Closing the Loop: Improving Student Learning through Direct Assessment
Closing the Loop

Segments of the Workshop:

1. Where Are We?
   - The Status of Program-Level Assessment
2. The Dancer’s Mirror
   - Goals for the Sept. 2009 Update
3. Closing the Loop
   - From Principles to Practice
4. Resources and Upcoming Events
Participants will...

- Strengthen their understanding of the two primary **principles** that guide work in assessing and improving student learning
- Further develop an understanding of the best **practices** in assessing and improving student learning
- Clarify their understanding of the next steps in program-level assessment
1. Where Are We?
   - The Status of Program-Level Assessment

Process for Feedback on the Updated Assessment Reports:
   - Draft of Review is sent to the assessment coordinator;
   - Conversation about the program’s assessment process:
     - Strengths
     - Areas for focus
     - Program goals for assessment for 2008-2009?
   - Final Review is sent to assessment coordinator, chair, and dean
Our Strengths:

1) gathering information about the knowledge, abilities, and values of program graduates;
   - All programs have an assessment plan
   - 92% have gathered information about student learning
   - A healthy proportion of direct to indirect measures

2) using that information to improve teaching and learning in the program.
   - Assessment informs program review
   - An ethos of collaboration and support
Assessment is like “a dancer’s mirror, which enhances and makes more systematic the dancer’s ability to critique and correct his/her own performance.”

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Two-minute Partnered Conversation:
Name one way that assessment has enhanced teaching and learning in your department.
Higher Learning Commission Expectations:
1. Assess, confirm, and improve student learning through systematic collection and analysis of information about learning.
2. Tell the story of assessment through documentation of evidence-based assessment.
49 established academic programs (both undergraduate and graduate):

- 100% (49) have established a plan for program-level assessment.
- 92% (45) have data on student learning and are in the process of analyzing the data.
- 73% (36) have articulated action taken to improve student learning.
- 18% (9) have indicated follow-up measures.
Goal for Program-Level Assessment for 2008-2009: to “close the loop” on assessment.

Follow-up on changes in curriculum or pedagogy:
- What are the results of the action taken?
- What do these results reveal?
- Were the changes effective in resolving the weakness in learning?
- What actions will you take as you move forward?
Two Principles of Assessment (adapted from AAHE):
1) Assessment makes a difference when it illuminates questions that people really care about.
2) Assessment is viewed as a continuous improvement process.
Principle 1) Assessment makes a difference when it illuminates questions that people really care about.

Practice: Design a strong assessment framework
- Collaborative
- Uniquely suited to the program
- Clearly aligned
- Manageable
Practice: Design a strong assessment framework
Clearly stated learning outcomes

Examples:
- From Business: Demonstrate the ability to work in teams
- From Religious Studies: Develop and demonstrate a life of ethical service
Principle to Practice: Illuminating Questions

Practice: Design a strong assessment framework

Multiple methods and meaningful criteria

Exhibit 2: Music
Exhibit 5: Art
Principle to Practice: Continuous Improvement

Principle 2) Assessment is viewed as a continuous improvement process.

Practice: Use results to improve student learning
Interpreting results and making changes in curriculum or pedagogy

Exhibit 3: Biology
Principle to Practice: Continuous Improvement

Practice: Use results to improve student learning

Testing the effectiveness of changes made

Exhibit 4: BSN
4. Resources and Upcoming Events

- Consultative Lab Sessions on TracDat:
  - Tuesday, Jan. 27, 8:30-10:30, MRC 304
  - Monday, Feb. 9, 2:00-4:00, RC003

- Consultation available: department meetings

- Announcement about Assessment website

- May Out-Service Assessment Day