


# Assessment Planning and Design




March 29, 2010

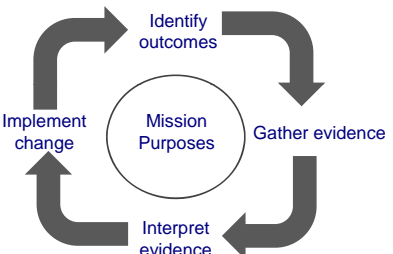
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## Session Outcomes

1. Articulate steps in the assessment process

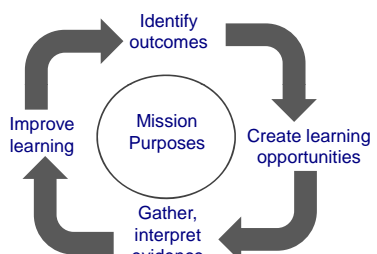


## Assessment Cycle



Maki, P. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution*. Sterling, VA: Stylus. P. 5.

## Assessment Cycle

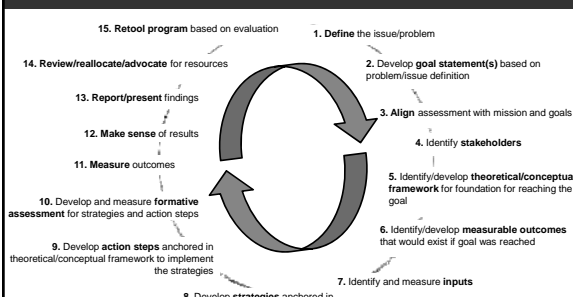


Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

## Assessment-Planning Cycle

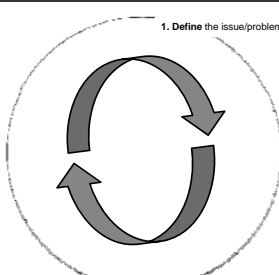
- Cycle combines planning and assessment to foster outcomes
- Step-by-step process
  - Planning
  - Implementation
- Both summative and formative
- Review/complete each step before beginning assessment since later steps may impact earlier steps

## Assessment-Planning Cycle




## Define the Issue/Problem

1. Define the issue/problem



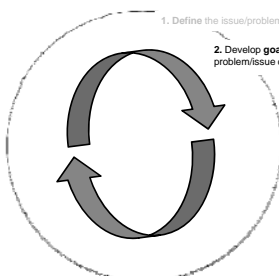
## Define the Issue/Problem

- May be difficult task because the problem or issue may not be as obvious as it may seem.
- Reduce the issue into multiple issues to make it easier to manage.




## Define the Goal Statement

1. Define the issue/problem  
2. Develop goal statement(s) based on problem/issue definition



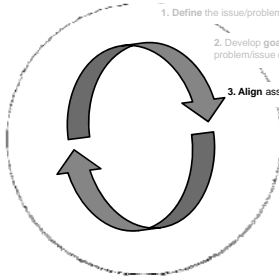
## Define the Goal Statement

- Once you have defined the issue, you will need to decide what you want to focus on.
- Write a clear statement(s) of what your goal(s) is in addressing the issue.
- For this step, just focus on a solution not how you are actually going to solve the problem.



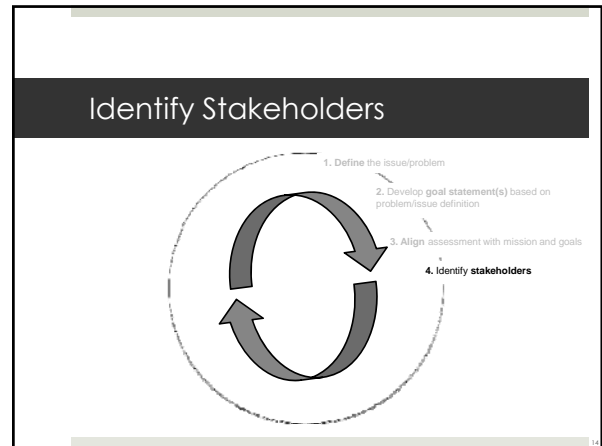
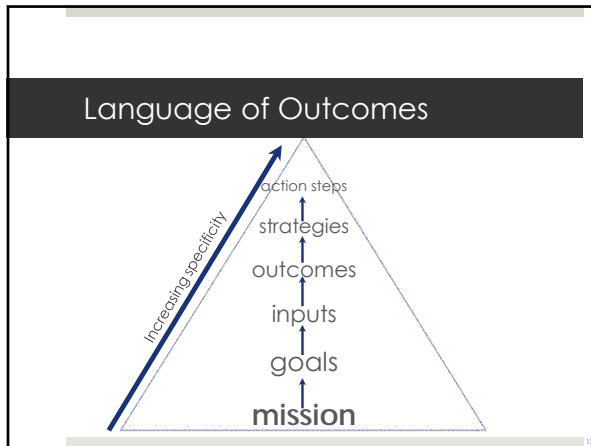
## Align Assessment

