

The Culture of Continuous Improvement: A How-To Guide on Actually Closing the Loop

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The Rationale of Continuous Improvement

“Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support appropriate student outcomes for its educational programs... To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution is always asking itself whether it has met those goals and *how it can become even better.*”

Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. 2018. SACSCOC; <http://isascoc.org/pdf/2018%20POA%20Resource%20Manual.pdf>

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Why do assessment?

If you don't measure what you value,
it won't improve.

Alan Merten, President, George Mason University

A pig won't get heavier just because you weighed it



3/21/2018

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What is ASSESSMENT?

Assessment is...

*a systematic examination of curriculum, teaching practices, and their **impact on student learning.***

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WHY do ASSESSMENT?

To answer the burning question....

are MY students learning what I want them to learn?

(Prompt: If we don't assess, how will we know?)

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We also assess because....

- We should not assume students are learning.
- It allows us to make curriculum decisions based on student learning data rather than on anecdotes and opinions.
- It allows us to make improvements to pedagogy that can impact student learning.
- It allows us to discover challenges with our environment that we may need to overcome. (i.e. *ursive handwriting*)

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So if we are to assess...

how can we make assessment *meaningful* without being *burdensome*?

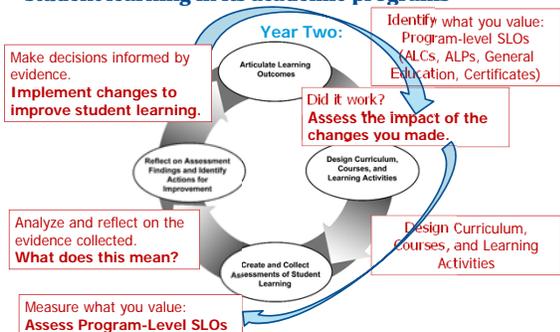
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Efficient and Effective Assessment!

- **Integrate** the assessment into **assignments you are currently using**. (Hint: Don't reinvent the wheel.)
- If you must create a new assignment, make the assignment appropriate of everyone's time and effort. (Hint: Remain relevant!)
- **Consider assessing at the practice level rather than only at the mastery level**. (Hint: Timing is everything!)

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The story we would like to be able to tell: How a department uses assessment to improve student learning in its academic programs



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Characteristics of Efficient and Effective Assessment Programs

- The department is invested in assessment of the program.
 - They have a *reasonable* cycle for assessing all program SLOs.
- Appropriate FACULTY
 - Are involved in the assessment.
 - Gather their assessment data.
 - Meet to discuss the assessment findings with their counterparts in the department to identify ways to improve.
 - Report how they plan to use the assessment findings to improve student learning.

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Characteristics of Inefficient and/or Ineffective Assessment Programs

- The program doesn't assess or assessment cycle is *unreasonable*.
- Assessment is "farmed out" to the "new guy/gal."
- Faculty are not involved in assessment.
- Faculty are not engaged in reviewing their assessment findings.
- Someone continually reports a description of their "process" but not a "Use of Results to Improve Student Learning."
- Faculty only look at improving assessment and do not devise strategies to improve student learning.
- The program doesn't report their assessment.

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What about Reporting?

- If you don't report it, *it didn't happen*.
- If you assessed more than one outcome, report accordingly.
- Reporting should reflect a **robust and ongoing cycle of continuous improvement**.
- Focus on improving student learning, not assessment.
- Consider providing a brief summary of the faculty discussion of assessment findings as evidence.

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Where Do I Get Help for My Program?

- Resources:
 - CUTLA
 - Institutional Effectiveness
- We can...
 - Provide guidance on assessment design and/or alignment to outcomes.
 - Provide guidance on devising assessment plans.
 - **Facilitate program faculty discussions of assessment findings.**

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Don't forget to feed the pig!



Even small changes, implemented over time, can produce significant improvements in student learning and program quality.

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thank you!



<http://uwf.edu/offices/cutla/>

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