Assessment 101: The Basics

Matthew D. Pistilli, Ph.D.
Director
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pistilli@iastate.edu
@mdpistilli
linkedin.com/in/mdpistilli
First things first…

• Building a Culture of Evidence and Assessment
• Student Affairs Assessment at ISU
• Q & A
Who gets excited when they hear the word “assessment?”
Building a Culture of Assessment
A Culture of Assessment

• More than:
  • “Doing” assessment
  • Meeting standards or expectations
  • Top-down requirements
  • Collecting data
  • Data
So what is it?

“

A culture of assessment is an organizational environment in which decisions are based on facts, research, and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders.

Lakos & Phipps, 2004
So what is assessment?

“Assessment is any effort to **gather, analyze, and interpret evidence** which describes institutional, divisional, or agency effectiveness.”

Upcraft & Schuh
*Assessment in Student Affairs*, 1996, p. 18
I NEED TO GET A HEART RATE MONITOR.

WHAT FOR?

TO MAKE SURE I'M CHEWING AT MY AEROBIC THRESHOLD! EVERY DAY I WANT TO SEE THAT I'M CHEWING MORE GUM FASTER, HARDER, AND LONGER!

WHAT'S THE POINT OF ATTACHING A NUMBER TO EVERYTHING YOU DO?

IF YOUR NUMBERS GO UP, IT MEANS YOU'RE HAVING MORE FUN.

SCIENCE TO THE SPIRITS RESCUE ONCE AGAIN.
“Assessment describes effectiveness ... and guides good practice.”

Schuh & Upcraft  
Assessment Practice in Student Affairs, 2001, p. 4, 5

For your consideration...

The word “assess” comes from the Latin verb *assidere*, meaning “to sit with.”

Palomba & Banta
Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education, 1999
But what about evaluation?

“Evaluation is the process of determining the *merit, worth, and value* of things.”
How are Evaluation and Assessment linked?

“Evaluation is any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, departmental, divisional, or institutional effectiveness.”

Upcraft & Schuh
Assessment in Student Affairs, 1996, p. 19
Effectiveness?

- Effectiveness relates to:
  - Learning outcomes
  - Cost effectiveness
  - Satisfaction
  - Needs
  - Professional standards alignment
  - Comparing outcomes with other entities

Schuh & Upcraft
*Assessment Practice in Student Affairs, 1996*
“Oh, I see what happened. Autocorrect changed ‘southpaw’ to ‘sauerkraut.’”
What is Research?

“Research guides theory development and tests concepts.”

Schuh & Upcraft
Assessment Practice in Student Affairs, 1996, p. 5
Assessment v. Research

“Assessment typically has implications for a single institution, while research typically has implications for [all of] student affairs and higher education.”

Schuh & Upcraft
Assessment Practice in Student Affairs, 1996, p. 5
Why does all this matter?
Where's the evidence?
“Student affairs professionals are educators who share responsibility with faculty, academic administrators, other staff, and students themselves for creating the conditions under which students are likely to expend time and energy in educationally-purposeful activities.”

ACPA, The Student Learning Imperative, 1996
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ACPA, The Student Learning Imperative, 1996
My take

• Built into processes, not bolted on to them
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• Curiosity-driven
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• Goal of enhancement and growth
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- Remove barriers
The Assessment Process and Cycle
Assessment is NOT an extra task. It is a way of being.
If you prefer...

[Image: This is the way...]

THIS IS THE WAY
The Assessment Cycle

Mission, Vision & Values at Core of the Assessment Cycle

Alignment with ISU, SVPSA, Department and Functional Area missions is key
The Assessment Cycle

1. (Re)Define Objectives & Outcomes
2. Demonstrate Alignment with Mission/Vision/Values
3. Plan
   - Determining Methodology and Metrics
   - Collect and Analyze Data
   - Evaluate Outcomes & Fidelity
   - Retool/Refine/Reimagine
   - Report and Strategize
4. Implement
5. Mission, Vision & Values
The Assessment Cycle

Mission, Vision & Values

Plan

Determine Methods and Metrics

Implement

Collect and Analyze Data

Evaluate Outcomes & Fidelity

Report and Strategize

Retool/Refine/Reimagine

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Report and Strategize

Retool/Refine/Reimagine

Share what was learned with stakeholders

Develop ways to bridge gaps between desired and realized outcomes
The Assessment Process
Assessment Measures

• Attendance: measures who’s there.
• Needs assessment: Identifies what those who are (or could be) there need and/or want.
• Satisfaction: Tells us what those who were there did/didn’t like.
• Learning outcomes: Identifies and demonstrates what those in attendance will learn, develop, or be able to do after attending and participating.
• Fidelity: Indicates how well what was delivered aligns with what was intended
Methods of Assessment

• Indirect Assessment
• Direct Assessment
Indirect Assessment

• Gathers information about learning based on personal reflection
• Individual inklings
• What students *think* they know or can do
Indirect Assessment Example

Please rate your level of agreement with the following:

I know where to go to get information about sexual health.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Indirect Measures

- Evaluations
- Satisfaction surveys
- Feedback
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Post-assessments without a corresponding pre-test
- Reflections that don’t discuss what was learned (e.g., how did you feel when...)
Direct Assessment

- Gathers data based on observation
- Students display or demonstrate what they know or can do
Direct Assessment Example

Where on campus would you go, or with whom would you consult, to get information about sexual health?
Direct Measures

- Pre/Post-test
- Direct Observation
- Video Observation
- Completion Accuracy
- Reflection Papers
- Performance Observation
- Demonstrations
- Interviews
- Competitions
- Table Top Exercises

- Juried Evaluators
- Portfolios
- Projects
- Capstones
- Goal Completion
- Training Others
- Essays
- Work Groups
- Focus Groups
Formative vs. Summative Assessment
I'm gonna need more specific feedback on my formative assessments.
I taught Stripe how to whistle.

I don't hear him whistling.

I said I taught him. I didn't say he learned it.
Formative vs. Summative Feedback

• Formative is collected along the way
• Summative is collected at the end
Recap

• Why we do assessment
• Assessment cycle
• Assessment measures
• Direct/Indirect assessment
• Formative/Summative assessment
If you remember nothing else...
“Good assessment leads to collective reflection and action.”

Allen, M. J.  
Assessing academic programs in higher education, 2004, p. 11
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