Assessing Student Learning to Improve Programs

Explaining, Understanding and Anticipating Reactions to Change
Elizabethtown College

Presenters

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• Kristi Kneas – Past Chair and member of Educational Assessment Committee

• Brian Newsome – Chair of Educational Assessment Committee

• Rick Basom – Executive Director, Office of Sponsored Research and Programs and member of Educational Assessment Committee
MSCHE Finding: Elizabethtown College's success, and on-going effort, to meet MSCHE's Standard 14.

Elizabethtown College Response: Design, implement and use the results of a student learning assessment system to improve program performance.
Setting the Stage for Designing and Implementing a New Student Learning Assessment System

- How to assess student learning that will improve programs

- How to balance compliance and commitment
  - MSCHE Standard 14 (compliance driven)
  - Assessment culture to document and improve student learning and program performance (commitment driven)

- How to lead (understand/manage) and support long-term, significant change
  - Shared ownership of process (shared governance)
  - Ongoing support (Concerns-Based Adoption Model – CBAM)
Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

- Framework used to support K-12 school improvement/reform efforts for almost 40 years


- Contains three distinct components
  - Stages of Concern
  - Levels of Use
  - Innovation Components
Stages of Concern
(describe how people feel about doing something new/different and their concerns as they engage with new practices – support should focus on needs of each stage.)

- **Awareness** – describes person unaware of proposed change or doesn’t want to learn about it
- **Informational** – interested and wants to know more
- **Personal** – interested in what the change means for them
- **Management** – concerned about learning new skills, time demands, etc.
- **Consequence** – how the innovation will improve the program for learners
- **Collaboration** – how to make the innovation work better by working on it with colleagues
- **Refocusing** – how to further improve the innovation
Levels of Use
(describe behaviors of people as they apply new knowledge and skills and implement the innovation.)

- **Nonuse** – taking no action to implement new practice
- **Orientation** – seeks new information
- **Preparation** – have decided to adopt the new practice and are preparing to implement
- **Mechanical** – early attempt to use; may feel awkward/inadequate (following the recipe)
- **Routine** – satisfactory pattern of behaviors to implement (with minimal “fidelity”)
- **Refinement** – assess impact of efforts and attempt to improve
- **Integration** – actively coordinating implementation with colleagues
- **Renewal** – seeking more effective ways to implement or other innovations to achieve further improvements
Innovation Components

- Description of how the end result should look (if implemented and working perfectly)
- Identify specific parts of the innovation
- Describe examples of what each part might look like when implemented
- Idea is to build a shared image of what the end result should be and how to know when you get there.
Elizabethtown College’s Innovation

Student Learning Assessment System
Components of the Student Learning Assessment System

- Faculty ownership and shared responsibility (shared governance)

- Student Learning Outcomes
  - Approved by Academic Council
  - Delivered through curricular and co-curricular programs
  - Embedded in course structure (syllabi) and programs
  - Mapped against Institutional Learning Goals
  - Assessed systematically (1-3 year cycle) by departments

- Mixed methods/triangulation of data/information

- Comprehensive Assessment Plans

- Departments submit annual reports and report how results have been used to improve programs and student learning

- Reported annually with broad dissemination across Campus
Addressing Concerns About Assessment of Student Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION YEAR</th>
<th>DOMINANT STAGE OF CONCERN ACROSS FACULTY/STAFF</th>
<th>OVERALL LEVEL OF USE OF FACULTY/STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>Awareness, Informational, Personal</td>
<td>Orientation/Preparation (a few early adopters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>Personal, Management, Consequence</td>
<td>Preparation/Mechanical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>Management, Consequence, Collaboration</td>
<td>Mostly Mechanical, a few at Routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>Management, Consequence, Collaboration</td>
<td>Expect half Mechanical, half at Routine (a few at Refinement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>Expect Consequence and Collaboration</td>
<td>Goal for half at Routine, and remainder at Refinement/Integration</td>
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</tbody>
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Recent Conclusions

