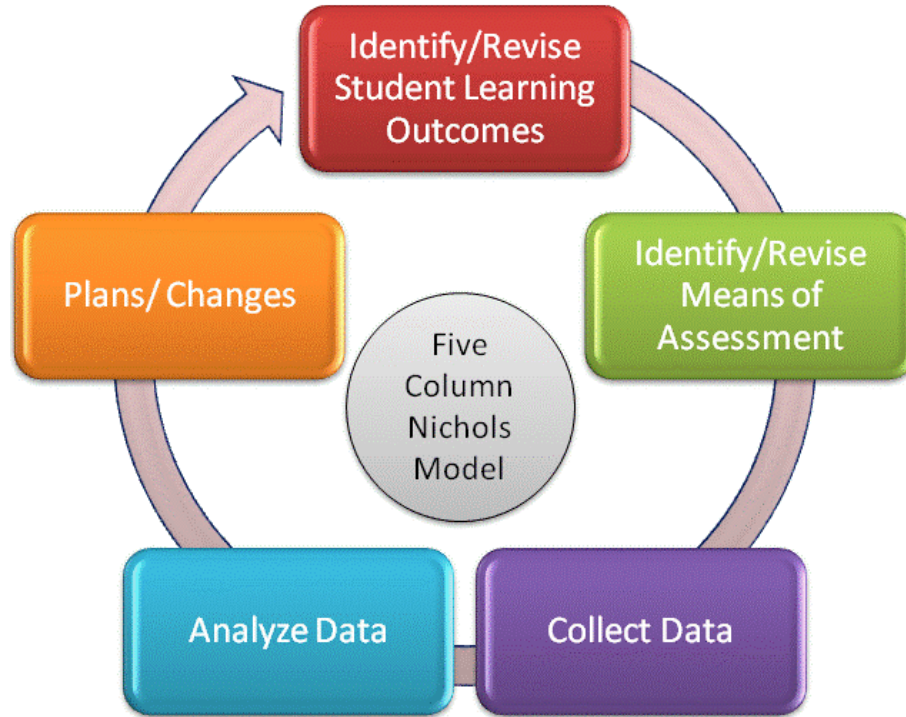# Closing the Loop:
The Heart of Student Assessment

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Assessment is always a work in progress because we are always working to increase meaningful student learning.

(Wehlburg, 2007)

The Assessment Cycle

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the presentation participants will

- Identify examples of 'closing the loop'
- Apply the information from the workshop to their own program assessment

What is 'Closing the Loop'?

- **The last stage of the assessment cycle**
- **Taking time to reflect on assessment results**
- **Documenting what changes were made**
- **Examining whether the implemented changes have been successful or unsuccessful**
- **Discussing the next steps**

What 'Closing the Loop' is NOT

- **It is not the action plan**
- **It is not changing the assessment process**
- **It is not "we will continue to monitor" without an explanation**

