
Meta-Assessment in Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 – Beginning</th>
<th>2 – Developing</th>
<th>3 – Good</th>
<th>4 – Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Student-centered learning objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Clarity and Specificity</td>
<td>No objectives stated.</td>
<td>Objectives present, but with imprecise verbs (e.g., know, understand), vague description of content/skill/or attitudinal domain, and non-specificity of whom should be assessed (e.g., “students”)</td>
<td>Objectives generally contain precise verbs, rich description of the content/skill/or attitudinal domain, and specification of whom should be assessed (e.g., “graduating seniors in the Biology B.A. program”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Orientation</td>
<td>No objectives stated in student-centered terms.</td>
<td>Some objectives stated in student-centered terms.</td>
<td>Most objectives stated in student-centered terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Course/learning experiences that are mapped to objectives</strong></td>
<td>No activities/courses listed.</td>
<td>Activities/courses listed but link to objectives is absent.</td>
<td>Most objectives have classes and/or activities linked to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Systematic method for evaluating progress on objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Relationship between measures and objectives</td>
<td>Seemingly no relationship between objectives and measures.</td>
<td>At a superficial level, it appears the content assessed by the measures matches the objectives, but no explanation is provided.</td>
<td>General detail about how objectives relate to measures is provided. For example, the faculty wrote items to match the objectives, or the instrument was selected “because its general description appeared to match our objectives.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Types of Measures</td>
<td>No measures indicated</td>
<td>Objectives are not assessed via direct measures (only with indirect measures).</td>
<td>Most objectives assessed with direct measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Specification of desired results for objectives</td>
<td>No a priori desired results for objectives</td>
<td>Statement of desired result (e.g., student growth, comparison to previous year’s data, comparison to faculty standards,</td>
<td>Desired result specified. (e.g., our students will gain ½ standard deviation from junior to senior year; our students will score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Results for Improvement

Exemplary
Good
Developing
Beginning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Obj.</th>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Methods/Design</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-15</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-09</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Misconceptions

Conducting assessment automatically leads to improved learning

*Even when assessment reports are disseminated widely, most of us behave as though the data in the reports will speak loudly enough to prompt action. We tend to believe that interesting findings will naturally prompt discussions and ultimately revisions in our courses and programs. But this denies the reality on most of our campuses—that the current state of affairs in our departments, curricular structures, and programs is usually a compromise carefully negotiated among numerous parties over the course of years. Unless the findings are truly devastating, assessment data has little impact on this tightly constrained arrangement.*

(Blaich & Wise, 2011)
Misconceptions

• Conducting assessment practices automatically leads to improved learning
Misconceptions

• Simply making a change is automatically an improvement
Pedagogical or Curricular Modification

Now, we can say this change is an improvement.

Class 2015
Average Writing Score = 2.5

Class 2018
Average Writing Score = 2.5

Change vs. Improvement
Misconceptions

• The more resources you have the more improved learning will occur
10-MINUTE BREAK
WHAT OBSTACLES IMPEDE BUILDING AN ASSESSMENT CULTURE THAT FACILITATES LEARNING IMPROVEMENT?
Obstacles?

• Faculty knowledge
• Faculty commitment
• Faculty buy-in
• Faculty time

• Institutional expertise
• Institutional support
• What else?
Variability in Faculty Assessment Knowledge and Commitment

- Faculty development opportunities can allow the institution to meet the faculty member responsible for assessment “where they are”

- Generally, there are “Beginners,” “Intermediates” and “Advanced”

- We might think of this as a continuum from least to most knowledgeable, and from openly hostile to fully committed
RESOURCES

Resources are critical to assessment improvement

What kinds of resources are available to assessment practitioners?
Resource Possibilities

- Easily Accessible
- Involved Experiences

Continuum of Resources and Experiences
Books & Conferences

Easily Accessible

*Books and Conferences*

- Informational Videos
- Reporting Expectations
- Assessment Workshops
- One on One Consultation
- Dedicated Time
- Rating Experience
- Celebrating Excellence
- Certificate Program

Involved Experiences

• Assessment Books
  - *Assessment Clear and Simple*
  - *Assessing Student Learning*