1. Define the issue/problem  
2. Develop goal statement(s) based on problem/issue definition  
3. Align assessment with mission and goals



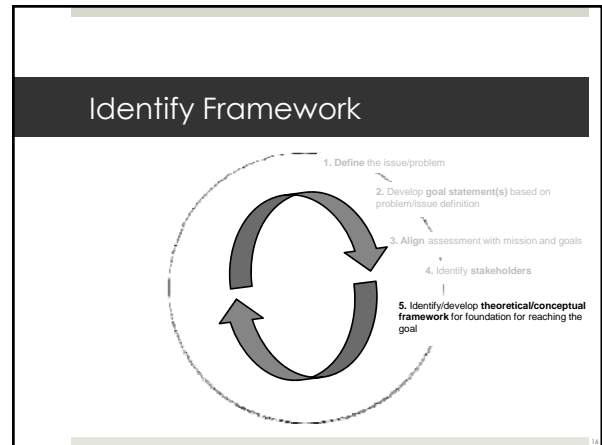
## Align Assessment

- Your issue and goal should be aligned with and support institution and department missions and goals.
- We often embark on projects that are not consistent with other missions and goals.
  - Can jeopardize budgets, resources, credibility
- Be able to complete the statement, "this program/intervention supports institution or department mission..."



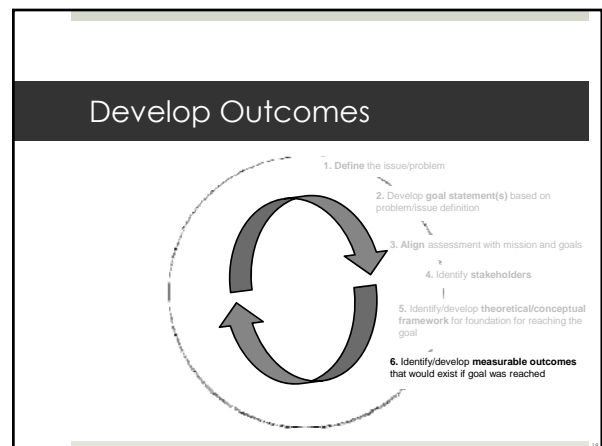
### Identify Stakeholders

- Identify all stakeholders even if they won't be part of the assessment itself.
  - Identify issues as a way to identify stakeholders.
  - Think of primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders.
- Important to get the right people on the bus AND in the right seats from the start.



### Identify Framework

- Try to answer the question, "what does theory say about this issue?"
- Literature review is always helpful.
- Theory is useful and adds credibility, but may not always exist.
  - Don't abandon the search just because it may be difficult to find.
- Conceptual framework can be based on practice.



## Develop Outcomes

- Determine what types of measurable outcomes would demonstrate that you met your goal.
- Outcomes will dictate the data you will collect.
- Outcomes will help you determine if you have reached your goals.
- Outcomes should be supported by your theoretical/conceptual framework.

## Develop Outcomes

- 3 Types of outcomes
  - Operational outcomes
  - Learning outcomes
  - Program outcomes

## Operational Outcome

- **Operational Outcome:** Metrics that document progression towards a goal.
  - Example: 200 students will participate in the Emerging Leaders Program at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year.

## Learning Outcome

- **Learning Outcome:** A learning outcome is the desired learning effect of a program, service, or intervention but is more specific than a goal. It is participant centered.
  - Example: As a result of participating in the Emerging Leaders Program, students will develop and hone meeting facilitation skills.

## Program Outcome

- **Program Outcome:** A program outcome is the desired aggregate effect of a program, service, or intervention but is more specific than a goal.
  - Example: 80% of all students will lead a student organization by the time they graduate.

