

DEVELOPING AN ASSESSMENT CULTURE:

STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN ASSESSMENT

Herb Amato, DA, ATC

Andrea Pope, M.Ed.

Madison Holzman, M.Ed.



Participant question



- At your institution, what is the single biggest **barrier** to developing a positive assessment culture?
- Write the answer on one side of the **index card** on your table
- Briefly **share** with others at your table

Institutional barriers

- Lack of expertise
 - Lack of resources
 - Faculty hostility
 - People too busy (not a high priority)
 - Misalignment with external mandates & internal priorities
-
- What else?



Workshop Agenda

- Introduction: Investigating Assessment Quality
- Using Assessment Results for Improvement
- Faculty Development
- Group Activity
- Resource Sharing
- Develop an Action Plan
- Discussion



Learning Outcomes

As a result of this workshop, participants will:

- Identify the six steps in the **assessment model** and explain how **quality can vary at each step**
- Identify where **faculty members** stand in their assessment development progress and what faculty development and resources are best-suited for faculty members at that stage of development
- Identify **faculty development opportunities** they can immediately offer
- Explain how institutions can strategically **enhance assessment culture** through faculty development and support
- Synthesize **ideas about how an institution can use assessment** to provide evidence for **impact on student learning**.



Why practice assessment?

- Accountability
- Program Improvement
- Recruitment

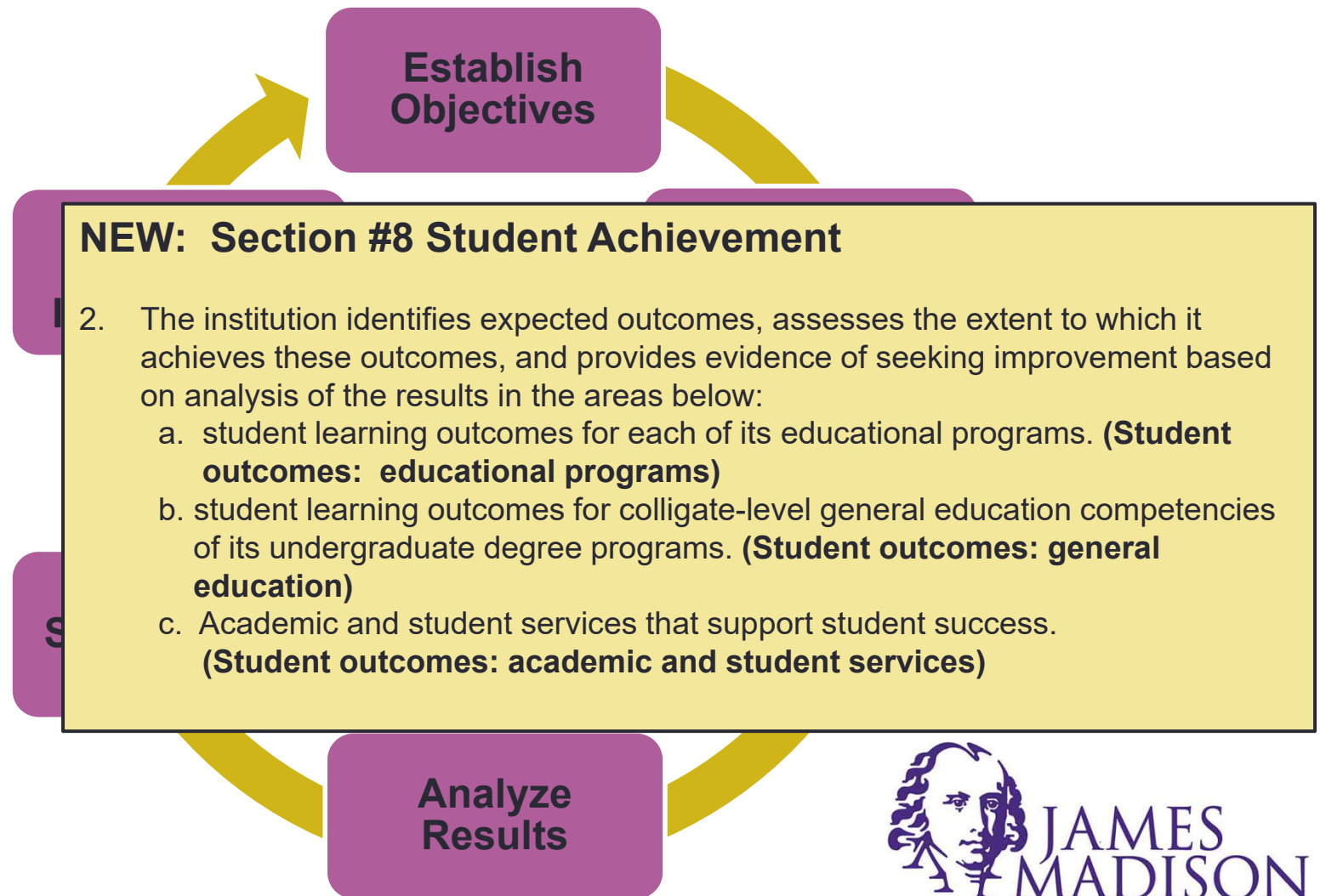


Quick Survey

- Where are you in the SACSCOC Cycle?
 - Visit within this year
 - Writing report within the next 18 months
 - Approaching 5 year interim
 - 5-10 year period, nothing due



Assessment is Cyclical



Assessment Improvement

- Assessment is **increasingly** practiced
- Expectations of **quality assessment** are less common
- Why does **quality assessment** matter?
- How to use assessment results to **improve** student learning



Example

What is the difference in assessment practice? Does it matter?

