Beyond Surveys and Focus Groups:
Using Other Assessment Methods to Gather Evidence

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Division of Student Life

Learning Outcomes

After participating in this workshop you will be able to:

- List the 7 step process of qualitative data analysis.

- Describe four alternative methods to gather assessment evidence.

- Determine how you could use one alternative assessment method in your work setting.

Reasons to Consider Other Methods

- Survey fatigue

- Time savings

- A fuller picture of outcomes (triangulation)

- Capitalizes on "incidental" data

Existing Measures

- Data has been collected for another purpose
- Can be in the form of documents or raw data
- Examples
  - Institutional data
  - Reflection papers
  - Applications or other materials
  - Incident reports

Existing Measures

Strengths	Limitations
Saves time and money	Access to raw data
Not having to manage response rate	Can't manage response rate
Cuts down on survey fatigue	Trustworthiness

What information already exists that could assist you in your assessment process?

Alternative Methods

1. Content Analysis
2. Reflections
3. Visual Methods
4. Observation/Unobtrusive Measures

Qualitative Data Analysis

The Process:

1. Organize the data

2. Give the data a "once-over," noting initial impressions

3. Categorize the data

Qualitative Data Analysis

The Process (continued):

4. Determine the relative significance of each category by counting the number of times it occurs

5. Note responses that do not fit into the categories

6. Find compelling quotes to include in your assessment report

7. Take a step back

Qualitative Data Analysis

Please list one thing you learned during the Excel Session.

To go to my professor's office hours
Just to go to class and to pay attention to do well in school.
Talking to professors
Some of the ways to do well in my classes.
I learned about asking questions, and going to office hours
Semester-hour expectations for each semester and graduation
You need to go to lecture halls!
To pay attention in lecture.
Some expectations of the college learning environment.
How to be a good student
Be where you need to be and when you need to be there
The online classes you can take
To do my best
Don't be afraid to talk to your professors.
Go to classes/office hours.
It is important to go above and beyond
Can't remember

Academic Skills

Expectations

Professors/TAs

Qualitative Data Analysis

Please list one thing you learned during the Excel Session.

Themes	Percentages (of 543)
Academic skills	29%
Don't remember	22%
Professors/TAs (office hours, get to know them)	11%
Other	9%
Expectations (class, academics, professors)	8%
Responsibility/Balance	7%
Time-management	5%
Excel/Challenge yourself/Set goals	5%
College versus High School	2%
Credit requirements/Grading	2%

Content Analysis

- Qualitative analysis
- Uses documents to glean: meaning, perspective, growth/change
- Can use training manuals, notes, portfolios, discussion boards, twitter, blogs, emails, papers, agendas, flyers, policies, meeting minutes, logs, etc.

Strengths	Limitations
Available and accessible (already there)	Context, decoding language
Low cost	Not interactive
Can be more precise	Can't generally follow up for more information
Timeline	Not all stakeholders will respond to this data

Content Analysis Example:
Resident Assistant Incident Reports

Resident Assistants should be able to:

- Refer residents to appropriate services
- Clearly convey important information in a timely manner
- Identify and interrupt behavior that is negatively impacting the community

Incident Report

Incident Type (Circle as appropriate): Accident Theft Violence Property Damage Medical Other (please explain):		Date	Time
Location		Report Date	
Reported by	Address		Phone

RA Matt received a call at 2:38 a.m. on October 30 from the front desk saying that there was an alcohol incident in the fourth floor lounge.

RA Matt and RA Sam, who was with RA Matt at the time, explained the situation to the police and escorted them to the fourth floor lounge where there was a security guard waiting with Resident Pete. Resident Pete had a quarter of Hawkeye Vodka sitting on the table with him.

The two police officers took control of the situation, and received Resident Pete's information. Throughout the process, Resident Pete was extremely compliant. After the officers

decided that Resident Pete was not very intoxicated, they issued him a PAULA and one of the officers took the vodka to dump out in the sink. RA Matt escorted the officer to the bathroom and watched him dump the alcohol down the sink.

