Assessment Basics
Agenda

- Definition of Assessment
- Assessment Requirements at MSU
- Terminology
- Examples
Assessment

- What do you think of when you hear the word assessment?
- Why is assessment important?
- How many in the room collect information that contributes to your departmental assessment plan?
- Are you or your department currently working on a project that you’re assessing?
- How do you know if you’re successful in your professional role?
Definition of Assessment

- Assessment is the systematic **collection, review, and use of information** about educational programs or support departments undertaken for the purpose of **improving** learning and development. (Palomba, Banta 1999)
Assessment Requirements at MSU

- Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, (a.k.a. SACS)
- College of Business, AACSB
- College of Education, NCATE
- College of Health Sciences and Human Services
  - Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Social Work, Radiology, Respiratory Care, etc...
- Student Affairs Core Competency, NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Ed.
Assessment

Most people use their intellectual curiosity to find out what works and what doesn’t.

- You ask a question... *determine an objective*
- Determine a way to get an answer to the question... *identify a measure*
- Analyze the answer to the question... *analyze findings*
- Move forward with the new information... *develop a plan of action*

However, most people don’t:

- Document their intended end results ahead of time
- Document the decisions made based on their results
- Follow up later to see if their decisions made the intended improvement

Breciani, 2006
We collect, review, and use information daily to make decisions and reach our objectives...

Example:
- You want to save money in order to take a trip next summer (objective). What steps should you take to reach that objective?
  - Determine how much the trip will cost and how much $ you’ll need to save (target).
    - Cost of trip, $3000
  - Decide a timeframe in which you need to have the $ saved
    - Save $250 each month for 12 months
  - Determine a way to track the savings (measure/measurement tool)
    - Open a travel savings account and track the monthly totals to determine how close you are to reaching your target amount.
  - Once you’ve tracked your total for the 12 month period, analyze the results (analysis of findings).
    - Do you have enough money to take your trip...did you achieve your objective?
  - If not, what can you do differently to achieve the objective (action plan)?
    - Document the steps you need to take to achieve your objective
Assessment

- How do you apply assessment to the successes you want to achieve in the workplace?

- Questions to ask yourself-
  - What are your goals/objectives for yourself, your department, the students you serve?
  - How can you gather information to determine if you are accomplishing these objectives?
  - How will you analyze the information and then determine a plan to make improvements?
Assessment

• Steps to take when assessing...
  o Determine the purpose of your department. Who do you serve and why?
  o Identify the stakeholder
    • Students, the public, administration, etc.
  o Document an objective
  o Set a target that will determine if you reach the objective
  o Gather data/evidence (measure) that will tell you if you reached the objective
  o Analyze the results of the data you gathered
  o Take steps moving forward...take action
Assessment Terminology

- Student Learning Outcomes and/or Functional Objectives
- Measures
- Targets
- Findings
- Action Plan
Student Learning Outcomes:
- focus on what the student will know, be able to do, or demonstrate upon completion of the program or service in your department.
Outcomes/Objectives

• Questions to ask when formulating a Student Learning Outcome:
  ○ What are the most important things a student should learn while participating/working in your program or department?
    • Example:
      ○ *Students who participate in the Career Management Center Resume Writing Workshop will demonstrate good resume writing skills.*
Outcomes/Objectives

- **Functional Objectives:**
  - focus on the *services provided or function/tasks accomplished* by the department
Outcomes/Objectives

- **Functional Objectives**
  - **Process focused**
    - Level or volume of activity
      - “…increase attendance at Spirit Days by 10%.”
    - Efficiency with which you conduct critical processes or services
      - “…improve production time on Print Shop orders by 5%.”
    - Compliance with standards or regulations
      - “…maintain compliance with SACS standards through assessment of objectives…”
    - Reduction in errors or increasing accuracy
    - Reduction in production time
  - **Satisfaction focused**
    - Description of customers rating of satisfaction with your critical process or service
      - “…customers will agree or strongly agree that they have received excellent customer service in the Registrars Office…”
Outcomes/Objectives

