

A red pencil with a gold band is positioned diagonally on a perforated metal surface. The background is a blurred grid of small holes.

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences - Annual Conference 2022

Pre-Conference Assessment Workshop

Back to Basics: Starting the Process

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This is an *interactive* session.
Ask questions, make comments, argue with us.
We all learn from the exchange.

So, you're starting (or re-starting) an assessment effort ... why?

1. Assessment has a variety of meanings in higher education. It includes “any activity designed to collect information on the success of a program, course, or University curriculum” in order to “improve institutional practices” (Stassen et al., 2001, p.5).
2. Program assessment “focuses on assessing student learning and experience to determine whether students have acquired the skills, knowledge, and competencies associated with their program of study” (Stassen et al., 2001, p.7).

Stassen, M., Doherty, K., & Poe, M. (2001). Program-based review and assessment: Tools and techniques for program improvement. Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA), University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Retrieved from http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf

Why?

- Accreditation / Re-Accreditation
- Program Review
- Other – issues unique to each region, state, institution, and program

What form will your assessment take?

- Institutional (Program / degree-wide)
- Program Options
- Courses
- No matter what you're doing, you are assessing student performance within your program, course, etc.
- What you are trying to assess makes a difference.

How will you assess?

- *What you are trying to assess makes a difference.*
- Objective or subjective?
- Methods
 - “Scantron” (of what?)
 - Essays (traditional papers or ‘Silhouettes’)
 - Projects
 - Written Exams
 - Practical Exercises
 - External vendor – program & package

Methods (page 1)

Method	Pro	Con
Scantron (or similar)	Fast & easy to administer, objective, easily deployed	Out of favor, depends on simple answers, does not allow nuance, instrument & question design very important
Essays / Vignettes / Projects / Practical Exercises / Written Exams	Qualitative, effective instrument design allows assessment of many aspects (vocabulary, term usage, conceptual understanding, practical skills)	Issues of inter-rater reliability, time intensive, ineffective instrument design defeats all assessment efforts

Methods (page 2)

Method	Pro	Con
External Vendor / Instrument	Skilled & experienced vendor with knowledge of design, content, and administration.	Potential loss of in-house control & design, costs beyond faculty action
All methods	Can be a grade-able event within the course administered – primary assignment or extra credit.	Lack of course credit (assignment, exam, etc.) likely to reduce student effort & participation

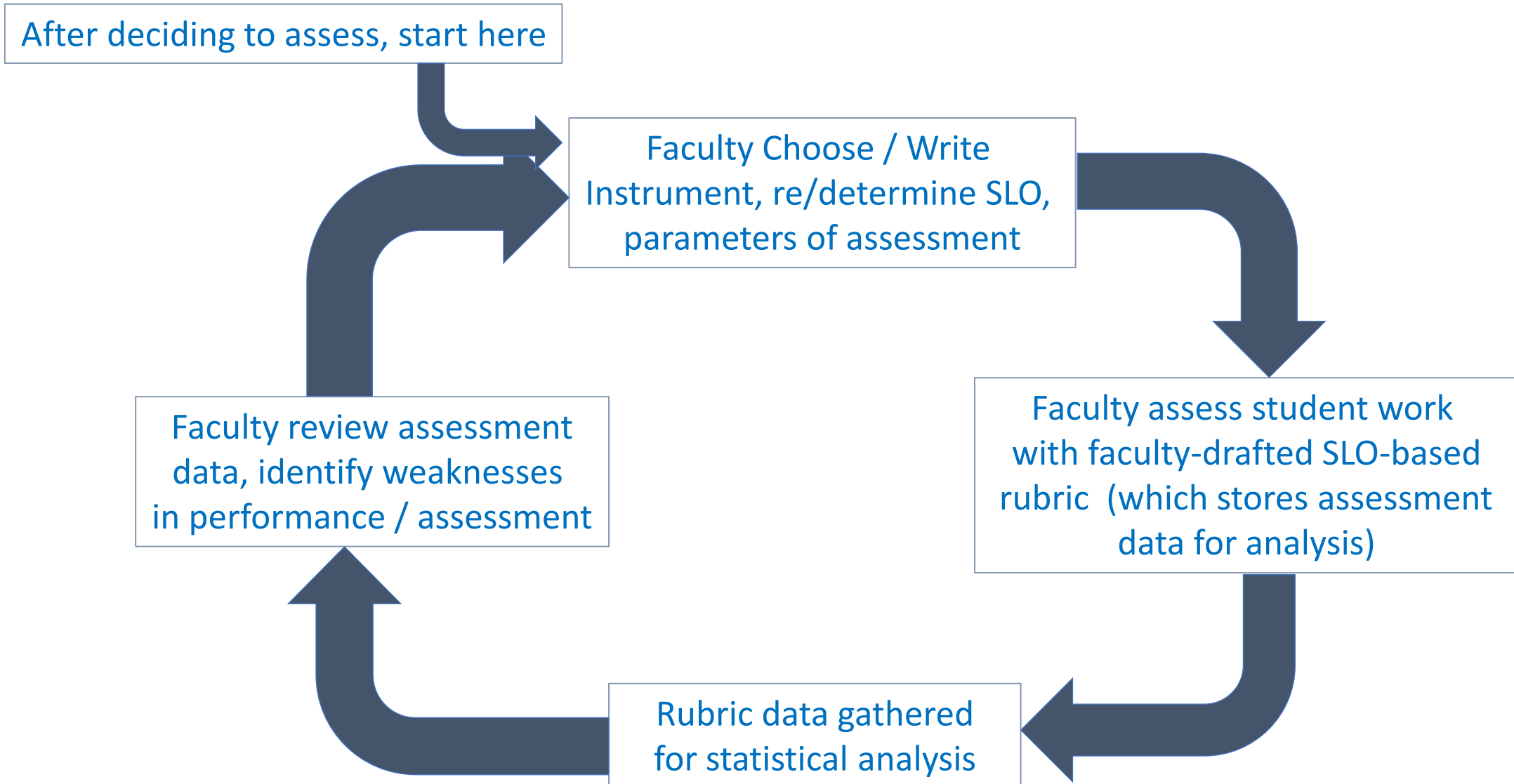
Common to all Assessments

- What to assess
 - Program > Course > Specific content target
- Instrument Design
- Rubric Articulation

Issues

- Rubrics
 - If shared with students, insight into how to form answers (but not content)
 - If not shared with students, potentially undirected effort responding to the prompt
- Faculty buy-in
 - Is this institutional busywork?
 - Faculty involvement in instrument design
- Validity of entire approach and individual instruments

Opening and Closing The Loop



Thank you!

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