Assessing Strategic Intervention Points in Student Services

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Background and Description
Background

• A need for viable assessment models & techniques in student support services

• A holistic approach (instruction and student services working together) for optimizing student success

• A unique set of challenges that happen outside of the classroom requires a special toolbox of potential assessment approaches.
Description

• Counting the number of students who receive services or evaluating student satisfaction can be a useful point of departure – but often provides limited actionable information.

• A complete toolbox of assessment measures should document:
  • program contributions to the college
  • how programs contribute to student development or learning
  • information on means for continuous improvement
Assessment Framework

- **Backward Design**: Start with the end in mind.
- **Initial Assessments**: Utilize pre-tests.
- **Comparison Groups**: Use similar and multiple groups to compare.
- **Research Agenda**: Develop a balanced agenda that promotes inquiry.
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
Describe the state of assessment in Student Services at your institution.

MOVING FORWARD
Identify some strengths and some areas of growth in Student Services assessment.
Components and Strategies
Backward Design

**Desired Outcome**
- Which intervention or service do you want to AND can you change?
- What do you want the student to learn or do as a result of the service or intervention?

**Data Needs**
- What evidence would provide useful information that would help you enact improvements?

**Research Design**
- What approach would result in collection of the necessary evidence?
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
Have you used backward design in any of your current Student Services assessment processes? If so, what have been the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

MOVING FORWARD
Identify Student Services areas that might benefit from a backward design approach.
Your Turn!

Review the Inventory of Support Services Assessments handout and identify which assessments might work well for your or other support service areas, and identify other assessments not listed.
Initial Assessments

1. Initial assessments help to answer the question of whether self-selection is influencing the student outcome.
2. Paired with post-tests, initial assessments can be used for student learning outcome assessment.
3. In-take questionnaires as an initial assessment can be used to gather information on:
   - Academic preparedness
   - Hours worked per week
   - Domain expertise
   - Motivation and hope
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT

Have you used initial assessments in any of your current Student Services assessment processes? If so, what have you learned?

MOVING FORWARD

Identify Student Services areas that might benefit from an approach that utilizes initial assessments.
Comparison Groups

• Comparison groups provide a useful benchmark that can help anchor discussions and decisions.
• Comparing a group that is receiving a service to everyone else in the college can miss key nuances that affect success.
• Comparing a “treatment” group to a group with similar characteristics not receiving the services is more appropriate.
Sample Comparison Groups

Single Comparison Group

Multiple Comparison Groups

African American Basic Skills students receiving services

African American Basic Skills students not receiving services

African-American Basic Skills students not receiving services

All Basic Skills Students not receiving services
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
Have you used comparison groups to evaluate Student Services programs to this point? If so, what did you find?

MOVING FORWARD
Identify Student Services areas that might benefit from using comparison groups.
Utilization & Satisfaction Measures

• Service utilization and customer satisfaction measures are key components of a multi-pronged approach to assessment.
  • Satisfaction Measures
    • Online provides on-going and readily available student feedback
    • May include comment cards given at the time of service
  • Electronic tracking systems can also provide very useful information about including:
    • Services used
    • Relationship to issues like persistence and success
    • Characteristics of the students who are using services
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT
Have you used utilization and/or satisfaction measures to evaluate your Student Services programs? If so, what did you find?

MOVING FORWARD
Think about the Student Services programs on your campus – for which programs should utilization and/or satisfaction approaches remain the primary assessment technique? For which ones are more direct assessment approaches more appropriate?
Balanced Research Agenda

• A research agenda provides a larger framework for the process of inquiry and helps:
  • organize and prioritize information requests
  • identify high-leverage decision points
  • create action plans

• Research agendas begin with determining key questions that would inform decisions, such as what, when, and where services should be offered to students.
Creating a Research Agenda

1. Review goals and conduct needs assessment
2. Review existing research and identify gaps
3. Determine additional research needed
4. Prioritize existing and additional research needs
5. Align research to goals and add effectiveness indicators
6. Link research to other college plans and initiatives
7. Establish reporting cycle
8. Share w/ constituency groups and adjust accordingly
9. Implement research agenda, review and revise agenda
Guided Inquiry

INSTITUTIONAL SNAPSHOT

Do you have a Student Services research agenda? If so, what are the priorities for the next year?

MOVING FORWARD

Discuss how you would form a Student Services research agenda. Who should be involved?
Evaluation
Evaluation

• Dedicate venues for evaluating and discussing plans, evidence and the results of the data analysis:
  • Professional development/flex days
  • A designated college committee
  • Share with broader campus
BRIC TAP Inquiry Guide Series

1. Assessing Student Learning Outcomes
2. Using an Equity Lens to Assess Student Learning (CUE Module)
3. Assessing Strategic Intervention Points in Student Services
4. A Model for Building Information Capacity and Promoting a Culture of Inquiry
5. Assessing and Planning for Institutional Effectiveness
6. Assessing Basic Skills Outcomes
7. Maximizing the Program Review Process
8. Turning Data into Meaningful Action
9. Research and Assessment for Noncredit Institutions

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