

# Beyond Surveys and Focus Groups

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# Before You Start...

- What is the purpose of your assessment?
  - Determines quantitative/qualitative or mixed methods
- What is your assessment plan?
  - \*\*Determines instruments, timeline, sample, etc.\*\*
- Who is your final audience?
  - Determines how you will analyze your data

# Goals of the program

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- Introduction to methods beyond “traditional” options
- Practice different methods
- Resources for more information

# Visual Methods

- Captures images as a main form of data collection
- Examples: Pictures, x-rays, videos, art work, sculpture, etc.
- Common example: Photo Journaling  
<http://www.usi.edu/depart/instires/air99%20reflex/index.htm>



- “When it rains or snows this is what we have to walk through to do our laundry or go to the convenient store.” - *Becky*



- “Psych/Forum class. Huge classroom; Dr. Donaldson, hilarious, uses microphone to teach class.” - *Lynn*

# Visual Methods

## Strengths

More detail

Picture says a thousand words

High levels of student investment

Images captured for other uses

Technology use

## Limitations

Threat of alterations

Smaller number of perspectives

Time for implementation and follow-through

# Putting it into Practice: Visual Methods

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- As a group, create an image that depicts the skills, knowledge, qualities, etc. that make up an assessment professional



# Document Analysis

- A form of qualitative research in which documents are used to give voice, interpretation and meaning
- Kinds of documents: flyers, magazines, agendas, blogs, emails, calendars, listservs, websites, student newspapers, papers written for a class, training manuals, handbooks, syllabi, annual reports, etc.

# Document Analysis Example:

- Do deaf students have different needs than hearing students?
  - Literature review
  - Time Use (staff Calendars)
  - Duty Logs
  - Incident Reports
  - Judicial cases
  - “Complex” cases

# Document Analysis

## Strengths

Available

Already “collected”

Low costs

Stable

Precise

Quick timeline

## Limitations

Context and language  
specific

Not interactive

Not reactive

Disconnected from  
their creator

Lack objectivity

# Putting it into practice: Document Analysis

- Group Exercise
- Brainstorm a list of documents you can use on your campus

# Cohort Studies

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- Follows a group (cohort) through an experience
- Usually more long-term
- Sometimes involves a “control” but sometimes not
- Can be quantitative or qualitative in nature
- Usually has a “pre” phase and a “post” phase

# Cohort Example

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## Quantitative:

- Pre-Test/Post-Test of Community Engagement

## Qualitative:

- Reflection papers coded by student ID

# Cohort Studies

## Strengths

Can track changes over time

Shows learning or growth over time

Compare groups

Good for long-term goals or to track a large change process

## Limitations

Tracking the cohort/losing people over time requires larger groups to start with

Comparison within the group vs. comparison between groups

Long timeline

# Existing Measures

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- Data that has been collected for another purpose
- Could be quantitative or qualitative
- Usually in the form of documents, summaries, reports, but could also be raw data



# Examples:

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- Using NSSE results by drilling down to a specific group of students
- Deaf vs. hearing students examples from earlier
- Reflection papers
- Applications and other types of materials

# Existing Measures

## Strengths:

- Do not have to take the time to collect data (saves time and \$\$)
- Pre-determined response rate
- Cuts down on “survey fatigue” and other concerns

## Challenges:

- Gaining access to data
- Reliant on reliability of the source
- Can't follow-up (non-responsive)

# Brainstorming Time...

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- What do you have already collected that you can use for your assessment needs?

# Portfolios

- A collected of student, staff or program's work
- To use in assessment – must have:
  - Pre-set determination of outcomes to be demonstrated
  - Pre-set criteria for judging quality/success
  - Determination of experiences to be included
  - Reflection

# Portfolios Continued

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- Three types of portfolios:
  - Document
  - Process
  - Showcase
- Should be used for both Formative and Summative assessments

# Portfolio Examples

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- RA senior capstone
- Masters programs

# Portfolio

## Strengths:

- Shows progress
- Awareness of learning/growth
- Multidimensional
- Reflective in nature
- Shows progress over time

## Challenges:

- Requires planning ahead and clearly stated outcomes, expectations, etc.
- Takes time
- Need trained evaluators

# Unobtrusive Measures/Observations

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- Naturally occurring
- Observing what is there
- Data comes to you
- Can be quantitative or qualitative in nature



# Examples:

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- Where students are congregating in a building
- If items are being recycled and where
- Classic examples of paths on grass, food left on trays, when lounge space is being used, where flyers are being hung, etc.

# Unobtrusive Measures/Observations

## Strengths:

- natural setting gives you non-responsive information
- data is usually there waiting to be collected
- can track changes over time without relying on student participants

## Challenges:

- Data is there, if you know what you are looking for aka make sure you are measuring what you think you are
- Privacy and right to know ethics
- Collection bias/consistency

# And still there are more:

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Rubrics- excellent way to put qualitative information into quantitative form.

Assessment Institute IV: Using Rubrics for Education and Evaluation

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Sheraton Boston Hotel, Beacon A

# And more:

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Classroom techniques – great ways to measure program specific outcomes:

Assessment Institute III: Using Classroom Assessment Techniques Outside the Classroom

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

8:45 AM - 10:00 AM

Sheraton Boston Hotel, Beacon A

# And more:

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- Historical Research
- Interviews
- Case Studies
- Benchmarking
- Others?

# One final go-around

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- Brainstorm types of assessment you are planning or have done in the past that could be “answered” using these types of assessment

# Sources of Inspiration and Instruction:

Huba, M.E. & Freed, J.E. (2000). *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses: Shifting focus from teaching to learning*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon

Maki, P.L. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution*. Sterling, VA: Stylus

Palomba, C.A. & Banta, T.W. (1999). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing and improving assessment in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Stage, F.K. and Manning, K. (2003). *Research in the college context: Approaches and methods*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Stage, F. (1992). *Diverse methods for research and assessment of college students*. Alexandria, VA: American College Personnel Association.

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Questions??

Thanks for Coming!