ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ADVISING: AN OVERVIEW

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AGENDA

• Assessment defined
• Why is it important for us to assess
• Evaluation versus assessment
• Assessment deconstructed

Student Learning Outcomes
Measurement
Data Collection
Analysis
Improvement

ASSESSMENT

“Assessment is the **systematic** basis for making inferences about the **learning** and **development** of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase **students’ learning and development.**”

Erwin (1991)

ASSESSMENT

“Assessment is the **systematic collection, review, and use** of information about **educational programs** undertaken for the purpose of improving **student learning** and development”

(Marchese, 1993)

* Advising is part of the educational process, not simply a “service”
Assessment is an ongoing process of collecting information* that is aimed at understanding and improving student learning and personal development.  

(Angelo, 1995)

* what we like to call “evidence”

Assessment is a process that focuses on student learning, a process that involves reviewing and reflecting on practice as academics have always done, but in a more planned and careful way.  

(Ewell, 2000)

Assessment is the means used to measure the outcomes of education and the achievement of students with regard to important competencies.

(Pellegrino, Chudowsky, and Glaser, 2001)

In a way, good assessment is teaching to the test. Assessment is part of a process that identifies what we want students to learn, provides them with good opportunities to learn those things, and then assesses whether they have learned those things.

(Suskie, 2009)
The Higher Learning Commission defines assessment of student learning in the following way:

Assessment of student learning is a participatory, iterative process that:

• Provides data/information you need on your students’ learning
  • Engages you and others in analyzing and using this data/information to confirm and improve teaching and learning
• Produces evidence that students are learning the outcomes you intended
• Guides you in making educational and institutional improvements
• Evaluates whether changes made improve/impact student learning, and documents the learning and your efforts.

LET’S CHAT!

Grab Your Cell Phone

SO WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?
Assessment is intended to be a positive and beneficial process, yet its connotations are often negative.

The focus has often been on activities that demonstrate accountability to the exclusion of those that are aimed at improvement.

Assessment has multiple purposes:
- Program effectiveness
- Program improvement
- Program accountability
- Activities aimed at both improvement and accountability are important
- Accreditation
- Most compelling purpose is “institutional curiosity” (Maki, 2002; 2004)
  - i.e., student learning and student achievement

Assessment for Advisors:
- Plan and modify advising teaching and learning experiences for individual students and groups of students
- Pinpoint students strengths so that both teachers and students can build on them
- Identify students learning needs in a clear and constructive way so they can be addressed

Assessment for Students:
- Provides students with information and guidance so they can plan and manage the next steps in their learning
- Identifies what information has been learned to what needs to be learned next

Assessment is:
- Evidence-driven—relying on multiple measures
- Mostly formative rather than simply summative
- Measurement of outcomes
  - Student learning-outcome based (in education)
  - Advising process/delivery outcomes
- A complex process of comparison
- Always a process of reasoning from evidence
- Always, to some degree, imprecise
**ASSESSMENT IS NOT**

- episodic
- just about measurement
- about evaluating the performance of an individual staff / faculty / student
- solely an administrative process
- easy or quick

**ASSESSMENT VS. EVALUATION**

- An ongoing process/cycle that focuses on inquiry, evidence and improvement of learning.
- Focuses on what the student is learning.
- What does the student know or what is the student able to do as a result of the service you have provided.

- A systematic process that focuses on determining worth and/or value.
- Focuses on what the program/service is doing to facilitate learning.
- How does the program implement its plans to achieve its goals? Is it effective? Has it improved?

**THE CONVERSATION ABOUT LEARNING**

“... a lack of assessment data can sometimes lead to policies and practices based on intuition, prejudice, preconceived notions, or personal proclivities – none of them desirable bases for making decisions”

Upcraft and Schuh (2002)

“Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning.”

Huba and Freed (2000)
FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING

“Assessment is the process through which we gather evidence about the claims we are making with regard to student learning and the process/delivery of academic advising in order to inform and support enhancement and improvement.”

