

# What is assessment?

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# Agenda

- What is assessment?
- An assessment quote
- Good assessment
- Types of assessment
- Types of Outcomes
- Methods
- Ethics
- Working with Data
- Sharing knowledge & closing the loop

# Teaching versus Learning



# What is assessment?

- “Assessment involves the use of empirical data on student learning to refine programs and improve student learning” (Allen, 2004).
- “The evaluation or estimation of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something.” (google.com)
- “Assessment is the formal or informal process of observing and assigning value or worth to an event or activity” (Keeling et al., 2008).

# What is assessment?

- “Any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisioned, or agency effectiveness” (Keeling et al., 2008).
- Assessment is “collecting evidence of (1) student performance on specified measures of development, (2) program strengths and weaknesses, and (3) institutional effectiveness” (Banta, 1988, p. 1).

# Consider

- What does Eastern want to send their students away with?
  - Personal Growth & Development
  - Academics
  - Citizenship
- Where do EIU students learn?
  - Extra-circular
  - Presentations
  - Classroom

What does Eastern want their students to get out of the EIU experience... then where do EIU students learn? It's important then, to make sure that the programs we put on for students are effective \*use assessment\*

# Why we need assessment

- “Assessment is a mindset, not just an activity. Student affairs professionals committed to their roles as adviser, helper, counselor, responder, and advocate should also be dedicated to using assessment as a framework for practice. It’s about wanting answers to questions and about using evidence to help students make good decisions. If we are to be intentional about serving students we must adopt an evidence-based approach to determine best practices. Assessment can help us to do this!”
  - *Dan Bureau, Director of Student Affairs Learning & Assessment, University of Memphis (TN)*

# good assessment



- Good assessment:
  - Is used
  - Is cost-effective
  - Yields reasonably accurate and truthful results
  - Is valued
  - Focuses on and flows from clear and important goals
- Why do your programs and services exist?

Used: planned with a purpose, focused on goals, and the results are used by multiple individuals

cost-effective: Realistic, given the financial technological, and human resources that need to be involved

Results: Developed thoughtfully with a clear goal and purpose

Valued: results inform important decisions and are part of an institutional culture that values asking questions and using information to make decisions

Why do ... ? – Once you know this, you'll know what to assess, as this is the impact you hope to make

# Types of assessment

- Based on our purpose, what type of assessment should we use?
  - Tracking Usage
  - Needs Assessment
  - Program Effectiveness
  - Environmental Assessment
  - Learning Assessment
  - Benchmarking
  - Cost-effectiveness
  - Program Review



Tracking usage: track participation in programs or services

Needs Assessment: Gathering information about student needs related to a particular program, office, or population

Program Effectiveness: level of satisfaction, involvement, effectiveness, helpfulness, etc.

Environmental Assessment: Used to assess the behaviors/attitudes on campus

Learning: Used to determine how a participant will think, feel, or act differently as a result of your program/course/service

Benchmarking: Comparing a program/service against a comparison group or standard

Cost-effectiveness: how does a program or service offered compare with the cost?

Program review: A comprehensive review of a department that typically involves the writing of an in-depth self-study and an external review process.

# Outcomes

- Based on the purpose of your assessment, do you need to write a learning or an operational outcome?
  - A learning outcome
    - Ex: Through participation in a rubber lovers presentation, students will be able to demonstrate the 18 steps they need to perform in order to safely and correctly use a condom.
  - An operational or program outcome
    - Ex: Through transferring our assessment paperwork to iPads, the Health Education Resource Center will be able to save staff time and money spent on paper and supplies.

Learning – describes how students will think, know, do, or feel differently because of a learning experience.

Operational/program – describes how a program/services/system/office will change as a result of a planned course of action

# Methods

- Difference between traditional research and assessment:
  - Assessment guides good practice, research guides theory and conceptual frameworks.
  - Assessment typically has implications for a single institution, while research typically has broader implications for student affairs and higher education.
  - Research adds to the “generalizable” knowledge



# Types of Methods

- Existing Data
- Survey
- Rubric
- Focus Groups or Interviews
- Portfolio
- Observation
- Document Analysis
- Classroom Assessment Techniques
- Visual Methods
- Case Study

**Existing Data:** Any data that has already been collected, usually from previous assessments, student information systems, office systems, card swiping or other tracking systems.

