

Assessment...

...entails "any effort to *gather, analyze, and interpret* evidence which describes institutional, divisional, or agency effectiveness" (Schuh & Upcraft, 1996, p. 18).

...ponders critical questions. "How well do we achieve our educational intentions? How do we know? Therein lies the wellspring of an institutional commitment to assessment—intellectual curiosity about what and how well our students learn. Assessment is the means of answering those questions of curiosity about our work as educators" (Maki, 2004, p. 2).

...is used to identify and celebrate our successes, reinforce and support our mission, enhance the quality and effectiveness of our programs and services, inform planning and decision-making, assist us in securing additional funds, improve our institutional profile for prospective students, and, ultimately, foster student learning and success (adapted from Bresciani, M.).

...at Cornell, is based on intellectual curiosity about, and inquiry into, student learning and educational effectiveness.

Through assessment, we can consider...

- ☞ What are we trying to do and why?
 - ☞ How well are we accomplishing that which we say we are?
 - ☞ How do we know?
 - ☞ How do we use the information to improve or to celebrate our successes?
 - ☞ How well do our improvements work?
- (adapted from Bresciani, M.)

Types of Assessment

- Tracking usage of services/facilities
- Needs
- Satisfaction
- Campus cultures and environments
- Outcomes
- Comparable institution
- National standards
- Cost effectiveness
- Benchmarking

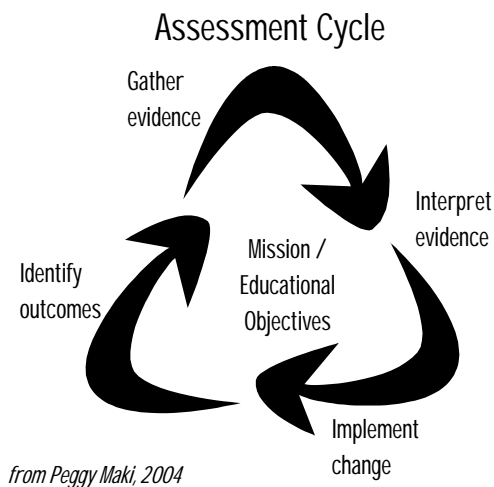
(Schuh & Upcraft, 2001)

"A systemic and systematic process of examining student work against our standards of judgment, assessment enables us to determine the fit between what we expect our students to be able to demonstrate or represent and what they actually do demonstrate or represent at points along their educational careers."

~ Peggy Maki in "Assessing for Learning"

Did You Know?

OIR
306D Law Hall
Mt. Vernon, IA 52314
319.895.4595



Steps in the Assessment Cycle...

- a. Keep in mind the mission and educational objectives.
- b. Begin by identifying desired outcomes related to the mission / educational objectives.
- c. Determine how you will assess the identified outcomes. What is the purpose of your assessment? What methods and measures will be useful? What population will you sample?
- d. Collect data using appropriate means.
- e. Analyze the collected data and interpret the evidence according to the assessment purposes.
- f. Use the interpreted evidence to guide decisions about improving practices and making curricular or programmatic changes.
- g. Begin again.

Assessment Design Considerations

The following questions to guide conversations about assessment design are adapted from Schuh and Upcraft (2001).

1. What circumstances (including opportunities, concerns, and pressures) are driving our assessment?
2. Who are the stakeholders in this project?
3. What is the purpose of our assessment?
4. What needs / experiences / outcomes are we interested in studying?
5. What approach(es) best meets our assessment needs (i.e., what information do we need and what is the best way to get it — quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods)?
6. What assessment tools / instruments will best meet our needs? If quantitative, this step includes identifying input/control and environmental variables. If qualitative, this step includes identification of interview/focus group/observation protocols. A mixed-method approach requires both.
7. Who is our population for the study? How will we identify our sample?
8. How will we collect our data? This step includes identifying strategies for data collection as well as who will collect the data and when it will be collected.
9. How will we analyze our data? This step includes identifying modes of statistical analyses and methods of qualitative analysis.
10. How will we evaluate the results for policy and practice implications?
11. How will we effectively report and use the results?