

ENGAGING FACULTY TO PROMOTE CHANGE: EXPLORING THE ASSESSMENT LITERATURE AND REFLECTING ON LESSONS LEARNED

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2014 Assessment Institute, Indianapolis
Tuesday, October 21, 2014

Objectives & Outcomes for this Session

- Review the assessment literature
 - Apply the literature to initiatives at DSU
- Introduce a framework through which to view change initiatives
 - Use the framework to evaluate the change initiatives at DSU (i.e., the extent of implementation, the impact on institutional change, identifying continued gaps, and drawing conclusions)
- Participants attending this presentation will:
 - Discuss the obstacles to faculty involvement in assessment
 - Evaluate those obstacles in the context of your institutional culture
 - Engage in discussions and learn from other participants
 - Use the literature, along with the proposed framework and the active discussion, to plan strategies for change at your institutions

LITERATURE REVIEW

Faculty Participation Essential

- For assessment to be meaningful, faculty participation is essential (Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Hutchings, 2010; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Maki, 2002).
- Yet, according to Hutchings, “much of what has been done in the name of assessment has failed to engage large numbers of faculty in significant ways.”

Factors Affecting Participation

- Faculty are experts in their field, but are not trained in assessment (Hutchings, 2010)
- Viewed as part of “the management culture” (Walvoord, 2004)
 - “You’re just going to use the information to evaluate us.” (Lederman, 2008)
- Seen as “redundant” work, duplicating already existing processes and not yielding additional benefits (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009)

How to Design Change

- Many studies suggest that unless people understand a proposed change and what it means for their role and identity, they are unable to either approve or implement it (Kezar, 2012)
 - What leaders in higher education perceive as resistance might be better understood as an institutional failure to educate or give opportunities for meaningful feedback

How to Design Change

- “To make substantial improvements..., we need to understand and address the sources of faculty resistance.” (Tagg, 2012)
- **Loss Aversion:** Change is risky & people’s tendency is to take much greater risks to avoid a loss than to achieve a gain
 - Accreditation/job vs. student learning
- **Endowment Effect:** My things gain value just by virtue of being mine
 - Objects and ideas (e.g., salary, tenure, autonomy)
 - Confirmation bias (others that support your ideas)
- **Loss Aversion + Endowment Effect = Status Quo**
- **OWNERSHIP IS KEY!**

Building Faculty Endowment

- Value the scholarship of teaching and learning
 - can alter the reward system if credit is given to faculty for research that bears fruit in pedagogy & curriculum design
 - only 35% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that institutions recognize SoTL as genuinely valuable research (Huber & Hutchings, 2005)
- Reward collaborative work instead of only individual work
 - Create structures through which large numbers of faculty can design the change
 - Establish channels outside of academic departments

Other Suggestions for Engaging Faculty

- Hutchings (2010)
 - Make a place for assessment in faculty development
 - Create campus spaces and occasions for constructive assessment conversation and action
 - Involve students in assessment
- Kezar and Lester (2009)
 - External networks and support groups (e.g., conferences, grant opportunities, sister institutions) are important in creating change
 - Grassroots movements (promote bottom-up change)

Other Suggestions for Engaging Faculty

- Driscoll and Wood (2007)
 - Acknowledge faculty resistance – fears, concerns, complaints, misperceptions
 - Anticipate faculty expectations – answer questions
 - Help faculty make the connection between assessment and curriculum and pedagogy
 - Students make persuasive arguments for inclusion
 - Start with successes—program strengths, individual efforts, stories
 - Draw on local experts
 - Engage unofficial leaders to participate
 - Adequate resources to support assessment efforts (assessment system, assessment software, website)

Other Suggestions for Engaging Faculty

- Maki (2002)
 - Provide the materials and training they need for success
 - Be prepared to make accommodations & last minute changes
 - Follow up consistently (sales approach)
 - Give feedback using a rubric
 - Report back on general findings – be transparent (faculty & administration)
 - Understand the individual and what type of approach works best (perfectionistic verses more loving) – most people in education are perfectionistic
 - don't make them feel guilty that they've failed

