



Challenges to Developing and Supporting a Culture of Continuous Improvement: The Contemporary Assessment Debate

Annual Meeting of the Commission on Information, Measurement & Analysis

Bozeman, Montana

July 30, 2018



BGSU. BELONG. STAND OUT. GO FAR.
CHANGING LIVES FOR THE WORLD.

Goal & Purpose of Session

- Provide an overview of current arguments for and against institutional assessment.
- Discuss the role of assessment in continuous improvement.
- Identify strategies and best practices at our institutions to address how we can use assessment to inform continuous improvement efforts.

Recent Arguments Against & In Support Of Assessment

- January 2018
 - “An Insider’s Take on Assessment: It May Be Worse Than You Thought”, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Erik Gilbert (1/12/2018)
 - “Letters in Response to ‘An Insider’s Take on Assessment’”, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Multiple Authors (2/5/2018)
- February 2018
 - “The Misguided Drive to Measure ‘Learning Outcomes’”, *The New York Times*, Molly Worthen, (2/23/2018)
 - “Assessment Isn’t About Bureaucracy but About Teaching and Learning”, *Inside Higher Education*, Kate Drezek McConnell (3/1/2018)
- July 2018
 - “Some Questions for Assessophiles”, *Inside Higher Education*, Alex Small (7/3/2018)
 - “Why Assessment of Teaching is Vital”, Matthew DeSantis, *Inside Higher Education*, (7/19/2018)

Arguments Against

- Ineffability
 - Student learning is unmeasurable; Validity & Reliability Issues
- Assessment is a Bureaucracy
- Value-Added?
 - To student learning and success; Is assessment ‘worth’ it—
assessing assessment
- Content Expertise
 - Faculty are the content experts
- Consequences of not doing assessment
 - “What would/can you do to us?”; Academic Freedom
- Rewards
 - Assessment is something above and beyond faculty workload (it is something “extra”); To improve teaching

Arguments In Favor Of

- Student Learning is Measurable
 - Grades vs. Learning Outcomes; Validity (Construct, Content, Concurrent, Practical)
- Efforts/Tools to Decrease Bureaucracy
- Value-Added
 - To student learning and success; *Assessment is Assessed*
- Content Expertise
 - Many faculty do not have expertise in assessment
- Consequences of not doing assessment
 - Accreditation & Compliance
- Rewards
 - Assessment can improve/inform teaching; Continuous Improvement

Small & Large Group Discussion

- For each group, identify a:
 - Time Manager
 - Recorder
 - Reporter

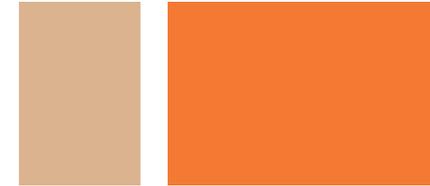
Small Group: About ½ hour

Large Group: About 20 Minutes

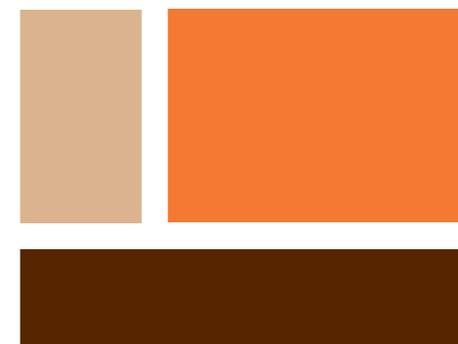
Small Group Discussion Questions

- What is your involvement with assessment efforts on your campus?
- How important is assessment in developing and supporting a culture of continuous improvement on your campus?
- What is the prevalent argument (for/against) on your campus?
- What strategies/action steps have you employed on your campus to use assessment to inform continuous improvement on your campus?
- What role does CIMA play in this debate?

Large Group Discussion



- What roles does assessment play on CIMA campuses?
- What is the prevalent argument (for/against) assessment on CIMA campuses?
- What strategies/action steps can you take back to your campus to improve the use of assessment to inform continuous improvement?
- What role does CIMA play in this debate?



Final Thoughts

- Assessment and Research are fundamentally different (Assessment = Evaluation; Research = Discovery)*
- Assessment infrastructures need to be integrated and accessible
- Assessment is a core function of teaching and learning
- Faculty play a critical role in effective assessment systems—should be the designers, assessors, digesters, and actors
- Assessment is a critically important mechanism to improve teaching and, thereby, the academy

*Sriram, R. (2017). We need researchers....So let's stop using the term assessment. *About Campus*, May-June ■