Assessment of the First Year Experience - Covering All the Bases

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Objectives for Presentation

(1) Identify the critical first year experiences that should be assessed,

(2) Identify the assessments that will aptly capture these critical first year experiences,

(3) Develop a framework in which the assessment data will be analyzed,

(4) Explore the implications of both the improvement of the first year experience and subsequently student success, and

(5) Introduce a multi-dimensional model that enables assessment professionals to ensure that all that should be considered is assessed.
What this Presentation is NOT

Creative methods to assess the First Year Experience
Innovative use of existing technology or adaption of new faculty
New ways to engage faculty & staff

Admittedly,
This Presentation is Just Plain Boring!
Background

- Penn State Berks is a college campus of the Pennsylvania State University (PSU) system
- 2800 students
  - 926 New Baccalaureate in fall 2008
  - 741 New Baccalaureate in fall 2009
- SAT-Critical Reading + SAT-Quantitative hovers around +/- 1000
- 30% of students are in residence halls
- Almost all are full-time
- Require First Year Seminar (FYS) for all first time students

YouTube Video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaMX-QmdSE0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaMX-QmdSE0)

By Spring 2009, University required all campuses (19) to have a First Year Experience (FYE) plan in place

- Must address PSU goals for FYE (set in stone)

  - **Goal 1:** to engage students in learning and orient them to the scholarly community from the outset of their undergraduate studies in a way that will bridge to later experiences in their chosen majors, and

  - **Goal 2:** to facilitate students’ adjustment to the high expectations, demanding workload, increased liberties, and other aspects of the transition to college life.

    - **Objective 1:** to introduce students to University study
    - **Objective 2:** to introduce students to Penn State as an academic community, including fields of study and areas of interest available to students
    - **Objective 3:** to acquaint students with the learning tools and resources available
    - **Objective 4:** to provide an opportunity for students to develop relationships with full-time faculty and other students in an academic area of interest to them
    - **Objective 5:** to introduce students to their responsibilities as part of the University community.
Background

Assessment of First Year Engagement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Assessment Activity</th>
<th>When Administered</th>
<th>Who is Responsible?</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008</td>
<td>Survey of FTCAP, Survey Student Orientation</td>
<td>Late Spring-May</td>
<td>SR PRA **</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>Survey of FYEP Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>3 Week, 2nd Week</td>
<td>FYS Coordinator, SR PRA, First Year Seminar Students</td>
<td>First Year Seminar Students</td>
<td>Ascertain gains in outcomes between 2008-2010 Coordinating Cohorts</td>
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<td>First Year Seminar Students</td>
<td>Ascertain gains in outcomes between 2008-2010 Coordinating Cohorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2010</td>
<td>Survey of FTCAP, Survey Student Orientation Experience</td>
<td>Make changes to FTCAP, Student Orientation Experience based on results of Fall 2009/Spring 2010 Surveys</td>
<td>FYS Coordinator, Associate Dean</td>
<td>All New Incoming Students</td>
<td>Ascertain improvement of FTCAP and Student Orientation Experience with regards to FYEP student outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
<td>NSSE Survey</td>
<td>Feb 11-Apr 11</td>
<td>SR PRA, First Year Seminar Students</td>
<td>First Year Seminar Students</td>
<td>Ascertain gains in composite scores between 2008-2011 scores for BOTH Cohorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
<td>Survey of FYEP Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>3rd Week, 2nd Week</td>
<td>FYS Coordinator, SR PRA, First Year Seminar Students</td>
<td>First Year Seminar Students</td>
<td>Ascertain gains in outcomes between 2008-2010 Coordinating Cohorts</td>
</tr>
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First Year Assessment Components

(0) Assessment of Placement Testing Experience (FTCAP),

(1) Assessment of the **New Student Orientation**, 

(2) Survey of the **First Year Seminar**, 

(3) Student **success indicators**, and 

(4) Examination of **NSSE** results for first year students.
First Year Assessment Components
Conceptual Model

- Placement testing (0)
- Orientation (1)
- FYS (2)
- Extent of College Engagement (3)
- Student Success Indicators (4)

FTCAP Survey

- Ask students & parents questions about FTCAP activities
- Results VERY positive so there has been no drill-down results to:
  - Orientation,
  - FYS,
  - NSSE,
  - Student Success Indicators
- Comparison to previous FTCAP Survey administrations
New Student Orientation Survey

