



reconnecting with students as essential stakeholders

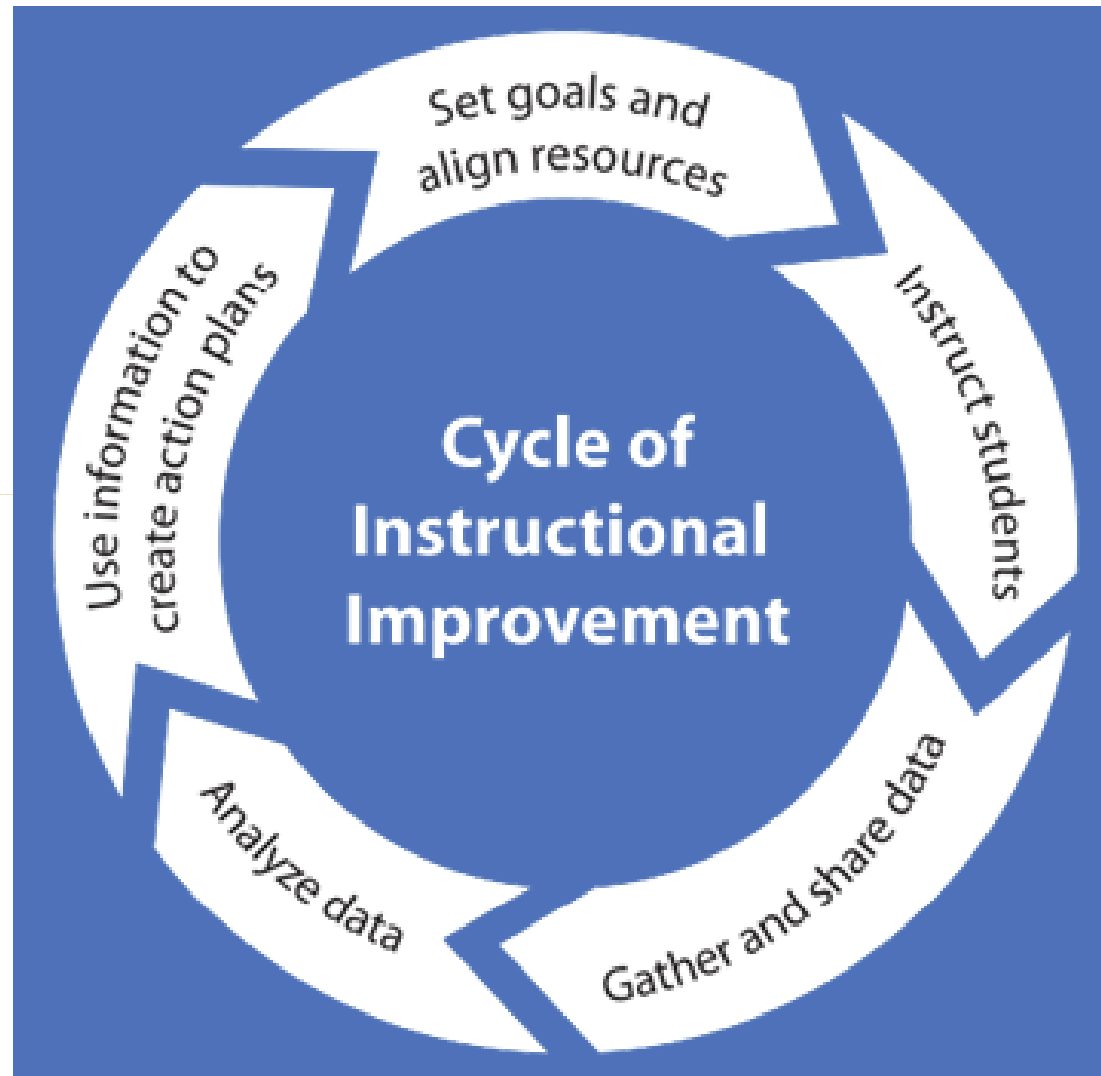
**Early engagement and communication
strategies**

Jennifer Hill, Ed.D.