B.A. program in NFL History

- Well defined objectives
- Objectives mapped to curriculum
- Uses an alumni survey to assess all objectives and one senior satisfaction survey (15% response rate on each)
- Makes curricular changes based on assessment results

B.A. program in 80s Pop Culture

- Well defined objectives
- Objectives mapped to curriculum
- Uses at least one direct measure to assess all objectives (100% response rate)
- Makes curricular changes based on assessment results

Assessment Quality

- Enables one to trust inferences made from results
- Is necessary if assessment is to lead to program improvement
- Can we gauge assessment quality?



MEASURING ASSESSMENT QUALITY



“Meta-Assessment”

- “Meta-Assessment”- assessing the assessment cycle (Ory, 1992)
 - Specifically, assessing the **quality of assessment**



Meta-Assessment Research

- Over 50 institutions practice “meta-assessment” (Fulcher, Swain, Orem, 2012)
 - Typically a rubric is used to evaluate an assessment report
- Assessment coordinators who utilize resources and consultation improve assessment quality (Rodgers, Grays, Fulcher, & Jurich, 2012)
- Programs who more frequently consult have higher assessment quality (Fulcher & Bashkov, 2012)



Advantages of Meta-Assessment

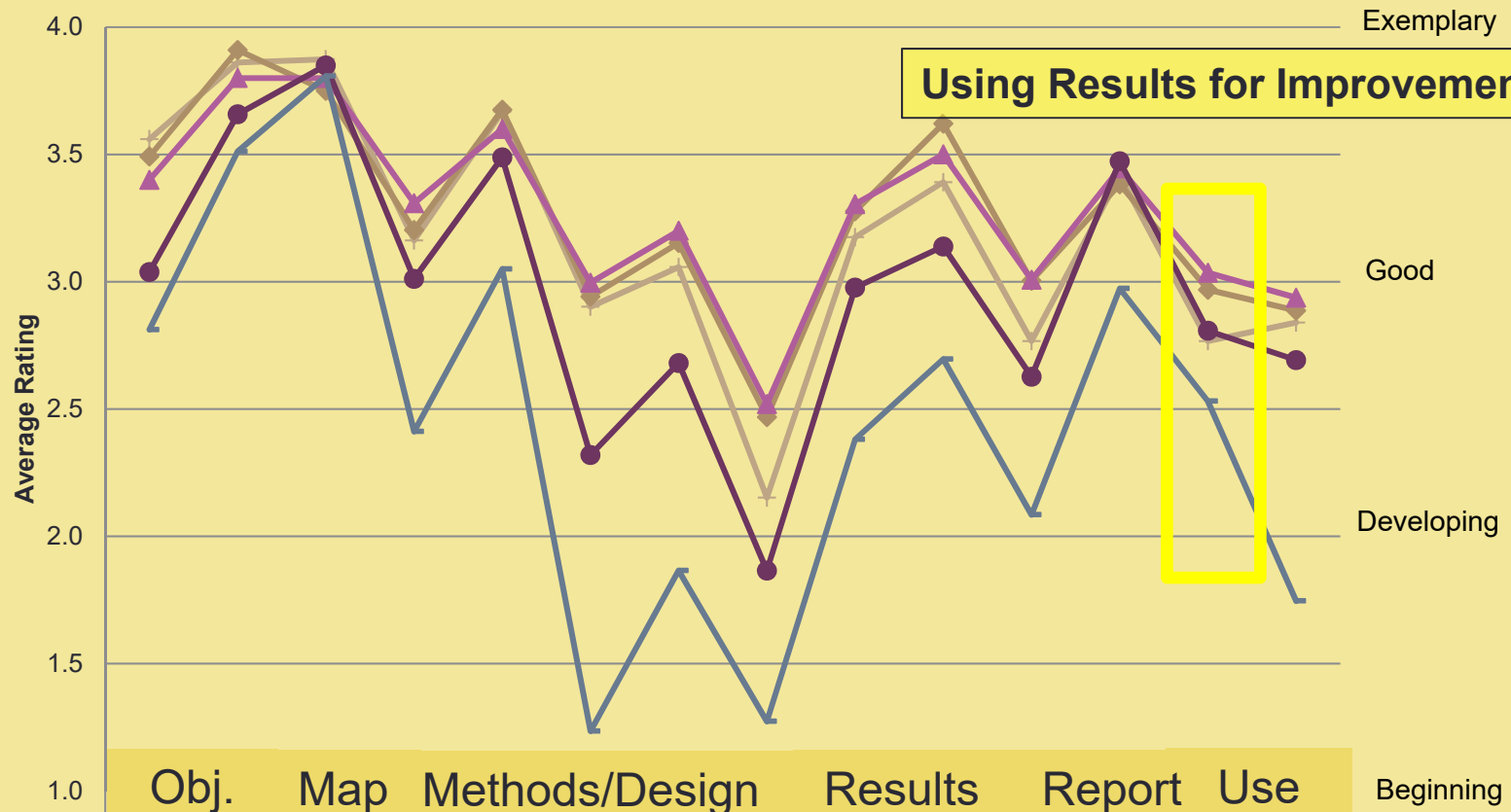
- Identify individual program assessment strengths and weaknesses
- Allows for a common reporting mechanism across the university
- Allows institutional view of assessment quality
 - Via aggregate data