## Identify Inputs

1. Define the issue/problem
2. Develop goal statement(s) based on problem/issue definition
3. Align assessment with mission and goals
4. Identify stakeholders
5. Identify/develop theoretical/conceptual framework for foundation for reaching the goal
6. Identify/develop measurable outcomes that would exist if goal was reached
7. Identify and measure inputs

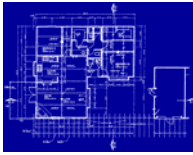
## Identify Inputs

- Inputs are the raw materials available and can include available budget for a program or intervention, staff, facilities, etc.
- It is helpful to identify the inputs as they will dictate what strategies and action steps you can employ and they also may affect the extent to which you can achieve your goals or outcomes.
- You will want to measure the inputs before you begin the actual program or intervention.

## Develop Strategies

## Develop Strategies


- Think about what specific strategies will help you meet your outcomes and thus your goals.
- Determine if existing strategies will actually help you meet your outcomes or if you should develop new ones.
- Strategies should be supported by your theoretical or conceptual framework.



## Develop Action Steps

## Develop Action Steps

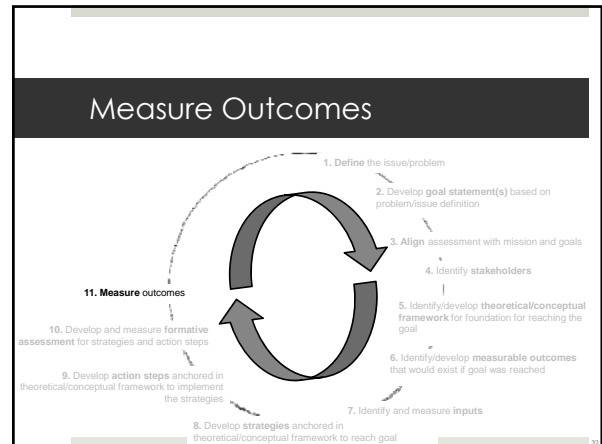
- Action steps make implementing strategies easier by providing a "to do" list.
- Action steps should be supported by the theoretical/conceptual framework.
- It is important to track these because you can determine which action steps helped you achieve or not achieve your outcomes.



## Formative Assessment

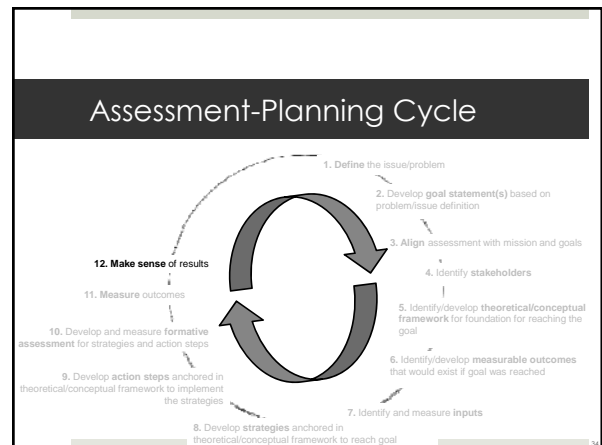
## Formative Assessment

- Formative assessment focuses on the process.
- Formative assessment helps you understand the effectiveness of your strategies.
- Formative assessment helps you with three things:
  - Make changes mid-course
  - Make changes for next implementation cycle
  - Help understand impact of strategies on goals
- Can be time consuming - but worth it!



## Measure Outcomes

- Need to collect summative outcome measures.
- Measurement should be considered early in the assessment/planning cycle so that you can determine if you can get the data in the format that you want or need.
- Don't rely solely on surveys.
- Couple direct and indirect methods of assessment.



## Make Sense of the Results

- Once you have the outcome data collected you need to make sense of it.
- Analysis
  - How sophisticated? Cross-tabs,  $X^2$ , regression
  - Statistical significance vs. practical significance
- Context to consider:
  - theory/conceptual framework
  - formative assessment
  - stakeholders
  - institution/department mission and goals

## Make Sense of the Results

- Consider alternative hypotheses.
  - Many things impact student change
  - We need to consider what else might impact change and learning aside from our program



### Report Findings

- FACT
  - Format
  - Audience
  - Content
  - Timing

### Report Findings - Audience

- Who are your audiences?
  - Board of Trustees
  - Senior administrators
  - Faculty
  - Students
  - Parents
  - Community
  - Others

### Report Findings - Format

- What format will be best for audience(s)?
  - Written report
  - Executive summary
  - Web-based report
  - Oral presentation
  - Podcast/YouTube

### Report Findings - Content

- Journalistic
  - Who?
  - What?
  - Where?
  - When?
  - How?
- Institutional Research
  - What?
  - So what?
  - Now what?

