



Establishing Roots:

***Key Ingredients for Involving Faculty and
Creating a Culture of Assessment on Campus***

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Ten Key Ingredients in Creating a Campus Culture of Assessment

Key assumption: Someone has been identified who has the major responsibility for implementing the assessment initiative---and that person is currently teaching or has recently been in the classroom. Creating a culture of assessment works best if the person can both ‘talk the talk’ and ‘walk the walk’.

1. **Be sure everyone understands what assessment IS** -- as faculty, we have always been doing assessment, this just formalizes it. Stress that it creates a learner-centered classroom, rather than a teacher-centered classroom. As long as you can answer the key question: “What do you want students to be able to KNOW/DO at the end of the course?” you can do assessment. Encourage people to ‘begin at the end’ in developing student learning outcomes.
2. **Provide workshops, speakers, and open sessions** where people can learn assessment language, learn how to write student learning outcomes and how to measure the results. Do this continuously every semester, not just once or twice. Continue to stress that what they are already doing is fine -- - we are just working together to convert what they are currently doing into measurable outcomes. The key question I ask is, “Tell me what you are doing NOW --- what is it that you want students to be able to do/know when they leave the course, and how do you currently know that they know/can do it?” Recognize that some people cannot analyze data --- they will need help.
3. **Identify key people in major discipline areas/departments** that can be your liaisons – but do not expect them to do all the work --- you need to be available to meet with people as needed.
4. **Enlist the support of key administrators** who can ‘tell the same story’ in terms of the need for assessment --- and who are respected/listened to by the faculty.
5. **Model an assessment strategy yourself.** Use it as the basis for a workshop where you ask your colleagues to help you analyze the outcomes --- especially if it did not work well or did not meet the benchmark level – it will demonstrate that assessment is a learning process for everyone and the feedback loop is the essential ingredient.
6. **Be clear from the start on how the outcomes data will be used.** Describe how the data will be analyzed and presented. Allay fears or, if needed, confirm fears --- honesty is the key. The assessment person should not be responsible for performance evaluations.
7. **Encourage full-time faculty to involve adjuncts** in the planning and design of assessment materials. Some adjuncts are interested in being part of the process, others are not --- let adjuncts know early what changes/efforts assessment will require.
8. **Have everything available electronically**, but recognize that not all people will want to use electronic means to communicate with you. Provide multiple avenues, including personal appointments at the convenience of the person at his/her site. Have examples to share, be comfortable with resistance --- it is part of the process.
9. **Continue to stress the importance of the feedback loop** as a key element in improving instruction, i.e., turning in data is not the end of assessment.
10. **Be available, be flexible, be quick, be involved** --- assessment is a time-intensive, on-going, long-term activity!!!! Remember: YOU have to believe assessment is a worthwhile endeavor or no one else will believe it either!