Meta-Assessment in Practice

1 – Beginning	2 – Developing	3 – Good	4 – Exemplary
1. Student-centered learning objectives			
A. Clarity and Specificity			
No objectives stated.	Objectives present, but with imprecise verbs (e.g., know, understand), vague description of content/skill/or attitudinal domain, and non-specificity of whom should be assessed (e.g., “students”)	Objectives generally contain precise verbs, rich description of the content/skill/or attitudinal domain, and specification of whom should be assessed (e.g., “graduating seniors in the Biology B.A. program”)	All objectives stated with clarity and specificity including precise verbs, rich description of the content/skill/or attitudinal domain, and specification of whom should be assessed (e.g., “graduating seniors in the Biology B.A. program”)
B. Orientation			
No objectives stated in student-centered terms.	Some objectives stated in student-centered terms.	Most objectives stated in student-centered terms.	All objectives stated in student-centered terms (i.e., what a student should know, think, or do).
2. Course/learning experiences that are mapped to objectives			
No activities/ courses listed.	Activities/courses listed but link to objectives is absent.	Most objectives have classes and/or activities linked to them.	All objectives have classes and/or activities linked to them.
3. Systematic method for evaluating progress on objectives			
A. Relationship between measures and objectives			
Seemingly no relationship between objectives and measures.	At a superficial level, it appears the content assessed by the measures matches the objectives, but no explanation is provided.	General detail about how objectives relate to measures is provided. For example, the faculty wrote items to match the objectives, or the instrument was selected “because its general description appeared to match our objectives.”	Detail is provided regarding objective-to-measure match. Specific items on the test are linked to objectives. The match is affirmed by faculty subject experts (e.g., through a backwards translation).
B. Types of Measures			
No measures indicated	Objectives are not assessed via direct measures (only with indirect measures).	Most objectives assessed with direct measures.	All objectives assessed using at least one direct measure (e.g., tests, essays).
C. Specification of desired results for objectives			
No a priori desired results for objectives	Statement of desired result (e.g., student growth, comparison to previous year’s data, comparison to faculty standards,	Desired result specified. (e.g., our students will gain ½ standard deviation from junior to senior year; our students will score	Desired result specified AND justified (e.g., Last year the typical student scored 20 points on measure x. The current

Nine Years of Assessment Report Feedback Ratings (2009-2017)



	Obj.	Map	Methods/Design	Results	Report Use
16-17 APTs	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.2	3.7
14-15 APTs	3.5	3.9	3.8	3.2	2.9
12-13 APTs	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.3	2.9
09-10 APTs	3.0	3.7	3.9	3.0	2.6
08-09 APTs	2.8	3.5	3.8	2.4	2.1

Misconceptions

Conducting assessment automatically leads to improved learning

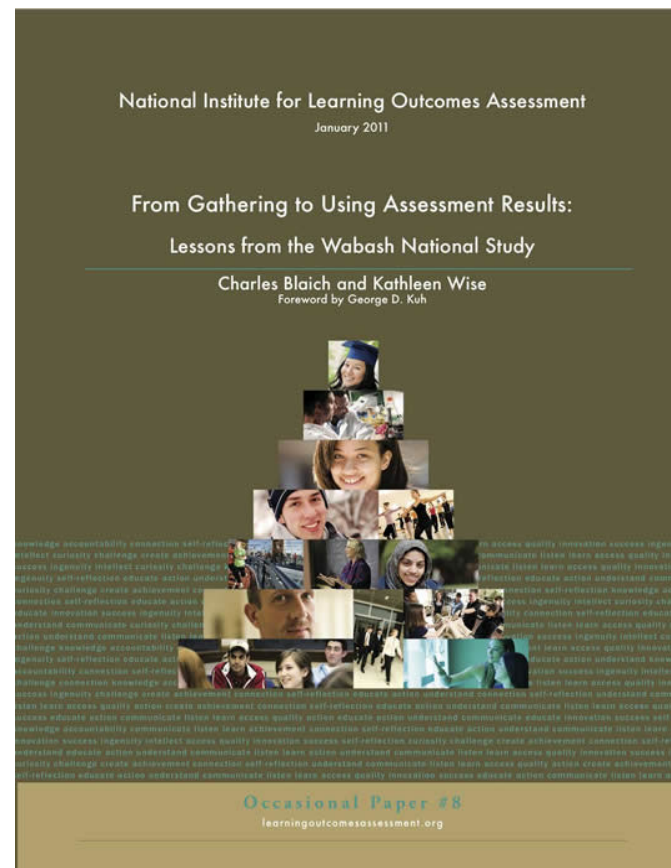
Even when assessment reports are disseminated widely, most of us behave as though the data in the reports will speak loudly enough to prompt action. We tend to believe that interesting findings will naturally prompt discussions and ultimately revisions in our courses and programs. But this denies the reality on most of our campuses—that the current state of affairs in our departments, curricular structures, and programs is usually a compromise carefully negotiated among numerous parties over the course of years. Unless the findings are truly devastating, assessment data has little impact on this tightly constrained arrangement.

(Blaich & Wise, 2011)