Other Suggestions for Engaging Faculty

- Maki (2002)
 - Find ways to streamline work
 - Take time to build relationships & teach administration about assessment
 - They are part of the process (connections with budget decisions)
 - Assess the assessment process, and continually do things to make it easier for faculty
 - Make the connection between teaching, learning and assessment (item analysis, test construction)
 - it's about student learning
 - Manage the tension between assessment and accreditation

Summary Themes from the Literature

- Debunking Myths & Communicating Truths
- Clarifying Roles & Responsibilities
- Increasing Endowment Effect
- Facilitating Assessment
- Empowering Faculty
- Stimulating Collaborations & Grassroots Initiatives

DIXIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Dixie State University

- A publicly funded institution that has experienced rapid growth
 - over 8,300 students
 - offering 70+ programs at the Certificates, Associates, and Bachelors levels
 - 6 academic schools: Business & Communication, Education, Health Sciences, Humanities, Science & Technology, and Visual & Performing Arts
- 2012 accreditation visit, NWCCU recommended that DSU fulfill its plans to do program assessment
- Many “top-down” strategies were implemented in an effort to motivate faculty engagement, and bring about institutional change
- Some strategies have brought about positive impact, but the sustainability of the impact is questionable

Debunking Myths & Communicating Truths

- New Faculty Handbook (Assessment vs. Evaluation)
- **Managing Tension Between Assessment & Accreditation**
 - Accreditation Recommendation Reminders (Accreditation Reports)
 - Doing Assessment to Improve Student Learning (All-faculty presentations during In-service)
- **Program Assessment Annual Report (transparency)**
- Connecting Assessment to Pedagogy (new CTLE)

Clarifying Roles & Responsibilities

- Faculty Responsible for Course Assessment
- 42 Assessment Coordinators Across Campus
 - Task Document & Timeline
- 6 Assessment Coordinator Leads (1/school)
- Faculty-led Committees
 - Institutional Strategic Assessment & Accreditation Committee
 - General Education Assessment Committee
 - Academic Assessment Committee
- New Faculty Position Description
- Regular Faculty Meetings on Assessment
- Peer Feedback
- Administration Role in Assessment (training needed)

Increasing Endowment Effect

- Annual Brainstorming Session (seek feedback)
- AC Leads by School (shared content expertise)
 - Engage Unofficial Leaders
- Credit Release Time / Stipend
- Professional Development & Grant Funds for Assessment
- Part of Tenure & Promotion Review Process

Facilitating Assessment

- Simplified Reporting Forms
- Reporting Deadline Flexibility
- Assessment Management Software
- One-on-one Consultations
- Assessment Coordinator Lead Role

