



Activities to Promote Use of Assessment Results in Higher Education

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Use of student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment results is a regional accreditation requirement. This roundtable will discuss answers to the question, "How can *use* be encouraged?"

A. What activities promote faculty's use of results?

Assumption: the closer the assessment activities are to the faculty, the more likely that use will occur

Idea #1 Hypothetical results

Faculty discuss hypothetical results in order to (a) confirm that the measurement tool can provide actionable information and (b) start thinking about use before data collection.

Overview:

- i) After faculty decide on possible measurement tools/evidence (e.g., exam, paper + rubric), create two or three charts and/or tables with hypothetical results: each shows a different scenario such as poor performance in one area, good performance all around, etc.
- ii) In a meeting with the faculty, discuss two questions,
 - a. "Can these results be acted upon?" [If no, "What's needed to make them actionable?"]
and
 - b. "If these were the results, what might the program do?" [faculty put brainstormed ideas on the screen/chart paper]

Idea #2. Graffiti wall¹

Faculty brainstorm ways to use results, categorize ideas, and then prioritize to select 1-2 action items.

Overview:

- i) Select 3-4 key results or key issues that emerged from the assessment project. Write each one on a different sheet of large chart paper as a question or open-ended statement. E.g.,
 - Given that 69% met expectations and 31% did not on SLO 1, what might the program do?
 - What workshops/events could help professors and/or students improve on SLOs 2 & 3?
 - What changes in the curriculum design/map could improve achievement on SLO 6?
 - Students have high achievement on SLO 1 when . . .
- ii) Form teams of 2-4 faculty members and give each team 3x5" sticky notes using a different color per team.
- iii) Teams rotate, visiting each sheet for 1-2 minutes per sheet, writing their brainstormed ideas on sticky notes. One idea per note. Stick each note to the sheet.
- iv) After all teams have visited all sheets, each team takes one sheet and categorizes the notes.
- v) The participants identify the main themes/ideas, share with the full group, and the full group prioritizes and select 1-2 action items.

¹ Adapted from this excellent resource: *Interactive Evaluation Practice: Mastering the Interpersonal Dynamics of Program Evaluation* (Sage, 2013) by Jean King and Laurie Stevahn: Graffiti/Carousel, pp. 133-135.

Idea #3. Three-way interview²

Faculty interview each other to generate information related to the improvement plan. For example, generate a list of assignments, activities, or pedagogies that have been successful in improving student performance.

Overview:

- i) Faculty form teams of 3 and each team member is assigned an initial role: interviewer, responder, recorder.
- ii) Three minutes per interview on the interview topic/question. E.g.: “Think about a research project you assigned (or a research project you completed). What made the assignment work well? If nothing, how could the assignment have been improved?”
- iii) The interviewer interviews; responder responds; recorder records on one team response sheet.
- iv) Rotate roles until each has had a turn at each role.
- v) Team discussion: synthesize and identify the team’s main ideas/themes.
- vi) Full group discussion to identify cross-team themes/ideas and salient themes/ideas.
- vii) Themes and ideas are shared and faculty encouraged to use these “best practices.”

B. Do activities differ for faculty and administrators?

Assumption: stakeholder groups have different areas of responsibility and different intentions

On my campus:

- Faculty: activities that target curriculum, pedagogy, student development, and assessment capacity building
- Administrators: activities that target basic assessment knowledge, roles (who does what), appropriate and inappropriate use of results, and strategies to build faculty ownership

C. What skills do faculty need to facilitate conversations on use of results?

Assumption: meeting facilitation skills and conflict management skills are crucial

On my campus, I include skill-building on how to . . .

- A. Create an action-oriented agenda with a desired outcome and process. E.g.,

Desired Outcome	Process
finalize student learning outcomes list	by evaluating draft student learning outcomes
narrow a list of commercial tests to a best option	by evaluating alternatives and dot voting
understand curriculum coherence and identify gaps	by creating and analyzing a curriculum map
ways to use assessment results	by brainstorming a list of possible actions
improve the program by using assessment results	by prioritizing a list of actions

- B. Redirect – after validation
- C. Make contributions visible: Record ideas using markers + flip chart paper or computer + projector
- D. Decide how to decide (e.g., consensus, 85/15 rule, super majority, simple majority)
- E. Reserve the last 5-10 minutes to summarize, communicate praise for accomplishments, and state commitments/actions/next steps

² Adapted from this excellent resource: *Interactive Evaluation Practice: Mastering the Interpersonal Dynamics of Program Evaluation* (Sage, 2013) by Jean King and Laurie Stevahn: Cooperative Interviews, pp. 117-120.