Programmatic actions upon assessment results

A case study of breadth and depth in higher education

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Assessment Office

An on-going process designed to monitor and **improve** student learning. Faculty: a) develop explicit statements of what students should learn (i.e., student learning outcomes); b) verify that the program is designed to foster this learning (alignment); c) collect data/evidence that indicate student attainment (assessment results); d) use these data to **improve student learning** (close the loop). (Allen, M., 2008)
Use program assessment to improve teaching and learning
Assessment cycle

Learning Outcomes

Use Results

Learning Opportunities

Interpret Results

Collect & Evaluate Evidence
238 degree programs need to demonstrate using assessment for improvement
Program has increasingly reported assessment use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 (N=230)</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 (N=233)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 (N=232)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 (N=238)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015 (N=238)</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How and how better use assessment process and results?
Research Foci

Factors

Breadth

Depth

Communicate for more actions
Data:
2015 Annual Program Assessment Reports

Sample: 151 reports from 164 programs that claimed use of results
Method:
Thematic Analysis + Expert Judgement

Made sure our coding is trustworthy:
79% interrater agreement on 28 randomly selected programs

Made sure excellent cases were truly excellent:
87% intra-rater agreement or major categories agreement on 47 programs
Strategic Thematic Coding to Promote Use

- Stability
- Specificity
- Ready to use
Used existing major categories

- Assessment tools and procedures
- Course changes
- Program curriculum and policy
- Resources and personnel
- Student out-of-course experiences
Two other often neglected options

- Celebration
- No change needed
Making changes to assessment tools & processes is the most frequently reported use.

- Assessment processes and procedures: 37%
- Course changes
- Student out-of-course experience
- Program curriculum and policy
- No change needed
- Celebration
- Resources/Personnel
Most changes to assessment are tools and processes when collecting & evaluating evidence.
Course and program curriculum policy changes are often related & represent common programmatic actions.

- Assessment processes and procedures
- Course changes (37%)
- Student out-of-course experience
- Program curriculum and policy (22%)
- No change needed
- Celebration
- Resources/Personnel

48% changed course or program
Changes in assignment are in line with recommendations from higher ed leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content coverage/general</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment (Signature assignment 3%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Course(s)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities/materials</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education designation</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course title &amp; description</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course combination/deletion</td>
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Small manageable changes can make a meaningful difference.

- Content coverage/general: 15%
- Assignment (Signature assignment 3%): 10%
- New Course(s): 8%
- Classroom activities/materials: 8%
- General education designation: 2%
- Course title & description: 2%
- Course combination/deletion: 2%
Programs identified need to define clear learning pathway

- Added pre-requisite(s)/co-requisite(s) 5%
- Increased sections/frequency 4%
- Changed graduation requirement 3%
- Created/Restructured curriculum 3%
- Served professional accreditation 3%
- Examined curriculum coherence 2%
- Increased course selection flexibility 2%
- Institutioned course-taking sequence 2%
- Increased course repeat limits 1%
### Programs seriously examined alignment between curriculum and outcomes

<table>
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<th>Change Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Added pre-requisite(s)/co-requisite(s)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1%</td>
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Programs increased opportunities for timely graduation

- Added pre-requisite(s)/co-requisite(s): 5%
- Increased sections/frequency: 4%
- Changed graduation requirement: 3%
- Created/Restructured curriculum: 3%
- Served professional accreditation: 3%
- Examined curriculum coherence: 2%
- Increased course selection flexibility: 2%
- Institutioned course-taking sequence: 2%
- Increased course repeat limits: 1%
Meaningful co-curricular activities enhance learning in both undergraduate and graduate students

- Assessment processes and procedures
- Course changes
- **Student out-of-course experience** 23%
- Program curriculum and policy
- No change needed
- Celebration
- Resources/Personnel
There are multiple ways to support students outside of the classroom.

- Academic advising/mentoring: 9%
- Ccocurricular activities (workshops): 8%
- Resource materials (handbooks, website): 6%
- Financial/Career support: 3%
At a time when resource is scare, assessment results provide persuasive arguments in requesting and getting it.

<table>
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<th>Resources/Personnel</th>
<th>14%</th>
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<tr>
<td>No change needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebration</td>
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Consider revising the job description, too.

- Acquired new faculty/faculty time: 7%
- Acquired student assistant: 3%
- Provided professional development: 2%
- Increased faculty collaboration: 2%
- Acquired new material/technology: 2%
- Reassigned teaching duty: 1%
- Acquired a new lab/facility: 1%
When faculty share, they are likely to learn from each other and improve.

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- Acquired a new lab/facility: 1%
Breadth → Depth
20% (47 out of 238) of the UH Mānoa programs demonstrated excellent use of results.
Minimal Use
• Results indicate no actions needed

Excellent Use
• Actions are clearly aligned with results.
• Careful deliberation of reasons behind actions.

Trying to Use
• Some programmatic actions with no or very weak alignment with results

Good Use
• Actions are meaningful and reasonable.
• Some clues that actions are based on assessment results.
Active and full faculty participation is closely associated with good or excellent use.
Next task: Communicate & Advocate
Deliver use packages
- Statistical skills
- Research methods
- Written communication
Give people options for low-hanging fruit

- **A** - Develop a rubric 1.5 hr
- **R** - Faculty share OC assignment 1.5 hr
- **C** - Share & assignment instructions 1.5 hr
- **S** - Advise students to take 2 method courses
Showcase excellent programs

Assessment Office

Fall 16 Workshops

Univ. Recognition
Implications for the field of evaluation?

Do we know how clients have used the results?
Implications for the field of evaluation?

Do we know how our clients have used the results?
Implications for the field of evaluation?

Have we used that information to help other clients?
Implications for the field of evaluation?

How can we show case our clients to build community of practice?
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