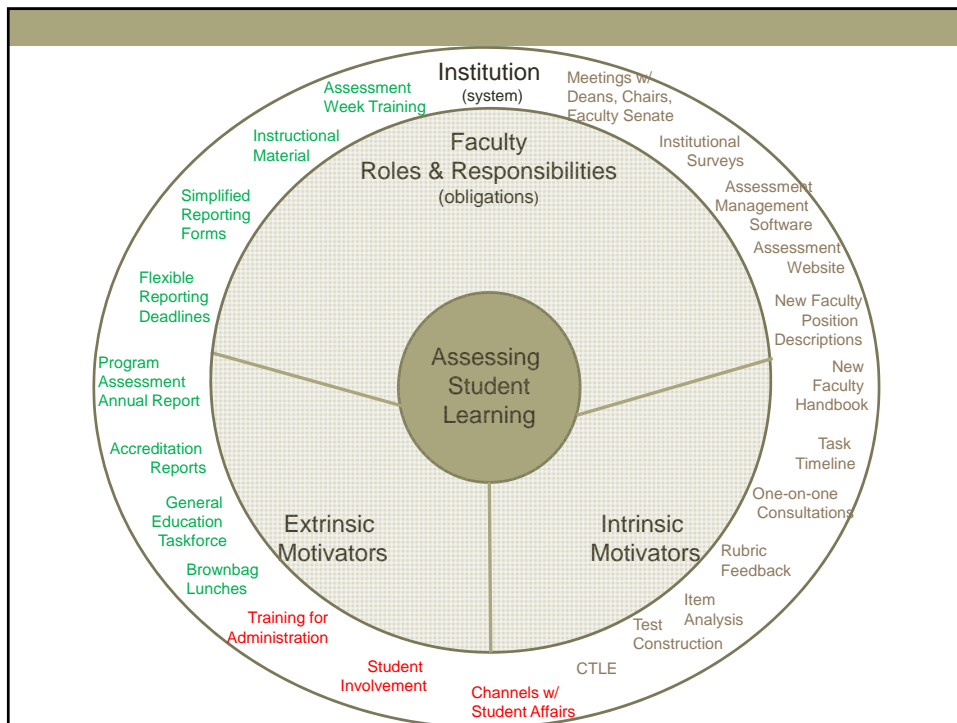
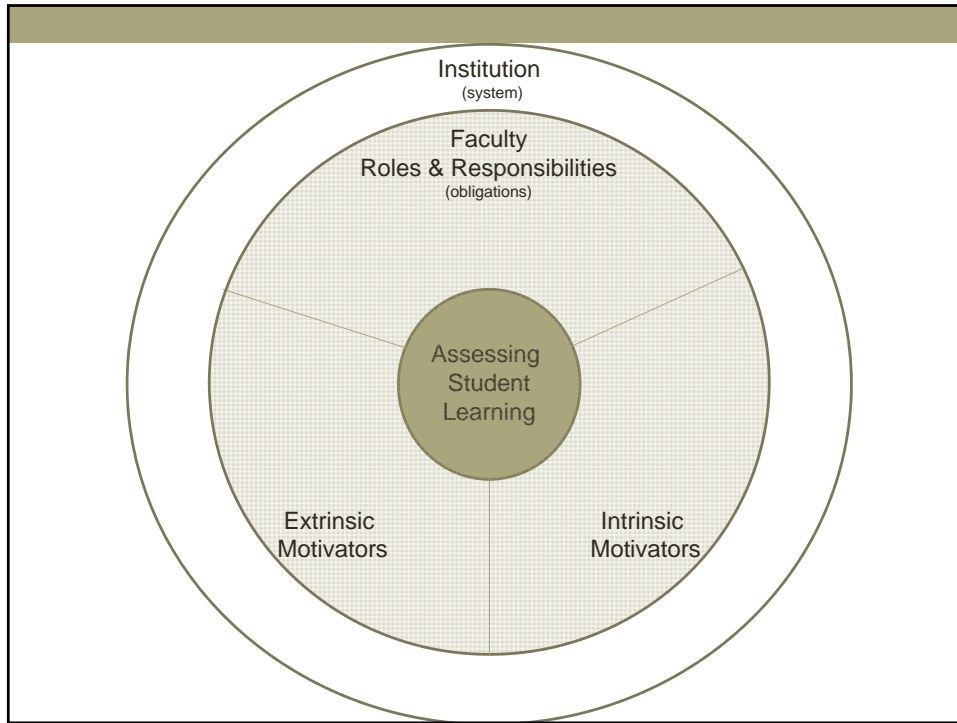
Empowering Faculty

