

Assessment in Student Affairs



Kimberly Yousey-Elsener, PhD.
Kim.yousey@gmail.com

Research vs. Assessment

Research

- Contributes to a larger body of knowledge
- Is linear (if this, then that)
- Research conducted =>
Results reported =>
Policy Created =>
Change Occurs

Assessment

- Meant to give feedback/effect practice and policy
- Practitioners draw on many sources for information and then construct knowledge that they put into action
- Practitioners view of change process:

Plan	←	Reflect
↓		↑
Act	→	Observe
- Practitioners make sense through: experience, assumptions and personal senses

Assessment vs. Formal Research

Assessment

- Conducted by practitioners in the field or IR professionals
- Results in improving/changing practice or effects policy
- Involved in day-to-day here and now
- Grounded in sense making
- Not meant to be generalizable
- **“Loose” methodology ok**
- Conducted in work environment
- Context driven

Formal Research

- Conducted by researchers and practitioners
- Results in adding to a body of knowledge
- Long-range, less action oriented
- Generalizable
- Formalized Methodology needed
- Conducted in formal settings
- Narrowly focused

Why assessment in student affairs?



- Accountability movement in higher education (national)
- Accreditation more focused on student learning
- Student Affairs focus on student learning (Student Learning Imperative, Learning Reconsidered, etc.)
- **“Tough Times Call for Good Measures”**
- **Professionals and programs learn and grow
- Proof or Perish

Challenges and Strengths



- Traditional skill sets
 - Complex learning
 - Direct vs. indirect measures
 - Different standards for academic/student affairs
 - Diverse components of student affairs
- More education at masters and doc levels
 - National conversations through conferences and publications
 - Time and talent being recruited
 - Fluid and flexible
 - Clear idea of what you need to know

ACPA - ASK Standards



- #1: Assessment Design
- #2: Articulating Learning Outcomes
- #3: Selection of Data Collection and Management Methods
- #4: Assessment Instruments
- #5: Surveys
- #6: Interviews and Focus Groups
- #7: Analysis
- #8: Benchmarking
- #9: Program Review and Evaluation
- #10: Assessment Ethics
- #11: Reporting and Using Results
- #12: Politics
- #13: Assessment Education

NASPA – Assessment Framework



- 18 “courses” or topic areas that cover every aspect of assessment
- Overlap with ASK *plus...*
 - Beginning Concepts
 - Cultivating a culture of assessment
 - Methods other than survey, FG and interviews
 - Using National assessments

What does it look like?



