Using Mixed Methods to Create a Culture of Assessment

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Making a Positive Contribution as a New Professional: Using a Mix Method Approach and Practical Practices to Create a Culture of Assessment within a Student Affairs Department

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Indiana University - Bloomington
Presentation Agenda

- Introduction, Welcome, & Review Learning Outcomes
- Key Terms and Overview of Literature
- Project Overview
- The Development of the Training Session
- Small Group Discussion
- Current State of the Workgroup
Learning Outcomes

As a result of participating in this program, participants will be able to:

• Design a practical application of assessment (e.g., conducting a lit review, interviewing professionals, and surveying staff members) within their own department.

• List factors that influence the success of creating a “culture of assessment.”

• Describe the use of culturally relative and culturally appropriate terminology and methods, which are inline with departmental, divisional, and institutional political climates.

• Develop creative assessment schemes, such as an analytics approach to evaluating student card swipe records.
Key Terms

- **Assessment**: "any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, divisional or agency **effectiveness** (e.g. learning outcomes, goals, etc.) (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment is:</th>
<th>Assessment is not:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both qualitative and quantitative</td>
<td>A professional performance evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An important professional competency honed over time</td>
<td>Costly or time consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done best when everyone contributes to the culture of assessment</td>
<td>The responsibility of a single person or group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Terms

- **Evaluation**: “Any **effort** to use *assessment* evidence to **improve** institutional, departmental or divisional effectiveness. (i.e. “Closing the loop”)”

- **Measurement**: “The **methods or tools** used to gather information for the purposes of assessment (e.g. interviews, surveys, etc.)”

- **Research**: “guides theory development and tests concepts in student affairs and higher education. Research has broader implications than assessment.”

Schuh & Upcraft, 2001
Best Practices in Assessments

- **Connection to Mission**
  Assessment starts with well-defined mission, values and/or outcomes
  (Heilman & Kennedy-Phillips, 2011; Schuh, 2010)
  An education on learning outcomes (Brown, 2008)

- **Leadership & Stakeholders**
  Top-down approach to creating a "culture of assessment"
  (Seagraves & Dean, 2010).
  Gathering stakeholders
  (Brown, 2008; Hoffman & Bresciani 2010, Morest, 2009)

- **Creating an Assessment Plan**
  External review and creating "best practices"
  (Shutt, Garrett, Lynch, & Dean, 2012).
  “Action to Inquiry Model” (St. John, McKinney, & Tuttle, 2006).
  Tell a story (Leimer, 2011)
Project Overview

- **Interviews:**
  - Faculty “A fork in the road”
  - Departmental Partners “Are we behind on this?”
  - Staff Members
    - “Assessment can take a lot of time”
    - “What are you going to do with the results?”

- **Surveying the Department:**
  - Demographic Information (Tenure and Position)
  - Assessment Frequency (% Important Decisions)
  - Professional Development Resources (e.g., Colleagues or Journals)
  - Assessment Resources (e.g., Focus Groups or Satisfaction Surveys)
  - Assessment Topics (Student Satisfaction, Conduct, Learning)

*How do you define the term "assessment" as it applies to the field of student affairs?*
How do you define the term "assessment" as it applies to the field of student affairs?
### What Topics Improve Decision Making

*Prompt: "Understanding more about ______ would improve my in center decision making."*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Topic</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student Learning</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students' Interactions with Diversity</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Staff Attitudes Towards Their Workloads</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Student Conduct</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Facilities Maintenance</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Budgetary Affairs</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 = Strongly Agree  
4 = Agree  
3 = Neutral  
2 = Disagree  
1 = Strongly Disagree
Familiarly of Assessment Resources

Prompt: "I have the familiarity to use __________ to inform my in-center decision making."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Resource</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. One-on-one Conversations with Students</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Staff Evaluations</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student Conduct Records</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Student Satisfaction Surveys</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Focus Groups</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Check In/Check Out Info</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Student Card Swipe Records</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Student Admissions Information (i.e., information regarding a student’s demography or academic preparation)</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI) Survey Results</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Student Meal Point Records</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Developing of the Training Sessions

Overview of Training session

- Pre-Test - wanting to model good assessment practice
- Using the Survey Data to describe the current culture of assessment - (people are more interested in assessment when they see themselves involved in the assessment)
- Introduction to unfamiliar resources: tangible takeaways for the staff
- Case Study / Reflection - Encouraged staff to actively participate and make meaning of the new information being presented
- Recommendations- made to staff and department leadership on next steps to continue building a culture of assessment ---> Lead to the creation of the workgroup
Outcomes of Training Session

Using the pre test/post test we found that ....

- Staff members suggested training in assessment could by expanded by "Giving an example of a problem/issue that was positively impacted by an assessment" and "Actually creating an assessment tool, how to create questions for focus groups/surveys, etc." or "A concrete example from start to finish."

- 16 out of 25 had a positive comment for the training, like "Excellent job--I'm excited about this."; whereas 9 out of 25 left the comment section blank.

- 8 out of the 25 staff members surveyed actually said they needed more time in our last presentation in order to make the presentation more effective in garnering motivation for participants to do assessment in their work.
Small Group Discussion

What factors would influence the success of creating a “culture of assessment” on your campus?

What are creative assessment schemes have you used or would like to develop in your own work?
Research and Assessment Workgroup

Mission:

• Create a climate of assessment for Residential Operations, while contributing to the colleagues’ understanding of assessment, evaluation, and research;

• Create general outlines, expectations, and tools for assessment for Residential Operations;

• Enhance the institution, division, and department stated mission and educational effectiveness, while prioritizing and aligning program and learning outcomes with organization goals and values;

• Identify the political and educational sensitivity of raw and partially processed data;

• Use culturally relative and culturally appropriate terminology and methods;

*Derived from CAS Standards and ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies
Research and Assessment Workgroup

Three Goals for the Year:
1. Create a report for central staff
2. Host and design three professional development trainings:
   - NSSE Presentation
   - "Brown Bag" Conversation
   - RA Evaluation Session
3. Synthesize the national tools (NSSE and EBI)

Added:
EBI Training
Position evaluation report

Items for Next Year:
Less reports, More strategic reports
More research and assessment role modeling
More training