ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

## HOW ASSESSMENT CAN HELP US IMPROVE
AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

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YES, ASSESSMENT CAN BE TEDIOUS.

- But if done correctly, it serves as a fantastic road map. You have to know where you're starting from and where your final destination is before you can choose the best route.

- Landmarks along the way show you that you're on the right track.
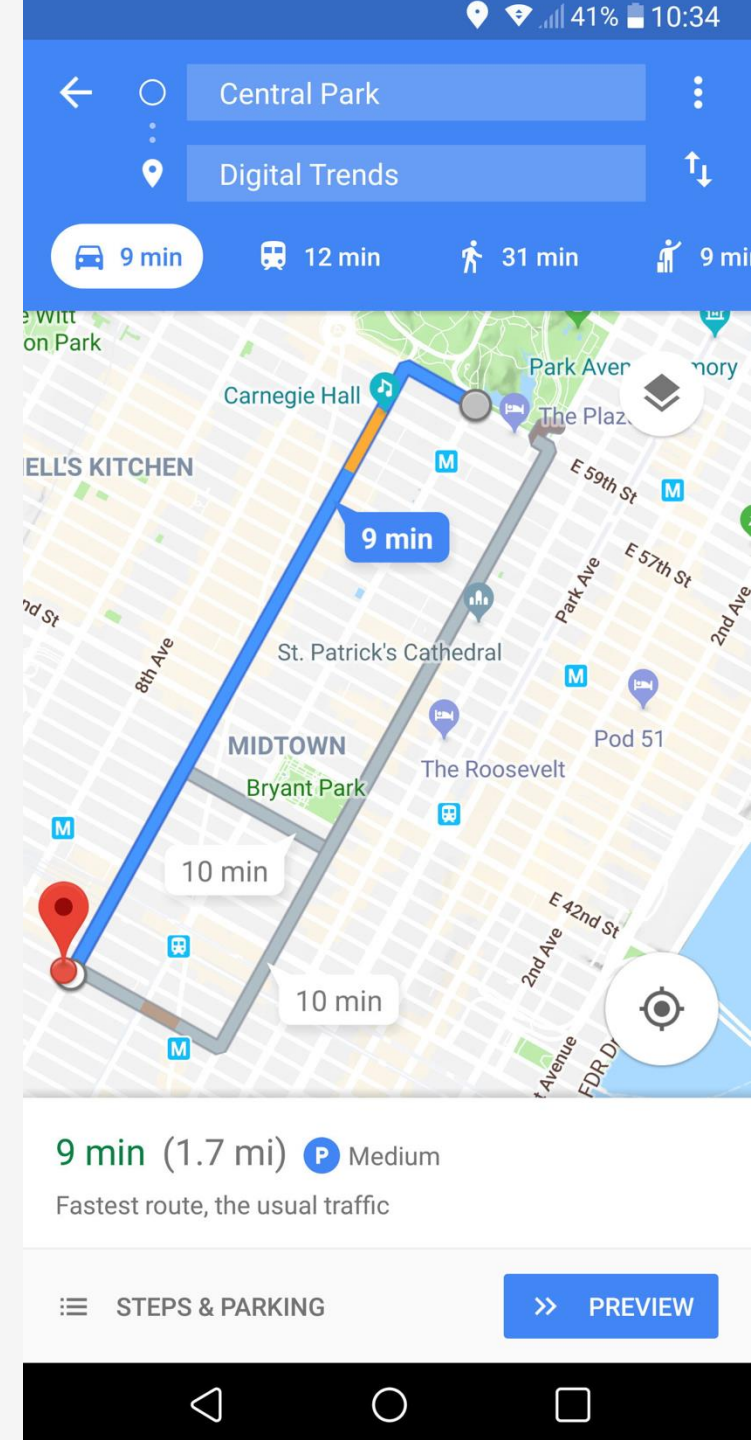
IMPORTANCE OF AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

- **Enhances Learning and Teaching:**
- Provides feedback to students and teachers.
- Identifies strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Ensures Fairness and Consistency:**
- Standardizes the assessment process.
- Reduces bias and subjectivity.
- **Aligns with Learning Objectives:**
- Ensures assessments are relevant and meaningful.
- Helps in achieving educational goals.
- **Supports Accreditation and Quality Assurance:**
- Provides detailed records of student performance and learning outcomes.
- Facilitates ongoing quality assurance and improvement initiatives within the institution.