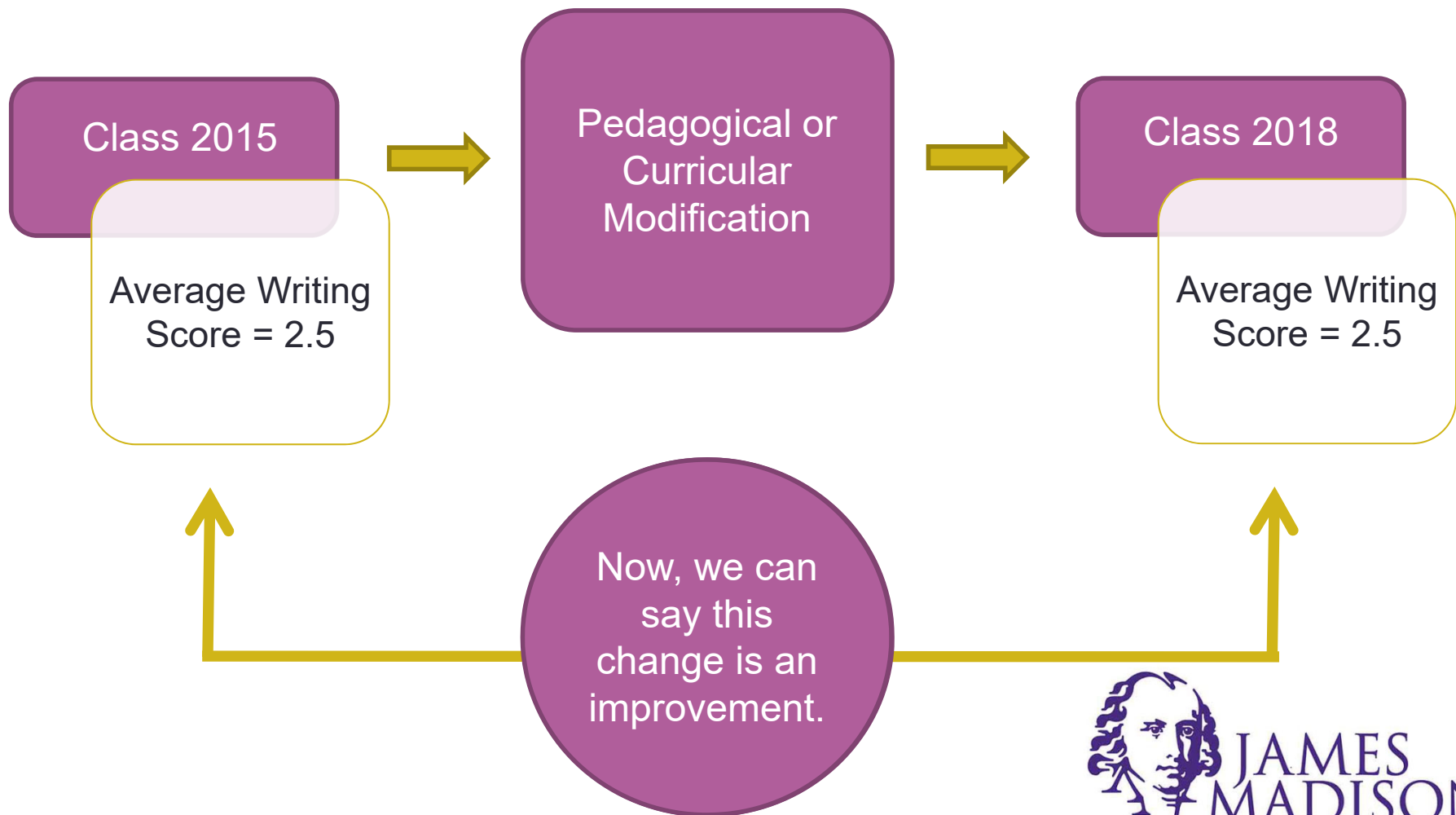


Misconceptions

- Conducting assessment practices automatically leads to improved learning



Change vs. Improvement



Misconceptions

- The more resources you have the more improved learning will occur



10-MINUTE BREAK



WHAT OBSTACLES IMPEDE BUILDING AN ASSESSMENT CULTURE THAT FACILITATES LEARNING IMPROVEMENT?

Obstacles?

- Faculty knowledge
- Faculty commitment
- Faculty buy-in
- Faculty time
- Institutional expertise
- Institutional support
- What else?



Variability in Faculty Assessment Knowledge and Commitment

- Faculty development opportunities can allow the institution to meet the faculty member responsible for assessment “where they are”
- Generally, there are “Beginners,” “Intermediates” and “Advanced”
- We might think of this as a continuum from least to most knowledgeable, and from openly hostile to fully committed