- Questions to ask when formulating a functional objective:
  - What are the most important services your department provides?
  - What are the most important tasks your department performs?
  - What are the critical processes of your department?
  - Example:
    - *Students will agree or strongly agree that the on-line registration process was user friendly when registering for classes.*
    - *The number of students served by the Career Management Center will increase by 10% in 2010-2011.*
Targets

- Targets
  - Level of achievement expected that determines if you’ve achieved your outcome or objective.
    - Requires you to make your objective more specific
    - Often quantitative in nature
    - Example:
      - Increase the number of assessment training sessions offered by 20%
      - Improve the average customer service rating from 3.5 to a 4.5 in 2011-2012.
      - Increase Orientation participation by 8% in 2011-12.
Think of a Student Learning Outcome or Functional Objective you are currently trying to achieve, or hope to achieve in the future.

Write down the outcome or objective.
Measures

- **Measures:**
  - The instrument(s) and processes used to determine if you achieved your outcome/objective
Measures

○ Direct Vs. Indirect Measures
  ✷ Direct-require the student or customer to **perform or show proof** of the task.
    ○ Examples: Pre/post tests, evaluations, tracking spreadsheets, attendance reports, contact hours, financial reports
  ✷ Indirect-measures the student/customers **perception or reflection** of the event.
    ○ Examples: Surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.
Questions to ask when developing or choosing your measures-

- How do you determine if you’re achieving your objective?
- What are some of the tool(s) you use to determine if you’ve met an objective?

  - Examples:
    - Objective: Increase the number of assessment training sessions by 20% in 2013.
    - Measure: Using an Excel spreadsheet, track the number of workshops completed in 2013 and compare to total completed in 2012.
Measures

- Usage/Tracking-spreadsheets, registrations, attendance sheets
- Surveys
- Pre/Post tests
- Document Analysis
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Peer Evaluations
- Tests or Assignments
- Rubrics
- Evaluations
Measures

- MSU IR Collection Tools: (IR maintains this data)
  - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
  - Graduating Student Survey
  - Entering Student Survey
  - Graduate Survey
Measures

- **Example:**
- **Objective:**
  - *Students will state that they have received excellent service when registering for classes.*
- **Target and Measure:**
  - *90% of students will complete the Registrars Office customer service survey and choose either “Agree” or Strongly Agree” when responding to question #2, “I received excellent customer Service from the Registrar’s office when registering for classes.”*
Measures

- Take a few minutes to write down the target and measurement tool you used, or will use, to measure the objective you documented earlier.
Findings

FINDINGS

- Data or information gathered from your measure.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS:

- Questions to ask when evaluating your findings:
  - Did you meet your objective?
  - What can you learn from the data you gathered?
  - What does this mean for your role/department/customer?
  - What will you do with the information you now have?
**Action Plan**

- **Create an Action Plan**
  - Establish a plan to move forward based on the analysis of your findings
  - Clearly document steps to implement the plan
  - Determine a timeline
  - Identify those responsible for carrying out steps involved in implementing the recommendations you have to move forward

  - **Documentation is key!** Documenting these tasks will increase your level of commitment to the project!
Identify the Pieces

Student Learning Outcome

Students who participate in Career Management Center Graduate/Professional School Preparation Courses will illustrate increased knowledge to perform well on the entrance exam. Students will complete a Graduate/Professional School Knowledge Acquisition Survey at the conclusion of the preparation course. Question 1 of the survey asks “As a result of going through the preparation, has your knowledge about how to succeed on the entrance examination increased?” 85% or more of participants will respond “yes” to question #1. One hundred percent of the participants reported increased knowledge about how to succeed on the entrance examination. Response size = 8. The results are an encouraging indicator that CMC Graduate School Preparation Services are having a positive impact on students. A new target of 90% will be set moving forward for next year.

Measure

Target

Findings

Action Plan
Finishing Up!

- Document an outcome/objective you want to assess
- Set a target
- Determine how you’ll measure the objective
- When will you analyze the findings?
- Commit to carrying forward with an action plan
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