REFLECTION BASED ASSESSMENT: An Authentic Approach to Learning Outcomes Assessment of Student Employees

Chris Johnson & Justin Keen
Agenda

• Background
• Outcomes Development & Backwards Design
• Staff Buy-in
• Learning Through Self Assessment
• Reflection
• Implementation
• Analysis of Assessment Data
• Improving Practice
• Moving Forward
Background

• 100 student employees
• Wide variety of experiences
  • Operations
  • Box Office
  • Games Room
  • Information Center
  • Summer Conferences desk staff

• “Assess Student Learning”
Student Employment as a High-Impact Educational Practice

- Considerable time & effort devoted to meaningful tasks
- Interaction with faculty & peers about substantive matters
- Increases interactions with diverse populations
- Promote frequent feedback about performance
- Demonstrates various learning styles
- Can offer a life-changing experience

- George Kuh, 2008
Student Employment as a High-Impact Educational Practice

• How can you make an experience High Impact?
Outcomes Development

• Recognizing Differences in Staff Competency
• Gaining Staff Buy-in
Outcomes Development

- Professionalism
- Problem Solving
- Goal Setting
- Teamwork
- Communication skills
- Practical Skills
Assessment

- Publish Outcomes
- Determine student “success” rates
- Monitor Student Performance
Pit-falls

- Measures are largely performance indicators

- Student expectations are not well-enforced

- Students and staff members are not invested in the learning or assessment process.

- Preliminary assessment measures were not extraordinarily helpful.
Learning Partnerships Model

- Validate learners as knowers
- Situate learning in the learner’s experience
- Define learning as mutually constructing meaning

- Baxter Magolda, 2004
Learning through Self-Assessment

• For self-assessment to result in meaningful growth:
  • Articulate Expectations
  • Conduct Self-Assessment
  • Encourage Revision

• Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009
Learning through Self-Assessment

• To increase usefulness to students:
  • Continued practice & use
  • Need to see connections to improvement/benefit
  • Don’t look for a specific answer
    • You’ll get what you ask for!

• Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009
Self-Reflection and Capacity Development

• “Using the insights generated through reflection, advisers can become more adaptable and flexible in dealing with the unexpected challenges and problems that arise in day-to-day work with clients.”

• Britton, 2010
Self-Reflection and Capacity Development

Process of Reflective Practice
1. Experience: Select a ‘critical incident’ to reflect on
2. Appraisal: Describe and unpack the experience
3. Analysis: Examine the experience
4. Discovery: Interpret and draw realizations from the experience
5. Integration: Explore the alternatives and re-think future action
6. Informed Action: Take action with new intent

• Britton, 2010
Self-Reflection and Capacity Development

Ways to Encourage Deeper Reflection

• Ask Interesting Questions
• Draw a rich picture
• Keep a journal
• Develop a timeline
• Write a brief case study

• Britton, 2010
Training → Daily Tasks → Down Time
Designing Reflection Questions

Outcome

• Which outcome do you want to explore?

Content

• What do you want to know about the outcome?

Method

• How do you want students to explore their connection with the outcome?
Designing Reflection Questions

Outcome

- Conflict Management

Content

- Recall one or more styles
- Recognize conflict in the workplace
- Discuss supervisor/supervisee conflict

Method

- Direct Question
- Hypothetical Situation
Designing Reflection Questions

Have you used any of the five conflict management styles this semester? What was the situation, and how did you manage the conflict? If you have not yet encountered conflict in your work, what style are you most likely to use if you are in a disagreement with your supervisor?
Designing Reflection Questions