Campbell (2008)

THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF ASSESSMENT

Institutional Vision and Mission

School/College/Division Vision, Mission, Program Goals

Advising Program Vision, Mission, Program Goals

THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Plan

Evaluate

Implement

Report and Revise

HOW THINGS IDEALLY FLOW

Values, Vision, Mission, Goals, Programmatic Outcomes

Process/Delivery Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes

Mapping the Experience

Gathering Evidence (Multiple Measures)

Acting on Results

Start Over Again!

(Darling, 2005, 2010)
STARTING THE ASSESSMENT PROCESSS!
LET THE FUN BEGIN

IDENTIFYING KEY STAKEHOLDERS: Who Should Be Involved?
• Colleagues, faculty, administrators, institutional researchers, staff, students, institutional community, external community, others...
• Decide how the assessment team will interact, overlap, and/or support other institutional efforts
• Encourage stakeholders on and off campus
• Continuous communication and feedback is a must!

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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Articulate what students are expected to

• **know**
• **do**
• **value/appreciate**

as a result of involvement in the academic advising experience

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COGNITIVE SLOs

What do we want students to **KNOW** as a result of participating in academic advising?

- Know general education requirements
- Know about academic support services
- Know how to use the student information system to register
- Know how to use the catalog etc.

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BEHAVIORAL SLOs

What do we want students to **Do** as a result of participating in academic advising?

- Generate their degree audit
- Make advising appointments
- Keep advising appointments
- Ask for help
- Access degree requirements using the online catalog etc.

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AFFECTIVE SLOs

What do we want students to **Value or Appreciate** as a result of participating in academic advising?

- Value/Appreciate general education
- Value/Appreciate the advising relationship
- Value/Appreciate the process of learning etc.
SLO’s ARE ...

SMART
Specific
Measurable
Actionable (think, know, do)
Relevant
Timely

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Once the desired SLOs have been identified, as well as when and where they will occur, the next step is to determine who or what will be measured and how the data will be gathered...

...using multiple measures of varying types
WHY MULTIPLE MEASURES?

- No assessment is perfect and precise
- Goal is to “strive to make assessments sufficiently truthful that we will have reasonable confidence in our findings and can use them with enough assurance to make decisions...” (Suskie, 2009, p. 38)
- “Union of Insufficiencies” (Shulman, 2007)

MULTIPLE MEASURES

- The multiple measures utilized should vary in type
  - Qualitative
  - Quantitative
  - Direct
  - Indirect
- This will help ensure the validity of the results of any single measure

DIRECT VS. INDIRECT

**Direct:** Evidence that is gathered about student learning based on the student’s actual performance or demonstration of learning itself.
Examples: direct observation of student’s ability to understand their educational plan, pre/post test, multiple choice questions, checklists, advising rubrics, etc...

**Indirect:** Data based on inferences of student abilities knowledge, and values rather than directly observed evidence.
Examples: focus groups, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, student perceptions, etc...

BENCHMARKS

It is important to identify the minimum criteria for success of the outcome measure.

Determine what successful outcome data looks like!
So I Have The Data – Now What?

- Interpret results regarding how they inform the advising process/delivery, student learning, and decision-making
- Determine with whom and how the results are reported
- Decide how you will implement changes based on the results
- Start assessment cycle again...

SHARE AND ACT UPON RESULTS

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ADVISING IS ALL ABOUT ...

- developing consensus around collective expectations about student learning that should occur in advising
- gathering evidence in order to understand student learning resulting from academic advising
- using this evidence to support improvements in academic advising that will contribute to improvements in student learning

ASSESSMENT PLAN

An assessment plan clearly demonstrates:

- Which outcomes will be assessed for the year
- Measurement tools that will be used to assess
- Where the assessments will take place (where will the data be collected)
- Success Benchmarks
- Identifies needed resources
- Identifies where the data is stored
- Identifies the audience with whom info will be shared
- How will you improve advising programs/services based on outcome data
ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ADVISING IS ALL ABOUT...

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REMEMBER:

Assessment is much more than just a single evaluation, it is an ongoing continuous improvement process.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please provide feedback for this session – your thoughts and opinions help shape future NACADA presentations and Institutes!

To rate this session visit: PollEv.com/Institutefac1

This evaluation will be open until 10:00 p.m. tonight!