

The Academy of Student Affairs Professionals

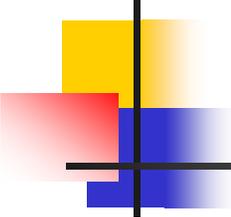
Assessment in Student Affairs

Presented May 22, 2008

Drs. Sandi Osters and Darby Roberts

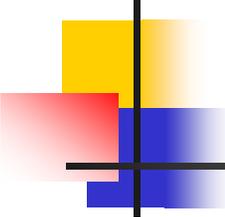
Student Life Studies

Texas A&M University



Introduction to Today's Session

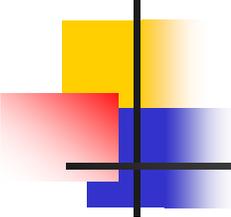
- Introductions
- Today's agenda
 - Landscape of assessment – overview
 - Learning and Program Outcomes
 - Developing a Survey
 - Conducting a Focus Group/Interviews
 - Developing Assessment Plans
 - Lessons Learned
 - Open Forum



Today's Learning Outcomes

Participants will be able to:

- Define and identify the basic components and articulate the importance of assessment in Student Affairs and its relationship to planning and institutional effectiveness
- Identify opportunities for assessment within their department/service area based on basic assessment types, including needs assessment, satisfaction surveys, and outcomes assessment