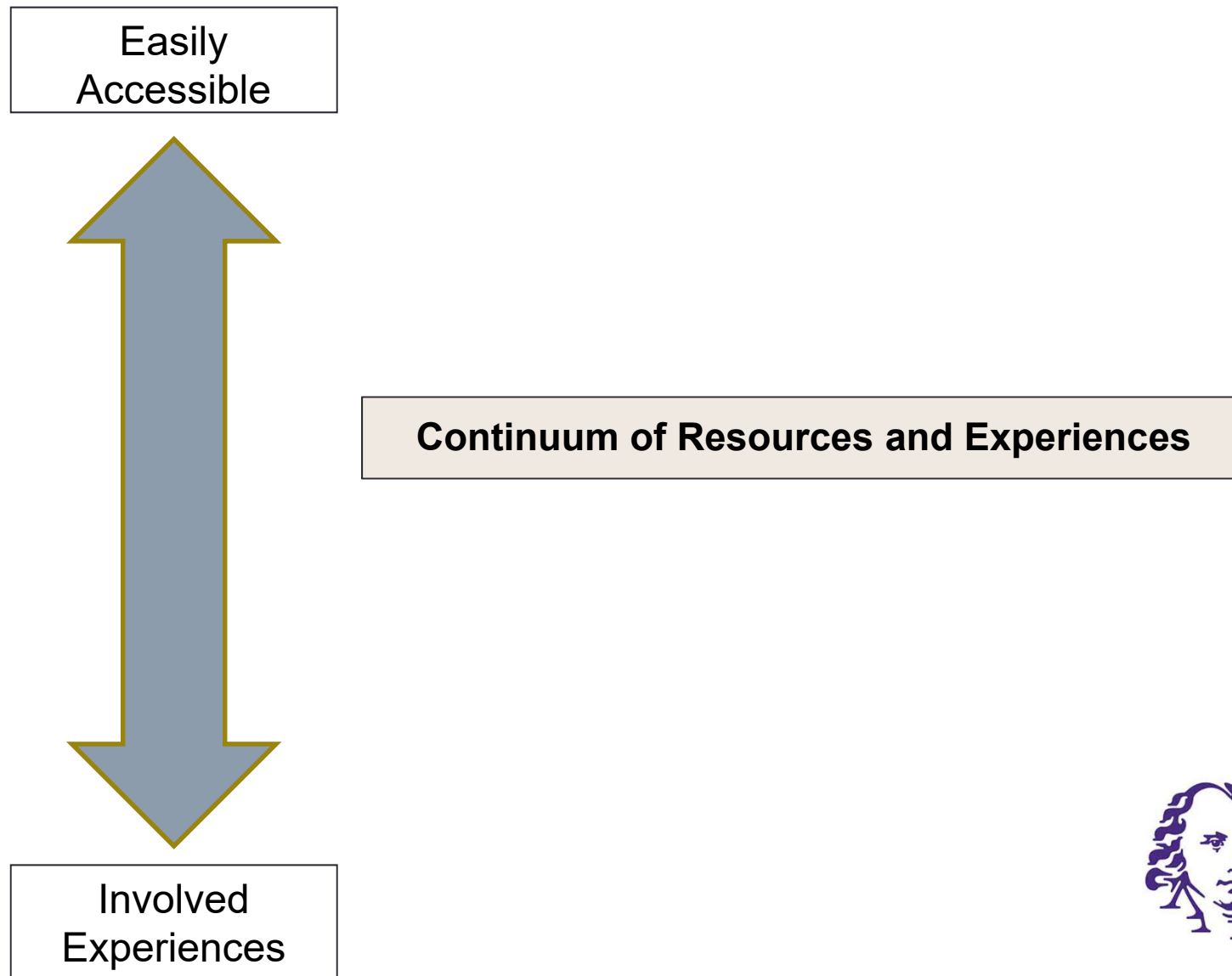


RESOURCES

Resources are critical to assessment improvement

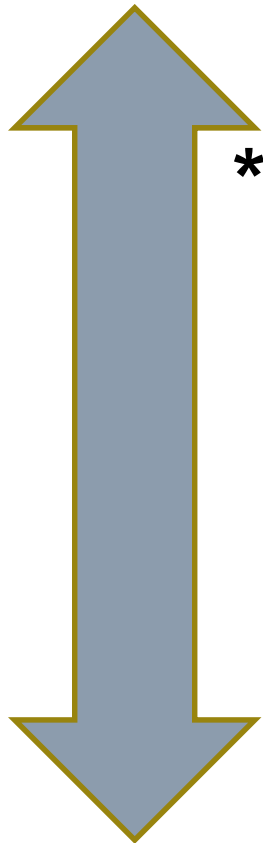
What kinds of resources are available to assessment practitioners?

Resource Possibilities



Books & Conferences

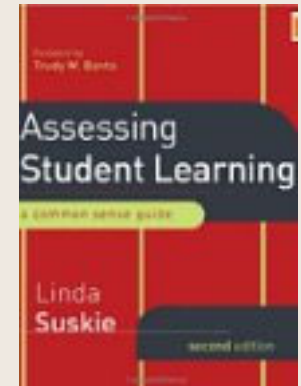
Easily
Accessible



Involved
Experiences

*** Books and Conferences**
 Informational Videos
 Reporting Expectations
 Assessment Workshops
 One on One Consultation
 Dedicated Time
 Rating Experience
 Celebrating Excellence
 Certificate Program

- Assessment Books

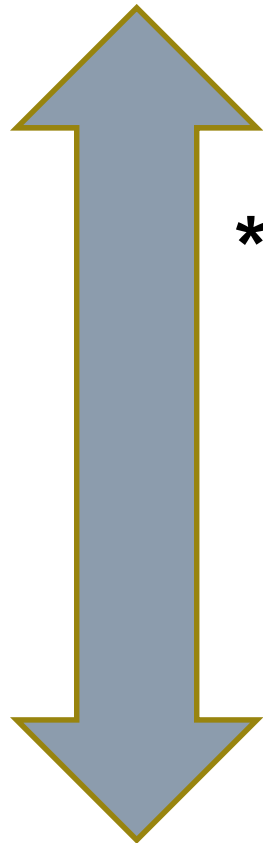


- Assessment Conferences
 - SACSCOC
 - AALHE
 - Virginia Assessment Group
 - Association of Institutional Research
 - Community College conference on Learning Assessment
- Many more!

