

Sharing Assessment Results

Thank you for joining the Student Life Studies assessment podcast. Our goal is to educate people about assessment resources and topics, so they can more easily incorporate assessment into their daily lives. Feel free to contact Student Life Studies by calling 979-862-5624, emailing sls@tamu.edu, or coming by 222 John J. Koldus Building. Let's get on with the podcast.

In this podcast, I want to talk about sharing assessment results. Some folks think that once they get the survey analysis or summary report, they are done. That's actually where the real work begins! If you keep the results to yourself without sharing, then other people don't know the great work you have done and how you contribute to the student experience.

Before you share results, you need to think about your stakeholders. Who are they, what do they care about, and how do they like to consume information? Take a moment to name your stakeholders. They could be students, parents, your supervisor, administrators, faculty, the community, alumni, legislators, etc. They all care about different things and want to know different things. That can create a challenge for you, because you cannot just produce one report for everyone.

The challenge is really an opportunity to make key points, potentially in a creative way, so others are informed and supportive of what you do. As you begin a new assessment project, before you even collect data, think about who cares, or should care, about what you are assessing. Those are the key stakeholders that you may engage with throughout the process and/or plan to share important information at the end.

After you have collected and analyzed your data, it's time to focus on your stakeholders. What does each person or group need to know to support what you do or take some sort of action? What is their knowledge level around the topic and your methodology? When you have that organized into lists, then you can think about the best way to share the information. Think about what excites you the most, and what you really want other people to know. You have a variety of options from simple to complex.

You could prepare one or more one-page executive summaries. This might be good for folks who do not have a lot of time, but need to know key pieces. For people who want more detail, you could be preparing a full report covering the whole assessment project and including tables, charts, or graphs. You can describe a lot of quantitative information using tables, charts, and graphs but you probably still need some sort of descriptor or key point about the visual.

If you have a qualitative data, think about how you want describe what you have gathered. In a report, you may include some impactful quotes. On the other hand, if you want a quick visual to highlight themes, you could create a word cloud using a system such as Wordle.

You could prepare something more eye-catching in a poster, flyer, or even table tent that highlights a couple of key findings or actions. Online, you may want to use data visualization tools, such as Tableau to create visually appealing and interactive charts. Infographics are also popular right now to share key points.

Think about what social media platforms you want to use for various stakeholders. In a few words, you can share information and push people to your website for more detailed information. Different audiences use different platforms, so you can also tailor your message to each if you want.

If you are lucky enough to get in front of an audience, you can create a presentation. This is a great way to engage people in a conversation about their reactions to your information. Be sure to allow time for questions or build that conversation time into the presentation.

No matter how you share, here are a few tips. Keep you results easy to read and digest. Eliminate jargon. Put information in an order that makes sense. Round percentages to the nearest whole percent. Use percentages rather than raw numbers. Label tables and other visual-aides. Pay attention to font size and color.

Sharing results doesn't have to be a boring, academic endeavor. Be creative as it makes sense and get other people involved to help you—you don't have to do it in a vacuum.

Thanks for listening to today's podcast. Please let us know if this was helpful or if you have additional questions. You can contact us by calling 979-862-5624, emailing sls@tamu.edu, or coming by 222 John J. Koldus Building. Check out our website at studentlifestudies.tamu.edu for more resources and information. We hope to hear from you.