### Report Findings - Content

- Basic research
  - Introduction
  - Lit review
  - Method
  - Results
  - Discussion
  - Conclusion

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### Report Findings - Timing

- When is the best time to disseminate results?
  - During the summer when faculty and students are gone?
  - At the beginning of the semester when everyone is concerned about the start?
  - In November when planning is already completed?
  - In time for budget discussions?

### Review Resources

### Review Resources

- Once you have the assessment data, you want to make changes based on that.
- Review the resources you are allocating.
- Based on the data you may want to reallocate how resources are used, perhaps discontinuing strategies that didn't work and implementing ones that you think will.
- You may choose to advocate for more resources.

### Retool Program

### Retool Program

- This step is sometimes called "closing the loop."
- Retool program based on what you learned from the summative and formative evaluations.


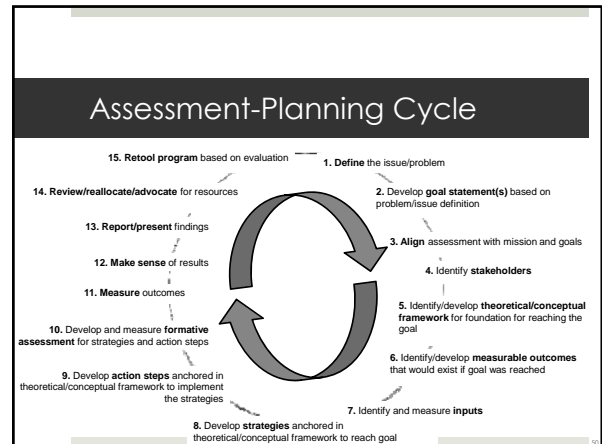
**Repair with Care**

### Redefine Issue/Problem



## Redefine Issue/Problem

- Start process all over again with your retooled program or something new.

## Example

- Thanks to Jennifer Lackie from Boston College for allowing us to use elements of her assessment plan as an example.

## Define the Issue/Problem

- While the Student Programs Office at Boston College has high expectations for club officers to be campus leaders and role models for other students, the club officers themselves perceive their roles as positional only and limited to the descriptions outlined in the club constitution.

## Goal Statement

- The goal of this program is to challenge students in the Jesuit tradition to become increasingly complex and increasingly principled in their understanding of appropriate behavior for student leaders at Boston College.

## Align Assessment

- The Student Program Office's mission is to "develop students who are engaged with the Boston College community and prepared for leadership in the larger society" (Student Programs Office, 2008). By helping students to understand that leadership is more than positional Boston College graduates will become better leaders on campus and in the larger society.

## Identify Stakeholders

- Advising Deans (Primary)
  - Given our limited resources, how are we going to put energy towards this program while still fulfilling all of our other responsibilities?
- Provost (Secondary)
  - With this project, and the data garnered from it, be a positive addition to our accreditation process?
- Parents (Tertiary)
  - How is this program preparing students for the future?

## Identify Framework

- Two of Arthur Chickering's seven vectors are particularly informative in helping Boston College administrators understand and help resolve the issue of student leader behavior. Chickering explains that while students move through the vector "Moving through Autonomy Towards Interdependence", they emotionally separate themselves from their parents, becoming increasingly reliant on their peers. Peers then have a great influence on students' behavior.

