Closing the Loop on Assessment

You've gathered and analyzed your data, now what? Communicating and using assessment results from across the department is a critical aspect of the assessment cycle. However, "closing the loop" often gets pushed aside as assessors are pressed for time or uncertain about the most valuable way to share results. In this session, you will explore strategies for communicating results to various audiences, overcoming barriers to using the results to improve resource and service delivery to students, and collaborating with stakeholders to build capacity around evidence-based decision-making. This session will provide concrete examples of how to effectively synthesize and use results with a variety of audiences to inform decision-making and inspire change. It will also address how to utilize the assessment reports from Planning & Self Study to increase resource allocation and implement campus change.

Britt Rhymes, M.S. Office of Institutional Research & Assessment

Where we are in the Assessment Cycle

Plan

Implement

Measure

Collect and Analyze

Report and Strategize

Improve

Communicating Assessment Results

- How can assessment results be communicated in a way that is clear, concise, compelling, and *useful*?

- If assessment results are positive, how should they be disseminated and used?

- If assessment results are negative, how should they be disseminated and used?

- Once a programmatic change has been made based on assessment results, how do we know if this change was an *improvement*?
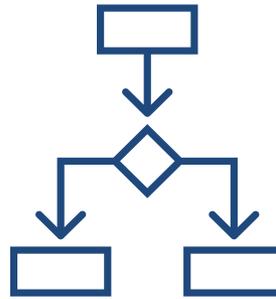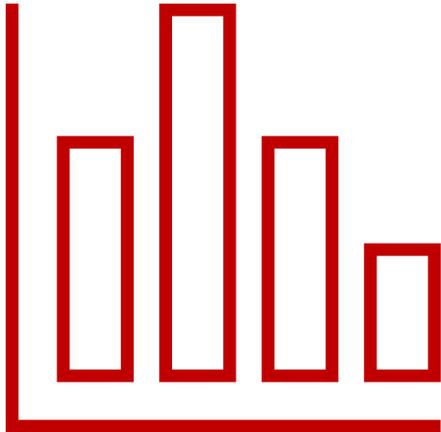
Strategies for Communicating Results to Various Audiences

- Identify the audiences and decisions that your evidence will inform
- Different people need different information to inform different decisions
- Share a story with a clear point
- Focus on sharing what's most important with your most important audiences
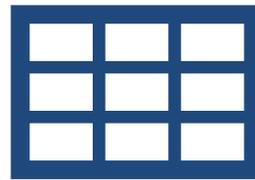- view sharing evidence as a teaching slash learning process

ACTIVITY:

Imagine that the writing skills of students completing the first-year writing course at your college have been assessed using the ABC Writing Test. The results have come back and they're very disappointing; on average, students score well below the national mean on every characteristic of effective writing assessed by the test. Discuss how you might constructively communicate this information to the faculty who teach first-year writing. You have been asked to prepare a short summary of survey results for Rodney College's leadership team and board of trustees.
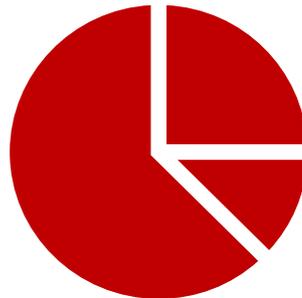
- What are the main points that you would want them to understand about the evidence from this assessment?

- Develop a summary (table, graph, slide, and/or text) that conveys those main points clearly, succinctly, and understandably.

- You have also been asked to prepare a short summary of the same survey results for Rodney College's faculty. What are the main points you would want them to understand?

- How do those points differ, if at all, from the points you want to make to the leadership team and board?

