

Closing the Loop in Assessment



Jeanne M. Hilton, Ph.D., CFLE
Human Development and Family Studies

Methods used...

- Senior online exam
- Internship supervisor ratings
- Focus group
- Alumni data

Usefulness of the data

- Senior online exam
 - Redundant information
- Internship supervisor ratings
 - Strengths/weakness of each student
 - What students need for job that they don't have, or have not developed yet
- Focus group
 - Student's perspective on things
 - Best source of data for improving program
- Alumni data
 - Employability of students
 - How they compare with other majors

Example of closing the loop

- Learned that the internship was in trouble from assessment
 - Supervisor ratings...no data were being collected
 - Focus group...students had horror stories to tell

● Problems

- Taught by LOAs who constantly changed
- Drift away from original intent
- Match with sites was poor...busywork
- Little or no supervision by instructor
- Evaluation was haphazard
- Students were upset

Steps to resolving the problems

- Phase 1- Hired one of our MS students to teach the course
 - Worked with her to design the course
 - Developed internship handbooks for students and supervisors
 - Developed a rating scale for supervisors to be used in assessment
 - Developed a plan for identifying and evaluating sites

Assessed Phase 1 Outcomes...

- **Course was more focused and students knew intent**
- **Better placements**
- **We had appropriate supervisor ratings to use**
- **Instructor did not have experience to teach professional development**
- **Students were enraged by the way they were treated by the instructor**

- **Phase 2 – Hired another of our graduates (with a Ph.D.) to teach course**
 - Gave her all the materials and syllabus to use
 - Explained the intent
 - Asked her to continue to develop sites

Assessed Phase 2 Outcomes...

- **Instructor did not follow the syllabus, visit sites, or hold meeting with students**
- **She did not collect supervisor ratings**
- **Students just showed up at the sites and did whatever**
- **It was a giant step *backward***

- **Phase 3 – Realized that an experienced faculty member was needed to teach the course**
 - Added in-depth learning experiences
 - Added emphasis on professionalism
 - Built community relationships
 - See evaluation portion of syllabus

Assessed outcomes

- **Students report the course is one of the most valuable in the curriculum**
- **Students are consistently offered employment at sites**
- **Students want course offered for letter grade**

Conclusions

- **Key courses have to be taught by experienced and committed faculty**
- **Constant monitoring is necessary to control for course “drift”**
- **Focus groups are an excellent assessment tool for staying on top of things**