

What Now? Using Assessment Data to Make Decisions

Learning Outcomes

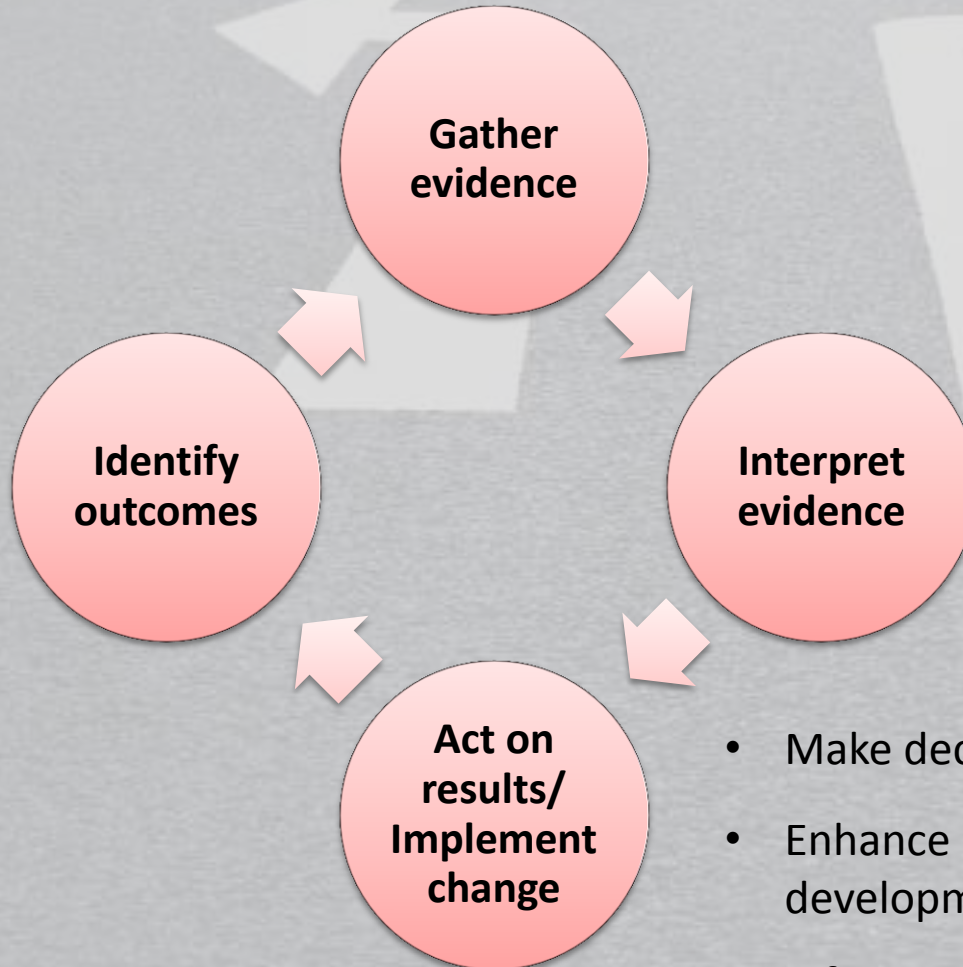
After participating in this workshop you will be able to...

- List the three steps to evidence-based decision making.
- Describe the three principles that can help guide your response to data.
- Explain one way you will apply what you have learned today in your work.

“**Assessment** is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes, institutional, divisional, or agency effectiveness.”

In other words, assessment enables us to determine **the level of effectiveness** of our programs and services. The definition of “effectiveness” varies by our goals.

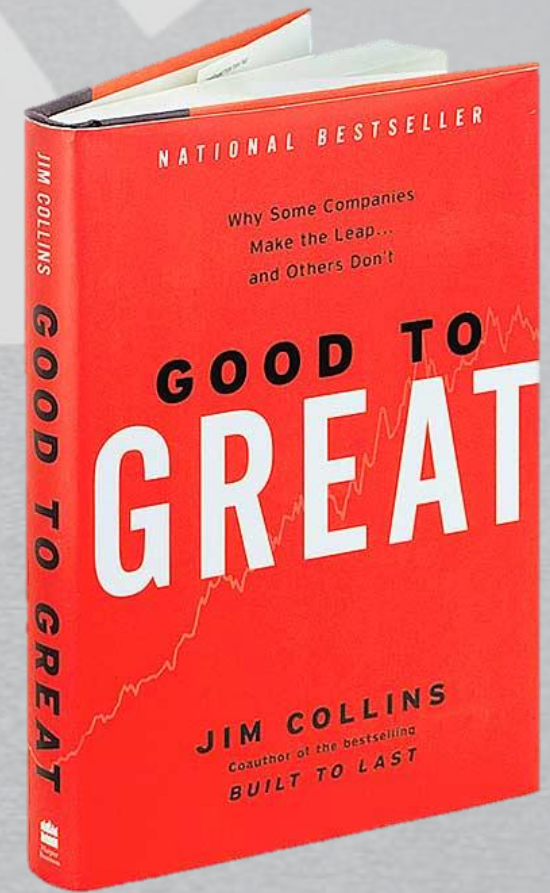
Assessment Cycle



- Make decisions to improve programs
- Enhance student/faculty/staff learning, development, or experience
- Inform institutional/departmental decision-making, planning, budgeting, and policy