• Assessment Conferences
  - SACSCOC
  - AALHE
  - Virginia Assessment Group
  - Association of Institutional Research
  - Community College conference on Learning Assessment
  - Many more!
Assessment Videos

- Easily Accessible

Books and Conferences
* Informational Videos
- Reporting Expectations
- Assessment Workshops
- One on One Consultation
- Dedicated Time
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https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/Visitor/AssessmentResources.shtml
Assessment Report Exemplar

**Easily Accessible**

Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
*Reporting Expectations*
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
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Assessment Workshops

Easily Accessible

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Involved Experiences

Previous Models:
• Three week experience where faculty work on an assessment project for their program
• One week group projects facilitated by assessment specialist

Assessment 101:
• 5-day workshop
• Open to faculty members and student affairs professionals
• Interactive format
• Work through each step of the assessment cycle
Consultation

Easily Accessible

Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops

* One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

Involved Experiences

- Consultation with an assessment expert
- Most commonly identified support mechanism in qualitative study
- Could be:
  - Institutional Effectiveness professional
  - Knowledgeable faculty members
  - Graduate students
  - Students in statistics courses
- Could hire an external consultant
Dedicated Time

Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation

* Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

Assessment Lockdown
• Partnered with on-campus faculty development center
• Hosted a 3 hour “Assessment Lockdown”
  • Faculty worked on their assessment reports with experts “on-hand”

Reflection Year
• For programs with exemplary assessment, the option to take a year to reflect on the data

Learning Improvement by Design
• Intentional partnership between assessment and faculty development center
Faculty Assessment Raters

Easily Accessible

Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
* Rating Experience
  Celebrating Excellence
  Certificate Program

Involved Experiences

- Faculty representatives from all colleges
- Two week experience
- Two days of training
- Work with assessment office staff daily to evaluate assessment reports
Celebrating Excellence

- Easily Accessible
- Books and Conferences
- Informational Videos
- Reporting Expectations
- Assessment Workshops
- One on One Consultation
- Dedicated Time
- Rating Experience

* Celebrating Excellence
- Certificate Program

- Annual award or recognition given through Provost’s office
- Nominate high achievers for external awards
- Support scholarship, travel, etc.

Involved Experiences
Assessment Certificate

- Easily Accessible
- Books and Conferences
- Informational Videos
- Reporting Expectations
- Assessment Workshops
- One on One Consultation
- Dedicated Time
- Rating Experience
- Celebrating Excellence

* Certificate Program

- Professional development program
- Online
- Four courses taught by assessment professionals
- Two year commitment
What Else?

Easily Accessible

Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

* Other

Involved Experiences

• What ideas do you have?
• Examples from your home institution
  •
  •
  •
  •
Targeted Audience

- Easily Accessible

Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

Beginner
Intermediate
Advanced
Group Activity

• Work with your table to brainstorm **resources and faculty development opportunities** for your hypothetical faculty member.

• Did you find **other resources** not mentioned here today that you want to provide for your faculty?

• Books and Conferences
• Informational Videos
• Reporting Expectations
• Assessment Workshops
• One on One Consultation
• Dedicated Time
• Rating Experience
• Celebrating Excellence
• Certificate Program
• Other
SHARE

- Each scenario will report their proposed solutions

NEW TO ASSESSMENT

10 YEARS OF ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR—IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

NOT EXCITED
Action Plan Worksheet

- Goals:
  - Promote a positive assessment culture
  - Evidence student learning improvement
- What are the most important and realistic resources to provide faculty at the institution?
- Each group will report out their two most important resources
TAKE AWAYS

Percentage of Institutions in Non-Compliance

- Faculty Competence (3.7.1)
  - 93% Off-Site Review
  - 30% On-Site Review
  - 5% C&R

- IE - Educational Programs (3.3.1.1)
  - 64% Off-Site Review
  - 30% On-Site Review
  - 22% C&R
TAKE AWAYS

• Think of where your university is now and where it could be in 10 years
  • How could you get there?

• Assessment may drive the current conversation, but ultimately we want student learning improvement to be the bottom line
QUESTIONS?

Please visit the JMU consulting booth!
References