Closing the Loop: Improving Student Learning through Direct Assessment

VITERBO UNIVERSITY FACULTY WORKSHOP
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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

Closing the Loop

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

Closing the Loop: Where Are We?

- 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

Closing the Loop: Where Are We?

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."
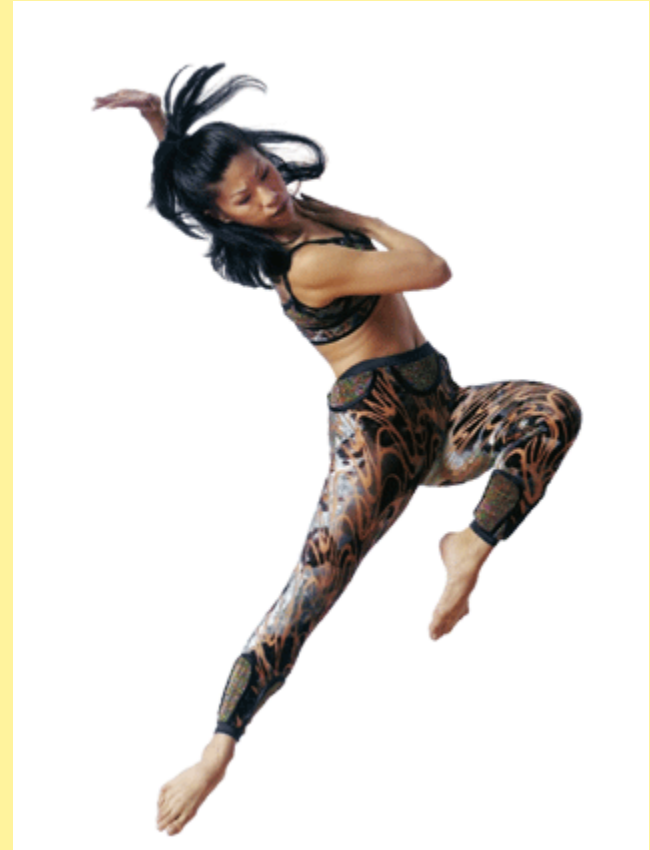
Astin (1993)

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Astin (1993)

Closing the Loop: The Dancer's Mirror

Two-minute Partnered Conversation:

Name one way that assessment has enhanced teaching and learning in your department.

Closing the Loop: The Dancer's Mirror

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.

Closing the Loop: Where Are We?

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.

Closing the Loop: The Dancer's Mirror

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?

Closing the Loop: From Principle to Practice

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

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

Closing the Loop

- 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

Reference

Astin, Alexander W. (1993). *Assessment for Excellence*. Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx.

Astin and Banta. (1991). Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning. AAHE Forum.