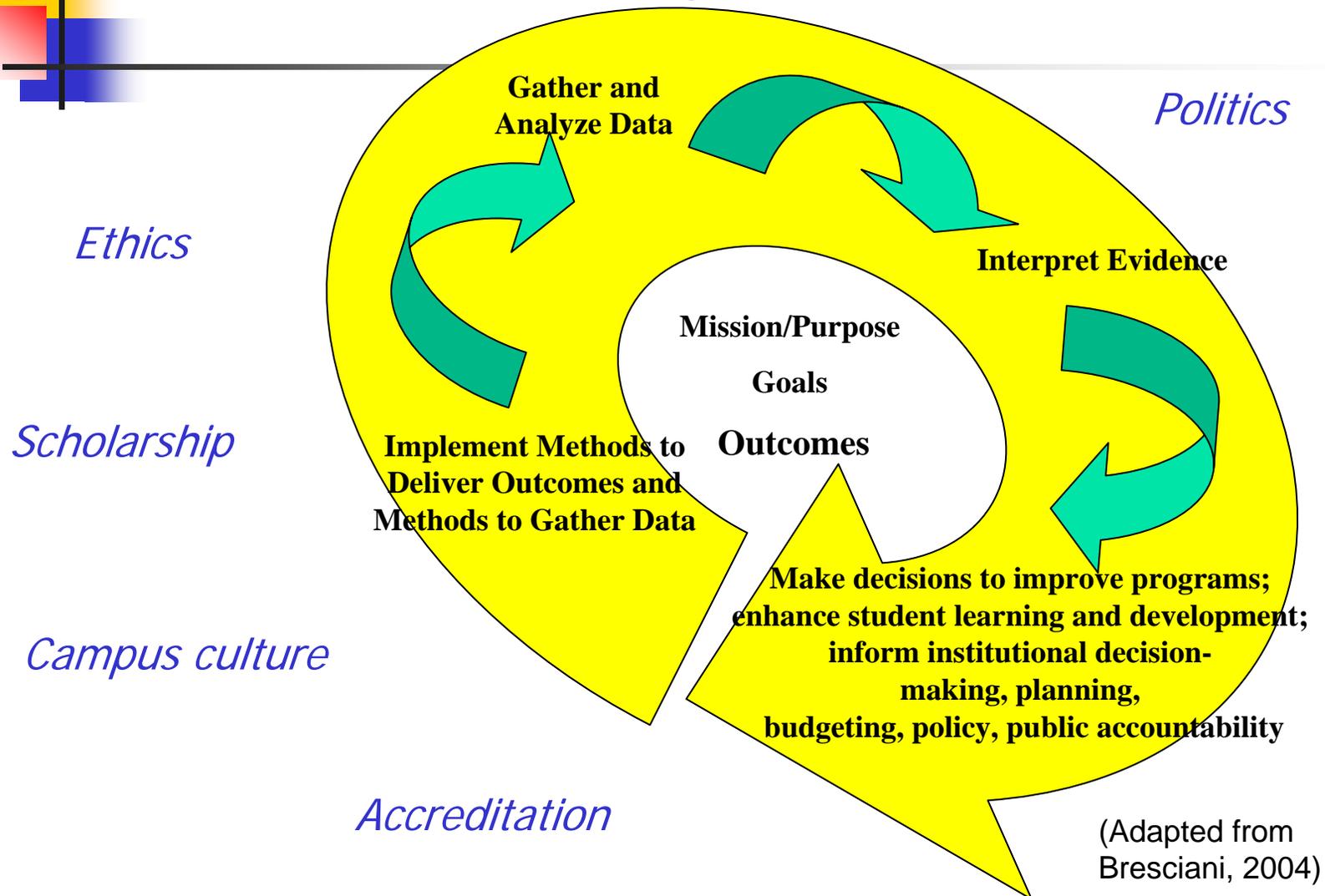


Learning Outcomes (cont.)

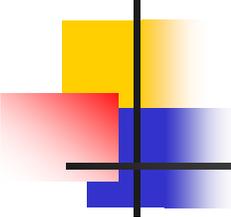
Participants will be able to:

- Determine appropriate methods and methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) when creating an assessment instrument
- Comprehend the meaning of basic data generated through assessment and the implication of results.

Assessment Cycle/Environment



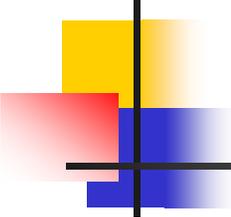
(Adapted from
Bresciani, 2004)



What is Assessment?

"Assessment is any effort to *gather, analyze, and interpret evidence* which describes institutional, departmental, divisional or agency effectiveness."

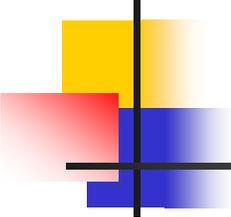
Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (1996). *Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



What is Evaluation?

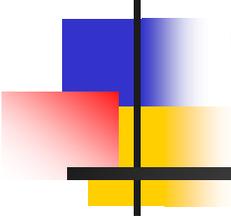
“Evaluation is any effort to use assessment evidence to *improve* institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness.”

Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (1996). *Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



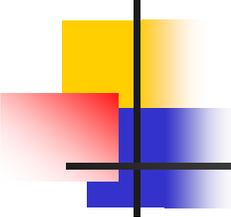
Assessment

- Describes
 - What we do
 - Why we do it
 - How well we do it
 - How we improve or change and why
 - How well the improvements work
- Is a process not a product
- What assessment is not
- Best practice in assessment in student affairs
- Best practice for regional accrediting agencies



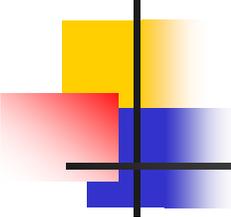
Writing Learning and Program Outcomes

The Heart of the Assessment
Enterprise



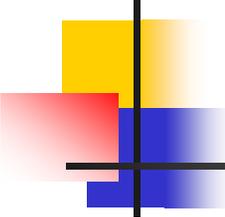
Advantages of Using Outcomes Language

- Make it clear to students who participate in your programs and activities what they can expect to gain
- Make it clear to others what the program will accomplish and, where appropriate, what students will learn
- Help staff select appropriate strategies to reach the outcomes



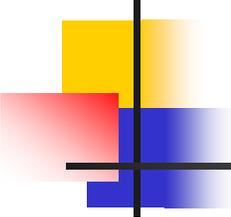
Advantages of Using Outcomes Language (cont.)

- Move beyond student satisfaction and the use of services as the sole means of describing student affairs effectiveness
- Assist in developing and using appropriate assessment methods
- Apply the results of your assessment to improvement and/or change
- Comply with regional accrediting bodies



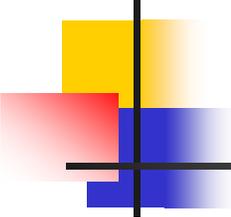
What are Learning Outcomes?

What *students* are expected to *demonstrate* in terms of **knowledge**, **skills**, and **attitudes** upon completion of a program, course, or activity.