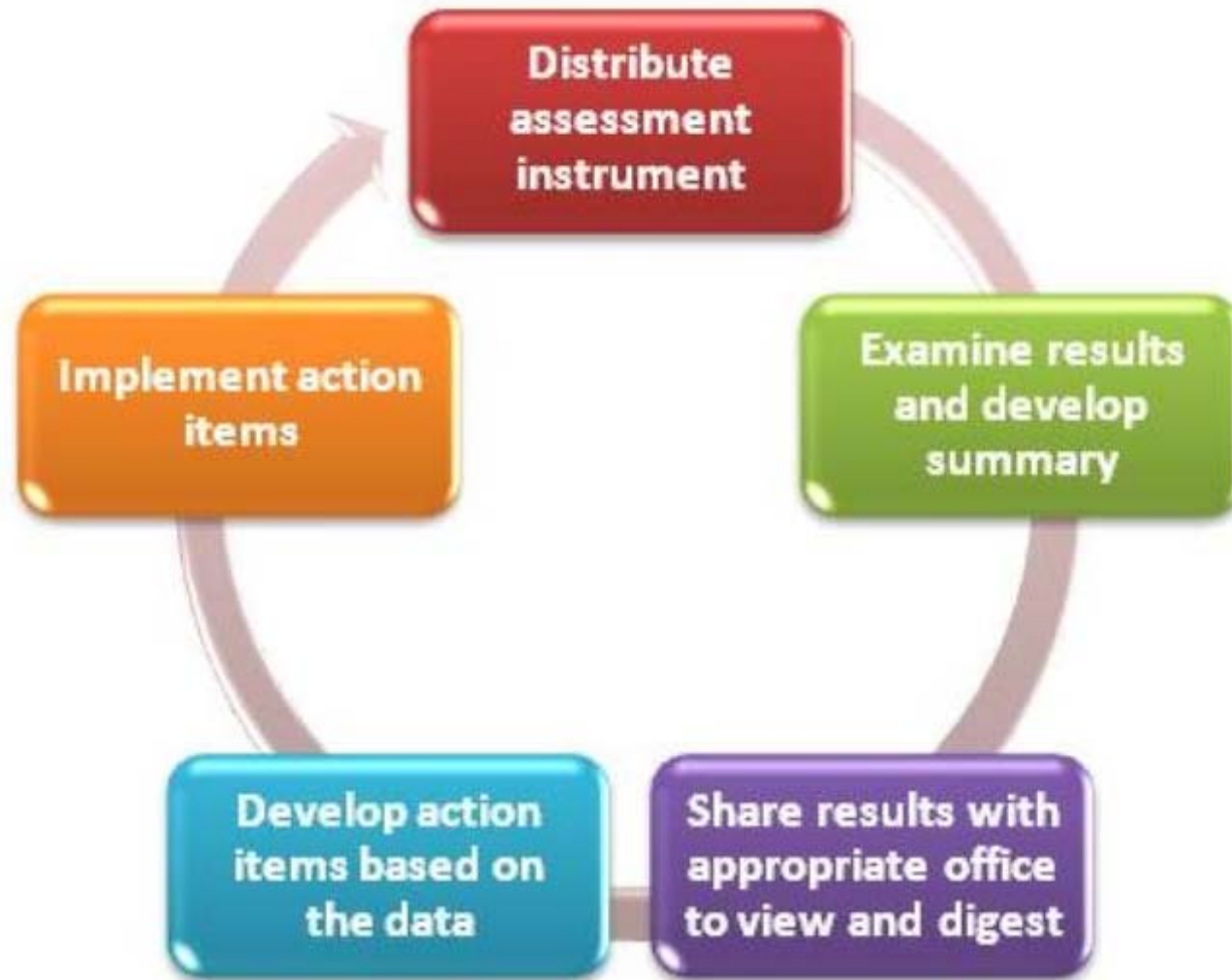
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