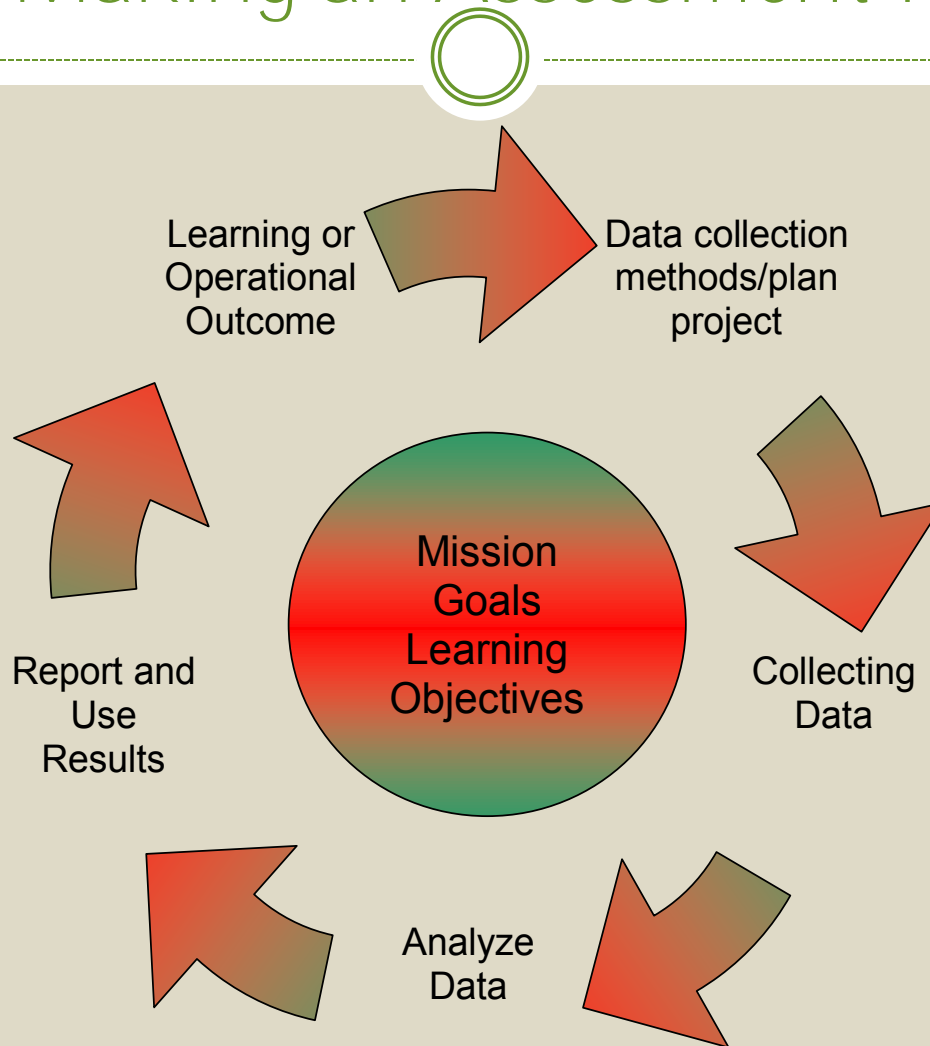
- Examples of student affairs assessment programs:
 - <http://www.nyu.edu/studentaffairs/assessment/reports/>
 - <http://www.iusb.edu/~saassess/>
 - <http://www.uga.edu/studentaffairs/assess/>
 - <http://studentlife.osu.edu/assessment/>
 - <http://oregonstate.edu/studentaffairs/assessment/index.html>
 - <http://www.uncc.edu/stuaffairs/sarlinks.htm>
 - <https://www.studentvoice.com/app/Views/Home/Default.asp>

Step 2: Different Types of Designs



- Different types of assessment:
 - Usage Numbers (Learning Center Usage)
 - Student needs (Commuter Student Needs Survey)
 - Student satisfaction/Perceptions (SSI, CSEQ, Reality Show and MLK Week Evaluations)
 - Environments (Campus Climate Study, Alcohol Focus Groups)
 - Learning Outcomes (Service-Learning Pre-Post Test, Applications for Orientation Leaders)
 - Comparable (Benchmarking) (EBI, NSSE, CSEQ)
 - Using National Standards (i.e. CAS)

Assessment Cycle Or Making an Assessment Plan



My favorite example....