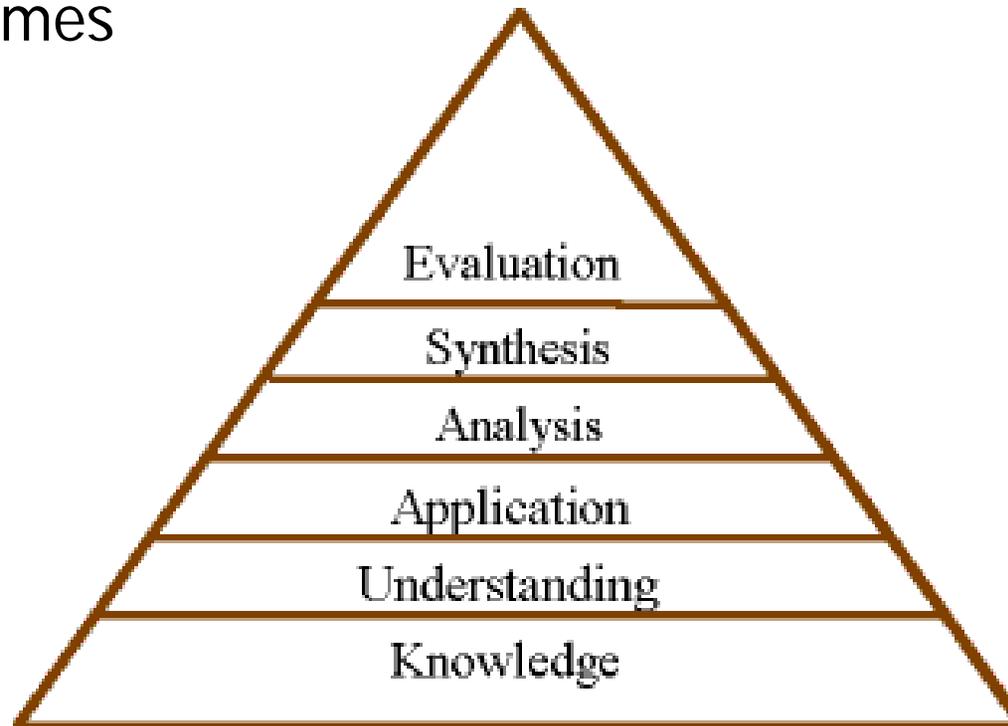
Learning Outcomes?

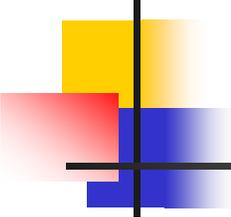
- Students will like the meal.
- Students will rate the speaker positively.
- Students will create their own personal leadership philosophy based on three models taught in Lead 101 the fall semester.
- After the service project, students will be able to articulate the root causes of homelessness in Bryan/College Station.



Bloom's Taxonomy (1956)

A structure for developing learning outcomes

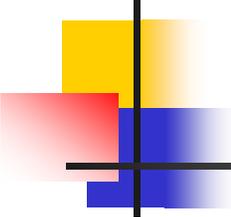




What are Program Outcomes?

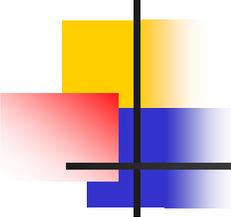
Program outcomes are what a *program* is **to do, achieve** or **accomplish**.

Can also be applied to process and performance outcomes.



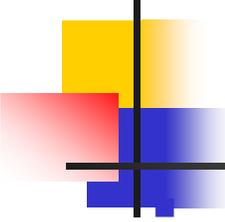
Program/Process Outcomes?

- Students will like the conference banquet.
- The professional development sub-committee will offer two dining etiquette programs in the fall semester for the graduating seniors in Alpha Beta Gamma.
- Develop and expand the Student Health Services web page in order to increase student access to health information, patient services and educational programming.



Examples

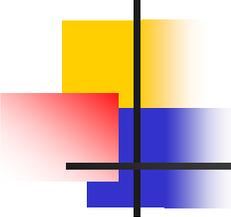
- Learning outcome
 - Students will articulate the root causes of homelessness in the Bryan/College Station area
- Assessment method
 - Pre-test/Post-test
- Criteria for success
 - Students post-test scores will improve over pre-test



Examples

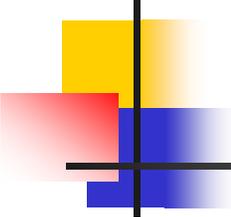
■ Program outcome

- Develop and expand the SHS webpage in order to increase student access to health information, patient services, educational programming
- Assessment method(s)
 - Data retrieval from webpage interactions
 - Annual patient survey to determine student utilization of the web page
 - Survey instruments by Health Education program to determine student utilization of web page
- Criteria for success
 - Increase in the utilization of the SHS webpage regarding health information, patient services, and educational programming