- Asks questions about orientation activities
- Asks questions that connects the orientation activities to the FYE goals & objectives
- If students don’t respond to “connection” questions, revamp orientation
- Working on student learning (ex. Common Reading → FYS score on Common Reading assessments)

Results focused around orientation activities

Results focused around FYE goals
New Student Orientation
(New International Students Survey)

Pre/Post Survey of the FYS

- Asks questions about the FYS activities
  - How often engage in "good behaviors"
  - How important good behaviors are
  - Behavior categories
    - Classroom (ex. attentive in class)
    - Academic (ex. think critically)
    - Personal (ex. network with other majors)

- Asks questions that connect the FYS and FYE goals & objectives

- If responses are poor on POST or minimal positive movement from PRE → POST revise FYS
NSSE Results for First Year Students

**Step 1:** Look at five composites for First Year vs Seniors

**Step 2:** Look at (-) comparisons to three peer sets

1. PSU college campuses
2. “Local Competitors” - regional area schools that Berks compete
3. “National Benchmark” - schools with better retention graduation rates than Berks

**Step 3:** Look at previous administrations

**Step 4:** Look at individual item effect sizes (with other PSU Campuses) both (-) & (+) within composites that peers outperformed Berks

### NSSE 2008 Results

#### Peer Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite</th>
<th>PSU</th>
<th>Local Competitive Set</th>
<th>National Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active &amp; Collaborative Learning (ACL)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching Educational Experience (EEE)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2003-2006-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite</th>
<th>FY</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>FY</th>
<th>SR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active &amp; Collaborative Learning (ACL)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching Educational Experience (EEE)</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Composite Item Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Effect Size (ES)</th>
<th>Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)</th>
<th>Enriching Educational Experience (EEE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY First Year</td>
<td>Senior First Year</td>
<td>FY Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #16</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #19</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #20</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item #21</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**15** The 2010 Assessment Institute- IUPUI - IUPUI October 24-26, 2010

**16** The 2010 Assessment Institute- IUPUI - IUPUI October 24-26, 2010
NSSE Results for First Year Students

Step 5: Should be looking at NSSE results by
(1) Orientation participation
(2) FYS type (Linked or not linked)
(3) FYS grade categories (A-C, D-F, W)

Student Success Indicators

- First Semester Credits Enrolled
- First Semester Credits Earned
- First Year Credits Earned
- First Year GPA
- One-year retention rate
- Six-year graduation rate
Student Success Indicators

- Over 40 cohorts identified by Enrollment Management Team & First Year Experience Committee
- Also examine student success indicators (SSI) by:
  1. Orientation participation
  2. FYS type (Linked or not linked)
  3. FYS grade categories (A-C, D-F, W)
- Comparison of SSI of cohort to overall baccalaureate or associate cohort

Student Success Indicators

Standard Report of Student Success Indicators for overall, & each of the eight that were completed this summer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veterans Count</th>
<th>Fall 2005</th>
<th>1st Semester Credits Enrolled</th>
<th>1st Semester Credits Earned</th>
<th>1st Semester GPA</th>
<th>One Year Retention</th>
<th>3 (min) &amp; 6 (max) Year Graduation</th>
<th>ALL Veterans Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>14.86</td>
<td>14.35</td>
<td>7.68</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>14.86</td>
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<td>7.68</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>14.86</td>
<td>14.35</td>
<td>7.68</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1st Semester Credits Enrolled-Bachelors

1st Semester Credits Earned-Bachelors

1st Semester GPA-Bachelors

One Year Retention-Bachelors

The 2010 Assessment Institute - IUPUI - IUPUI October 24-26, 2010
Sometimes letting the 400 lb gorilla stay in the room is preferable to reporting assessment results

That said…

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Before you start the assessment
- Have articulated goals or objectives or both in place

Assessment
- Assess to those goals,
  Assess the intangibles, “the means,” but

Do not lose sight of the “ends” - student success
Recommendations

Data Analysis Considerations:
• Disaggregate results by specific student groups
• Use comparative data if available (historic, peer institutions)

Use of Assessment
• Be able to connect the “ends” to the “means” (slide 9) to make assessment results meaningful and valuable
• Use assessment of the “means” to identify milestones or activities that affirm student success or fall short