Focus Days!
Creating a Culture of Assessment on Campus

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Presentation to Assessment Colleagues - October 1999
KEY FEATURES

• Faculty Assessment Committee
  – established by Chancellor, appointed by the Provost

• Small Assessment Office
  – Director & Statistical Research Assistant
  – $60,000 for testing and operations

• Two Assessment Days
  – Cohort based “mass” testing
  – Multiple testing sites, common testing time
  – Make-up Days
Focus Days

Fall - 1/2 Day, following Convocation

- All undergraduate classes cancelled ‘til 5:00
- Freshmen test for 2 - 3 hours
- Departmental assessment meetings, focus groups, etc.
- (Builds on survey & placement testing during summer orientation)

Spring - Thursday after MLK holiday

- All undergraduate classes cancelled 8 - 5
- Sophomores test for 2 - 3 hours
- Campus-wide day for assessment activities
- (Will add Senior testing in two years)
1998 - 99 Participation

Freshmen
94.7% Tested on Focus Day
4.6% Make-up Testing
0.7% Did Not Test

Sophomores
88.5% Tested on Focus Day
7.9% Make-up Testing
3.5% Did Not Test
Cohort Based - Designator Focused

- Each year’s freshman cohort focuses on a specific set of learning outcomes.

Freshman Benchmarks
- Prior experiences
- Entry-level Skills
- Expectations

Sophomore Formative Evaluation
- General Education Outcomes
- Designators
- Experiences
- Skills & Knowledge

Senior Year
- Designators
- Majors
- Experiences

“ND” - 1997 & 1998
“W” - 1998
“C” - 1999
“S” - 2000
Tests & Surveys Used

- ACT-CAAP (Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing (editing), etc.
- Appalachian Essay (Placement/Assessment)
- Appalachian Math/Science Reasoning
- Computing Skills & Experiences Survey
- Hands-on Computing Test
- Appalachian Information Literacy
- Learning Community Questionnaire
- CSXQ (Expectations)
- CSEQ (Experiences)
- NSSE
- NCTLA (pre and post)
Inviting Support

- Use Student Proctors
  - Training creates a cadre of informed and supportive students
- Use Faculty & Staff Proctors and Leaders
  - Increases involvement, taps valuable skills
  - Creates first hand knowledge of the process
- Give the effort a name and logo - market it!
- Use direct mail, personalize letters and mailings
- Carrots “beat” Sticks
- Mimic SAT-type testing (id, admit ticket)
Lessons Learned

- Today’s students grew up in a culture of assessment - talk to them as adults, ask for their help
- Inviting students to proctor & participate works
- Assessment depends on the good will of others
- Wide involvement works
- Don’t wait for a perfect plan - jump in and go
- Expect to do the heavy lifting in the first year(s)
- A happy process makes data more believable
Unexpected Outcomes

- Focus Day Attendance as Early Warning
- 141 freshmen did not test on time

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missed testing</th>
<th>Tested on time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did NOT returned the following fall</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year GPA</td>
<td>2.16</td>
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