

# Alternative Assessment Methods

While we may have go-to assessment methods that we prefer, one must also consider the many options available. They may be easier to administer, produce better data, and facilitate outcomes.

**Session attendees will learn how to:**

- employ lesser-known methods of assessing student learning, understanding as well as attitudes.
- facilitate learning and provide effective feedback with assessment.

# Qualitative Assessments

## Expanded

- Not all assessment methods must be based on typical research methods.
- The overall goal is to understand what students know and/or think as a result of an experience (e.g., workshop, program).

# Alternative Assessment Methods

- Rubrics
- Portfolios
- Observations
- Learning Contracts
- Narratives/Reflections
- Reflexive Photography
- Document Review
- One-sentence Summary
- Direct Paraphrasing
- Application Cards
- One-minute Papers
- Muddiest Point
- Empty Outline
- Documented Problem-solving

# Rubrics

## ➤ Uses

- Assess behavior/conduct or oral/written reflections
- evaluate employees or organization members

## ➤ Detailed/Quality rubrics

- clarify behavioral and learning goals and expectations
- increase reliability/objectivity
- improves feedback quality
- Invites student participation in learning process

# Using Rubrics

- Use vetted/established rubrics when possible, but personalize for local use
- Explain the purpose of the assessment with the student and share/discuss the rubric with them.
- Use the rubric to articulate desired learning/development/behavioral outcomes. (whenever possible, do this with students directly)
- Use rubrics to assess reflections, behavior, artifacts, etc.

# Portfolios

- Used to evaluate and promote learning
- Serves as an evidence repository for student learning and knowledge transfer (e.g., photos, reflections, StrengthsQuest results)
- Articulate a clear scope and audience (e.g., current and future employers)
- For full effect, staff must provide frequent direction and feedback.
- Portfolios may be hardcopy or digital.

# Observation

- Systematize for assessment purposes
- Create an observation protocol
  - location, start/end time
  - 1 column for detailed notes
  - 1 column for reflective notes
- Observation types
  - Participant, Non-Participant, naturalistic, and simulation

# Learning Contracts/ Development Plans

- Co-created, personalized plans that describe the intended learning outcomes for an event, semester, year, etc. (e.g., an action plan)
- Promotes students' engagement and ownership in their learning opportunities
- Use rubrics, theory, and/or departmental SLOs to guide contract/plan development
- Identify experiences where these skills are likely to be tested and how these might be assessed (e.g., oral reflection in an 'after action review' or written summative narrative/photo gallery)
- Use contract/plan to guide supervisor/advisor feedback
- Provide frequent feedback and request frequent reflection on related experiences



# Sample Learning Contract Protocol

# Narratives/Reflections

- Uses metacognition and synthesis to foster learning through live experiences
- may be handwritten, typed, oral, pictorial, etc.
- What? So What? Now What?
  - Describe the experience. What was learned? Where and how was it learned?
  - Describe why this was important and to whom.
  - Describe why/how one could apply what was learned in a future context. What will be done differently based on what was learned?

# Document Review

- Use existing documents (e.g., meeting minutes, project tangibles, training exams, etc.) as evidence of learning when applicable
- Collect photos (with captioned explanations/reflections) or other writings that illustrate learning.

# CATs!

*Angelo and Cross (1993) Classroom Assessment Techniques - CATs*

- One-minute Papers
- One-sentence Summaries
- Muddiest Point
- Direct Paraphrasing
- Misconception Checks
- Documented Problem Solving
- Empty Outlines
- Application Cards

# The TQA

## A Three Question Assessment

- What ideas did this presentation generate for you?
- Did you learn something today that might help you perform your job better.? Please describe.
- What could be changed about this presentation to make it more helpful or effective?

# References

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➤ Much of the information provided in this presentation is from Henning, G. W. & Roberts, D. (2016). Student affairs assessment: Theory to practice.