



Acting on Assessment-related Data

Establishing Standards

Determine what level of overall performance you are seeking. For example, should 75% of students get a “3” or better? Are there standards you want to meet for the criteria scores?

You’re Satisfied with Student Performance on the Learning Outcome

While the outcome isn’t perfect, overall the faculty are happy with a strong student performance. What do you do?

- Celebrate!
 - Congratulate each other and the students
 - Share exemplars of strong assignments with students as models
- Get the word out
 - Put results on the program web site or in the newsletter
 - Send an email with the results to all students in the program
 - Announce results in specific courses
 - Email the dean, department chair or others
 - Prepare a brief presentation for your advisory board or community partners
 - Put the findings in admissions and recruitment materials

You Want to Improve Student Performance

What do you do if you’re unsatisfied with student performance, or even if you’re satisfied overall but some students are still not “getting it”?

- Ask some key questions to determine the nature and extent of the problem:
 - Is there corroborating evidence that the students are struggling with the related skills or content elsewhere or was it just on this assignment?
 - How many students are struggling? Is it 1 or 2 out of 30, or 20 out of 30?
 - How critical is the outcome or the criterion on which students are struggling? Is it fundamental to their practice or is it important but not critical that they be proficient?

If you’ve determined that the results merit immediate action rather than just monitoring performance over time, here are some options:

- Look at learning outcomes and standards
 - Do you have too many outcomes? Can a student realistically accomplish all these? Are they all of equal importance?
 - Are your expectations for performance too high?
 - Consult your advisory board about the relevance of the outcome(s) that is posing a problem. Is this outcome core to professional practice?

- Look at curriculum
 - Review all courses where the skill or content is taught to see if it being covered in sufficient depth and if the curriculum is in full alignment. Consider expanding coverage in the current courses or adding the skill/content to additional courses.
 - Require students to take a capstone course or complete a project that helps them synthesize the skill where they are having difficulty.
 - Explore ways to supplement learning outside of coursework – such as through optional study groups, practica, or workshops.
- Look at pedagogy
 - Are students getting detailed and timely feedback related to their performance throughout the program?
 - Does more time and attention need to be paid to the content or skill in particular courses?
 - Are the current teaching strategies used by instructors optimal? Should there be more active learning? More demonstration? More explicit lecture?
- Look at other explanations
 - Did the students just not make an adequate effort to master the material?
 - Was the signature assignment an “outlier,” in the sense that it was an inappropriate measure of student knowledge or given in an unfamiliar format?