CHOOSING AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT METHOD

THE STUDENT AFFAIRS ASSESSMENT COUNCIL
AUGUST 12, 2015
AGENDA

• Welcome
• Importance of choosing an appropriate assessment method
• Quantitative assessment methods
• Qualitative assessment methods
• Assessment planning
• Question & Answer
• Group/Individual work time
THE ASSESSMENT METHOD YOU CHOOSE WILL AFFECT YOUR RESULTS.

THE GOOD NEWS: IT TAKES TIME TO GET THIS RIGHT. REFLECTION AND PROCESSING IS CRITICAL TO ASSESSMENT SUCCESS. DON’T BE AFRAID TO CHANGE YOUR METHOD.

ASSESSMENT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS.
THINGS TO CONSIDER

• Questions
  • What type of assessment are you conducting?
  • If you are assessing learning, do you need direct or indirect evidence of learning?
  • What are the advantages & challenges of specific methods?

• Thoughts & Advice
  • Keep it simple!
  • Using the planning document
  • Get feedback from colleagues
  • Ask if data already exists
  • Look for potential to collaborate
  • Use inclusive language
DIRECT VS. INDIRECT METHODS

• Direct: data which requires students to display their knowledge, behavior, thought process
  • Example: Where on campus would you go, or who would you consult with if you had questions about which courses to register for the fall?
  • Quiz, rubric, document analysis, observation, portfolio, case study, visual methods

• Indirect: data which asks students to reflect upon their knowledge, behaviors, or thought process
  • Example: I know where to go on campus if I have questions about which courses to register for the fall (Strongly agree, moderately agree, neither agree or disagree, moderately disagree, strongly disagree).
  • Survey, focus group, document analysis
QUANTITATIVE, QUALITATIVE or BOTH

• **Quantitative:**
  - simple facts/figures
  - who, what, where, when
  - matches outcomes with knowledge/comprehension
  - Examples: survey, existing data, tracking system, observation, document analysis

• **Qualitative:**
  - Data with more depth/description
  - Why and/or how
  - Matches outcomes about application, analysis, evaluation
  - Examples: focus group/interview, portfolio, rubric, observation, case study

• **Both:** need a combination of the above to make strongest case
QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Tracking Systems
Institutional Data
National Data
Surveys
TRACKING SYSTEMS

• Allows users to track various data points and store data in a systematic way

• May include pre-packaged software, but can be adapted for traditional paper/pencil tracking

• Key is to maintain data in one place for easy analysis

• Some existing systems at UC: Campus Link, Tutor Trac, Register Blast, Starfish

• Common examples: Usage data (visits, contact hours)
INSTITUTIONAL DATA

• The University of Cincinnati already collects a LOT of data about our students.

• Existing institutional data is a great way to provide context or add depth to your assessment.
  • Provide additional relevant data about participants
  • Identify comparison group data (non-participants)

• UC Institutional Data resources: UniverSIS, BI-Query, Financier, Institutional Research
NATIONAL DATA

- National organizations collect larger data sets to address various questions of interest.
  - Commonly derived from large, national surveys

- Data may provide valuable benchmarking information

- Examples: NSSE, SSI, Campus Pride Index, ACHA-NCHA, PEQIS
SURVEYS

• Surveys can have quantitative or qualitative items, or both

• Quantitative: Closed-ended questions with responses that can be turned into numbers
  • Likert-scale responses are a common example

• Responses are numerically coded and then analyzed
  • Average response value
  • Percentage of specific responses
  • Pre/Post comparisons
CREATING A DATA POINT:
COACHING AND MANDATED STUDENTS
ACADEMIC COACHING

- Program Serving Mandated and Self-Referring Students
- **Ultimate Goal:** To Increase Graduation Rates among at-risk students
- **Interim Measures:** GPA, Retention, Student Confidence
IMAGINE YOUR BEST CASE

What is my program goal?

• Is this impact realistic?
• Is the outcome easily measurable?
  • Or, more nebulous (leadership or problem solving skills)?
• How long will it take to obtain that data?

“Stats” are often a good measure for:

• Larger numbers (at least >7 students)
• Easily quantifiable outcomes (GPA, Likert responses)
• Monetary requests/reports
# QUESTIONS TO ASK

## What info do I need to know?

- Do I already have this info (ex: survey responses)?
- Can I or someone in my office obtain this info (Universis, Campus Link, BI Query, etc.)?
- Will this require outside resources (IR, Provostal Researchers, etc.)?
- What is the timeline associated with each data source?

## Different Data Sources

- Retention and Graduation
  - IR
- DFW Rates
  - IR or BI Query
- GPA
  - BI Query; some third-party campus platforms
- Student Opinions/Confidence
  - Internal Surveys
CONSIDER THE SKEPTIC

If someone was a skeptic about your program, what kind of questions would they ask?

