

Alignment

Refers to the supporting relationship across multiple elements to improve assessment accuracy. For example, faculty “align” assessments, standards/objectives, learning activities and instruction so that the assessments evaluate students’ achievement of the standards/objectives.

Assessment

Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development." (Banta & Palomba, 2015, p. 2; Palomba & Banta, 1999, p. 4).

Assessment Process

A continuous cycle of:

- Establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning.
- Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes.
- Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations.
- Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning. (Suskie, 2009, p. 4.).

Benchmarking

“According to Jackson and Lund (2000) benchmarking Involves comparing organizational or industry practices, performance, and processes to improve the principal organization or business. Similarly, Bender and Schuh (2002) define benchmarking as a process of comparison for purposes of assessment and innovation. In their terms, assessment involves comparison of one’s own organizational activities with those of similar other organizations to provide a context in which to measure outcomes and activities while innovation involves comparison with peers to obtain new ideas to facilitate major change." (Secolsky, C., & Denison, D. B. (Eds.), 201, p. 100).

Buy-in

Signifies the commitment of interested or affected parties (see stakeholders) to support a decision.

Classroom Assessment

“An approach designed to help teachers find out what students are learning in the classroom and how well they are learning it.” (Anglo and Cross, 1994, p. 4).

Coding

An analytical process used in which data is categorized for analysis.

Consistency

In agreement. Compatible. Corresponding.

Dashboard (Institutional)

A tool used to view an aggregation of assessment information.

Data

Information systematically collected to answer a particular question.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data to make determinations about the quality of something (e.g. student performance). Can be used to evaluate student strengths and weaknesses; may point to problems with the test's validity and to possible bias.

Direct Assessment of Learning

Direct methods of assessment are generally thought to be quantitative in nature. In terms of data collection, direct and indirect methods complement one another. Direct methods of collecting assessment data “require students to display their knowledge and skills as they respond to the instrument itself” (Palomba & Banta, 1999, p. 11). When you ask students to respond to questions on an exam, you are using the direct method of assessment.

Dissemination

Publicly sharing and publishing information.

Embedded Assessment

“A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into and a natural part of the teaching-learning process. Often uses for assessment purposes classroom assignments that are evaluated to assign students a grade. Can assess individual student performance or aggregate the information to provide information about the course or program; can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative. Example: as part of a course, expecting each senior to complete a research paper that is graded for content and style, but is also assessed for advanced ability to locate and evaluate Web-based information (as part of a college-wide outcome to demonstrate information literacy)”. (Leskes, 2002).

ePortfolio

A collection of student work that has been electronically stored providing a chronological account of their learning through a range of artifacts to demonstrate progress toward or achievement of learning outcomes. (Maki, 2010, p. 170).

Evaluation

Evaluation is using assessment data to understand (level of success or value), judge, and/or improve current knowledge, services, and/or practices. (Suskie, 2009).

Evidence

Data collected that can be used as proof to support conclusions or results.

Focus Groups

A qualitative approach to gathering data via small groups of people, typically with prepared questions.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment happens during the learning process and is described by Bailey & Jakicic (2012) as “an activity designed to give meaningful feedback to students and teachers and to improve professional practice and student achievement” (p.14).

General Education/Core Curriculum (Institutional)

Assessment of general education follows the same process as that of other programs. Program assessment requires consensus and agreement across different academic departments representing multiple disciplines and this can be particularly challenging for general education. Having a strong interdisciplinary committee representing faculty and staff from across campus can assist in assessment programs being successful. (Banta & Palomba, 2015).

Goals

“Used to express intended results in general terms and consist of broad learning concepts such as clear communication, problem solving and ethical awareness.” (Banta and Palomba, 2015, p.66).

High stakes/Low stakes Assessment

The decision to use the results of assessment to set a hurdle that needs to be cleared for completing a program of study, receiving certification, or moving to the next level. Most often, the assessment used is externally developed, based on set standards, carried out in a secure testing situation, and administered at a single point in time. Examples: at the secondary school

level, statewide exams required for graduation; in postgraduate education, the bar exam. (Leskes, 2002).

Indicators

A list, sometimes phrased as questions, used to judge the quality and progress of what is being assessed (e.g., student learning outcomes).

Indirect Assessment of Learning

Indirect methods are generally thought to be qualitative. In terms of data collection, direct and indirect methods complement one another. Indirect methods of collecting assessment data can be “helpful in deepening interpretations of student learning” (Maki, 2010, p. 213). When you ask students to respond to a survey or participate in a focus group, you are using the indirect method of assessment.

Interviews

A qualitative approach to gathering data via individuals.

Knowledge Tests

An assessment usually consisting of questions based on understanding of a lesson or content area.

Learning Outcomes

“Outcomes are goals that refer to a destination rather than the path taken to get there - the end rather than the means, the outcome rather than the process. Learning outcomes are the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience” (Suskie, 2009, pp. 116-117).

Learning Objectives

“Describe expected learning and behavior in precise terms, providing guidance for what needs to be assessed.” (Banta and Palomba, 2015, p.66)

Likert Scale

A five (sometimes seven) point scale which is used to allow an individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement or phrase.

Logic Model

A tool or framework used to evaluate the effectiveness of a program.

Mapping

A process typically used in programs to collect and record data that identifies competencies, content, and assessments used in each course across the entire program. It provides a visual 'map' of areas of strengths and weaknesses (gaps) in learning.

Measure

To collect quantitative and/or qualitative data to be analyzed.

Program Assessment

“Uses the department or program as the level of analysis. Can be quantitative or qualitative, formative or summative, standards-based or value added, and used for improvement or for accountability. Ideally, program goals and objectives would serve as a basis for the assessment.” (Leskes, 2002).

Qualitative Assessment

Collects data that does not lend itself to quantitative methods but rather to interpretive criteria. (Leskes, 2002).

Quantitative Assessment

Assessments that use structured, predetermined response options that can be summarized into meaningful numbers and analyzed statistically.” (Suskie, 2009, p. 32).

Reliability

How consistent an assessment instrument performs over time. The instrument should provide similar results over time with similar populations in similar circumstances to be considered 'reliable'.

Rubric

“A scoring guide: a list or chart that describes the criteria that someone will use to evaluate or grade completed student assignments.” (Suskie, 2009, pp. 137).

Standards

“Sets a level of accomplishment all students are expected to meet or exceed. Standards do not necessarily imply high quality learning; sometimes the level is a lowest common denominator. Nor do they imply complete standardization in a program; a common minimum level could be achieved by multiple pathways and demonstrated in various ways.” (Leskes, 2002).

Stakeholders

People who are involved or invested in the assessment process (administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, etc.).

Statistical Tests

Quantitative method used to make decisions about processes; to determine whether there is enough evidence to reject a hypothesis.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment occurs at the end of the learning process and “is used to give a grade or provide a final measure of students results” (Bailey & Jakicic, p. 14).

Surveys

A quantitative approach to gathering data for a larger population.

Validity

An assessment is valid when it accurately reflects the learning it was designed to measure; it measures the desired performance and appropriate conclusions can be drawn from the results.

Value Added

“The increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. Can either focus on the individual student (how much better a student can write, for example, at the end than at the beginning) or on a cohort of students (whether senior papers demonstrate more sophisticated writing skills-in the aggregate-than freshmen papers). Requires a baseline measurement for comparison.” (Leskes, 2002).