Using Assessment Data **(TITLE NEEDS TO SAY “VIDEO”)**

Shared Experiences with Using Assessment Data

***Provide one example of a way in which you have used assessment data or seen assessment data used to make a very small and rapid change in a course or program of study***

Meghan Finley: In my Introductory to Sociology class that I teach we teach a very very basic concepts in order to get students involved and look at the world from a more sociological perspective and in teaching them a term called “the sociological imagination” students learn about the connection between the private and the public In other words personal problems that people might have and how sociology helps it become more of a public issue And to me its really a foundational basic term used in sociology but in a couple of my classes the students werent understanding it And so I had them do group work in classes they had to do a short essay and they also have to discuss it online in discussion groups after they respond to their own questions about applying the sociological imagination And as Im going through these answers and Im sifting through the discussion theyre having online Im thinking Huh They are not getting this very fundamental principle of sociology What is going on here And so I sift through the information a little bit more and I want to understand this is very basic why arent they getting it And then I notice well a few students are getting it but most of them are not And the few students who are getting it are those who are older Those are students who are closer to my age You know in their thirties forties fifties And I realized that my references my examples to illustrate the sociological imagination was lost on my traditionally-aged students So when I talked about domestic violence and how domestic violence became a social issue in the 1970s or the even the Catholic priest scandal that happened in the early 2000s this was foreign to them Although they knew about it they didnt understand the before and after So once I quickly introduced within the first few weeks of the semester I introduced topics such as bullying right that has become a social issue Black Lives Matter more recently Ive been able to use And then instantly I see that students are understanding what I mean by sociological imagination

Susan Ouelette: Ive begun instituting an online component to my courses We moved to a new learning management system that allowed us to do a lot of really interesting things outside of the classroom Including things like quizzes and just sort of observational activities and so on And what happened was I initially I was just testing it out to see if it was going to work out for me because I had a little bit of a suspicion Im interested in online learning but Im not really sure how it fits in the hybrid model that I was thinking about applying and so I began to test with little short little burst quizzes from time to time on how students were proceeding in their reading for instance and that was one of the issues in our learning objectives was to you know have good critical reading And what I discovered is that their focus on the reading dramatically improved with this And it wasnt I wasnt doing any sort of like broad-scale quizzing of them but just the notion that each week there were going to be a couple of these questions not necessarily at random but certainly you know not comprehensive kind of tweaked what they though about what they were reading and perhaps even convinced them that perhaps they need to be more conscientious about the reading and so I think that that was a really interesting improvement And I think part of that was related to figuring out that students werent reading as much as they should or as timely as they could and so that was the result

Liz Metallinos-Katsaras: Ive used the clicker turning point technologies to see if students have understood a concept that Im teaching And based on the results of that Ive noticed at times they didnt quite get it they didnt quite understand the concept and then immediately I either give another example or do a little small case study or I expand on it and so its a rapid and immediate response to the assessment and its worked very nicely for me

***Provide one example of a way in which you have used assessment data or seen assessment data used to make a large and substantial change in a course or program of study***

Meghan Finley: Our English department at the community college is huge like many English departments right There are so many course intro courses that students need to take for gen ed And so a few years back they came up with a common assignment In order to manage well they had several but they were focusing on this one particular one in order to understand you know are all of our teachers meeting these marks These certain outcomes we expect from our students And they decided to pilot this particular assessment so they crafted their assignments that everybody was using they created a rubric a way to measure the degree to which theyre meeting these particular outcomes and about two or three of them get together over the summer and they review sixty seventy papers and early on they realize Uh-oh Our rubric and our assignment and our course objectives do not align perfectly So they did as much as they could but they really had to go back to the drawing board in terms of How do we tweak the assignment And how do we adjust the rubric so that we are looking at all the same things So they made that adjustment they went back did it again theyve been doing it ever since and theyve expanded it to many more faculty and many more artifacts and papers that they review But it was a major overhaul to change a common assignment for everyone

Susan Ouelette: I think that we have become a lot more systematic about approaching how students do their senior thesis So for instance in earlier you know a decade or so ago students arrived at senior thesis and were told Ok you need to choose a topic and you need an advisor and so on Nowadays in their junior year were saying to them Next year youre going to be doing a senior thesis And so because youre going to be doing a senior thesis you need to be thinking in advance about what that thesis might be and who might be the person you want to work with and were encouraging students before the end of their junior year to actually make contact begin making plans for various both for the person that theyre going to work with as well as for the subject that theyre going to work in Some students will use the summer to do prep work to get started And I think that thats probably been a really big change thats been assessment-related

