Gathering Data

Introduction

Welcome to the module on gathering data for assessment. Whether you are a faculty member, staff member, or administrator in higher education, this module should provide a useful introduction some of the important things to consider when gathering assessment data. Through completing this module, you should be better able to the types of data that you want to collect and generate an assessment plan that outlines how this data will be collected to make evidence-based decisions. This module will also allow you to identify some of the best practices you should consider when collecting assessment data and recommend changes, if needed, to improve data-gathering practices at your institution. As you work through the different sections of the module, we will begin each one by asking you to reflect on and write about some of your own experiences with assessment. Don’t worry if those experiences have been limited, you will have the opportunity to watch videos in which faculty and administrators from other institutions will share their experiences using data to attempt to answer important questions about teaching and learning at their institutions. You will also have the opportunity to read examples and case studies from other institutions as well as some perspectives from the literature on assessment. After each activity of this sort, you will generally be asked to think back and expand on the written responses you initially provided. If possible, we strongly recommend you find one or more colleagues who would be willing to work through the module with you and discuss your responses together. Finally, you’ll also be given activities in which you choose an assessment scenario that best matches your role at your institution or are asked to generate ideas specific to your own institutional needs. We hope that through these activities, you and any colleagues with whom you complete this module, will come away with concrete ideas about how to improve assessment efforts on your own campus.