When Assessment Stalls:
Using Process Education for Just-in-Time Solutions

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WORKSHOP

Abstract:

In this workshop, participants will review and use available Process Education Methodologies to address scenarios where assessments are ineffective, lack direction, or are locked in differences. Process Education Methodologies will be used, when possible, to create just in time solutions to the intractable situations that are typical of those faced in higher education.

Educators often begin in the middle. They undertake assessment well after programs and courses have been designed and implemented. Process Education, on the other hand, recommends a design process that is integrated and linear interconnecting conceptualization, implementation, and assessment. So what happens when assessments stall in contexts where Process Education methodologies have not been followed in whole or in part?

Learning Outcomes:

1. How to systematically advance assessment practices after the fact by incorporating more problem solving into the process to improve assessment

2. Creating consensus with multiple stakeholders of what is and how to measure quality with assessments

3. How does assessment improve learning outcomes but provide faculty academic freedom with the processes used to produce strong learning outcomes

Facilitation Plan:

In this workshop, participants will review and use available Process Education Methodologies to address scenarios where assessments are ineffective, lack direction, or are locked in differences. Process Education Methodologies will be used, when possible, to create just in time solutions to the intractable situations that are typical of those faced in higher education.

Educators often begin in the middle. They undertake assessment well after programs and courses have been designed and implemented. With the current emphasis upon collecting direct evidence of student learning, program faculty may wait until data are gathered that document trends and until they have an archive of student work products before assessing student performance.

Process Education, on the other hand, recommends a design process that is integrated and linear interconnecting conceptualization, implementation, and assessment. The integrity of the assessment process resides in extent to which it is an integral part of the design process. Whether consulting the Process Education *Faculty Guidebook* or the new release, 25 Years of Process Education, assessment works best when educators begin at the beginning of the process methodologies. In the Methodology for Developing a Program Assessment System, "documenting program quality" is stage 5 of a 5 stage process. In Designing a Course Assessment, assessing the course is Step 19 of 21 Steps.

So what happens when assessments stall in contexts where Process Education methodologies have not been followed in whole or in part?

To what degree than are the methodologies of Process Education useful for problem-solving and as interventions, to create limited solutions that allow existing processes to resume and to improve incrementally? Are Process Education methodologies adaptable to problem-solving where, rather than the development of an integrated and aligned system with assessment as the logical outcomes of the design process, Process Education methodologies instead serve to identify and resolve the roadblock, the missing piece, or the misstep in an existing process. To what extent is it possible to use Process Education to move immature processes forward one step at a time?

The workshop will apply Process Education methodologies to the following cases of stalled or incomplete processes.

1. Academic Freedom vs. Standardized Syllabi:

    Academic freedom and the acceptance of the faculty member as content expert are two factors that contribute, in part, to variation in the production and expression of learning objectives in course syllabi. Yet a focus on the consistency of learning objectives is required as a measure of quality by accrediting bodies which view shared or common statements of learning objectives as needed to demonstrate quality. Can faculty maintain different versions of syllabi that are then able to demonstrate consistency across outcomes?

2. General Education Distribution Area Courses: Too Broad to Assess

    The academic program is owned by various stakeholders such as a distribution area in general education that allows for multiple departments to contribute to the establishment of learning objectives. For example, one area, global studies, meets a distribution area of the general education curriculum, and shares a set of broad learning objectives. But there are a wide range of course expectations, some that involve mastery of geography and history, and others that involve cultural awareness or cross-cultural comparisons. As such assessing student performance outside of each course seems too difficult, like comparing apples to oranges.

3. Assessment and Keeping It Too Simple:

    An institution has a 5 Step Quality Cycle that is widespread in its adoption. Using the Process Education methodologies, identify and prioritize what the key aspects of program design and assessment methodology are missing or are in need of strengthening.

Resources: Hand-outs and resources will be given in the workshop for each case study. Participants need only to bring materials to take notes.

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