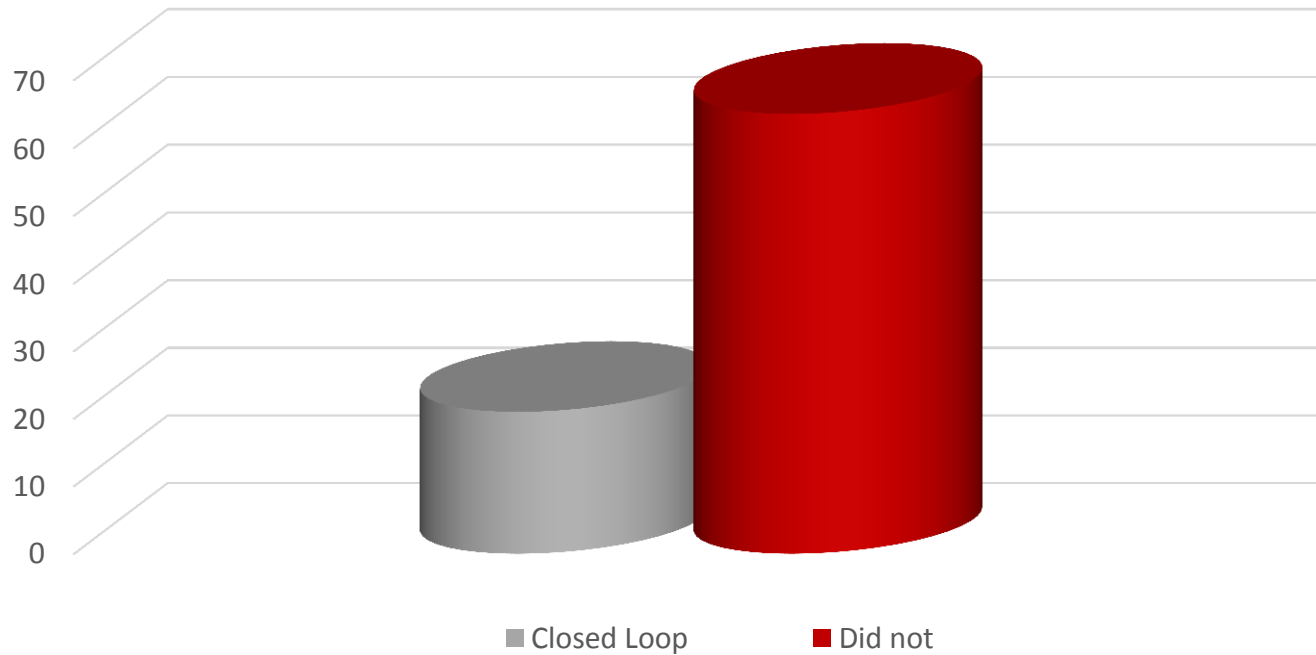# Why 'Close the Loop'? Accreditation

Why 'Close the Loop'? Student Learning

"Completing the assessment cycle (gaining evidence of improved student learning) is assessment's nirvana: Measuring the impact of the action taken to <u>improve student learning</u>"

(Kuh et al., 2015, 69)

Number of Programs Closing the Loop in 2014-2015

How to 'Close the Loop'

- **Be specific and document**
- **After implementing action plan reassess student progress**
  - <u>Improvement occurred</u>

    Document progress

  - <u>Improvement did not occur</u>

    Make modifications to current plan

    Develop new action plan

    Continue to assess but document process

Examples

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Student Learning Outcome	Results from 2014-2015	Action Plan	Results from 2015-2016	Discussion
Students will identify the major theories of the field	On multiple choice exam, only 60% of students were able to identify the major theories of the field. The target was 75%	Have groups of students create videos about the major theories of the field (one theory per group)	77% of students were able to identify the major theories of the field. The target was 75%	The video assignment allowed students to delve deeper into the theories of the field and as a result, the percentage of students who are able to identify major theories increased.

Student Learning Outcome	Results from 2014-2015	Action Plan	Results from 2015-2016	Discussion
Students will apply Theory X to the real world.	On an application paper, only 50% of students were scored as 'competent' in the application of the theory to the real world. The target was 70%	Asking students to apply a theory to the real world on paper seemed artificial. Students will be given 3 real life case-studies and asked to apply Theory X to those case	80% of students were able to apply Theory X to the real world using the case studies. The target was 70%.	Having students use a real life example allowed students to show they understood the application of Theory X better than when asked to write a paper about Theory X.

Student Learning Outcome	Results from 2014-2015	Action Plan	Results from 2015-2016	Discussion
Students will be able to correctly perform Skill X.	40% of students were able to correctly perform Skill X. The target was 80%.	The department will purchase equipment used to train people in Skill X. Students will use this equipment to practice Skill X before being assessed.	After the purchase of the equipment, 90% of students were able to perform Skill X correctly. The target was 80%	The purchase of the equipment allowed students hands-on practice of Skill X before being assessed. This resulted in more students being able to perform Skill X correctly