Activity on writing questions

1. Experience: Select a ‘critical incident’ to reflect on
2. Appraisal: Describe and unpack the experience
3. Analysis: Examine the experience
4. Discovery: Interpret and draw realizations from the experience
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# Rubrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginner 1</th>
<th>Developing 2</th>
<th>Accomplished 3</th>
<th>Advanced 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal Setting</strong></td>
<td>Does not set any goals, or goals are inconsistent with Values, Interests, Personality, and Skills (VIPS), or unattainable.</td>
<td>Sets goals, though some lack clarity or consistency with VIPS, or are otherwise unattainable.</td>
<td>Sets goals that are attainable and consistent with VIPS, though lacks strategies to reach them all.</td>
<td>Sets goals that are attainable and consistent with VIPS, and develops reasonable strategies to reach them.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict Management</strong></td>
<td>Passively accepts alternate viewpoints/ideas/opinions.</td>
<td>Redirecting focus toward common ground, toward task at hand (away from conflict).</td>
<td>Identifies and acknowledges conflict and stays engaged with it.</td>
<td>Addresses destructive conflict directly and constructively, helping to manage/resolve it in a way that strengthens overall team cohesiveness and future effectiveness.</td>
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<td><strong>Peer Teaching</strong></td>
<td>Does not understand multiple learning styles or how to create learning outcomes</td>
<td>Has an understanding of learning styles, but relies heavily on one or two styles</td>
<td>Presents to more than one style, may create learning outcomes but does not measure peer learning.</td>
<td>Planning begins with the creation of learning objectives, presentation is geared toward multiple learning styles. Assessment looks to measure peer learning.</td>
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Meet with Students!

- This can be a challenge – particularly with a large staff
- One of the key tenants of a high-impact educational practice!
Student Employee Meetings Report

* Required

Spring Semester - First Meeting

How well is your student able to articulate ways in which this position relates to his/her major? *
- The student sees no correlation.
- The student is able to agree with ways I suggested the two relate.
- The student is able to articulate transferrable skills (soft skills) related to this position and any other position.
- The student is able to articulate clear links between this position and their major.
- We did not discuss this linkage.

How would you describe your student's ability to set and work toward a SMART goal? *
- Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, Timely
- Student did not set a goal, or was unable to remember his/her set goal.
- Student set a goal that was unrealistic, and has not worked toward the goal.
- Student set a SMART goal, but does not have a clear plan for achieving the goal within the set timeframe
- The student set a SMART goal and has a plan to meet/exceed this goal
- We did not discuss SMART goals.

How would you describe the student's ability to solve problems? *
- The student does not easily recognize challenges/difficulties.
- The student identifies unrealistic ways to work through challenge or relies heavily on supervisor assistance to identify solutions.
- The student identifies one or more solutions to problems, but either jumps too quickly into the first possible solution or does not follow through with the solution without supervisor approval.
Assessment Plan

- **Student Self-Assessment**
  - Self-Assessment @ Training using rubric
  - Weekly Reflection on a specific learning outcome
  - Reflection following in-person meeting with supervisors
  - End of semester self-assessment

- **Professional Staff**
  - Read student reflections to inform student meetings
  - Inform student meetings with observational, anecdotal information
  - Assess learning based on in-person meetings
Transparency

- Builds buy-in from students and staff
- Helps students to benchmark learning
- Assists in “norming” the value of learning through the employment experience
Welcome back! I hope you had an enjoyable and relaxing winter break, and have come back prepared to take on the challenges of a new semester. I have been busy analyzing student learning over the past semester, and would like to share what I’ve found.

By the Numbers...

- 45% of student employees demonstrated one or more ways in which they have successfully managed peer-to-peer conflict (disagreement, difference of opinion, etc).
- 66% of student employees demonstrated an understanding of the importance of setting and working toward personal and professional goals.
- 70% of student employees demonstrated an understanding of how to apply professional skills learned in SLKU to future careers.

My Observations...

- Reflection experiences should differentiate between new and seasoned employees.
- Student participation in the reflection and assessment process has increased since 2011-2012, however, many of the reflections lack depth and clarity.
- A large percentage of student employees need to better develop their goals. While we hope you strive to follow through with your obligations (show up to work on time, etc.), you should set goals that are meaningful to your personal and professional growth.
- Many students are not able to label conflict in the workplace. Perhaps it would be helpful...
Using Assessment Data
Using Assessment Data

- Individual students
- Entire Program
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- George Kuh, 2008
Next Steps

• Utilizing data to inform hiring decisions for student manager positions
• Including questions to better assess students base during interview or after hiring.
• Continue to improve reflective questions and find new ways to improve reflection quality
Questions / Thank you!

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