The police officers then left and RAs Matt and Sam stayed and talked with Resident Pete about his actions and that they were going to have to fill out a report about the incident.

Resident Pete mentioned that he had just recently broken up with his girlfriend, and that is why he had turned to alcohol. He said that he knew it was stupid but he felt that he had no other place to turn. Resident Pete mentioned several times that he wanted to physically hurt someone in order to make himself feel better and that he has dealt with anger issues.

RAs Matt and Sam talked to Resident Pete about how that would not help the situation. RAs Matt and Sam stayed with him until he had calmed down sufficiently enough for them to leave him alone.

Content Analysis Example: Resident Assistant Incident Reports

Resident Assistants should be able to:

- Refer residents to appropriate services
- Clearly convey important information in a timely manner
- Identify and interrupt behavior that is negatively impacting the community

What evidence might you have, based on the incident report, that the above learning outcomes were or were not met?

Content Analysis Example:
Resident Assistant Incident Reports

Refer residents to appropriate services.

- Did not refer Resident Pete to appropriate service e.g. UCS

Clearly convey important information in a timely manner.

- Explained the situation to the police

Identify and interrupt behavior that is negatively impacting the community.

- Spoke to Resident Pete about his actions

Analyzing Reflection

- Capturing reflection as assessment data (vs. an individual exercise) is a frequently missed opportunity

- Rubrics can be used to collect aggregate information about level of reflection (depth, quality, connection)

Analyzing Reflection

The level of reflection, as reported in Chabon & Lee-Wilkerson (2006), could be used for coding as follows:

- Level 1 – *Descriptive*: The participant provided evidence that **new knowledge was obtained**, which allowed him/her to make sense of new experiences or make links between old and new knowledge

- Level 2 – *Empathic*: The participant **expressed thoughts or emotions about others and self**. S/he reflected their experience (emotions, attitudes, beliefs) onto how future participants may feel or react to the experience. Participant empathizes with those around him/her.

Analyzing Reflection

- Level 3 – *Analytic:* The participant demonstrated the **application of learning to a broader context** of personal and professional life. Entry provided evidence of learning/growth in order to contrast, compare, or plan for new actions or responses. Participant also noticed unexpected positive or negative outcomes related to the project.

- Level 4 – *Metacognitive:* Participant demonstrated **examination of the learning process**, showing what learning occurred, how learning occurred, and how newly acquired knowledge or learning *altered existing knowledge.* Participant plans to change future behavior based on the project experience and its outcome(s) on his/her life.

Example: What is the Level of Reflection?

"I think the person I identify the most with would be Jesse. He's an overachiever and just wants his parents love and support. I know how hard it can be to want to make a difference and be a leader, but people won't let you, not because of being unqualified, but just being looked down on for being different. Honestly it has shaken my confidence in my ability to succeed. I really look up to Jesse. He was so strong and pushed as hard as he could until the end and it paid off."

Visual Methods

- Captures images as main form of data

- Examples: pictures, videos, art work, sculptures

- A more structured method of self-reflection
  - If learning is the goal, it needs to be built into the process/structure

Strengths	Limitations
The old cliché – "A picture says a thousand words"	Smaller number of perspectives
Could use images for multiple uses	Timeline
Technology	Technology

Photos as Assessment Data

- Photo elicitation:
  - For example, asking students to take a picture that captures something they learned during an event or program and include an explanation why they took that photo
  - Photos and explanations can be analyzed to determine common themes

- Photo taxonomies:
  - Birnbaum created a taxonomy of impressions students want peers to form of them, based on Facebook photos. E.g., Red solo cups = "partier"

"Adjusting to college life includes having to clean up after yourself... And maybe your roommates."

