

Plenary Session – Skinner (facilitated by Dr. Steve Beyerlein)

Interview – Moving Measurement from the Classroom to Institutional Level

Definitions –

Assessment = vehicle to bring about change in performance

Evaluation = judge relative value of a performance

Measurement = document level of performance

Thank you – conference a great opportunity to participate with folks around these educational issues as something different from primary role solving problems.

Questions

1. What different roles have you played that involve measurement?
 - a. Dr. Skinner comes with an educational background with many classes and much work behind her in this area.
 - b. Some early experience in MI (early 1970s) – faculty went on strike. She came back to a completely new faculty and was appointed to help set up a system of measures to determine how ranks should be assigned and how faculty would move between them.
 - c. Was asked to take over a program (business) for someone going on maternity leave. This began her real administrative experience. Needed to learn about what factors make a successful department.
 - d. Moved to The Ohio St University and experience teaching for prison programs off campus came into play. There were quality issues there – how do a good job teaching in an area you are not qualified for? Leads to need for defining what good quality programs and teaching should look like and articulating those characteristics. A large part of this work involved figuring out what data to collect and how to do that.
 - e. Worked with State Board of Regents to develop definitions of quality that were based on outputs rather than inputs (this was new at the time). This led to a different way of creating objective criteria and measures, along with the need to figure out how to collect the data that would speak to those criteria.
 - f. Coming to Gaston. Didn't have a highly collegial atmosphere. It was a challenge to get faculty to believe that input (data) was welcome in order to help her understand how best to move the institution forward.
 - g. Positions of leadership come with lots of expectations that have criteria already set up for you from a variety of stakeholders.
2. What are some challenges to assessment/evaluation as related to measurement?
 - a. Resistance to change, fear of the unknown, and lack of trust are barriers to moving forward
 - b. Current measurement systems may be a barrier to innovation (example of the current student evaluations preventing pedagogical innovation) since the criteria are not appropriate to a new context or do not incorporate the idea performance in a changing environment

- c. Measures set up for you by others may not be easy to change
- 3. What are some challenges in reporting to state, national, and other audiences?
 - a. Two examples: Compliance measure and QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan)
 - i. May not be doing things yet to measure impacts in areas these items address
 - b. Performance Measures for State of North Carolina
 - i. Very specific items must be reported annually and money is tied to that. The data is provided but the metric is measured by someone else, not the institution itself
 - ii. Measures were changed two years ago because too many institutions were meeting them → it is difficult to gauge one's progress
 - c. Need to do self-assessment based on these measurements to figure out what to do to meet criteria or score higher
 - d. Different constituents each have their own standards and criteria. Therefore, data from measurement activities must be processed in multiple ways and tailored to the needs of each stakeholder.
- 4. How to create synergy among stakeholders in creating and using measures?
 - a. Need to set up effective avenues for communication that utilize existing social structures on campus.
- 5. How has measurement changed during your career?
 - a. Much more learning centered
 - b. Must be based on student learning activities/process
 - c. Data collection via computers/internet is much more sophisticated
 - d. Expectation of immediate response due to technology enabling that.
 - e. Need to balance what and how much is measured based on resource limitations that are continuously changing.

Audience insights/questions, etc.

- 1. Risk takers are out there. How do you support them when measures are attached to specific evaluation expectations?
 - a. Allow faculty to explore whether it is measurable, and if so, how?
 - b. Don't always need to apply the standard evaluation if it is not appropriate.
- 2. Administration can set a tone to support risk despite whatever a measure might indicate as needed. This is through direct presence at faculty development events, public statements saying "we need to head in this direction", etc.
- 3. Thoughts on using electronic portfolios from the administrative perspective?
 - a. Need to ask faculty who might actually be involved with pieces of it
 - b. Start with one course in a department and have students from the course spend separate time with the students addressing specific areas where measures are required for accreditation (such as ethics)
 - c. Use a time lag to present portfolio results to faculty (5 semesters) and have faculty do SII on the results. This can then be used for several ABET criteria.
- 4.