



Helping Your Campus Utilize Assessment Data to Improve Student Learning

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Michael Reder, Connecticut College : : reder@conncoll.edu

1. Goals for this Morning's Session

By the end of our session, you will have had the opportunity to:

- 1) reflect upon and discuss with colleagues your institution's current strengths and challenges related to utilizing assessment data about student learning;
- 2) think through what specific improvements the data you have identified point to, identifying both the changes in practices you wish to accomplish and the groups with whom you will need to engage;
- 3) apply to your own campus's situation specific principles, strategies, and practices that can help your colleagues—faculty, administrators, and staff—better utilize assessment data to improve student learning;
- 4) consider and discuss examples of one campus's specific use of evidence (aka "assessment data") related to student learning, including programming for faculty, staff, and administrators informed by evidence about student learning;
- 5) begin to think about how to incorporate these strategies for utilizing evidence with faculty, staff, and administrators into the work you are currently undertaking on your campus.

2. Your Own Campus's Strengths & Opportunities

PLEASE TAKE THE NEXT 5 or so MINUTES AND MAKE NOTES ABOUT YOUR RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. THEN TURN TO SOMEONE AND BRIEFLY DISCUSS YOUR RESPONSES:

YOUR CONTEXT—WHAT WORKS: What does your campus do related to sharing and utilizing data and evidence that works well? What could it do to improve?

3. Three Framing Principles for Utilizing Assessment Data

1. EVIDENCE REQUIRES A PROCESS OF “COLLECTIVE MEANING MAKING.”

2. YOU MUST BE INTENTIONAL AND STAY FOCUSED: YOUR LEADERSHIP IS KEY.

3. THIS WORK IS *AFFECTIVE* AND IS THEREFORE *INTENSELY POLITICAL*.

4. Your Own Campus's Evidence & Improvements

PLEASE TAKE THE NEXT 2 or 3 MINUTES AND MAKE NOTES ABOUT YOUR RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. THEN TURN TO SOMEONE AND BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE YOUR RESPONSES:

CURRENT FOCUS ON ASSESSMENT DATA—POTENTIAL GOALS FOR YOUR WORK:
What possible improvements to student experience or teaching practices does your data or evidence point to?

What changes or improvements, specifically, would you hope to see?

Who—what people on your campus—would be involved in making those changes and improvements?

5. Notes on Connecticut College's NSSE Data

6. Three Specific Strategies for Helping Faculty, Staff, & Administrators Utilize Data to Improve Student Learning

1. MAKE THE PROCESS FACULTY-, STAFF-, & ADMINISTRATOR-CENTERED AND APPEAL TO AND FOCUS UPON YOUR COLLEAGUES' INTERESTS & PRIORITIES.

2. REMEMBER THAT EVIDENCE IS NOT "PROOF": BE WARY OF COLLECTING MORE DATA.

3. CAREFULLY DESIGN THE EVENTS THAT ASK YOUR COLLEAGUES TO ENGAGE WITH EVIDENCE.

7. Examples from Connecticut College

8. Your Own Campus's Values

PLEASE TAKE THE NEXT 5 MINUTES AND QUICKLY MAKE NOTES ABOUT YOUR RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS: WHO CARES AND WHY?

How does the potential improvement or change fit into the values of your institution—its identity?

Do these changes fit well into any of your school's current strategic priorities or initiatives?

Are they the purview or domain of any existing committees or groups? If so, how and which ones?

How might the changes relate to the priorities of individual faculty and staff members?

Who might feel threatened by what the data suggest?

9. Levels of Evidence about Student Learning and Information about Student Experiences

Research on and Evidence-Informed works based upon Effective Teaching & Learning (e.g., chapter on theories of student motivation from *McKeachie's Teaching Tips*, or the book *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*).

National Studies of Student Experiences and Learning based on Large-Scale Assessments (e.g., overall “effective practices” from the Wabash National Study or NSSE “Effective Practices” Scales).

Your Own Institution's Results from those National Assessment Instruments (NSSE, HERI, CLA ...).

Your Own Institution's Further Analysis of the Above (bringing in specific comparison groups, parsing the evidence in various ways (by year, major, student's identity or background, etc...)).

Your Institution's Own Data (retention data, GPA, information about majors and student participation, etc...; see sheet on the back bibliography).

Course/Faculty/Student Level Information (student feedback/evaluation forms, peer reviews of teaching, information about DFWs, syllabi, etc...).

10. Thinking about a Plan: Creating a Campus Narrative

CREATING A CAMPUS NARRATIVE Considering the principles, strategies, and ideas for activities, how should the data be shared and discussed on your campus? With whom, in what order, and in what context or events?

THINKING ABOUT POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES What specific “meaning making” events focused on data or evidence might work on your campus? What might be your specific goals for the event? Who would attend, ideally? Who would run the event? How will you garner support and participation? (Think about the three principles and accompanying strategies.)

GETTING STARTED: LEADERSHIP Consider the governance and power structures of your campus—its leadership. Who needs to be involved? Whom would you like to have involved—who are your potential allies? Who needs to be involved in leading these events or this initiative?

11. Why Does this Work Matter?

12. What Do You Do Next?

13. Your Immediate Next Steps

Given what you feel the evidence suggests about opportunities to improve student learning and the answers you quickly outlined in sections 8 & 10, please delineate the “Wednesday Morning” step(s) you will need to take to get the ball rolling—to begin a process of inquiry about your evidence (please give as much detail as possible):

What, *exactly*, will you do?

- *Whom will you contact?*
- *What, exactly, will you request?*
- *What is your rationale?*
- *What answer would you like ideally?*
- *What is the deadline?*

How will you follow up?

Who from off-campus can be a resource or sounding board for your work leading the utilization of evidence?