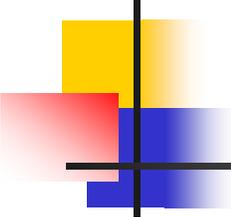
Outcomes Activity

- Refer to Writing Outcomes handout
- Take the program or workshop you developed for an academic integration initiative yesterday and fully develop program and/or learning outcomes
- Identify multiple methods you could use to determine that outcomes have been met



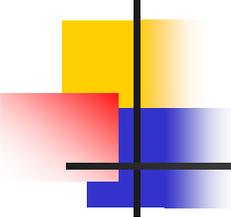
When to Use a Survey

- Assessment Option Examples:
 - Focus groups/interviews—provide deep and narrow information from a small number of people
 - Portfolios—demonstrate a skill or knowledge area
 - Surveys—provide wide and shallow information from a large number of people



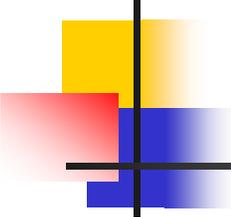
When to Use a Survey (cont.)

- Questions to Ask:
 - What do you really need to know? (not just what is nice to know)
 - How do you plan to use the information you gain from the assessment?
 - Is a national instrument available (and cost effective) or does a local survey need to be developed?
 - Is there a sense of ownership in the project?



Constructing Surveys

- Introduction (may be in cover letter)
 - Purpose, use of information, deadline, sponsor, contact information, importance of their participation, time required, instructions
- Content
 - Start with easy but interesting questions first, demographics last
- Conclusion
 - Thanks, when/if results available, contact information, resources



Question Types

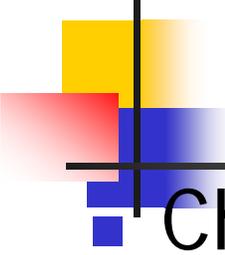
- Yes/No Questions

- Typically, these are questions with only two possible responses.
- Determine if there are other possible responses such as “don’t know” or “maybe” that need to be included.
- Example:

Are you currently enrolled in 12 or more hours at this university?

Yes

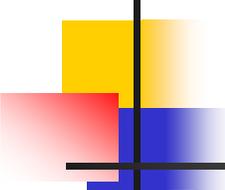
No



Question Types (cont.)

■ Checklists

- Questions consist of a question followed by a list of choices.
- The stem should ask a complete sentence.
- Choices should be mutually exclusive.
- Order responses logically, numerically if the answers are numbers.
- Example:
 - What was your primary reason for living on campus? (choose one)
 - Convenient location
 - Low cost
 - Proximity to dining hall
 - My parents wanted me to
 - Safety and security
 - etc...
 - Other _____
- This example could also be phrased as:
 - What were your reasons for choosing to live on campus? (check all that apply)
 - Check the top THREE reasons you chose to live on campus.



Question Types (cont.)

■ Rankings

- The respondent is asked to number a series of responses according to some criteria.
- Make sure the directions are complete and the ranking criteria is specified.
- Keep the list no longer than ten items.
- Specify if you want all, or just some, of the items ranked (i.e., the top three).
- Responses do not tell you the relative distance between items.
- Example:

Please rank each item below to indicate the importance of each service to you, with "1" as the most important and "5" as the least important.

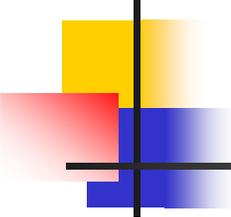
___ Career Services

___ Health Services

___ Counseling Center

___ Recreational Sports

___ Volunteer Services Center



Question Types (cont.)

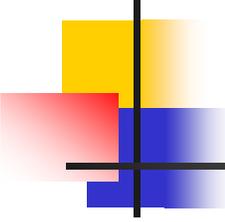
- Likert-type Rating Scales

- The responses to these questions range from one end of a spectrum to the other.
 - Determine whether you want a “neutral” middle response or a forced choice.
 - Determine whether you want/need “don’t know”, “undecided”, or “not applicable” responses.

- Example:

I was satisfied with the number of different sports offered through the intramurals program.

Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree



Question Types (cont.)

