Pushing Beyond Compliance
Seeking Meaningful Learning Improvement

Dan Stroud, Ed. D.
Jarvis Hampton, M. Ed.

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Outcomes

1. Participants will understand the importance of closing the loop AND improving rather than merely monitoring their outcomes.

2. Participants glean thoughtful information regarding ways in which improvement can be promoted more vociferously at each of their institutions..

3. Participants will share their best practices in promoting their institution's desire and ability to seek improvement both annually and over a period of years.

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The way we were
Looking back

- Instability

- Failure to establish "the Culture"

- Lack of Communication/Follow through

- Rewarding unwanted behaviors

The way we were
A look back

Early Success through Compliance – A Familiar Tale

- Established a reporting template

- Created a web-based assessment reporting portal (LARS)

- Enforced assessment

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The way we were
A look back

Two Steps Forward, Three Steps Back

- Web-based assessment reporting portal

- Reporting template

- Struggled to establish a culture of Assessment

Compliance or Culture?

Decisions to be made

- Was there 100% compliance on campus

- Was there a "culture of assessment?"

- Was assessment meaningful on campus?

Assessment … to what end?

3 Steps of Assessment

1. Outcomes we expect for our students.
2. Information – How well students achieve these outcomes.
3. Action – How we use this info to *improve* student learning. (Closing the loop)

Walvoord (2010)

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Answering Faculty Questions/Conclusions

- Why must we assess?
- Why are you evaluating me?
- Why must we do the Provost's busy work?
- What do you want me to write to get this done?

A Plan of Attack

Issues to Consider

- Faculty fatigue
- Prevailing question – What do you need me to do?
- Faculty was skeptical about assessment's motives. Believed it to be evaluation of them.

A Plan of Attack

Action Plan

- Help reduce faculty stress through service
- Encourage meaningful and direct approach to making their programs stronger
- Turn assessment on its head and start promoting *improvement*.
- Address compliance as a secondary objective.

Why Improvement?

The most important consideration in assessment "is whether the assessment process is leading to improvements in academic and co-curricular programs."

Banta and Palomba (2015)

Why Improvement?

Linda Suskie (2018) takes this idea a step further and suggests "building a culture of evidence and betterment" which informs change … in "curricula, teaching/learning strategies, learning goals, co-curricular experiences, and support systems.

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Why Improvement?

In speaking out against the culture of compliance, Ikenberry and Kuh (2015) point out that "Understanding the needs of learners, documenting student performance"… adjusting to improve learning …"constitute the core functions of assessment."

Why Improvement?

Just feed the pigs … or buffaloes???

"A Simple Model for Learning Improvement: Weigh Pig, Feed Pig, Weigh Pig." An Occasional Paper #23 (Fulcher, Good, Coleman, & Smith, 2014)

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)

First Steps

The "A" Word

- Focus efforts away from assessment and towards improvement initiatives.
- Renamed the University Assessment Committee as the University Improvement Committee (UIC)
- Provided "Assessment Clear and Simple" to all UIC members

The "A" Word

- Brought in a consultant to discuss successful strategies with faculty/administration and Student Affairs.
- Began discussing the streamed down reporting that would make everyone's life easier both short and long term. (Improvement Narrative)

Improvement Process

Improvement Process

Learning Outcomes
$$\neq$$
Improvement

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Improvement Process

Measures track
Outcomes
but…
Not always
Improvement

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Improvement Process

Benchmarks prove
Achievement
but…
Not always
Improvement

Improvement Process

Action Plans should
drive Improvement
or…
At the very least seek
Improvement

Improvement Process

Conclusion
We track Action Plans
Intended to achieve
Improvement!!

Building the Narrative

Year One
Improvement Narrative
- Process
- Positives
- Challenges
- Action Plan

Building the Narrative

Process: What work has been done to develop learning outcomes, make changes, and achieve meaningful improvements?

Building the Narrative

Positives: What were good things that came out of the improvement process based on the results/data?

Building the Narrative

Challenges - What things didn't work out as expected? Results aren't always cooperative – and that's okay!

Building the Narrative

Action Plan for Year Two

Offer actions in detail

- Training/added reading, etc.
- Instruments (New/Adjusted)
- Added treatments to a previous year's actions

Building the Narrative

Year Two
Improvement Narrative
- Process
- Positives
- Challenges
- Action Plan

Building the Narrative

Year Two
<u>Process, Positives, Challenges</u>

- Information for these areas will be directly pulled from results/data in the previous year's Action Plan.

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Building the Narrative

Year Two
Action Plan (s)

- At this point, changes can be made that will strengthen last years results.

- From the changes made here, improvement can be measured.

