**Gathering Data Activities**

**Write down the questions you are trying to answer about the assessment process. These questions might be about student learning, student engagement, course assessment, program assessment, institutional effectiveness, or other areas of interest. These questions will inform the process you use to decide what data to gather and how you gather it.**

What are professional writing students actually getting out of their study at Fitchburg State?

**After watching the video,** [**write reflective responses to**](https://mghinstitute.desire2learn.com/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=170219&type=discuss&rcode=MGHIHP-805225) **or discuss the following questions with colleagues:**

1. **What differences if any did you notice in the different types of questions asked by the people in different positions (director of assessment, dean or chair, and faculty member)?**
2. **In comparison to examples discussed in the video, who are your stakeholders, the people who would be interested in the answers to questions about teaching and learning?**
3. **What questions might your stakeholders have that need to be answered?**
4. **To what degree are the questions you would like answered connected to the goals and objectives for your course, program, unit, or institution?**
5. **Revisit the questions you drafted. Are there additional questions you want to add to the list after viewing the video and reading through the list of questions and prompts?**

1) Scale of the question was the most obvious but all constituents spoke on the need to align questions and data to remain focused despite a deluge of data.

2) The video spoke of students, parents, and faculty in particular. I would think that employers would be especially interested as well and this could be used to show how a wide range of majors could adopt professions in various fields. This could be especially true in the humanities.

3) What are the major goals of the program and what significant experiences do the students have to solidify their learning?

4) My question is directly linked to program goals/objectives and will branch into those at the course level as well.

5) This one question is the most pressing at this time and I’d prefer to focus squarely on this question.

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| What are the goals/objectives you are trying to achieve? | What are the questions you are trying to answer? | Category of data | Source of data/method of data collection | Timeline / deadlines | Roles and responsible individuals and groups? |
|  Students who can produce publishable work in a range of publications and audiences | What are the students really learning? Their writing doesn’t seem that flexible or of publishable quality.  |  Course syllabi, student work, alumni hiring data, post graduation interviews, student publications |  syllabi |  Short process  |  Faculty collect and review objectives and assignments. |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |

I’m not sure how I am supposed to complete this grid. Is each row for a different assessment question?

**After completing the activities, reflect on your final product by responding to the questions below. You can do this exercise either through individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.**

1. **While creating the final product, on which goals, objectives and questions did you decide to focus and why?**
2. **What questions or challenges arose for you when completing this task?**
3. **For group dialogue: What is one piece of advice or information that you would give your colleague if they asked for feedback on how to improve and/or re-prioritize this list of goals, objectives and questions?**

1) I’m not sure what you’re asking for here. Am I supposed to find a goal or objective related to my question. That was my guess, so that’s what I did.

2) There weren’t enough directions or instructions on moving from questions to objectives/goals.

3) Keep a tight focus so you can have meaningful answers.

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|  | **Now that you have articulated and prioritized your questions, begin to brainstorm some of the data you could potentially gather to answer these questions.** **Create a list of this potential data. You can use your assessment plan table from the previous activity, but be prepared to change and rework your list as we begin to think about what factors should influence the type of data we gather.** |

See above grid for list.

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| In the Warm-up activity you brainstormed a list of potential types of data you could collect to answer your questions about student teaching and learning. For this activity you should return to that list. You can add to it as well, if you have new ideas about types of data that would be useful. Please transfer the list into this table and attempt to complete the rest of the table to begin to process the different types of considerations outlined in the section above. Some considerations to bear in mind for each of the columns:

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| **Data Source** | **Educational Input, Output or Experience** | **Higher or Lower Validity** | **Higher or Lower Reliability** | **High, Low and type of Process Input Need** | **Intensity of Process: Roles and Timeline** | **Higher and Lower Process Output** |
| Syllabi | Experience | High | Low | Low | Low | high |
| Student work from classes | Output | High | High | Low | Low | high |
| Alumni interviews | experience | low | low | high | high | low |

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**For this next activity, return to your assessment plan and list the sources of data for each of the questions you are trying to answer. It’s ok if a particular question has multiple sources of data. For each source of data, identify what categories of data are represented in terms of direct and indirect, quantitative and qualitative, flexible and standardized, and learning objectives, engagement, dispositions, etc. As you complete the table bear in mind the potential benefits of balancing these different kinds of data.**

See warm up grid.

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| **After completing the activities, reflect on your product by responding to the questions below. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.**1. **While creating the product, on which types of data and sources of data did you decide to focus and why?**
2. **What questions or challenges arose for you when completing this task?**
3. **For group dialog: What is one piece of advice or information that you would give your colleague if they asked for feedback on how to improve and/or re-prioritize this list of goals, objectives, questions, types of data and sources of data?**
 |

1) course syllabi and student products to see what we think we’re teaching versus what the students are able to produce.

2) The column titles were not particularly clear and a method to judge the use value of a specific piece of data could have a clearer formula. It seemed like there were several binaries of data types presented without recommendation of which should and shouldn’t be adopted given certain circumstances, so I can identify data types but not necessary what the best blend of data would be.