- Ecosystem Rating Scale

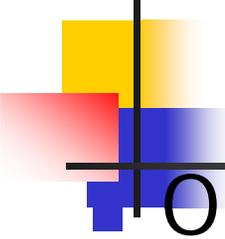
- This question asks for two different ratings about one concept.
- Example:

Please rate the importance of and your satisfaction with the amenities of your residence hall room.

Importance scale: 4=very important, 3=somewhat important, 2=somewhat not important, 1=not at all important

Satisfaction scale: 4=very satisfied, 3=somewhat satisfied, 2=somewhat dissatisfied, 1=very dissatisfied

	Importance	Satisfaction
Closet space	_____	_____
Wall color	_____	_____
Bathroom size	_____	_____
Internet connection	_____	_____



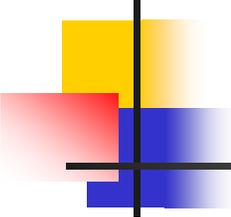
Question Types (cont.)

■ Open Ended Questions

- These allow respondents to answer in their own words.
- The amount of space allotted for the answer should provide an indication of the expected response length.

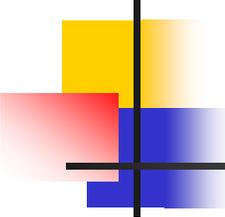
- Example:

What did you learn from today's workshop?



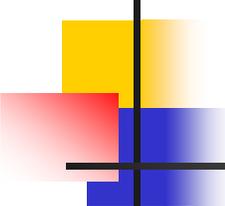
Conducting Focus Groups

Definition: "...Carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is relaxed, comfortable, and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion." (Krueger, 1988).



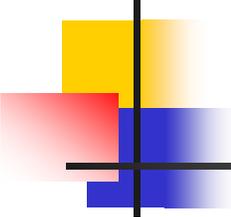
Ethical Issues

- Institutional Review Board
 - Sensitive topics (alcohol, drugs, sex, illegal activity, etc.)
 - Do no harm—provide resources
- Anonymity vs. Confidentiality
 - Data security (electronic, audio tapes, etc.)
 - Collection of IP addresses or other imbedded data
- Required vs. Optional Participation
- Required vs. Optional Responses



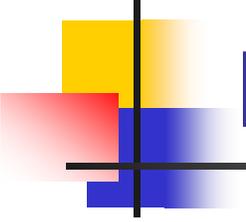
Practical Issues

- Response rates—multiple contacts, length, salience
- Incentives—pre/post, lottery/all, administration
- Survey fatigue/timing—random sampling, campus calendar, day of the week
- Self report data—accuracy, truthfulness, validity, reliability
- Expertise—survey design, data collection, data analysis
- Using the data—plan ahead, involve stakeholders



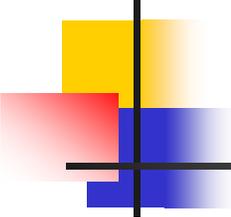
Conclusions

- Use multiple methods (local and national surveys, focus groups, interviews, self assessments, observation, portfolios) to gather information.
- Plan/prepare—begin with the end in mind
- Pilot test before giving it to larger audience
- Practice—few surveys are perfect!



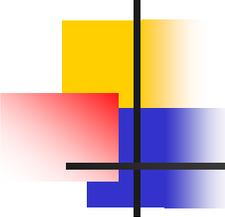
Survey or Focus Group Development Activity

- Individually write a five question survey or focus group interview protocol for the outcomes you developed for the academic integration initiative



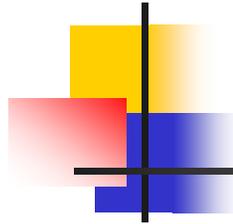
Assessment Plans: Putting It All Together

- Mission/Purpose
- Goals
- Objectives
- Outcomes
- Delivery methods
- Evaluation methods
- Implementation of the Assessment Process
- Results
- Decisions and Recommendations

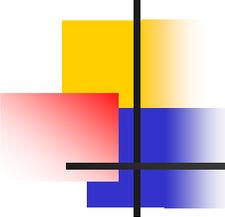


Wise Rules of Engagement

- Refer to “Everything You Wanted to Know About Assessment on One Page”
- Time and resources
- Expertise
- Division Assessment Team
 - Share, collaborate, celebrate
- Department Assessment Plan
- Caution: Over surveying
- Advertise what you have learned and decisions you have made
- Students – first and last



Open Forum



Contact Information

- Student Life Studies

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