Assessment Videos

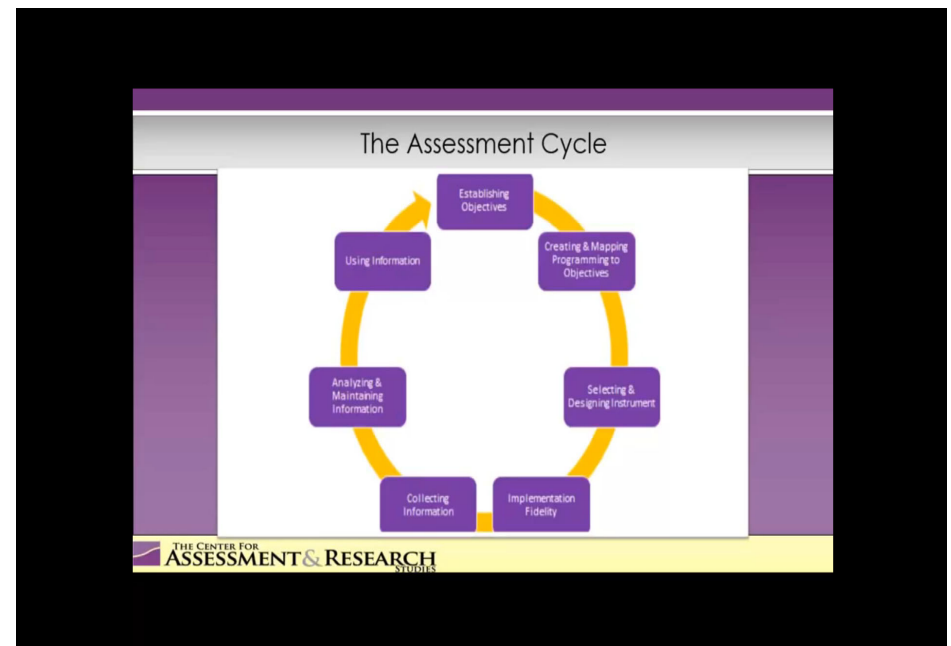
Easily
Accessible

<https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/Visitor/AssessmentResources.shtml>



Books and Conferences
*** Informational Videos**
 Reporting Expectations
 Assessment Workshops
 One on One Consultation
 Dedicated Time
 Rating Experience
 Celebrating Excellence
 Certificate Program

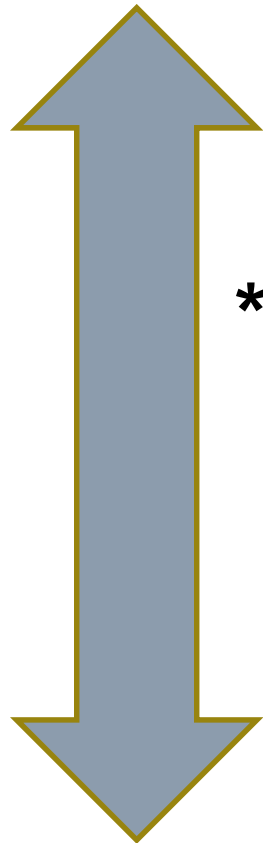
Involved
Experiences



Assessment Report Exemplar


Easily
Accessible

https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/_files/APT_Complete_How_to.pdf



Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
*** Reporting Expectations**
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

Involved
Experiences



JMU Assessment Progress Template
 Hypothetical Exemplar

PART I. Objectives

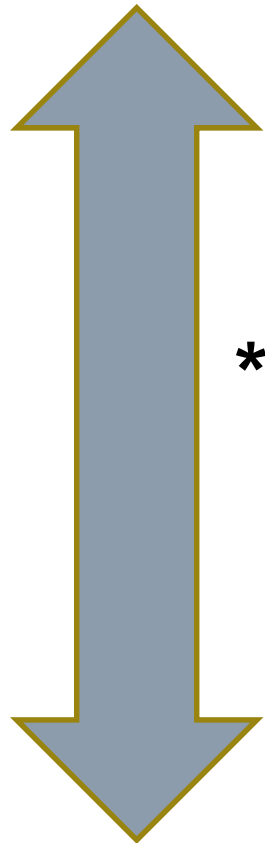
[For illustrative purposes, the Center for Assessment and Research Studies has created a hypothetical degree program (a B.A. in 80s pop culture). The faculty of this program have written four objectives that drive subsequent steps of the assessment process.]

Description of process for developing objectives: In the early spring of 2003 all program faculty participated in an objective writing process for the BA program in 80s pop culture. We began with the following question: What knowledge, skills, or attitudes should our students possess by graduation? The initial list consisted of 20 objectives. Over the course of the semester the faculty combined some of the objectives and dropped others. Finally, the faculty endorsed four universal objectives for program graduates.



Assessment Workshops

Easily
Accessible



Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
*** Assessment Workshops**
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

Involved
Experiences

Previous Models:

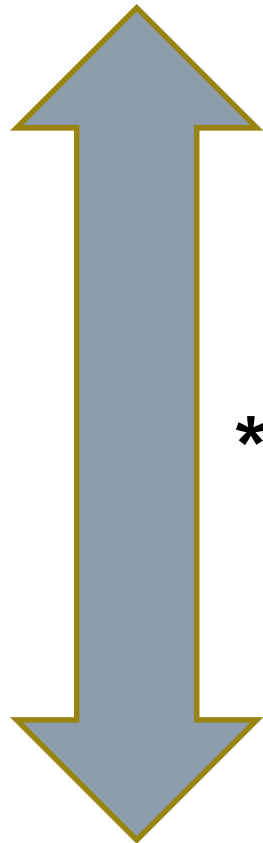
- Three week experience where faculty work on an assessment project for their program
- One week group projects facilitated by assessment specialist

Assessment 101:

- 5-day workshop
- Open to faculty members and student affairs professionals
- Interactive format
- Work through each step of the assessment cycle

Consultation

Easily
Accessible



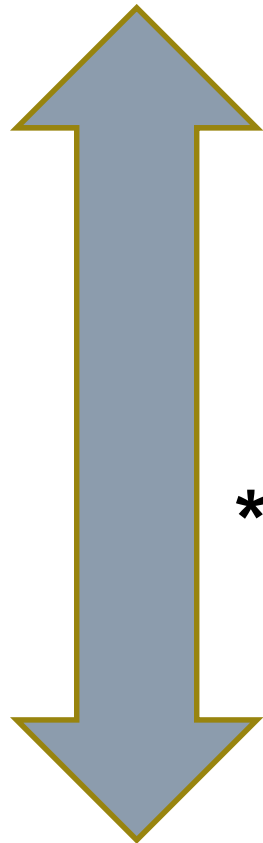
Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
*** One on One Consultation**
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