As we drafted our first “comprehensive” report on student learning…

- Believe the train is pulling out of the station and is on the “right track”
- Departments (Academic and Co-curricular) are using their findings to make changes to improve student learning and program performance
- Believe we have sufficient data/information to build a solid picture of student learning based on our Institutional Learning Goals
- Mixed methods/triangulation of data will work
- Need much improved data (quality and quantity) over time
- Travelling toward the destination of an Assessment Culture
Usefulness of CBAM for EAC and Institution

- Anticipate challenges and be proactive rather than reactive
  - E.g., Anticipate/predict faculty and staff needs and provide appropriate support
- Maintain focus on outcomes and “rise above” the politics
- Move from compliance toward commitment
Latest Results from Implementation of Assessment System

Indicators of Progress Toward Student Learning: Institutional Learning Goals

Addendum: If Time Allows & Audience is Interested…
Institutional Learning Goals

At Elizabethtown College, students are inspired and challenged to:

1. Assume responsibility for their intellectual development, personal growth and well-being. Students will learn to sharpen their curiosity and become aware of the capabilities, strategies and resources needed to learn.
2. Reason, analyze and engage in critical thinking. Students will make, systematically evaluate, and, if necessary, refute arguments and claims—both their own and those of others.
3. Demonstrate thoughtful and articulate communication by applying knowledge in a variety of contexts, including writing, speaking, listening and interpretation.
4. Understand the creative process and its role in human expression, and cultivate the ability to make informed aesthetic judgments.
5. Navigate diverse cultural worldviews and perspectives, with the realization that differing frames of reference influence analysis, communication and behavior.
6. Make reflective ethical decisions and act with integrity to seek just outcomes with relationships, communities and society.
7. Apply and integrate different strands of learning and comprehend interconnections in the process of gaining knowledge and experience.
8. Identify and cultivate a sense of purpose that inspires a commitment to meaningful work in service to society.”
Student Learning at Elizabethtown College: Assessing Progress Towards Institutional Learning Goals

Results from Fiscal Year 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Not Rated as Proficient</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Rated as Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility for Own Learning (N=149)</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate Communication (N=445)</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Aesthetic Judgments (N=411)</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Cultural Worldviews (N=73)</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Decision and Integrity (N=556)</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Learning (N=556)</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= Total Number of Students Assessed
Institutional Learning Goal 2

Reason, analyze and engage in critical thinking. Students will make, systematically evaluate, and, if necessary, refute arguments and claims—both their own and those of others.

- **SAMPLE:** 552 students assessed

- **SOURCES OF EVIDENCE:** Collegiate Learning Assessment (N=91), assessments from 6 academic departments (N=171), standardized test results from 7 academic departments (N=274), assessment of Honors Theses (N=16)

- **FINDINGS:** E-Town seniors scored at 85th percentile across all institutions participating in CLA last year; 459 (83%) rated as performing at or above “proficient” level.
Institutional Learning Goal 3

Demonstrate thoughtful and articulate communication by applying knowledge in a variety of contexts, including writing, speaking, listening and interpretation.

- **SAMPLE:** 445 students assessed
- **SOURCES OF EVIDENCE:** Collegiate Learning Assessment (N=91), assessments from 5 academic departments (N=180), assessment of Honors Theses (N=16), First Year Seminar Research Paper Assessment (N=122), and assessment from 1 Student Life department
- **FINDING:** 379 (85%) were rated (by their programs) as performing at or above “proficient” level.
Institutional Learning Goal 8

Identify and cultivate a sense of purpose that inspires a commitment to meaningful work in service to society.

- **SAMPLE:** 84 students assessed
- **SOURCES OF EVIDENCE:** assessments from 2 academic departments
- **FINDING:** 73 (87%) were rated (by their programs) as performing at or above “proficient” level.
Acknowledgements

- Elizabethtown College Faculty and Staff for embracing the intent rather than just the letter of the requirement to assess student learning and their hard work and commitment that is required for successful implementation of a new student assessment system.

- Students who demand and embrace increased engagement in their own learning.

- Educational Assessment Committee for its diligent hard work and commitment to assessment of student learning.