**Survey:** A set of open and closed-ended questions in a questionnaire type format, a survey is a self-report of anything, including opinion actions and observation

**Rubric:** A scorecard used to rate student learning either through observation or artifacts. Includes a scale, key dimensions, and descriptions of each dimension on the scale

**Focus Groups or Interviews:** The process of asking face-to-face open-ended questions in a group or one-on-one setting. Questions are meant to be a discussion

**Portfolio:** A collection of artifacts or work that provide evidence of student learning or program improvement

**Observation:** A systematic method of collecting data through unobtrusive visual means, (e.g., watching people or places) in order to collect information

**Document Analysis:** A form of qualitative research, sometimes referred to as content analysis, in which documents are used to give voice, interpretation and meaning. Any document can be used, common documents may be: application materials, duty logs, reflection papers, student newspapers, or publications, marketing materials, meeting minutes, strategic planning documents, etc.

**Classroom Assessment Techniques:** A form of short formative evaluations used by facilitators to monitor student learning before, during, and between workshops, learning experiences, exams or assignments and to then adapt instructional strategies to better meet student needs.

**Visual Methods:** Captures images as a main form of data collection, usually also includes captions or a journal to accompany images. Most often used for photo journals, video projects, and visual art projects.

**Case study:** A form of qualitative descriptive research, the case study looks intensely at an individual, culture, organization, or event/incident.

# Which Methods can I use?

- Existing Data
  - All but learning assessment
- Survey
  - Needs assessment, Program effectiveness, Environmental, culture or climate assessment, Benchmarking, Program review, and Learning assessment
- Rubric
  - Environmental, culture, or climate assessment, Benchmarking, and Learning assessment
- Focus Groups or Interviews
  - Needs assessment, Program effectiveness, Environmental, culture, or climate assessment, Program review, and Learning assessment
- Portfolio
  - Learning assessment

## Which Methods can I use? – Cont'd

- Observation
  - Program effectiveness and Environmental, culture, or climate assessment
- Document Analysis
  - Cost effectiveness, Environmental, culture, or climate assessment, and Program review
- Classroom Assessment Techniques
  - Learning assessment
- Visual Methods
  - Needs assessment
- Case Study
  - Environmental, culture, or climate assessment and Program review

# Methods Continued

- Formative vs. Summative
  - Formative: intend to use the data immediately while the program is taking place to make changes as the experience progresses
  - Summative: intend to use the data in the future, or summarize the entire experience

# Methods continued

- Effective tools:
  - Provide useful information
  - Are focused, simple, and cost effective
  - Give us reasonably accurate, truthful information
  - Are systematic, transparent, and consistent
  - Are fair and ethical
  - Are qualitative as well as quantitative

# 10 tips for ethical assessment practice

- Free choice to take assessment
- Protect anonymity and confidentiality
- Create a safe environment
- Keep promises
- Provide appropriate incentives
- Be true to the data
- Protect access to raw data
- Share data results
- Credit contributors and authors
- Go through IRB approval when necessary

## Analyze, Interpret, & report qualitative data

- Choose your data analysis technique
  - Coding
    - Reviewing data and drawing common themes or categories from it.
  - Rubrics
    - Rubrics provide a lens or framework from which to view the data.
  - Raw Data
    - Presented as is, with no attempts at summarizing.
- Report data
  - Narrative format
  - Number format

Coding is a good tool to use if you're unsure of what you'll find, or don't have a specific framework already in place

Raw data should only be used when the people you are presenting the data to are close to the project, and there is a very small amount of data collected.

Narrative: narratives tell stories, narratives present each theme or code in paragraph form, usually with some explanation or interpretation by the author.

Number: Counts, scales on rubrics. Use caution when presenting coded qualitative data in number format, you should still look for a way to present the voice of the respondents.

# Analyze, Interpret, & report quantitative data

- Organizing Data
  - Counting Method
    - Software or online survey
- Crunching Numbers
- Review data
  - What about “bad” response rates?
- Determine How to Present Data
  - Counts, Percentages, Averages, etc.
- Report Data
  - Graphics, Charts, Tables, Summaries, etc.

Bad response – doesn't meet national average of 20% (as of 2013), doesn't fall within the 95% confidence and 0-6% error levels, demographics don't line up --- need to note that the results don't represent the ideas of everyone. “responses indicate” instead of “students at EIU think..” also include demographic information in the response

# Share the knowledge

- Assessment Newsletter
- Websites
- Oral Presentations
- Dashboards
- Social Media
- Flyers



# Closing the loop

- Continue conversation
- Educate others
  - Workshops, forums, book clubs, webinars, presentations, etc.
- Clarify assessment
- Collaborate with others



Clarify – Common definition, include in job postings the position includes assessment  
Collaboration – don't do it in a vacuum, work with other departments!

## Works Cited

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