Liz Metallinos-Katsaras: In one of my courses which is a senior course seminar course in which when I took it over twelve years ago we noticed that students were not very strong in their writing skills And we understood from our profession that students needed to be better writers and also better consumers of information and interpreters of information for non-nutrition scientists And so we implemented a new course design in that course where it was writing-intensive I participated in a seminar where we designed the course to include many more writing assignments And the second example is I did an informal assessment of the course at the end of that course about four years ago and was really struck by the level of stress the students were under during the spring semester when that course was offered And they really emphasized to me how important it would be to change the course to be offered in the fall because in the spring they have many other courses that are very challenging and it was their senior year too So we actually decided as a faculty to change that course to the fall and thats worked very well Now that doesnt mean theyre not stressed because they still are the course is a lot of work but I think that was a really important move to make and I highlight to them that we made that decision based on student feedback on the course

***Can you provide or imagine an example in which the same assessment might be applied across different levels of an institution such as course program and institution-wide***

Meghan Finley: The buzzword were using across the country whether its community college or larger colleges and universities is “community engagement” right We really need to be engaged in some way So in the classroom it might be something like service learning it might be an internship or placement out in the field so we use rubrics and other measures to understand the degree to which that impacts students learning How does it deepen their learning How does it expand their learning How much does it really impact their long-term learning which is something we also measure So that happens in the classroom It also benefits the program or the department or whatever the course is steeped in how is that impacting the program How is that impacting the success of the program in terms of student success Their academic success and their professional success How quickly are they able to move on to other academic institutions Or find placement in terms of jobs from there And that reflects well on the program And then for the overall institution the college itself its very helpful not only is it helping students academically and professionally but its also helping colleges meet these certain metrics that they need to meet in terms of GPAs retention graduation rates job placement and that in turn helps them with things like grants federal and state money that could have It also helps build relationships within the community so you can really thrive in future areas for collaboration

Susan Ouelette: Part of our mission is to create the whole person right And weve got a variety of different initiatives that are related to that and one of them is writing across the curriculum So I can imagine that especially in the context of say the history intermediate courses where weve established rubrics for certain expectations around writing that that would be something that could be applied much more broadly at least across the humanities But I think probably beyond that as well because good writing doesnt really have a particular discipline Its more about the mechanics of writing and expressing good ideas and creating good habits of mind So I can imagine that that would be a place where it could go across the curriculum and across the entire institution in one way Course-wise it seems to me that and we have been moving in this direction doing good assessment of our liberal studies requirements and really kind of connecting them up in ways that make pedagogical sense would make sense for good assessment practices across the board – that would not necessarily homogenize but certainly would give us you know I think more consistent results I think it also helps students to understand well from our perspective its really important that students understand the liberal arts education and so that would be another place that that could happen

Liz Metallinos-Katsaras: We do survey our students every year our alums and we get feedback on their preparation for their internships And so we get the same data can be used to improve a course they feel they were not prepared but also can be used to change the program or study where we might need to add something like genetically modified foods or more on running your own business or entrepreneur and so that same data set is being used for both the program level and the course level changes Now we also have fed into the institutional level where we hear from students that the cost this is something where we as faculty cant do too much about but we hear about the cost of the education and how unhappy they were with the cost and we feed that back up to the institution and we have advocated for more scholarships more graduate assistantships

***What recommendations would you make to a colleague about how to ensure that the data they have collected is used in a meaningful way to improve teaching and learning***

Meghan Finley: Its sort of this unspoken uneasiness among many faculty We have spent years studying our field we know the research we know the techniques we know the analyses whatever the field is right You know it backwards and forwards More often than not however we did not receive pedagogical training A few have a few had great mentors throughout it but by and large that is not part of the graduate school experience So first and foremost I would say that faculty need to be humble We are used to being able to answer all of these questions right why why why But we dont have to know this This is part of our learning too And thats ok So please be humble and understand that youre learning too Youre not going to have all the answers I would also say that we need to believe and sort of a sound approach to assessment Believe in your teaching abilities believe in your assignments right the rubrics or whatever measures you choose to assess your work and the process you come up with however it is you decide to do this Believe in it dont question it I mean its ok to question it after the fact but really be comfortable with it when you start out in your assessment And finally I would say to be timely The semester and the work piles up it is so easy to be like Well I can do that later and the assessments and the artifacts pile up on our desks and in some cases the corner of our offices and we really need to make sure its incorporated in our schedules so that we do understand whats happening we do have our finger on the pulse of our classroom and that if there are changes that need to be made its ok Alright get em next time

Liz Metallinos-Katsaras: The first recommendation I would make is to plan you assessment before you teach your course or as youre teaching your course So that youre collecting the right types of data to inform teaching and learning The second is not to collect too much data because if you collect too much you will not have time to use it But also to set aside time to use the data Often we as faculty members have data that we worry about in terms of our promotion and tenure and we sometimes have some reticence in really reflecting on what all of the data means So standing back from your data from the course evaluations and also from the informal and formal assessment data and thinking about how this would improve the course