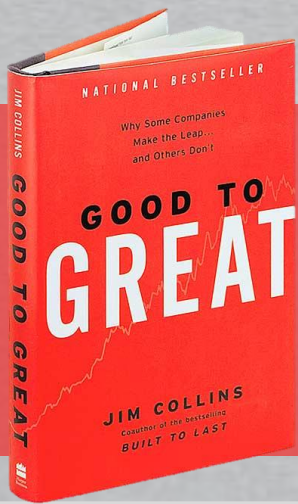
Lessons from *Good to Great*

- Collins (2001) compares companies that went from being good to being great with companies that failed to make the same leap
- Relevant conclusions-
good-to-great companies:
 - “Have a culture of discipline”
 - “Confront the brutal facts”
 - Were transformed through a *cumulative* process



Creating “Great” learning experiences for our students

- The “great” companies shared some common characteristics related to assessment:
 - A culture of disciplined thought and reflection
 - Lack of resources did not mean lack of disciplined thought – it made rigor all the more important
 - Looking at the “brutal facts” i.e. autopsies without blame

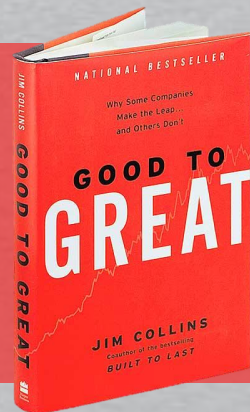


“What matters is that you rigorously assemble evidence – quantitative or qualitative – to track your progress.” (Collins, 2001).

Lessons from *Good to Great*

- Foster a culture of discipline
- Confront the brutal facts
 - Ask questions to gain understanding
 - Engage in dialogue and debate
 - Conduct autopsies without blame

"Once you know the right thing, do you have the discipline to do the right thing and, equally important, to stop doing the wrong thing?"



Lessons from Good to Great

- Celebrate small successes

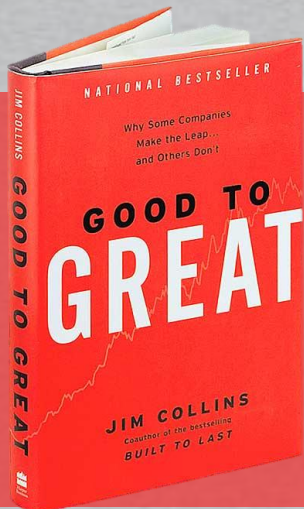
"The good-to-great transformations never happened in one fell swoop. There was no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment."



“Good to Great” in our Programs

- Colleague 1: “How did the program go last night?”
- Colleague 2: “Great – we had 40 people attend, and they seemed to really enjoy it.”

What can we do to create a culture where we challenge each other supportively around assessment?



“Leading from good to great...means having the humility to grasp the fact that you do not yet understand enough to have the answers and then to ask the questions that will lead to the best possible insights.” (Collins, 2001).


Locus of Control

- When thinking about making decisions/changes/improvements, what is within your locus of control?
- What decisions/changes/improvements require dialogue within your team/department/division or with your stakeholders?
- Try to focus on areas that are both
 - 1) changeable and
 - 2) important to the program/service/department

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Framework

- Gather data
- Have a dialogue about our data
- Act on what we have learned to make decisions
 - Action can have different meanings

Data  Dialogue  Action

Example: Peer Mentor Training

- **Learning Outcome:** As a result of participating in peer mentor training students will be able to describe the five steps to making an informed student referral.
- **Activity:** Steps are outlined using lecture format

- **81%** of students could describe all five steps.
- Specific steps:
 1. Define the problem- **92%**
 2. Analyze the problem- **89%**
 3. Develop alternative solutions- **68%**
 4. Decide on the best solution- **82%**
 5. Act effectively- **87%**



What are the implications of these results?

Example: Peer Mentor Training

What would be two recommendations you would make based on these results?

Using the recommendations you outlined, what decisions/changes/improvements would you make to peer mentor training?



Using Assessment for Improvement

LeaderShape: Pre/post definitions of leadership

Findings and changes:

- Pre-definitions were more likely to include concepts of leadership as positional or ‘charismatic’
- Post-definitions were more likely to include elements around integrity, possibility, action, and community
- Post-definitions were “deeper” and contained more elements
- Continue to focus on community aspects of leadership in future workshops

Using Assessment for Improvement

IOWA GROW® Supervisor Survey

- What challenges are supervisors experiencing?
- What do supervisors see as the benefits?
- What suggestions for improvement do supervisors have?

Finding and changes:

- The most common suggestion for improvement was to have additional questions to use during subsequent conversations
- Created additional questions for supervisors to use with students

Additional Questions

Based on IOWA GROW® feedback we have created additional questions that supervisors may use in subsequent conversations. These additional questions are for:

- student employees who are beyond their first year of employment in your department
- student employees with whom you have had more than two IOWA GROW® conversations
- student employees in their junior or senior(+) years

NOTE: The four core IOWA GROW® questions should be asked in every work-academic connection conversation. Any other questions that you may ask should be asked in **addition** to the four core questions. The four core questions are essential to IOWA GROW® and will be assessed at the end of the academic year.

