Closing the Loop
Cultivating Support for Assessment as a Change Agent

HLC Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois April 2013
Introductions

- Murphy Waggoner
  Math Professor, Director of Academic Assessment
  Past chair of EPCC, member EPCC and APRC

- CoryAnne Harrigan
  English Professor, Director of Writing Across the Curriculum
  Past Gen Ed director and APRC member, member EPCC

- Steve Griffith, Senior VP and Dean of Academic Affairs
the positive impact of a criteria-based general education curriculum on the culture of academic assessment
The Evolution of a Culture of Assessment

• Compliance
  o 1995 and 2005 college-wide assessment plans
  o Post HLC visit

• Cultural Shift
  o Writing criteria for Gen Ed
  o Evaluating proposals for criteria

• Closer to Commitment
  o Common vocabulary
  o Learning from doing
Simpson College

- Des Moines area
- Comprehensive Liberal Arts
- 1500 traditional, 500 non-traditional students
- Methodist affiliated
Assessment Culture
Before the ECC

• Our majors get good jobs so we must be doing fine.

• We don’t need assessment; the administration is just interfering with our academic freedom.

• Negative assessment results will cause us to lose funding, resources, staffing.
Assessment Culture
Before the ECC
Engaged Citizenship Curriculum

- Learning Programs Working Group
- Criteria working groups
- Review panels
- Departmental designation proposals
Method

• Interviewed faculty

• Varied
  
  o Terms of service

  o Experience with ECC and assessment

  o Administrative responsibilities
Where did you learn about assessment?

- My first exposure to assessment as a new faculty member was on the review panel.
- Everything I know about assessment came from the ECC.
- I was involved with assessment for ages but I didn’t understand it until we began working on assessment of the ECC.
What did you learn?

- Working with the ECC helped us understand what to look for when assessing our majors.

- We modeled the biology SLOs on the Scientific Reasoning SLOs.

- We were only assessing anecdotally, but now data support our intuition and we can measure impact.
How did you learn it?

• By working in a group to write ECC learning objectives
• By writing proposals for ECC courses
• By incorporating embedded skills into our courses
• By revising the ECC criteria
Evidence of Cultural Change

• Vocabulary of assessment permeates the faculty

• Common question: “...but is it assessable?”

• Moving from “I” to “we”

• Demystification of assessment – changed from a possible weapon to a useful tool
Future of the ECC

- Revise ECC course-level learning objectives based on our experiences so far
- Develop program-level learning objectives for ECC
- Build and apply rubrics to student artifacts
- Continue to train through doing
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Indianola, Iowa