

Closing the Loop

Plan, Produce, Assess, Reflect, Repeat

Assessments will not be helpful unless we use the experience and the data to inform our pedagogical, operational, or administrative practice. When done well, assessments are effective tools in the decision-making process — called closing the loop. Closing the loop ensures the data is used with a meaningful effect.

Session attendees will learn how to:

- define and identify ‘closed’ assessment loops
- incorporate steps into their assessment projects that help ensure loops are closed.

If a tree falls in a forest, does it
make a sound?

If assessment data is collected
but not used, are we doing
assessment?

Assessment Data Can Help

- inform decision making.
- measure impact or return on investment (e.g., learning, budgetary).
- develop strategic plans.
- identify and fix ineffective aspects of programs and service delivery.

Being Ethical With Assessment

- Make assessments planned and purposeful.
- Focus assessments toward the overall goal of helping students learn.
- Assess the process as well as the outcomes.
- Involve stakeholders in decisions stemming from results.
- Communicate assessment findings widely and transparently (but respect FERPA).

Assessments \implies Action

- Do not assess if there is no interest in the results.
- Do not assess if nothing will/can be done with the results.
- All assessors should be ‘change agents’, not merely objective observers.
- Anticipate administrators’ future assessment needs: prepare assessment plans for all programs (use as needed).
- Employ a reliable, valid, organizationally driven assessment process.
- Involve stakeholders at the appropriate times.
- Produce evidence/visuals that compels decision-makers—be audience specific.
- Dedicate organizational funds toward the use of assessment data / program improvement.
- Identify a data-use champion for each assessment project.
- Involve the team in the process.

Henning, 2009

Fostering Greater Use of Assessment Results

- Gauge the value of assessment work by the extent to which the results are used.
- Before the process begins, identify how the data will be used and shared.
- Begin with the end use in mind.
- Leverage the accountability process for meaningful action towards improvement.
- Connect assessment work to divisional and institutional initiatives and projects.
- Work purposefully toward the final stage of assessment, then repeat.

Kuh et. al, 2015

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

- Henning, G. W. (2009, April). Using what you have ASKed for: Turning assessment into action. Presented at the ACPA Annual Convention, Washington D.C.
- Henning, G. W., & Roberts, D. (2016). Student affairs assessment: Theory to practice.
- Kuh, G., Ikenberry, S., Jankowski, N., Cain, T., Ewell, P., Hutchings, P., & Kinzie, J. (2015). Using evidence of student learning to improve higher education.

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