## Develop Outcomes

- Operational outcome: The Student Programs Office will run at least 20 unique workshops between September and the Leadership Awards Ceremony as part of the Magis Leadership Series.
- Learning outcome: Student leaders who participate in the Magis Workshop Series will be able to identify and describe four ways their actions have an impact on the Boston College community by Christmas break.
- Program outcome: At least 75% of student leaders will be characterized at stage 5 of Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

## Identify Inputs

- At least twenty volunteers from across the Boston College community will be needed to help facilitate the workshops or speak at the workshops so that students can learn to become more principled and complexly ethical in their decision making.
- Year-long access to Survey Monkey or Zoomerang is needed to send out post-workshop evaluations and assessments to students so that we can conduct formative and summative assessment during the year.
- Web space is needed to post information about the Magis Program and other resources as they become available. This will ensure that students know about the program, its calendar, the program requirements and have access to additional resources about topics that have been covered, so that the learning can extend outside of the walls of the workshops.

## Develop Strategies

- Student leaders who participate in the Magis Workshop Series will be able to identify and describe four ways their actions have an impact on the Boston College community by Christmas break.
  - S1.1: As part of the Magis workshop series, run a program where student leaders will be exposed to testimonials from members of the Boston College community about how others have impacted their experiences while on the Heights (the name for Boston College's campus).

## Develop Action Steps

- S1.1: As part of the Magis workshop series, run a program where student leaders will be exposed to testimonials from members of the Boston College community about how others have impacted their experiences while on the Heights (the name for Boston College's campus).
  - AS1.1.1: Identify a list of individuals on campus (or in the extended BC community) who can talk about the role that others have had on their experiences at Boston College.
  - AS1.1.2: Narrow the list down to four individuals – two who can comment on positive experiences and two who can comment on negative experiences.
  - AS1.1.3: Secure the speakers for the time and date of the workshop.

## Formative Assessment

- **S1.1:** As part of the Magis workshop series, run a program where student leaders will be exposed to testimonials from members of the Boston College community about how others have impacted their experiences while on the Heights (the name for Boston College's campus).
- **One-Sentence Summary Statements**  
In order for this strategy to be successful, we want to ensure that students listened to the four speakers and absorbed some of the things that they discussed during their talks. In order to assess whether this happened, the Student Programs Office will have students write a one-sentence summary of the program on index cards before they leave.

## Measure Outcomes

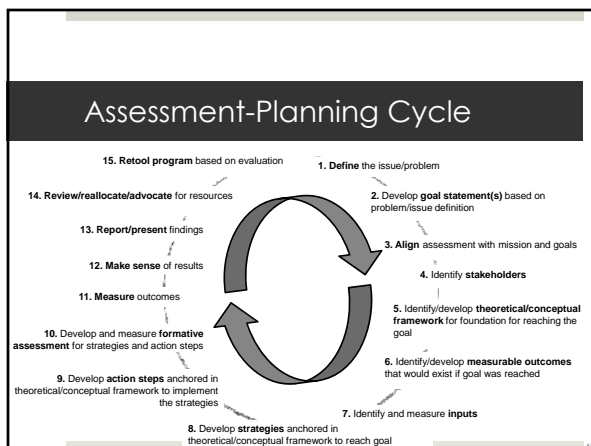
- **Learning outcome:** Student leaders who participate in the Magis Workshop Series will be able to identify and describe four ways their actions have an impact on the Boston College community by Christmas break.
- **Test of knowledge/skills (Direct)**  
Students who are participating in the Magis Program will be sent a "test" through Survey Monkey in early December which will ask students to demonstrate knowledge that they have learned up until that point. Among other things, the students will be required to list and describe four ways that their actions have an impact on the Boston College community, which will allow us to assess whether or not students have achieved this learning outcome.

## Make Sense of Results

- **Test:** students will identify and describe four ways that their actions have an impact on the Boston College community.
- Frequencies will be used to identify the top "impacts" student behavior has. Those will be compared to the "impacts" discussed in the workshops to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshops.
- We will compare the test results with a control group to determine if any change is due to the workshop.

## Report Findings

- The second report will be distributed to the Vice President of Student Affairs office. Each month, every department submits a report about the activities they have conducted over the previous month, including data where available. At the end of the year, each department submits an End-of-Year Summary. For the monthly reports, only 2 – 3 sentences are permitted to be written about any particular initiative, so brevity is particularly important. As a result, the information written in these reports will focus on operational outcomes and quantitative data only. In the End-of-Year Report, each program is allotted as much space as needed for quantitative data only. As a result, we will summarize as much as possible in quantitative form. Although these reports are very short, they are critical because the Vice President's Office sends the reports to the President's Office, and funding is directed towards programs highlighted in these reports.



## Questions/Comments?

Conclusion