KEY COMPONENTS OF AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

- **Learning Objectives:**
  - Clear, measurable goals for student learning.

- **Assessment Methods:**
  - Variety of tools and techniques (e.g., tests, projects, presentations).

- **Criteria and Rubrics:**
  - Standards for evaluating student performance.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:**
  - Processes for providing constructive feedback to students.

- **Review and Improvement:**
  - Regular evaluation and updating of the assessment framework.

EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATIONS

- **Course Level:** Individual courses may have their own assessment plans that align with the overall program objectives. For example, a biology course might use lab reports, exams, and group projects to assess different aspects of student learning.

- **Program Level:** Programs may have comprehensive assessment plans that include capstone projects, comprehensive exams, and portfolio reviews to evaluate cumulative student learning.

- **Institutional Level:** Universities may conduct surveys, standardized tests, and institutional research studies to assess broader educational outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

DEEP DIVE: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.

- Specification and measurement of learning outcomes to understand how well program goals are being met

  a. **Learning outcomes:** *What students know, value, and can do*

  b. **Program goals:** *The big-picture objectives of the program*

- Ongoing, cyclical process

- It's largely data driven

WHEN THE FOCUS IS THE PROGRAM

- Course-level assessments are not the focus

- Learning goals should reflect:

  - **Broad educational expectations** for each degree program, regardless of major.

  - **Major intellectual and behavioral competencies** a program intends to instill in its students due to the total educational experience across a given program.

WHY DO WE DO PROGRAM LEVEL ASSESSMENT

- Diagnose what is working well, what could be better

- Reform/Revise the curriculum or program effectively

- Program level assessment is *critical* to program review, which will soon be formalized across the institution as per HLC's recommendations.

TYPES OF MEASURES AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL

- **Direct Measures**
  – Look at student work products or performances that demonstrate level of learning
  – *Examples*:
- Published, standardized tests or locally developed tests
- Systematic evaluation of student work (papers, presentations, creative work, performances)
  – May or may not be embedded within courses
  – Usually involves scoring rubrics, at the capstone level

- **Indirect Measures**
  – Capture students' perceptions of their learning and the educational environment that supports learning
  – *Examples*:
  – Published surveys
  – Locally developed surveys and interviews
  – Alumni surveys

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- **For students:**
- A better learning experience, more effective
- development of competencies, knowledge and skills⬜