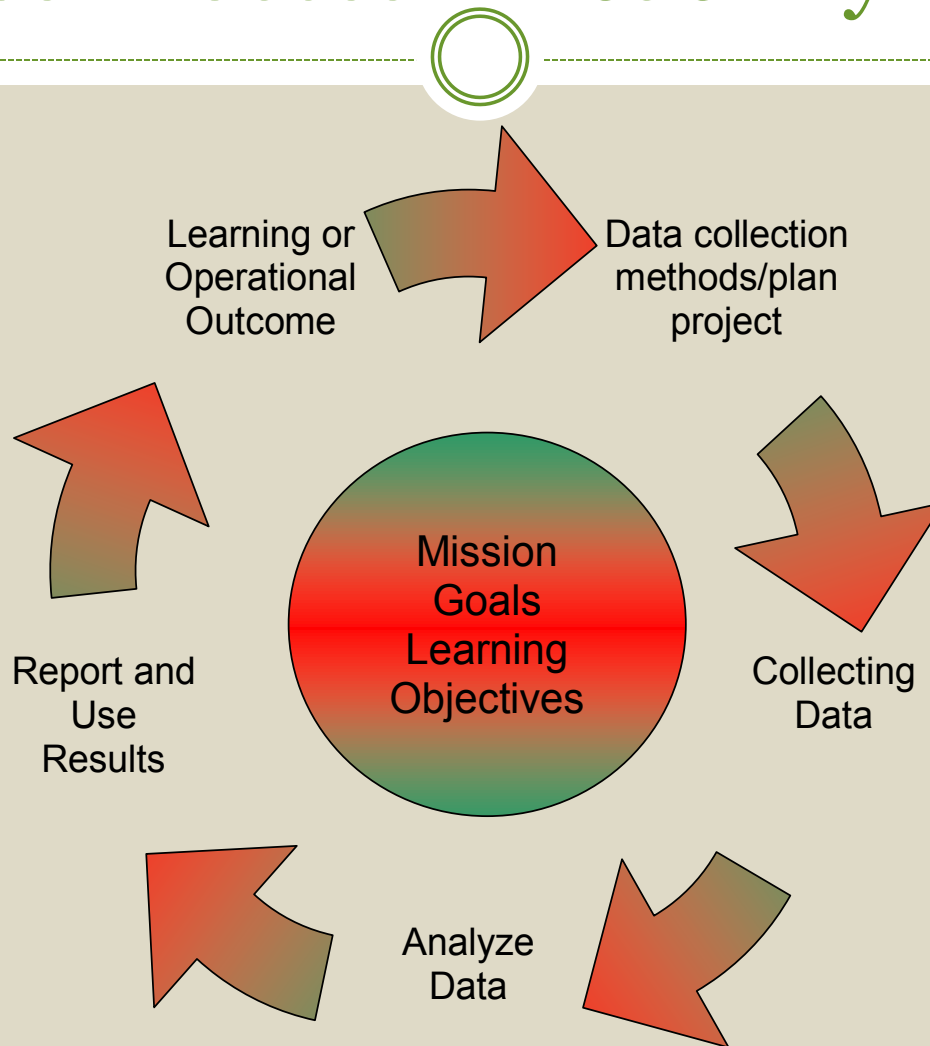


WE STARTED WITH ONE WAY

GOT STUCK

**ENDED WITH FOLLOWING THE CYCLE AND
USABLE RESULTS**

Groups Process – Let's Try It Now



Step One: Outcomes



- This is the *WHY*
- Start with the burning questions
- Turn those questions into objectives or leave them as questions
- Spend time on this, strong foundations lead to strong assessment projects

Note: Don't ask questions you do not want to hear the answers to or do not need the answers to

Step 2: Assessment Design/Planning



- Who – intended audience for results, who will participate
- What – will you do (type and method)
- How – what tools will you use (methods)
- Where/When – logistics of timing, locations, etc.

Step 2: Tools for Your Tool Box



- Surveys
(fatigue/response rate)
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Document Analysis
- Unobtrusive measures
- Visual Methods
- Existing Measures
- Historical research
- Case Studies
- Observations
- Rubrics
- Portfolios

Steps 3 and 4: Data Collection and Analysis



- Inform practice NOT writing a dissertation
- KISS
- Too much data can slow things down
- Ongoing process that is reflected on, learned about, and improved in time
- **Don't know how to do it** – find someone who can
- Excel will most likely be the most powerful tool you will need – SurveyMonkey and StudentVoice will do it all for you

Step 5: USE and Share What You Find



- You use first, then show others
- Audience – report accordingly
- Report the:
 - And what – what you found (concisely)
 - So what – why is that important
 - Now what - actions are key, what are you doing next or what resources do you need

Questions?



References



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- Maki, P.L. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution*. Sterling, VA: Stylus
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