Gotta Find Your Purpose
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Just like in research, good assessment starts with good...
Is it possible to assessment completely accurately?

- No!
- Samples or snapshots of time
- Draw our best conclusions based on that sample knowing there is measurement error
- “We must simply strive to make assessments sufficiently truthful that we will have reasonable confidence in our findings and can use them with enough assurance to make decisions about goals, curricula, and teaching strategies” (Suskie, 2009, p. 38)
Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about

- Assessment in Practice, by Trudy Banta, p.2
5 Dimensions of Good Assessment:

- Provide useful information
- Are focused, simple and cost effective
- Give us reasonably accurate, truthful information
- Systematic, transparent and consistent
- Fair and ethical
- Qualitative and well as quantitative

(Suskie, 2006, p. 1)
Define the purpose

Identify outcome

Connect with courses/programs/services

Review, analyze and interpret results

Gather data

Share/use information
Why?

- Roots assessment in priorities
- Focuses = not assessment everything
- Planning = varying assessment methods
- Streamline and plan resources needed
- More effective instruments
- Connects results to actions faster
- Guides data analysis
- Ensures you’re getting the data you need
Planning Assessment Backwards

- What do you want to discover?
- What sources of evidence can you draw on?
- Slow down to think about:
  - What do you want to learn about?
  - Who do you need to get the information from?
  - How do you want to assess (or learn)?
  - When is a good time to capture that information?
- Without asking these questions results risk being less than useful

(Maki, 2010, p. 8)
When you start an assessment project, ask yourself three key questions:

- Start with “why.” Why does your course, academic program, co-curricular program and/or service exist? When you know the answers to your why, you will know what to assess, as this is the impact you hope to make.
- When deciding what to assess, select those that address program goals, those related to longer interventions, those with a greater number of participants and those that use greater resources.
- If you have a number of activities related to one goal, you will not want to assess every activity related to that goal.” But you don’t need to do it all at once.

Dr. Vicki Wise, Portland State University (OR)
Worksheet time...
Based on your purpose/topic

1. What question do you want to ask or get answered?

2. How might you begin gathering information to answer that question? (Hint: try on some new techniques in the next breakout session)
References

- Suskie, L. (2006). “Good assessment?” (located on the UB Assessment Day Website, retrieved from IUPUI’s website)