-Mercedes

Photo: IMU M+D

"After participating in a leadership role in Dance Marathon I learned just how much effort goes into the big event. Organizing this event has taught me how to manage a large project and work with a group toward a goal."

-Joel

Photo Journaling

University of Iowa: http://captureiowa.uiowa.edu/

University of Minnesota: http://www.ofyp.umn.edu/en/first-year-photo-project.html

What settings in your work might benefit from visual aspects of assessment?

Unobtrusive Measures/Observations

- Naturally occurring
- Observing what is there
- Can be qualitative or quantitative in nature

Strengths	Limitations
Data is usually there waiting to be collected	Have to think about what you are measuring
Can track change over time without relying on participant response	Privacy?
Natural setting can be an asset	Consistency

Example: Don't Wait, Walk

- Point-of-decision prompts literature indicates:
  - Signs placed by elevators or escalators to encourage individuals to take the stairs rather than the escalator or elevator
  - Found to be effective in various locations
    - Subways, shopping centers, banks, airports, college buildings
- Question: Will point-of-decision prompts placed at Cambus stops increase the proportion of students who walk rather than ride the bus?

Methods

Ten Cambus sites selected:

- Sites greater than a 15-minute walk from campus were excluded

- Clustered into
    1. Residence Hall site
    2. Main campus site
    3. General campus

- Randomly assigned to intervention or control group

Methods

During first week, baseline data collected at each site:

- Counted number of individuals who waited for bus

- Counted number of individuals who boarded bus

- Excluded those who ran to catch the bus

Methods

- Signs reading "No time for physical activity? Don't wait, walk!" were posted during week 2 at intervention sites

- Same data collected during week 2
  - Same observers
  - Same times
  - Same weather
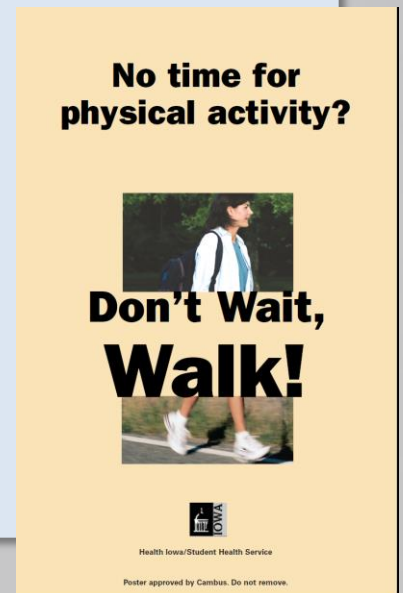
Conclusions

- Point-of-decision signs were effective at increasing number of students who walked rather than rode the bus at specific sites

- Significant sites had more visible signs

Other Observational Measures

- Dining swipes

- Hand hygiene adherence

- Shadowing

- Observing officials, instructors, trainers

- Others?

Photo Credits:

- Survey Photo: http://emfsafetynetwork.org/surevy-results-wireless-meters-impact-health-and-safety/
- Fatigued Student Photo: http://www.franklin.edu/blog/5-ways-to-avoid-academic-fatigue/
- Documents Photo: http://www.greatnorthernprepper.com/minicast-episode-5-ids-and-documents-for-bug-out-bags/
- Brain Photo: : http://phenomena.nationalgeographic.com/2013/04/02/a-new-push-to-explore-the-brain
- Women Talking Photo: http://thenetworkingstrategist.wordpress.com/
- Student Thinking Photo: http://www1.uwindsor.ca/internationalregistration/4/accept-your-offer
- Picture Frame Photo: http://factorydirectcraft.com/catalog/products/2030_2119-16954-large_primitive_burgundy_wooden_frame.html
- Bus Stop Photo: http://www.clker.com/clipart-bus-stop-sign-3.html
- Washing Hands Photo: www.281janitorial.com
- Question: http://allthingsd.com/20120717/ten-questions-for-new-yahoo-ceo-marissa-mayer-this-wont-hurt-a-bit-okay-just-a-little/