Student Learning Outcome	Results from 2014-2015	Action Plan	Results from 2015-2016	Discussion
Students will be able to create a work in the style of X.	70% of students were able to create a work in the style of X. The target was 75%.	Students were confusing the style of X with the style of Y. An outside expert was brought in to demonstrate the differences between style X and style Y.	85% of students were able to create a work in the style of X. The target was 75%.	Having an expert demonstrate the differences between style X and Y allowed students to see the differences between the two more clearly and then be able to create a work solely in the

Student Learning Outcome	Results from 2014-2015	Action Plan	Results from 2015-2016	Discussion
Students will be able to use logical arguments to compare the opinions of A and B.	30% of students used logical arguments to compare the opinions of A and B. The target was 75%.	Students were given examples of the differences between logical and emotional arguments during a voluntary workshop.	25% of students used logical arguments to compare the opinions of A and B. The target was 75%.	Having a voluntary workshop did not help to improve students use of logical arguments. Only 3 of the 75 students in the class attended the workshop. Next year, the workshop will

Student Learning Outcome	Results from 2014-2015	Action Plan	Results from 2015-2016	Discussion
Students will demonstrate the use of technique A.	**90% of students were able to demonstrate the use of technique A. The target was 85%**	**The department noticed that in the field a new technique (Technique B) is being used and currently no class covers this technique. The department has added a course to address this technique.**	**An additional outcome: Students will demonstrate the use of Technique B was added. 65% of students were proficient. The target was 85%.**	**Students have consistently met the target for Technique A, however, the department became aware of a new technique in the field and incorporated them into the program in a new course. After the first assessment students did not meet the target for this new technique (faculty were learning the technique at the same time as the students). It will be reassessed**

Practice Activity

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

- **SLO:** Students will be able to correctly identify the major viruses
- **Results from 2014-2015:** Only 63% of students were able to identify the photos of the major viruses (Target = 70%)
- **Action Plan:** There was only one microscope per three students, so the department applied for funding to increase the number of microscopes to give students practice identifying the major viruses.
- **Results from 2015-2016:** 78% of students were able to correctly identify the major viruses.
- **Closing the Loop:** Because students were able to get more practice time using the microscopes this led to an increase in the number of students making correct identifications on the final exam.

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

YES

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

- **SLO:** Students will demonstrate basic information literacy skills (scored with a rubric)
- **Results from 2014-2015:** Only 30% of students demonstrated basic information literacy skills on the assigned project (Target = 75%)
- **Action Plan:** Students will be required to complete the series of information literacy modules offered by the library
- **Results from 2015-2016:** 80% of students completed the information literacy modules
- **Closing the Loop:** The action plan worked

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

NO

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

- **SLO:** Students will apply the major concepts to a case study (scored with a rubric)
- **Results from 2014-2015:** 56% of students were able to appropriately apply the concepts to the case (Target = 70%)
- **Action Plan:** Additional homework assignments were given to students to assist them in applying the concepts.
- **Results from 2015-2016:** 53% were able to apply the concepts (Target = 70%)
- **Closing the Loop:** Because students were not meeting the outcome, next year the department decided to change the outcome.

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

NO

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

- **SLO:** Graduates will display competence in written communication (scored by external raters using standard scoring sheet)
- **Results from 2014-2015:** 70% of graduates were rated as competent (Target = 80%)
- **Action Plan:** Will continue to monitor because the past five years the students have consistently met this target. We believe this result is an anomaly.
- **Results from 2015-2016:** 82% of graduates were rated as competent (Target = 80%)
- **Closing the Loop:** We will continue to monitor to see if the drop in graduates ratings for 2014-2015 were an anomaly and not indicative of a persistent problem.

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

YES

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

SLO: Graduates will display competence in written communication (scored by external raters using standard scoring sheet)

Results from 2014-2015: 70% of graduates were rated as competent (Target = 80%)

Action Plan: Will continue to monitor because the past five years the students have consistently met this target. We believe this result is an anomaly.

Results from 2015-2016: 67% of graduates were rated as competent (Target = 80%)

Closing the Loop: We will continue to monitor to see if the drop in graduates ratings for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 were an anomaly and not indicative of a persistent problem.

Is this 'Closing the Loop'?

Probably Not

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Questions or Comments??