

Assessment Plans: Nuts and Bolts

Assessment Team Plus
January 2010

(adapted from the Office of Institutional Assessment)



Agenda

- Purposes of an Assessment Plan
- Components of an Assessment Plan
- Outcomes
- Measures
- Achievement Targets
- Cautions
- Role of the DSA Assessment Team



Purposes of an Assessment Plan

- Program planning
- Department/unit strategic planning
- Assessment direction
- Budget decisions
- Trend analysis
- SACS accreditation



Components of an Assessment Plan

- ❑ Mission Statement—concise statement outlining the purpose of the program
- ❑ Student Learning and/or Program Outcomes
- ❑ Measures—processes employed to determine whether outcomes are being met
- ❑ Achievement Targets—results or value that will represent success at achieving the outcomes



Outcomes

- Should be
 - Measureable and/or observable (within your control)
 - Meaningful (focus on important concepts)
 - Manageable (you don't have to measure everything all the time)
- Focus on the end result
- Discrete statements—avoid using “and”



Student Learning Outcomes

- Student Learning Outcome—An identified action that a student is expected to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes upon completion of a program.
- Formula: Students will be able to <action verb><something> following <experience>.
- May encompass cognitive skills, performance skills, and affective skills.



Program/Performance/Process Outcomes

- Program/Performance/Process Outcomes—
An identified action that the program is expected to accomplish.
- Formula: The program will <action verb><something>.
- May encompass time factor (accomplish something in a set period of time), number, etc.



Choosing Measures

- Direct Measures—assess learning by requiring students to *demonstrate* knowledge and skills.
- Indirect Measures—focus on students' opinions or perceptions or provide data that infers learning.



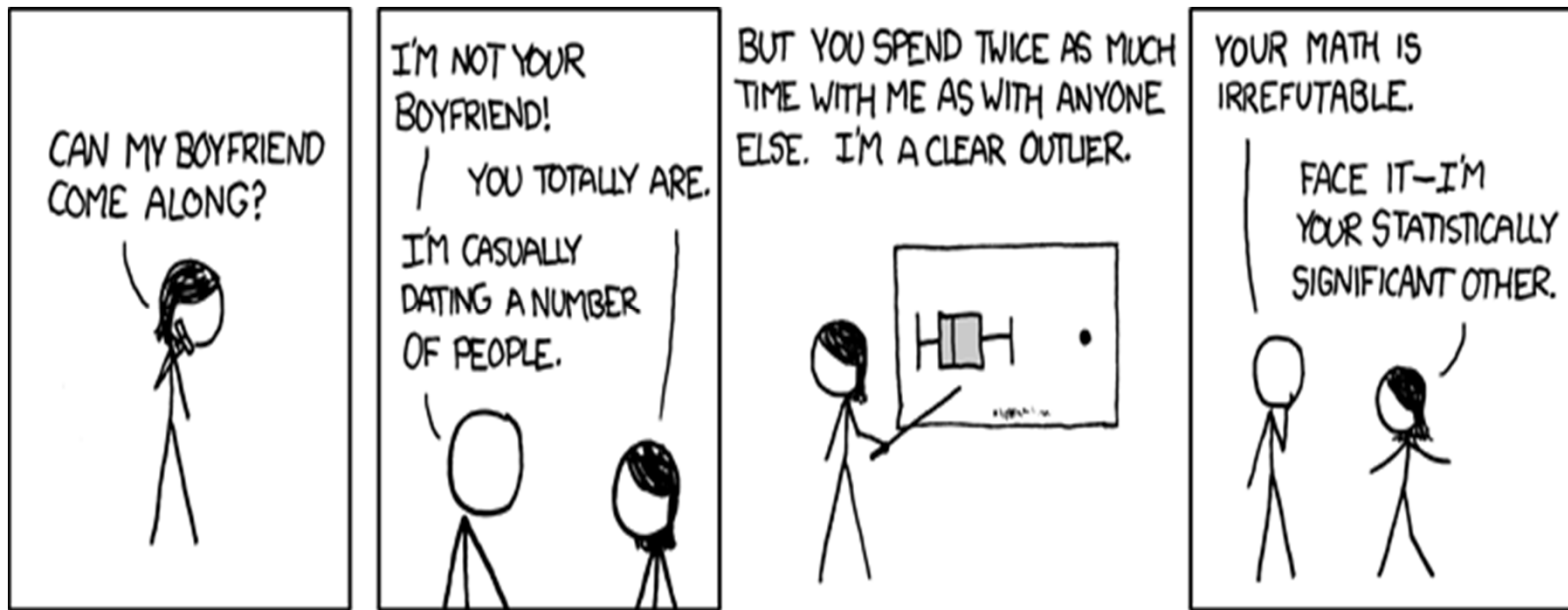
Choosing Measures (cont.)

- ❑ Inventory what's already being collected
- ❑ Choose a meaningful number of measures
- ❑ Select measures that can provide data on multiple outcomes
- ❑ Evaluate timeliness and cost
- ❑ Select methods in your control
- ❑ Measure things you can influence

Choosing Measures, an example

(okay, not really, but I thought it was funny)

(http://www.tltgroup.org/flashlight/f_humor.html)





Writing Measures

- ❑ Brief description of the measure
- ❑ Include where, when, who
- ❑ Be specific enough that it could be replicated
- ❑ Provide documentation with details, if necessary
- ❑ Seek results that are interesting, meaningful, accurate, and actionable



Achievement Targets

- Achievement target is the result, benchmark, or value that will represent success at achieving a given outcome.
- They can be specific numbers or trends.
- They need to be determined before results are documented.



Cautions

- ❑ Don't mix outcomes, measures, and achievement targets in one statement.
- ❑ Try not to rely only on indirect measures.
- ❑ Don't wait until the last minute to finalize your plan and provide results and action plans.



Role of the DSA Assessment Team

- ❑ Provide additional support and training to staff who write assessment plans.
- ❑ Provide feedback on assessment plan content.
- ❑ Hold staff accountable for completing their plans in a timely manner.
- ❑ Champion real use of assessment plans during staff meetings, one-on-ones, etc.
- ❑ Recognize staff who are doing a good job.



Questions?

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