Creating an Effective Academic Assessment Plan

Analysis of Findings

The Analysis of Findings is the opportunity for programs to extrapolate meaning about their students’ learning from the information reported in the Findings. This is where programs answer the “So what?” question: the findings indicate that students performed at XX level – so what? What does that say about how well students are learning?

A well-written analysis of the findings should answer the following questions:

1) What does the finding tell us about how well students are achieving this specific outcome?
2) What are the students’ specific strengths and/or weaknesses in this area?
3) How do the findings compare to findings from previous years?
4) What improvements do the findings suggest need to be implemented in the next year?
5) For programs with both online and on-campus degree earners: how does the performance of these unique cohorts compare?

Meets Standard Criteria:

Analyzes at least two findings; reflects on findings and/or processes that lead to current results; evaluates specific strengths and/or weaknesses related to the SLO; may analyze findings from previous years; if appropriate, compares data from differing delivery methods; if appropriate, proposes strategies for improvement as a result of the findings/analysis.

Example 1: Analysis of Rubric Scores

1. How well students achieving outcome

[1] Overall, students in the program are able to articulate the historical, social, and cultural dimensions of a topic of their choosing. [2] Students who earned a score of 1 - Unacceptable on this area of rubric failed to articulate at least one of the required dimensions of the topic. Most projects who earned this score confused the social and cultural dimensions, although they were able to articulate the historical dimension. Students who earned scores of 4 - Exemplary were able to connect their topic to the present day in addition to the required discussion of each dimension. [3] An analysis of last year’s data shows that students continue to struggle with this connection. [4] These findings suggest that the program should emphasize the distinction between social and cultural dimensions when discussing historical topics.

2. Strengths/weaknesses

3. Compare to previous years

4. Improvements
Creating an Effective Academic Assessment Plan

Example 2: Analysis of Comprehensive Exam – Question related to methods and analysis

[4] There were no evident weaknesses that need to be addressed with a course or program modification. [2] One student presented a qualitative methodological approach, while the other three students used quantitative methods. [1] All students utilized a sound methodological approach which lead to a passing score on exam question.

[2] Students that used a quantitative approach utilized both bi-variate and multivariate methods to test hypotheses related to their research questions. [1] Faculty with expertise in these methods scored the comprehensive exam question and approved of the methods/analyses used by students.

Example 3: Analysis Comparing Online and On-Campus Students

[1] Overall, our students demonstrated mixed levels of ability in identifying methods for assuring health program sustainability. [3] These results are similar to the results we reported last year. The program decided to monitor for trends in the data. [5] From these assessment results, it is clear that the online students are performing at a lower level than the main campus students on the HSC 555 final paper. [2] In these papers, on-campus students were able to identify multiple methods for assuring health program sustainability, while online students struggled to identify more than one method. Additionally, on-campus students were able to discuss how the multiple methods could interact in application to support their given health program. [4] Because this is the final course in the curriculum sequence, it is important for us to consider prior course preparation and skill building for the writing proficiency outcome.

A large majority of the main campus students meet with the professor to discuss their final paper. And while online office hours are scheduled for the online students, these have not been well attended. The department should discuss alternative methods for online students to interact with the professor in order to receive feedback about their papers while they are being developed.

For more information, please contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

http://www.odu.edu/assessment
assess@odu.edu
(757) 683-3322