• Do you have a control/comparison group?
• How quickly will you need to support the program?
• Is there an interim measure I can use?
• How is this different than other programs?
• Is the data simple to gather/understand?
• Is it the most accurate portrayal?
• Are their ‘quirks’ I need to explain?
DATA ADVANTAGES

Each choice will have advantages and disadvantages:

- IR data will be the most reliable and credible, but it will take longer and need to be highly organized.
- Larger numbers of students will often make data sets most compelling, but will also take longer to organize.
- Some results will take years to see (graduation rates), but could be represented with an interim measure (GPA improvement or comparison).
- This is not research; some comparisons will be more loose.
- Data is never perfect.
QUALITATIVE METHODS

Surveys
Focus group
Interview
Portfolio
Rubric
Observation
Case study
FOCUS GROUPS/INTERVIEWS

• Open-ended questions meant to serve as discussion

• Helps understand perceptions, beliefs, thoughts

• Typically small in nature

• Analysis takes time

• Important to use technology to help (tape/video record)
PORTFOLIOS

• Collection of work over time

• Reflective

• Multidimensional

• Planning needed

• Need system of collecting portfolios (electronic, hard copy, etc.)

• Training needed for evaluators
RUBRIC

- Think of a scorecard
- Scale, key dimensions or competencies
- Very clear
- Provides consistency
- Useful tool to set expectations
- Raters need to be trained
OBSERVATION

• Watching people/places to collect data

• Does not require participant engagement

• Often used in concert with survey or focus group

• Should learn how to effectively observe
CASE STUDY

• In-depth, descriptive review of an individual, culture, organization, event/incident

• Tells a story

• Time consuming
QUALITATIVE EXAMPLE
BRANDY TURNBOW
WOMEN’S CENTER

WILL (Women in Leadership and Learning):
Reflection utilizing Portfolio Process

WILL Program Overview
• Multi-year learning community comprised of academic and co-curricular experiences.
• Weekly meetings throughout the year
• Social Change Model of Leadership
• Development of inclusive & feminist leadership, Clarification of personal values, Conflict negotiation, and WILL planning/evaluation.
• Website info www.uc.edu/ucwc/we/WILL
### Strategic Priority: Holistic Development of UC Students

#### Name of Program/Service: Women in Leadership and Learning—WILL

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| Students will appraise their own individual strengths & weaknesses in the context of multi-disciplinary collaborations | (L): I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a leader  
(A): I evaluate my leadership practice.  
(C): WILL participants create a community of active reflection on leadership. | **Developing.** |
**Strategic Priority: Holistic Development of UC Students**

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<td><strong>Student will collaborate with others across difference to create change.</strong></td>
<td>(L): I am aware of my own value system. (A): I have worked with others whose value systems challenge my own to accomplish a shared goal. (C): WILL participants create a community in which diverse thinking is respected and valued.</td>
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Example of Portfolio Prompt: *Strengths and Weaknesses*

- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? Have your strengths/weaknesses changed throughout your time in WILL?
- How do you identify your strengths?
- How can/do you use your strengths to contribute to group processes? How can/do you use your strengths to improve as a (feminist) leader? How can/do you use your strengths to counterbalance your weaknesses?
Ex. Appraisal of Strengths & Weaknesses

“The fabric for the base of this quilt hex was cut out of a WILL t-shirt. The color of the fabric is indicative of the classroom WILL has been meeting in this semester…The colored strips of fabric are an articulation of my experience of how powerful it is to sit in our circle, despite the frustratingly impersonal nature of the room.”
(Shared during 1:1 and with group)

“Ask for what you need,” is the advice I’ve been trying to give myself ever since. One of my unhealthy instincts is that I will try to absorb ‘conflict’ into myself rather than address it with other people, so this is important advice for me, in my community, in my classes and at my work and inside myself. I need to ask myself for what I need just as much as I need to ask anyone else for what I need.”

We are all, us WILLfolk, vibrant people with amazing stories to tell and it is a privilege to converse with you on Monday nights.

When I think of our circular conversation, I imagine brightly colored threads connecting me to each of you.
QUALITATIVE EXAMPLE
BRANDY TURNBOW
WOMEN’S CENTER

Ex. Clarification of Personal Values

“WILL is challenging at times but for the most part I feel my personal values are not challenged in WILL.”

“Prior to WILL I had never heard of controversy with civility. But now it is something that I attempt to bring to all the communities I am involved in. Having harmony as one of my core values makes controversy something that I naturally try to avoid. I prefer thoughtful explanations and being provided time to consider both sides to the story. I feel that controversy with civility provides space for those needs to be met.”

Five of my core values are: Harmony, Personal Growth, Reliability, Community Connections, and Knowledge.
QUESTIONS?
GROUP & INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

ASSESSMENT COUNCIL MEMBERS AVAILABLE TO HELP!