Building the Narrative

Year Three
Improvement Narrative

- Does the program recognize improvement(s)?
- Choice – additional changes to improve further or focus on another outcome.

Media Communications Improvement Narrative

Media Communication Improvement Narrative, 2019-2020

During the 2019-2020 academic year, Media Communication faculty continued our assessment process by evaluating senior portfolios and providing feedback. Faculty members evaluating senior portfolios included Mary Liz Brooks, Kim Bruce, Nancy Garcia, Emily Kinsky, Li Chen, Michael McFarland, Patrick Osei-Hwere and Randy Ray. The Media Communication Studies program has a learning outcomes that we measure each year through the senior portfolio websites. We evaluated 44 portfolio websites for the academic year. Of the 44 submitted, 40 received passing scores (90%) which meets the benchmark (90%) we had set. Kim Bruce assisted the students who failed to receive passing scores for all sections of the portfolio until they submitted sufficient documentation of their learning to earn a passing score. In the goals of leadership, media production, media convergence/media global environment, cultural influences, media theory, professional and civic responsibilities; and managing new technologies and media, students are excelling as evidenced by their work in Media Communication organizations such as KWTS, competitive advertising and public relations teams and 1910 PR. Others serve the campus with WT Leadership, Buff Athletics and the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership. In the area of media production, our students participated in a variety of competitions. This chart summarizes their accomplishments in national, regional and state competitions:

NBS Awards	TIPA Awards	Addy Awards	NSAC Awards
6 national production awards 4 chapter & individual awards	7 awards (4 first place awards, 1 second place awards, 2 third place awards)	Four Gold ADDY Awards, two Silver ADDY Awards and a Special Judges Award	Placed 5th in Regional Competition (performed virtually)

Adobe Certifications completed this year include:

Photoshop	Illustrator	Premiere	InDesign
25	8	3	2

While the total number of certifications (38) is fewer than the 45 certifications earned last year, it is significant to note that restrictions placed on students because of the COVID 19 pandemic may have led to the decrease.

The area where we continue to seek improvement is in written communication skills. In reviewing senior portfolio websites, we found writing errors that students need to correct. We purchased copies of the Associated Press Manual and placed them in the MAC Lab. We continue to encourage students to take advantage of the campus Writing Center.

POSITIVES

Our assessment process is working well, and as the courses moved online in the Spring of 2020, faculty adapted final course presentations to the online environment using technological tools such as Adobe Spark pages, Zoom meetings and shared screens. Buffalo Advertising put their plans book together virtually, as well as competing in the first virtual competition held by NSAC.

CHALLENGES

Because of the hands-on approach used in many of our courses, we faced challenges in recreating that experience in an online environment that was made necessary due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Even though students had access to applications through Adobe Creative Cloud, their devices or lack of wifi connection created significant challenges in some of our courses. Our plans to offer a faculty-led study abroad experience in Cuba for fall, 2020 was placed on hold because of the limitations placed on travel.

ACTION PLAN FOR 2020-2021

We will continue to use senior portfolios for assessing learning, but at the same time stress to students that their portfolio gives them an added advantage in the job search process. As we move to delivery of more hybrid classes for the fall, using online meeting technology, we will adjust our assessment process as needed. Kim Bruce will continue to collect student responses for the MCOM Program Assessment. We will continue to encourage our students to take advantage of the services offered by the campus Writing Center, which are also available online, by including that information in all departmental course syllabi.

SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS:

- Evaluation of MCOM Senior Portfolios—completed by MCOM faculty as assigned by Kim Bruce
- Transitioning course material to hybrid delivery—will vary by faculty member but will be coordinated by Dr. Hanson
- Collection of student responses for program assessment—Kim Bruce collects this information in MCOM 4191 taught in fall and spring; Dr. Hanson collects information in the summer session class.
- Encouraging use of the Campus Writing Center—all Media Communication faculty through statements in their courses syllabi and announcements in classes

Improvement in Action

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Additional Improvement Initiatives

Improvement in Action

Selling the Brand

- Hope to offer funding as it is possible to encourage program improvement initiatives.
- In year three, the plan is to try to find a host for Buff's Improve! Dinner/Reception
- Buff's Improve Newsletter each semester.
- Buff's Improve Award(s)

Improvement in Action

COMING SOON !

A special, as yet to be named guest speaker will be brought to campus in the near future to help reinforce WT improvement initiatives.

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Improvement in Action

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Thank You for your attendance and Interest!

Dan Stroud
Director of Assessment
Institutional Research and Effectiveness
West Texas A & M University
(806) 651-3452
dstroud@wtamu.edu

Jarvis Hampton
Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness
Institutional Research and Effectiveness
West Texas A & M University
(806) 651-3451
jhampton@wtamu.edu

Call or email us with any additional questions!!