Syracuse University

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Understanding & Using Assessment Results

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Time to Talk!
Scenarios for Discussion

- Lessons learned that you might apply to using Syracuse assessment results?

- Why is it such a challenge to use assessment results to…
    - *Improve teaching and learning?*
    - *Inform plans and resource decisions?*

Why is Using Results a Challenge?

#1. We do not have a tradition of *using* research results.

Research

- Purpose
- Hypothesis
- Methodology
- Summary of results
- Analysis and conclusions
- Recommendations for further research

Assessment

- Key learning outcomes
- Standards and targets
- Assessment methods
- Summary of results
- Analysis and conclusions
- Use of results to inform improvements & decisions

#2. We need to set *defensible* standards and targets.

- Standard
  - *Minimally adequate performance*
- Target
  - *The proportion of students we want to meet the standard*

What is a standard?

- The minimum level students need in order to:
  - *Succeed in the next course.*
  - *Succeed in the workplace.*
  - *Succeed in the next degree program.*
- The level that would not embarrass you

Standards vary by course level.

- Foundation courses

- Cornerstone courses

- Capstone courses

- Use a developmental rubric to connect standards throughout your program.

What is a target?

- The proportion of students you want to meet your minimally adequate standard
  - *If essential for health & safety, 100%*
  - *If essential for subsequent success, close to 100%*
  - *If not essential… why is it a program outcome?*
- Would you be happy if all your students were minimally adequate…but none were exemplary?
  - *Consider an additional target for outstanding or exceptional performance.*

Time to Talk!
CRS 455 Critique Rubric

- Learning outcome:
  - *Design, execute, and write an original research project.*
- Scenario: If your program used this to evaluate senior research projects,
  - *What should be the minimally adequate performance for each criterion at that level?*
    - You would expect almost 100% of seniors to score at this level.
  - *Circle the boxes that best describe minimally adequate performance.*
  - *Your circled boxes may not all be in the same column.*

Time to Talk!
Public Health B.S. Assessment & Action Plan

- Of the 12 learning outcomes in this report,
  - *Which ones should the faculty celebrate as successfully achieved by students?*
  - *For which **one** would you most like to see student learning improved?*
  - *Why did you choose that one?*

#3 We do not have a pervasive culture of collaborating to knit pieces together.

Student-Level Assessment

- Assess *individual students* on *course-level goals*

- Tests & assignments, summarized into a grade

- Generally in isolation

Class-Level Assessment

- Assess *students as a whole* on *course-level goals*

- Tests and assignments
  - *Item scores aggregated across students*

- In isolation

Course-Level Assessment

- Assess *students as a whole* on *course-level goals*

- Tests and assignments
  - *Scored with a common scoring key or rubric*
  - *Aggregated across sections*
  - *Examined holistically for pervasive concerns*

- Collaboratively

Program-Level and Gen Ed Assessment

- Assess *students as a whole* on *program or gen ed goals*

- Key "capstone" assignments
  - *"Embedded" in "capstone" courses and other key courses*
  - *Scored with a common rubric*
- Field experience supervisor evaluations
- Portfolios
- Published tests

- Collaboratively

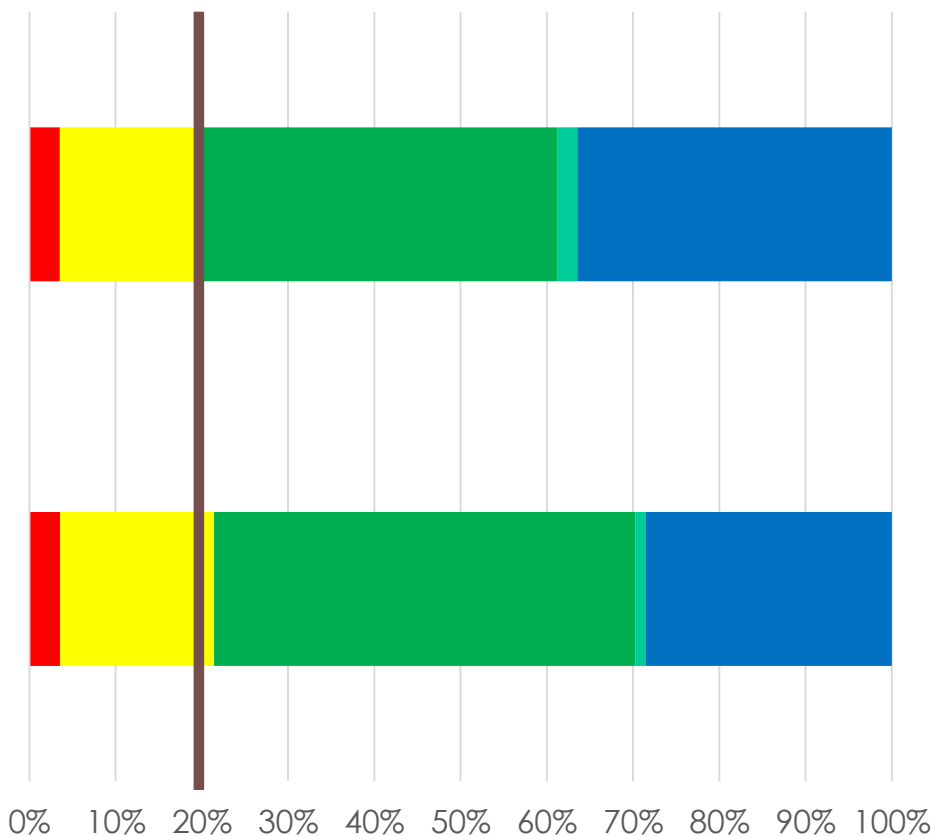# #4. Graphs are faster and easier to understand than tables.

English & Textual Studies 303, 305, 310, 320, 410

Learning outcome	Excellent	High Able	Able	Inchoate but Accep-table	Un-accep-table
Recognize how meanings are created through critical reading and analysis of texts.	31	2	35	14	3
Formulate sustained interpretive, analytical, or conceptual argument	24	1	41	15	3

ETS Faculty Observations

- Some papers fell between rating levels; they had characteristics of both higher and lower ratings.
- Few students could both mount an interesting argument AND support it with nuanced analysis.
- Students did not complete the assignment as intended
  - *Shorter papers*
  - *Made arguments unrelated to the assignment*
- Inchoate papers had weak arguments.
- Some inchoate papers were from students dealing with personal issues.

ETS Action Steps

- Revise required ETS 242 (Reading and Interpretation) to emphasize close-reading as well as a few dominant paradigms of interpretation.

- Add Advanced Critical Writing courses with significant "scaffolded" assignments with analytical and conceptual argumentation.

#5. Design assessments with the end in mind: Improving teaching and learning.

- Align rubrics, rating scales, and grading criteria with major learning outcomes and their essential traits.
- Analytic rubrics are harder to develop but are often easier to use.

Time to Reflect!