Involved
Experiences

- Consultation with an assessment expert
- Most commonly identified support mechanism in qualitative study
- Could be:
 - Institutional Effectiveness professional
 - Knowledgeable faculty members
 - Graduate students
 - Students in statistics courses
- Could hire an external consultant

Dedicated Time

Easily
Accessible



Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
*** Dedicated Time**
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

Involved
Experiences

Assessment Lockdown

- Partnered with on-campus faculty development center
- Hosted a 3 hour “Assessment Lockdown”
 - Faculty worked on their assessment reports with experts “on-hand”

Reflection Year

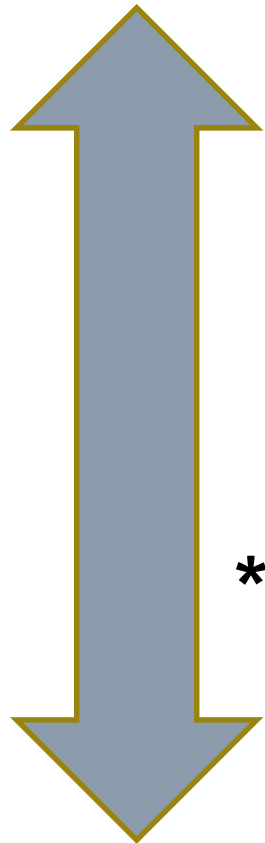
- For programs with exemplary assessment, the option to take a year to reflect on the data

Learning Improvement by Design

- Intentional partnership between assessment and faculty development center

Faculty Assessment Raters

Easily
Accessible



Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
*** Rating Experience**
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

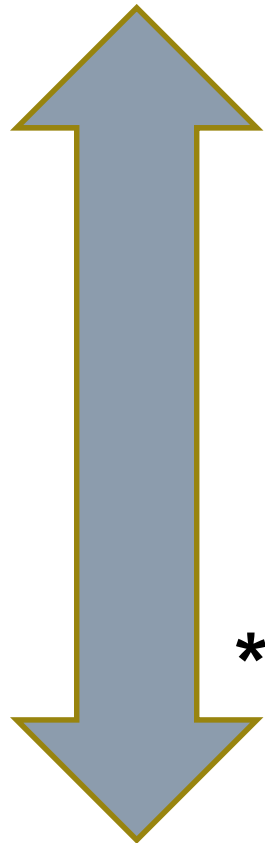
Involved
Experiences

- Faculty representatives from all colleges
- Two week experience
- Two days of training
- Work with assessment office staff daily to evaluate assessment reports



Celebrating Excellence

Easily
Accessible



Books and Conferences
 Informational Videos
 Reporting Expectations
 Assessment Workshops
 One on One Consultation
 Dedicated Time
 Rating Experience
 * **Celebrating Excellence**
 Certificate Program

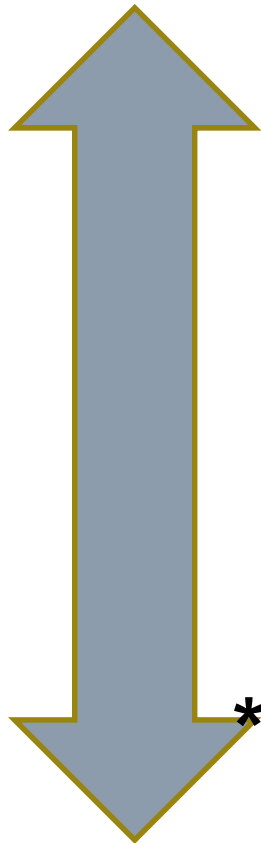
Involved
Experiences

- Annual award or recognition given through Provost's office
- Nominate high achievers for external awards
- Support scholarship, travel, etc.



Assessment Certificate

Easily
Accessible



Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence

* **Certificate Program**

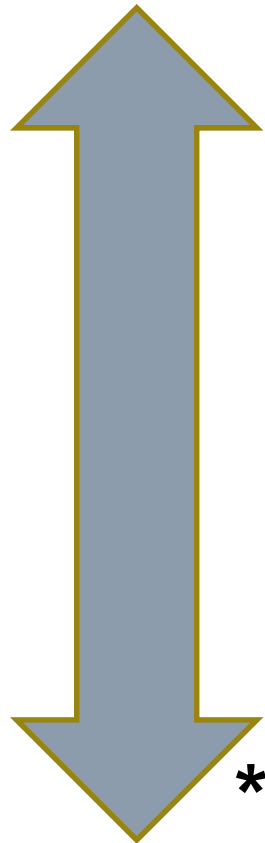
Involved
Experiences

- Professional development program
- Online
- Four courses taught by assessment professionals
- Two year commitment



What Else?

