

LOOKING AT LEARNING – EXAMINING THE FINDINGS

Step One: Probe the Results

- Collaboratively explore the findings.
- Ask questions and look at all the results for better understanding
- Consider the assessment methods: where did they hit the mark, what other methods could be used to garner better understanding
- Reflect on new questions that came out of your natural curiosity
- Discuss possible reasons for the data—what factors are affecting the results: what possible explanations are there for the findings? (This is the fun part.)

Some Prompts to help you examine the findings:

- What are the major assignments—papers, projects, portfolios, demonstrations, performances, art work, exams, etc.—that measure your outcomes?
- Are the assignments aligned with the outcomes? What did the assessment capture, what did it miss?
- What might be the reasons for the results (assessment methods, student preparedness, and other possible factors)?
- In which areas did students excel? Where did they struggle? what issues and needs were revealed?
- Did the different assessment methods yield different results? How do the results compare to any data previously collected?
- Did the assessment work, was it aligned with the outcome? If not, what needs to be revised?
- Do the assignments provide the students with an opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the outcomes?
- Do the assignments require that students demonstrate the kinds of knowledge, skills/abilities, and/or attitudes that I consider central to the course? Do the outcomes reflect the priorities of the college?
- Did the students have adequate time to practice the skills expected to master?
- Did the homework assignments, assigned readings and other exercises provide students the resources they need to successfully complete the assignment?
- What other things would you like to learn? What questions linger about the findings? What new lines of inquiry are possible?

Step Two: Brainstorm Possible Steps and Take Action

- Collaboratively consider some possible next steps you would like to try to close the learning gaps.
- Reflect on other lines of inquiry we might want to pursue in future assessment studies
- Examine whether the curriculum is working (design and implementation)
- Reflect on where time, money, and efforts could be dedicated or repurposed to improve learning.
- Think about how best to share what you learned so that we can learn from your investigation.
- Ponder how do we move from reviewing the findings to trying something new.

Some Prompts to help you examine the findings:

- What pedagogical and methodological changes to teaching might address the learning gaps? What learning objectives best prepare the student for mastery of the outcome?
- What other assessment methods might provide additional evidence or better capture the skills, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs most central to the learning?
- Does the curriculum appear designed to adequately prepare students for the essential skills expected? Is the curriculum aligned to help the students develop mastery?
- What can you conclude from the data?
- Does the evidence suggest next step?
- What other lines of inquiry might you want to pursue?
- What's the mechanism for moving from a review of the findings to trying something new?
- What strategies appear to be having the largest effect on learning?
- What might time, energy and/or money be allocated for continuous improvement in learning?
- How will you share your findings with other faculty and staff across the college so that we all might learn?
- How will you create a history of assessment so that future faculty in your discipline and the college can learn from your investigations?
- Where are the best venues for discussing these findings?