- **For faculty and staff:**
- Useful information for communicating program successes and needs to stakeholders
- Good results in assessment lead to success with recruitment, retention, and funding
- Effective use of time dedicated to curricular reform
- Additional evidence of effective teaching and programs
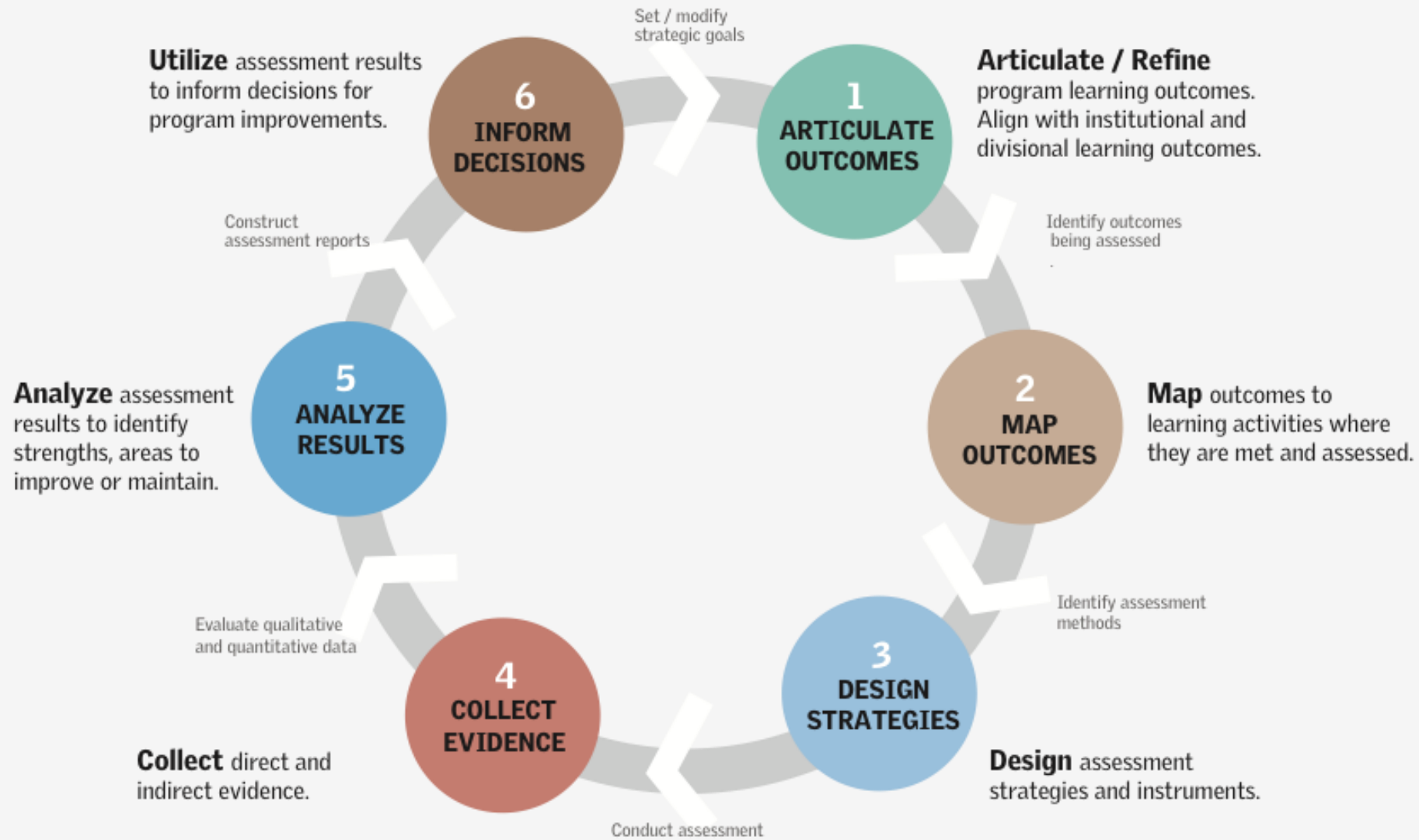
EXAMPLES OF CLOSING THE LOOP

ASSESS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	
Changes to Assessment Plan	• Revise intended outcomes • Collect additional data to support and align with institutional outcomes
Changes to Curricula and/or Pedagogy	• Revise course content • Revise course objectives • Revise course sequence
Changes to processes	• Modify frequency or schedule of course offerings • Revise advising processes • Create co-curricular activities • Implement training or workshops

TIPS FOR USING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- Present the results in several ways: face-to-face meeting, written report, workshop format in which the report serves as the springboard for brainstorming possible next steps.

- Engage the program faculty members, staff, and students in discussions about the results and how they might be used. Questions like these can start the conversation:

  - Do the results live up to our expectations?

  - Are our expectations appropriate? Should expectations be changed?

  - What were the most effective tools to assess student learning? Can those tools be shared and used in other courses or programs?

- Once there is consensus the action(s) to be taken, create an action plan that describes the actions the program will take, who will take those actions, and the timeline for implementing actions.

- Monitor changes as they are implemented to determine whether they have the desired effect(s).

- Keep in mind that even negative results can have a positive effect when they are used to improve the learning process.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

- **Common Challenges:**
  - Resistance to change, lack of resources, ensuring consistency.
- **Potential Solutions:**
  - Professional development, stakeholder involvement, iterative design process.
  - Foster a culture of continuous improvement, designed, led and implemented by faculty.