Easily
Accessible



Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program

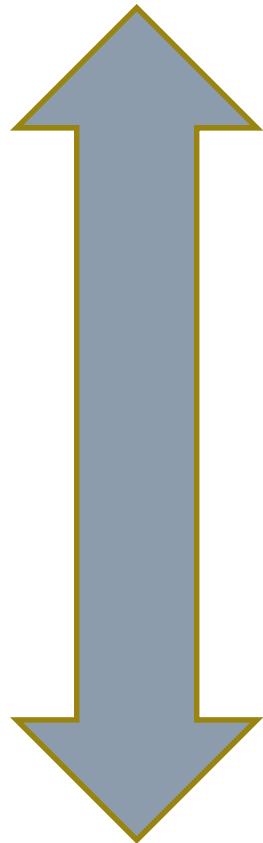
* Other

Involved
Experiences

- What ideas do you have?
- Examples from your home institution
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -

Targeted Audience

Easily
Accessible



Books and Conferences
Informational Videos
Reporting Expectations
Assessment Workshops
One on One Consultation
Dedicated Time
Rating Experience
Celebrating Excellence
Certificate Program



Beginner

Intermediate

Advanced

Involved
Experiences



Group Activity

- Work with your table to brainstorm **resources and faculty development opportunities** for your hypothetical faculty member.
- Did you find **other resources** not mentioned here today that you want to provide for your faculty?
- Books and Conferences
- Informational Videos
- Reporting Expectations
- Assessment Workshops
- One on One Consultation
- Dedicated Time
- Rating Experience
- Celebrating Excellence
- Certificate Program
- Other



SHARE

- Each scenario will report their proposed solutions

NEW TO ASSESSMENT

**10 YEARS OF
ASSESSMENT
EXPERIENCE**

**ASSESSMENT
COORDINATOR—
IMPROVING STUDENT
LEARNING**

NOT EXCITED



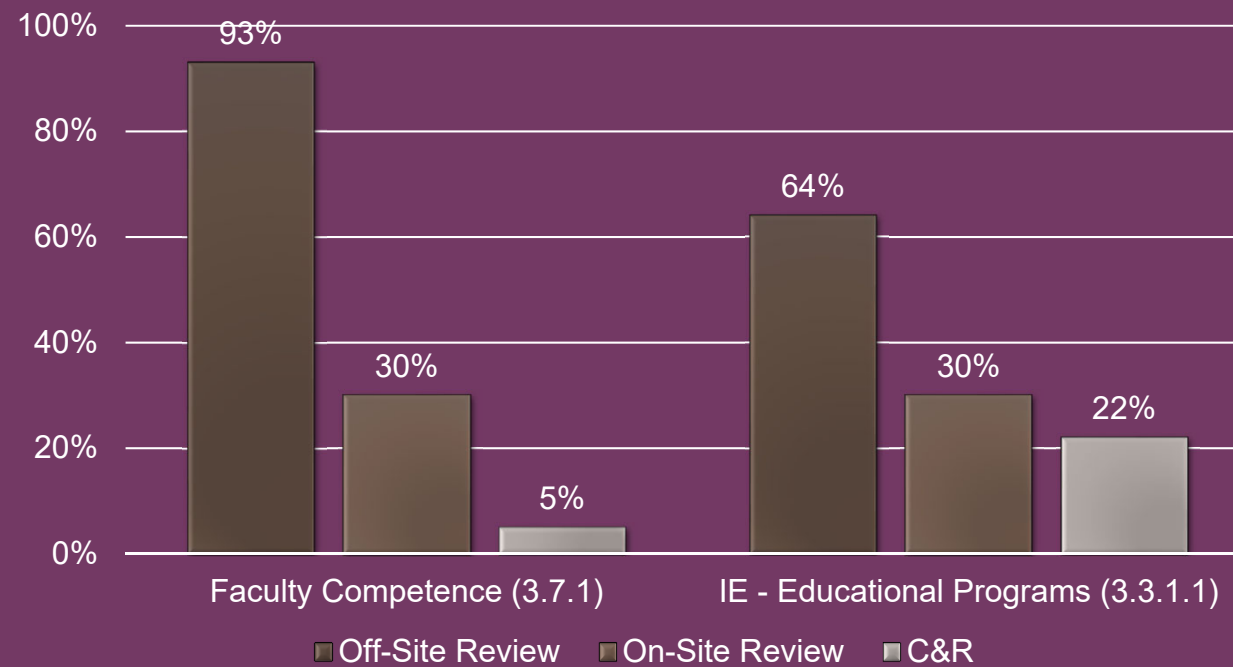
Action Plan Worksheet

- Goals:
 - Promote a positive assessment culture
 - Evidence student learning improvement
- What are the most important and realistic resources to provide faculty at the institution?
- Each group will report out their two most important resources



TAKE AWAYS

Percentage of Institutions in Non-Compliance



TAKE AWAYS

- Think of where your university is now and where it could be in 10 years
 - How could you get there?
- Assessment may drive the current conversation, but ultimately we want student learning improvement to be the bottom line

QUESTIONS?

**Please visit the JMU
consulting booth!**

References

- Fulcher, K. H. & Bashkov, B. M. (2012, November-December). Do we practice what we preach? The accountability of an assessment office. *Assessment Update*. 24(6). 5-7, 14.
- Fulcher, K. H., Swain, M., & Orem, C. D., (2012). Expectations for assessment reports: A descriptive analysis. *Assessment Update* 24(1), 1-2, 14-16. doi:10.1002/au.241
- Fulcher, K. H., Good, M. R., Coleman, C. M., & Smith, K. L. (2014, December). A Simple Model for learning improvement: Weigh pig, feed pig, weigh pig. (*NILOA Occasional Paper No. 23*). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Blaich, C., & Wise, K. (2011). From gathering to using assessment results: Lessons from the Wabash national study (*NILOA Occasional Paper No. 8*). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.
- Orem, C. (2012) *Demonstrating validity evidence of meta-assessment scores using generalizability theory* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.
- Ory, J. C., (1992). Meta-assessment: Evaluating assessment activities. *Research in Higher Education*, 33(4). 467-481.
- Rodgers, M., Grays, M. P., Fulcher, K. H., & Jurich, D. P. (2012). Improving academic program assessment: a mixed methods study. *Innovative Higher Education*, 38(5), doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10755-012-9245-9>