- How is this job fitting in with your academics?
- What are you learning here that's helping you in school?
- What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
- Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?

Additional Questions

Skills we want employees to learn:

- What have you learned here [in this job] about working with diverse populations [or any other employment outcome] that you think might be helpful in your academic courses?
- What have you learned from your studies and classes so far about working with diverse populations that you find helpful in this job?
- When have you used conflict resolution skills [or any other employment outcome] at work and in class?
- What have you learned about communicating effectively with your supervisor that also is effective with faculty?
- What types of problems have you solved at work and how will you use that in your courses? [Note: supervisors may need to provide examples or prompts as this question is general]
- How has working as a team member here at work helped you with group projects in your classes?

Learning about oneself from employment:

- How has working here helped you with group projects?
- What are your strengths and how have you used them at work and in class?
- Are there aspects of this job that have helped you discover things you might want (or not want) in a career?

Preparing for the world of full-time employment:

- What is one thing you've learned here about workplace culture and expectations that you think will help you in a full-time position?

Confirmation is a Finding Too!


- Confirmation that outcomes were met is a finding
- Record any confirmations made
 - Based on our findings students met the outcomes of the program with the instructors and content used



Evidence-Based Decision Making

Framework

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Data  Dialogue  Action

Three Principles

Three principles* to help guide your response to data collected:

- **Open sharing of results and the process for utilizing the results (transparency)**
- **Active involvement (dialogue) in interpretation of results and selecting area(s) of focus**
- **Shared responsibility for developing a plan, measuring progress on the plan, and achieving results**

Transparency

- Be as open and transparent as possible with results
- Communicate results early
- Develop and communicate a timeline
 - Plan for who gets the results right away, and who gets them after some dialogue
 - Plan for dialogue about the results
 - Determine who will draft and then approve action plans
- Decisions made should clearly connect to your results

Your Organization

- Consider whether your organization is accustomed to broadly sharing information and collaborating on solutions
 - **Yes-** You may be able to share your results via email, right away at a staff meeting, or through intranet
 - **No-** You may want to start with a leadership team planning session, then distribute the results and ask for input after you have the outline of a plan developed

Dialogue

The background features a light gray gradient with a pattern of colorful speech bubbles in shades of blue, green, yellow, and pink. At the bottom, there are two gray silhouettes of human heads in profile, facing each other, suggesting a conversation or dialogue.

- Interpretation of the results is most effectively done through a dialogue process
- It is important to include diverse perspectives in the dialogue
- It is not necessary or advisable to have all of the answers or solutions planned before sharing the results
- Leave the dialogue with an action plan

Dialogue: Using Questions

- Guide the conversation through the use of questions
- Dialogue Cycle
 1. General questions
 2. Areas of strength
 3. Areas of growth
- Ask questions from all three areas every time

General Questions

- What surprises you about the data?
- How does this data fit (or not fit) with other data sources you have?
- If you were to pick one thing to dig into and learn more about, what would it be?
- What are we doing well?
- What should we celebrate?
- What should we change?

Areas of Strength

- Are there specific policies, practices, programs (both informal and formal) that support this component within your department?
- How can you continue to build on/support these elements?
- In what ways do the areas of strength match the department's areas of focus over the past couple of years?
- What you have done to communicate this value to your staff members?

Areas of Growth

- If you feel there is a mismatch between respondent perception and reality, how can you better communicate your efforts in this area to stakeholders?
- In what ways are the areas for growth aligned or not aligned with the department's focus over the past couple of years?

Sample

- Do we have the full breadth of social identity groups and perspectives participating in this assessment? (who is missing?)
- What could we do to capture the perspectives of those individuals knowing that they already have chosen not to respond to our assessment?
- How might our unconscious attitudes and assumptions about these populations be playing out in the decision not to target our efforts to get more responses from them?
- How might making conclusions based on this data inadvertently advantage some and disadvantage others?

Dialogue



- Try not to get mired down in whether the data is “perfect” or “significant”
- Narrow down the answers to these questions into themes and consider whether there are stories to illustrate a set of themes
- Describe what you hope to change

Dialogue



- Can't focus on everything identified
- Choose focus area based on collective expertise/experience- connect it to your experience!

What challenges might you encounter when facilitating a dialogue?

Action and Change

- Stakeholders will view the data through different lenses
- Stakeholders will be oriented differently toward change
- Multiple conversations may be necessary
- You may need to “table” certain findings

Action Plan

- Formal or informal
- Documented
- Can take many forms including:
 - Action steps
 - Detailed action plan
 - Recording of verbal agreement

Shared Responsibility for a Plan

- Provides an opportunity for individuals to engage in the action planning process
- Key Steps:
 - Begin with a celebration of successes
 - Finalize the plan for who is responsible for what and when it will occur
 - Establish key steps with deadlines and ways to measure success (record at all steps)
 - Share the goals and the action steps broadly within the organization



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- [Question Marks](#)
- [Questions](#)