Assessment 101: The Basics

Assessment Workshops
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Session Outcomes

- Understand what “assessment” means and why we are doing it.
- Define two characteristics of assessment.
- Distinguish among the four types of data variables.
- Explain at least two statistical terms in concise and accurate language.
- Identify three elements of a comprehensive assessment model.
Focused Listing Exercise

What does the term “assessment” mean to you?
- What synonyms come to mind when you hear the term “assessment”?
Assessment definition

- . . . the **systematic** collection, review, and use of information about programs/services undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. (adapted from Palomba & Banta, 1999)
Definitions of Assessment
Schuh & Upcraft (2001)

- Assessment is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret **evidence** which describes institutional, divisional, (program,) or agency effectiveness.

- It includes...
  - assessment of student learning outcomes
  - assessment of cost effectiveness
  - assessment of “client” satisfaction
  - assessment of compliance with professional standards
  - assessment of comparisons to other institutions

- It is *not* restricted to assessment of students, but includes assessment of faculty, staff, administrators, parents, employers, graduates ....
Definitions of Assessment
(AAHE, 1995)

- Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning.
- It involves...
  - making expectations RE learning explicit and public;
  - setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality;
  - systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and
  - using the results to document, explain, and improve learning and performance.
### Characteristics of Assessment

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<thead>
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<th>Systematic</th>
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<td>Data-driven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied to practice</td>
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<td>Continuous</td>
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Limitations

True Impact

Outside influence

Time & Resource
Components of Assessment

- What you want to know
- Who/what do you want to know about
- How to measure what you need to know
What you want to know

- Needs
- Satisfaction
- Program and/or Learning Outcomes
Who/what do you want to know about?

- **Population**
  - Examples?

- **Sample**
  - Examples?
How to measure what you need

- Operationalize variables
- Determine method
- Develop instrument
- Analyze data
Developing instruments

STEM + RESPONSE = DATA
DATA

Data types (NOIR)

- Nominal (Male/Female)
- Ordinal (Likert Scale)
- Interval (Dates)
- Ratio (Length of Service, Age)
Tips

- Order (logical, flow, easy first, less important last, intersperse open-ended)
- Do not use "emotional language" or leading questions.
- Avoid negatives - especially double negatives.
- Consider ahead of time how to handle missing data.
- Minimum number of open-ended questions.
- Avoid asking more than one question at a time ("double barreled" question).
- Clear questions: reflect what you are asking and how you want answered.
Data Analysis

- **Descriptives:**
  - Mean, Median, Mode,
  - Percentages
  - “Top Two” and “Bottom Two”

- **Tests of significance**
  - P-values

- **Correlation:**
  - Correlation does not imply causation
  - Strength of relationship
Example

- What topic are you interested in?
- What would you like to know about your topic? (Questions)
- How can you answer your questions? (Variables, Method, Data)
- What did your data tell you? (analysis)
- How does that inform practice? (implications)
- What is the next question? (feedback loop)
A Comprehensive Model of Assessment Includes...

- Tracking
- Climate
- Standards
- Needs
- Benchmarking
- Learning and Program Outcomes
- Satisfaction
- Effectiveness
Divisional Assessment Model

Learning and Program Goals

Outcome Statements

Departmental Programs and Services

Assessment Plan

Assessment

Interpret & Evaluate

Decision-Making

Reporting

Unit Goals
Questions or Comments?