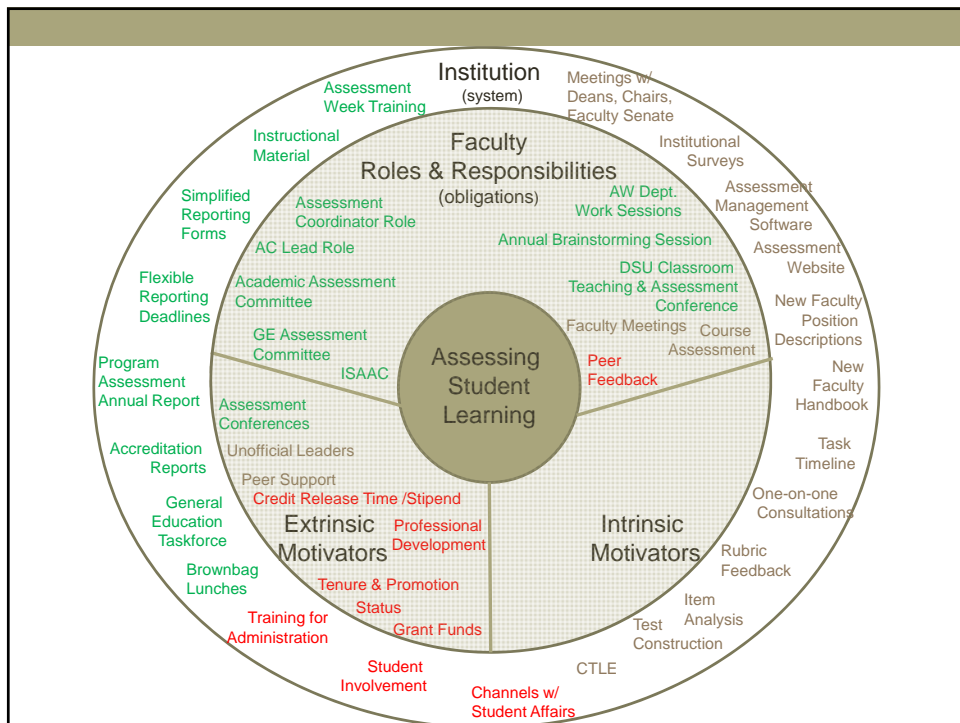
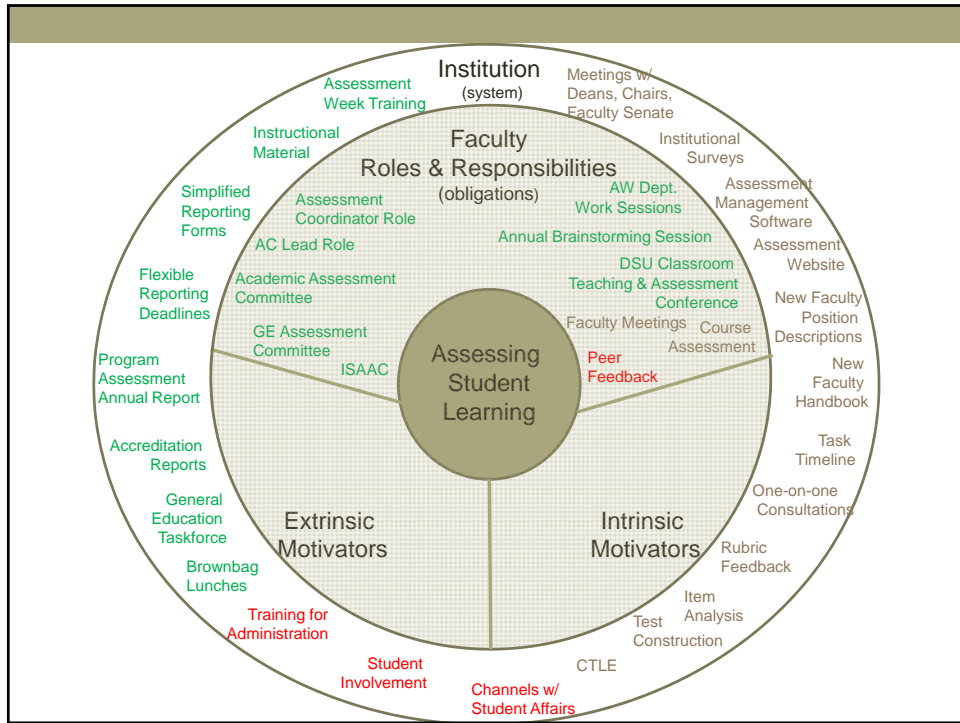
- Assessment Website
- Instructional Material
- Annual Assessment Week Training & Dept. Meetings
- DSU Classroom Teaching & Assessment Conference
- Conference Attendance (Assessment Institute)
- Brownbag Lunches
- Institutional Surveys (indirect measures data)
- Feedback Using Rubrics
- Item Analysis/Test Construction Services

Stimulating Collaborations & Grassroots Initiatives

- Relationships with Deans, Chairs & Faculty Senate
- Faculty Collaborations
 - Socialization component
 - Peer support
- **Grassroots Movements (Tuning)**
 - **Improvement of student learning**
- General Education Taskforce
- **Student Involvement**
- **Channels with Student Affairs**

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK





PAIR AND SHARE

Use the framework handout to evaluate the initiatives your institutions have taken to promote faculty engagement in assessment, and identify areas for improvement. Share your observations with someone sitting next to you.

OBSERVATIONS, QUESTIONS & CONCLUSIONS

Share your observations with the group.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

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