3) validity and reliability are key to selecting what data will give you the most bang for your buck and that it’s important to be selective with your time and energy.

**What kinds of methods for gathering data are you familiar with? Identify some of the best approaches to gathering data you have seen at your own institution or other institutions.** [**You can respond to this question through either individual reflective writing or small group discussion.**](https://mghinstitute.desire2learn.com/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=170219&type=discuss&rcode=MGHIHP-805218)

What I have seen has been simply by volunteer, asking faculty to submit student artifact, assignments, or syllabi. The three occasions our department asked for data from Institutional Research, no data was provided or useless data with too many holes. Granted, I have not been involved in projects beyond assessment for LAS and my department. Perhaps those doing program reviews had more success getting necessary data.

**If you have generated additional ideas for methods or approaches to gathering data, please add them to your initial list.**

**After watching the video,** [**write reflective responses to**](https://mghinstitute.desire2learn.com/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=170219&type=discuss&rcode=MGHIHP-805226)**, or with colleagues discuss the following questions:**

* **In comparison to examples discussed in the video, what do you see as some of the biggest roadblocks you might encounter in collecting data?**
* **Why is it important to have policies or procedures in place for storing data you have gathered?**
* **How can you envision making the data gathering process easier on your campus?**
* **Revisit the best approaches to gathering data that you drafted. Are there ideas you want to add to the list after viewing the video and reading through the list of questions and prompts?**
* **In what ways at your institution do you envision using multiple different sources of assessment data to get a better understanding of student learning?**

First, what list are you referring to?

1) getting consistent data and gaining access to the perspective you need. Many people are not open to the assessment process and they leave a hole in your data.

2) much of the data has private information and is the work of others (student, faculty) which they’ve shared with caveats and limitations. Mistreating their material will lose their trust.

3) If there was a central repository that was secure and easy for relevant parties to access, that could be simplier for electronic files.

4) Sure, there are surveys, quantitative data on student performance, or qualitative data from employers or internship supervisors

5) For a program redesign for professional writing, getting employment data with course objectives, student work, alumni surveys, etc. would be a highly valuable project if any of us had the time to spend on such a project.

**For this final activity, return to your assessment plan and complete the timeline/deadlines and roles and responsible individuals and groups. The table will probably start to get complicated as there may be multiple sources of data, deadlines and responsible parties for each pair of goals and questions. As you complete the table take a look back and consider how well you have prioritized your questions, kids and sources of data, timeline and roles.**

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| What are the goals/objectives you are trying to achieve? | What are the questions you are trying to answer? | Category of data | Source of data/method of data collection | Timeline / deadlines | Roles and responsible individuals and groups? |
|  Students who can produce publishable work in a range of publications and audiences | What are the students really learning? Their writing doesn’t seem that flexible or of publishable quality.  |  Course syllabi, student work, alumni hiring data, post graduation interviews, student publications |  syllabi |  Short process  |  Faculty collect and review objectives and assignments. |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |

For the syllabi collection, I would task one faculty member or admin assistant to gather four years of course syllabi for Professional Writing courses and have this person mark identical entries should syllabi have not changed over semesters. I would give this 2-3 weeks. I would then divide those syllabi evenly among the six faculty in the track to copy the objectives and assignments into a spread sheet and code for any agreed upon terms or assignment types. I would give 6-8 weeks for this. We would meet to discuss the potential tags at the time of distribution. I would then have 2 faculty aggregate and display the data in an accessible manner as a map of the curriculum with an 8 week time frame here. Finally, the group would meet to discuss results.

**After completing the activities, reflect on your product by responding to the questions below. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.**

1. **While creating the final product, what roles and responsibilities did you assign and why?**
2. **What questions or challenges arose for you when completing this task?**
3. **For group dialog: What is one piece of advice or information that you would give your colleague if they asked for feedback on how to improve and/or re-prioritize this list of goals, objectives, questions, types of data, sources of data, timeline/deadlines and roles and responsible individuals and groups?**

1) all stages from gathering data, to analyzing data, to representing data, to discussing data.

2) what is a reasonable time line for specific activities? Any suggestions for a meeting schedule…pre collection? mid analysis? Post analysis? What are the best practices here?

3) Be sure to spread the work equitably and make reasonable deadlines so the process is done well.

**Look over your completed assessment plan. Can you articulate rationales for each question you are trying to answer (or outcome you are trying to achieve), each source you chose, and the process you proposed for gathering the data (when and who)?**

**Reviewing and reflecting on your assessment plan with a critical eye may help you to identify gaps or revisions that need to be made and ensure that you will be able to justify your decisions.**

I chose the question I did because the curriculum of the program is quite out of date and needs an overhaul. I chose to start with student products and syllabi so that I could get a curriculum map of what we think we teach so we can shape a curriculum around patterns and fill in hole/cut redundancies that we notice in the map. The student work would show the gap between their work and the level we deem “publishable quality work.” The process should include all faculty in the track to keep the information available to all relevant parties and keep the project a collective with equal buy-in.