Assessment Ethics and Overview

Over the years, assessment has woven itself into the fabric of higher education and student affairs, specifically. Important ethical considerations are identified and discussed. An overview of assessment steps and objectives is provided, including motivating (some might say instigating) statements from national student affairs associations as well as from SACSCOC.

Session attendees will learn how to:
- identify and briefly describe all components of the Cycle of Continuous Improvement (i.e., the assessment cycle).
- describe the difference between research and assessment.
- identify the main areas important to ethical assessment practices.

Advancing Assessment: Program Goals

- **Program Goal**: The Adv. Assessment series is intended to empower and equip staff members to improve the quality of programs and services at Southern Miss.

- **Program Outcome**: Staff members who complete all Advancing Assessment sessions will be able to conduct their own full assessment of a program, service, or initiative under their purview.

"Why must we assess our programs and services?"

- A Staff Member

We assess to ensure programs and services enhance

the student learning experience.

ACPA & NASPA Professional Competencies

Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)

> This competency focuses on the ability to design, conduct, critique, and use various AER methodologies and the results obtained from them, to utilize to inform practice, and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses in higher education.

Council for the Advancement of Standards

Part 12. Assessment

❧ Programs and services must develop plans and processes.

❧ Assessment plans must articulate an ongoing cycle of assessment activities

❧ Programs and services must employ ethical practices in the assessment processes.

❧ Programs and services must have access to adequate [resources] to develop and implement assessment plans.

Accreditation

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Section 7. Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

Effective institutions demonstrate a commitment to the principles of **continuous improvement**. These principles are **based on a systematic and documented process of assessing** institutional performance with respect to mission in all aspects of the institution. An institutional planning and effectiveness process **involves all programs, services and constituencies**; is linked to the decision-making process at all levels; and provides a sound basis for budgetary decisions and resource allocations.

Section 8. Student Achievement

Student learning and student success are at the core of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. **Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support student learning outcomes for its educational programs**. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution provides appropriate academic and student services to support student success.

SACSCOC Principles of College Education (link)

Research *or* Assessment

- Research
  - Develops and tests theory; Investigates new phenomena.
  - Often emphasizes generalizability
  - Presented at conferences and/or published for wide audience
- Assessment
  - Theory guides program and assessment method development
  - Not typically generalizable
  - Used for continuous improvement of programs and services
  - Demonstrates the level of contribution to the organizational mission
  - Measures success against goals and objectives

Facilitating Continuous Improvement

1. What is your overall goal?

2. How will this goal contribute to the organization's mission or strategic objectives?

3. What are the desired outcomes?

4. What programs, initiatives, or plans will facilitate these outcomes?

5. How will the outcomes be measured?

6. Who are the responsible staff members and stakeholders?

7. What are the results?

8. What do the results mean and who would benefit from knowing?

9. What decisions, action plans, or initiatives resulted from this assignment?

Cycle of Continuous Improvement

Develop Plans & Outcomes

Revise Programs, Services or Operations

Use & Share Data to Inform Changes

Develop Goals from Mission or Strategic Plan

Determine Assessment Methods & Logistics

Collect & Analyze Data

Enact Plans; Deliver Programs & Services

Ethical Considerations

- **Respect Autonomy**
  - Do not coerce students to participate (appropriate educational experiences may be considered exceptions)
  - Note the effect of power differentials
- **Do no harm**
  - Maintain privacy, inflict no pain, embarrassment, etc.
- **Benefit others**
  - The assessment must be beneficial to participants and others
- **Being Just/Fair**
  - Impartiality, Equity, and Reciprocity
- **Being Faithful**
  - Honesty, share and use data, respect sensitive content

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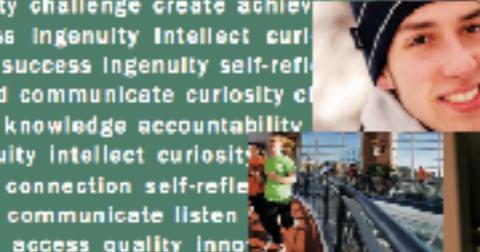
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National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

December 2014

A Simple Model for Learning Improvement:
Weigh Pig, Feed Pig, Weigh Pig

Keston H. Fulcher, Megan R. Good, Chris M. Coleman, and Kristen L. Smith

Occasional Paper #23

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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⌖ Keeling. et al. (2004). Learning reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience.

⌖ Keeling, et al. (2006). Learning Reconsidered 2: A practical guide to implementing a campus wide focus on the student experience.

⌖ Yousey-Elsener (2013). *Assessment fundamentals: The ABC's of assessment*.

⌖ The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges: http://www.sacscoc.org

⌖ Sukie (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide*.

⌖ Fulcher et al. (2014). *A simple model for learning improvement: Weigh pig, feed pig, weigh pig*.