Create Great Visuals and Reports

Reporting Example:
GSES Dashboard
GSES Executive Summary

Using Results to Improve Resource and Service Delivery to Students

Using student learning evidence to recognize and celebrate successes

use student learning evidence to give students the best possible education

rethink curriculum

breathing pedagogy

rethink learning goals

rethink support systems and Co curriculum

use student learning evidence to ensure stewardship

informing resource allocation decisions

informing program reviews

informing performance evaluations

Change ≠ USE

How to Avoid this:

- Use student learning evidence for broad impact

- use student learning evidence fairly, ethically, and responsibly

Examples of broad impact

- After assessing student learning in its writing-intensive, capstone, and service-learning courses, Daemen College hired a writing coordinator and writing-in-the-disciplines specialist, added an information literacy component to its first-year writing course, increased the proportion of first-year writing courses taught by full-time faculty from 35 percent to 90 percent, and offered workshops for faculty teaching writing-intensive courses (Morace & Hibschweiler, n.d.).
- After results of the National Survey of Student Engagement and other assessments suggested the need to improve students' digital literacy, Carlow University implemented an extensive faculty training program (Indiana University School of Education, Center for Postsecondary Research, n.d.).
- After assessing students' writing skills, Juniata College held workshops for faculty on teaching and assessing writing and established new goals and standards for its writing-across-the-curriculum initiative (Jankowski, 2011).
- After assessing first-year students' writing and finding disappointing outcomes for critical thinking and information competence, Norco College appointed course mentors to improve the consistency of teaching the first-year writing course, wrote a handbook for faculty teaching the course, and provided models for assignments that address these two skills (Flick, 2014).
- After assessing first-year students' writing skills, faculty at Stockton University revised its core learning outcomes for writing and initiated new teaching methods to support the new learning outcomes (Isabella & McGovern, in press).
- Disappointing evidence of student writing skills led Stetson University to implement writing-enhanced courses throughout the curriculum, help faculty develop teaching methods to support effective writing, and implement new assessments giving students feedback on the quality of their writing (O'Neill, Slater, & Sapp, in press).

ACTIVITY:

- One of the goals of the International Business program is for students to be able to "write clearly and effectively." Although International Business majors are asked to write term papers in at least four courses, their writing quality is nonetheless generally still inadequate by the time they're seniors. Faculty are quick to point to the woefully poor writing skills of entering first-year students and equally quick to blame the English department for not bringing writing skills up to par in first-year writing classes.

- Brainstorm what might be done to improve students' writing skills by the time they graduate.
  - Are the academic programs at your college now required to undergo periodic program reviews?
  - What are the guidelines for those reviews?
  - Is evidence of student learning included in the review? How?

Your program assessment planning should include the following:

- What means of assessment will you employ?
- Who will you assess? Consider the course, class sections, activity, workshop, term, etc.
- How do you expect your students to fare? Establish a minimum value for success and
- indicate the number (e.g. percentage, fraction, actual number) of students who you expect to meet the minimum value.
- How will you collect the evidence?
- When will you collect your evidence?
- Who will be responsible for the administration of the assessment?
- Who will be responsible for the evaluation of the data collected?
- If you have conducted assessment in the past, do you have any previous data to use as a marker for comparison?
- How do you plan to use the results?

Reminders:

- As staff and department chairs change please keep us in mind and let us know ASAP

- Pass previous assessment information to your successor

Meet with me!

- Lets review your plans and change outcomes.
- New department? Don't see your plan!? Let me know!
- Need consultation or guidance on in-house assessment initiatives? Let's chat!

[Book time with Spears, Britt](#)

Announcements & Resources

Website: **ira.howard.edu**

Email: **assessment@howard.edu**

Spring 2023 Workshops:

- STORYTELLING AND DATA VISUALIZATION - FEBRUARY 22, 2023 12 PM ET

- PROACTIVE ASSESSMENT PLANNING - MARCH 30, 2023 12 PM ET

- COLLABORATING IN ASESSMENT - APRIL, 12, 2023 12 PM ET

Planning & Self-Study 101 Course: A Primer:

- https://academy.watermarkinsights.com/planning-self-study-onboarding-course