Introduction to Assessment:
An Approach to Work in the Co-curricular

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Learning objectives:

As a result of today's workshop, participants will be able to:
- Define assessment
- Discuss why assessment is important
- Locate resources to help build assessment knowledge
- Summarize the components of assessment
- Differentiate between the common types of assessment
- Apply assessment to your own work

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Question:

When you hear the word assessment, what comes to mind?

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What is assessment?

"Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations 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 resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance."

Dr. Tom Angelo, Reassessing (and Defining) Assessment. The AAHE Bulletin, 48(2), November 1995, pp.7-9.

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What is assessment? (cont.):

- **Formative:** Are participants receiving programs and services as they are intended?
- **Summative:** Are participants learning what you intend for them to learn?

Assessment is a process where, using explicit goals, we measure learning and capture experiences in a systematic, transparent way, to support continuous improvement efforts.

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Examples of assessment activities in higher education:

- Program evaluation
- External reviews
- Assessment plans
- Education and training
- Strategic planning
- Program improvement

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What is assessment, *really*?

- **Explicit:** Clearly communicate what kind of impact we want to have.
- **Focused and specific:** Why and how are our programs and initiatives valuable and needed?
- **Embedded:** It should be a part of our practice. We should engage the questions how, where, and why we are successful, and how, where, and why we are not?
- **Provides insight:** What improvements can be made?

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Components of the assessment approach:

- Goals: Statements that capture how high-quality work will be measured.
- Outcomes: Smaller statements that operationalize the goals.
- Activities: Opportunities and experiences that enable specific learning and support outcomes.
- Assessment: Activities that help us determine if the desired outcomes were achieved.
- Review: How to improve.

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Learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes are smaller (in scope) statements that operationalize the goals.

- How should [students] be changed as a result of interacting with you, your office, programs, or services?
- Can the learning be measured?
- As a result of [*learning opportunity*], students will be able to [*action verb*].

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Learning outcomes (cont.):

- Language matters, choose strong verbs.
- Bloom's Taxonomy: measurable verbs.

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WORDS TO AVOID

- Believe
- Hear
- Realize
- Capacity
- Intelligence
- Recognize
- Comprehend
- Know
- See
- Conceptualize
- Listen
- Self-Actualize
- Memorize
- Think
- Experience
- Perceive
- Understand
- Feel

PHRASES TO AVOID

Evidence a (n): To Become: To Reduce:

- Appreciation for
- Acquainted with
- Adjusted to
- Awareness of
- Capable of
- Comprehension of   .
- Cognizant of
- Enjoyment of
- Conscious of
- Familiar with
- Interest in
- Interested in   .
- Knowledge of
- Knowledgeable about   .
- Understanding of

Culture of assessment:

- **Clarity of mission**: Explicit about what we do and why (goals and outcomes)
- Consistent and myriad **opportunities for learning**: The methods and ways we facilitate and teach
- **Measurement**: The rigorous ways we evaluate the impact of our work
- **Use**: Applying what we learn from measurements to support and improve our work, and review the clarity of our mission

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Aligning goals and outcomes, an example:

Social Responsibility: Students will implement the concept of local and global interdependence and demonstrate concern for others.

Possible outcomes:

- As a result of participating in Civic Team, students will be able to articulate their own understanding of interdependence. (free write)
- As a result of the *Social Action* campaign, in a year's time, students will increase the time they spend on community service by 25 percent. (journal or log)
- As a result of studying away, students will be able to synthesize concepts of global human rights. (final paper)

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Direct assessment:

Measures progress and learning (pre and post-tests, Capstone Project, performance evaluation)

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In-direct assessment:

Indirect assessment: Attitudes and observations (focus groups, surveys, testimonials)

Common types of assessment:

For new programs, constituencies, emerging issues:
- Needs assessment – measures the gap

Baseline, routine assessment:
- Usage, tracking
- Satisfaction

For investigating impact, program success:
- Learning outcomes (skills, knowledge, behaviors)

Institutional context:
- Disparate impact
- Climate and culture investigations

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Common types of assessment (cont.):

Needs assessment:

- How do the experiences of a particular population align with existing research addressing this population?
- Are the needs of a particular population being met by accepted practice in the field?

Assessment as process:

"In terms of assessing student learning, the field has been largely quiet when it comes to issues of equity. Assessment, if not done with equity in mind, privileges and validates certain types of learning and evidence of learning over others, can hinder the validation of multiple means of demonstration, and can reinforce within students the false notion that they do not belong in higher education."

(Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017)

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Tips for EOPC proposal:

Need: What is the need? How do you know this is a need (research, previous assessments)?

Build goals: Do the goals answer the need? Do the goals align with the unit or institution's strategic plan?

Create learning outcomes: What should participants get out of the initiative?

Assess: How will you measure success?

Timeline: When will the major milestones of your program or initiative take place?

Review: If applying for a renewal, give an overview of what was learned: challenges, success, and improvements to be made.

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Additional resources:

Please visit our [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources](#) SharePoint for more information on equity-minded assessment.

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Want to continue the conversation?

Please contact me via email:

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