

Methodologically Rigorous Assessment

Engaging Faculty in Data Collection for
Assessment and Publication



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Outcomes

1. Articulate methods for improving rigor of assessment data collection
2. Generate ideas for collaborative assessment research
3. Articulate steps or actions to begin the research process



- Accounting for priorities and challenges
- Engaging faculty and facilitating dialogue about assessment
- Providing examples of feasible, reliable/valid assessment projects
- Incorporating more methodological rigor into data collection
- Reframing expectations about assessment

Things to come

- Why?
- What?
- How?

Contexts

1. College or university level assessment
2. Program- or course-level assessment
3. Assessment for accreditation
4. Faculty-driven analyses of student learning in context of or across campuses
5. Others?

Why do we bother?

- Curiosity
- Continuous improvement
- Student success
- Accreditation

Guiding Questions

Getting to methodological rigor from motivation:

- What drives your interest in assessment?
- What assessment challenges have you faced?
- What methods have you used successfully?

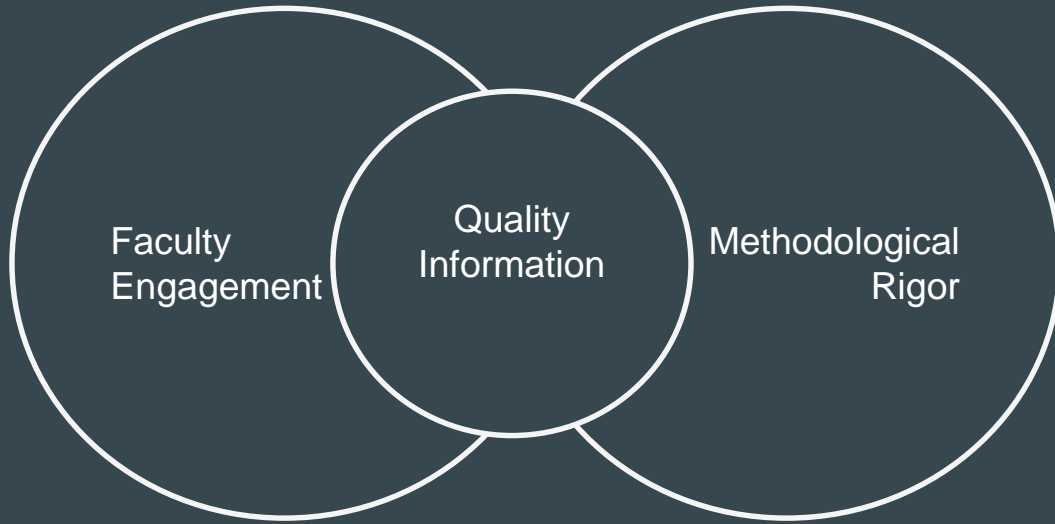
Motivations

Mandated Reporting ----- Continuous Improvement

Internal ----- External

Reward ----- Punishment

Incorporating Methodological Rigor



Isn't all assessment methodologically rigorous?

- Pro forma or ad hoc data collection
- Aggregating disparate data
- Round peg, square hole
- Confounding institutional data with assessment

Best Practices (C-RAC/AAHE)

- Mission-driven student learning
- Documented learning outcomes
- Evaluation of goal achievement
- Stakeholder involvement
- Commitment to improvement

Assessment scenarios

Scenario 1: Program Effectiveness

You have been appointed the faculty assessment coordinator. Your program's accreditation requirements include on-going, systematic assessment of student learning using multiple measures and involving internal and external stakeholders.

How would you design your assessment system? What questions would you have about your program effectiveness?

Scenario 2: A Report to the Board

The Board of Trustees has requested a report on the “critical thinking skills” of students. The provost has appointed you to a working group of faculty, staff, and students to undertake this assessment.

What existing evidence and data sources could help you frame your report?

Scenario 3: Curricular Reform

Your program faculty have learned from previous assessments that the structure and sequencing of the courses inhibit opportunities for academic exploration and participation in co-curricular programs. You reduce the number of prerequisite courses and proscribe the sequence and reassess students' academic exploration and participation in co-curricular programs every other year.

What data would you gather to you measure these outcomes?
How long would you collect data before generating a summative evaluation?

Scenario 4: Portfolio Assessment

You teach in a writing program and you want core courses to better prepare students to produce quality essays in their upper division classes. You plan to establish writing benchmarks, implement structured formative assessments, and documenting progress using writing portfolios.

What data would you collect? At what points would you want to collect data? How would you structure the evaluation process?

Designing Robust Assessments

- Identifying your population and sample
- Articulating methods grounded in literature
- Selecting (or developing) instruments
- Collecting data and reporting results
- Using the results in programmatic decision making

What are we studying when we evaluate learning outcomes (LO)?

- Student performance against expectations
- Alignment of goals and outcomes
- Program changes from a data-based decision model

Research Questions

1. Are students learning the content as expected?
2. How do students change over time?
3. Are the program outcomes assessable? What are the sources of data?
4. How well is our program working?
5. Are alumni satisfied?

Design

- Case study
- Longitudinal
- Observational
- Quasi-experimental

Sampling

- Simple random
- Purposeful
- Convenience
- *Constrained*

Instruments

- Standardized tests
- Rubrics/observations
- Self-assessments
- Interview protocols
- Proxy measures

Writing Reports

- Define your terms and use precision
- Follow disciplinary standards and cite your sources
- Identify and support your methods and instruments
- Collect and reporting trend data, wherever possible

Engaging Faculty

- Facilitating dialogue with and among faculty
- Articulating institutional needs
- Understanding accreditation requirements
- Acknowledging challenges

Engaging Faculty

- Acknowledge the evaluation they currently do
- Reduce the burden of assessment
- Shift expectations for participation and benefits
- Provide examples and options

How might we collaborate with colleagues to design and implement robust, methodologically rigorous assessments?

What are some actions you can take to begin the research process?