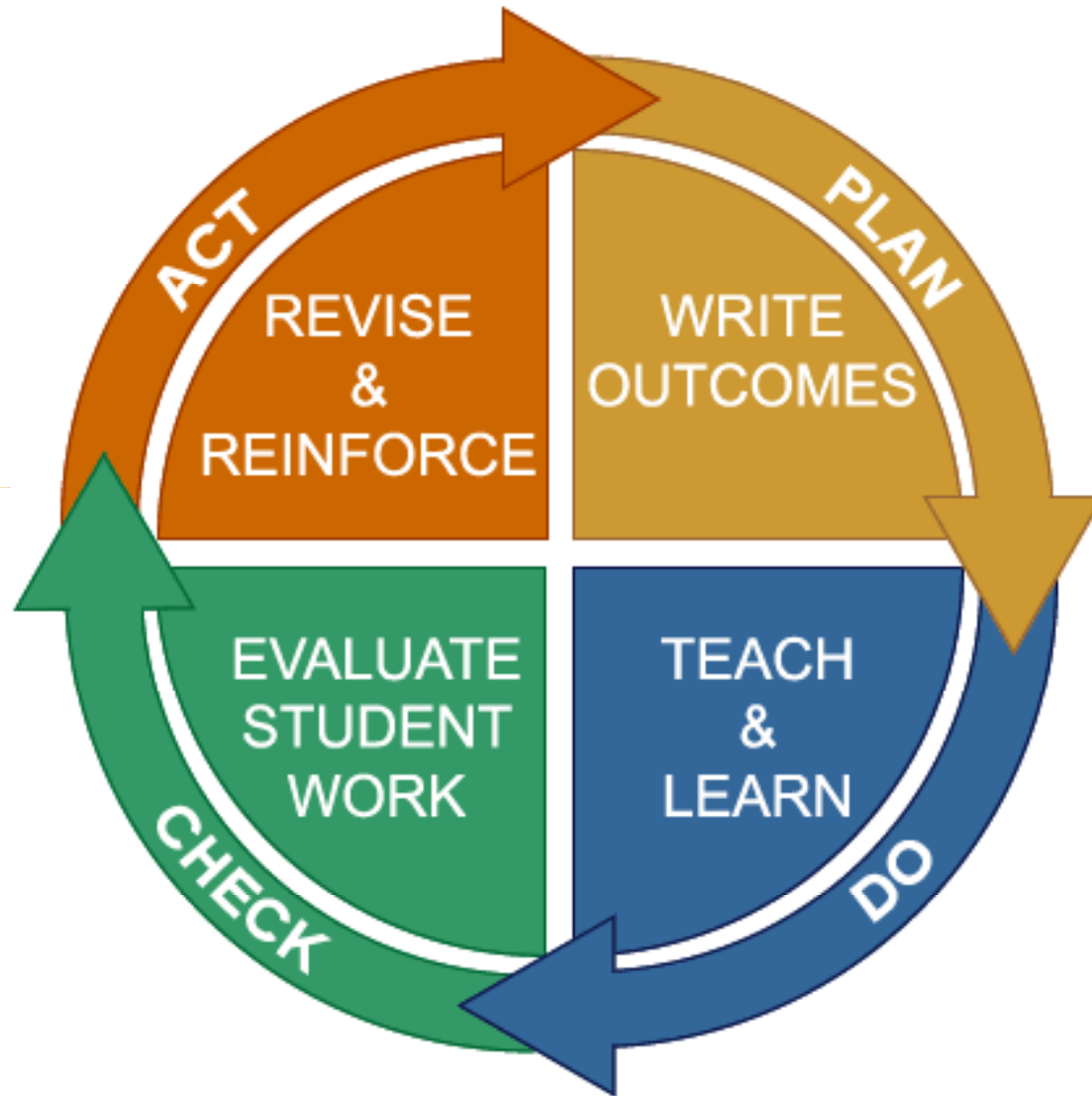
assessment.aas.duke.edu/AACU_presentation_Feb2011.htm



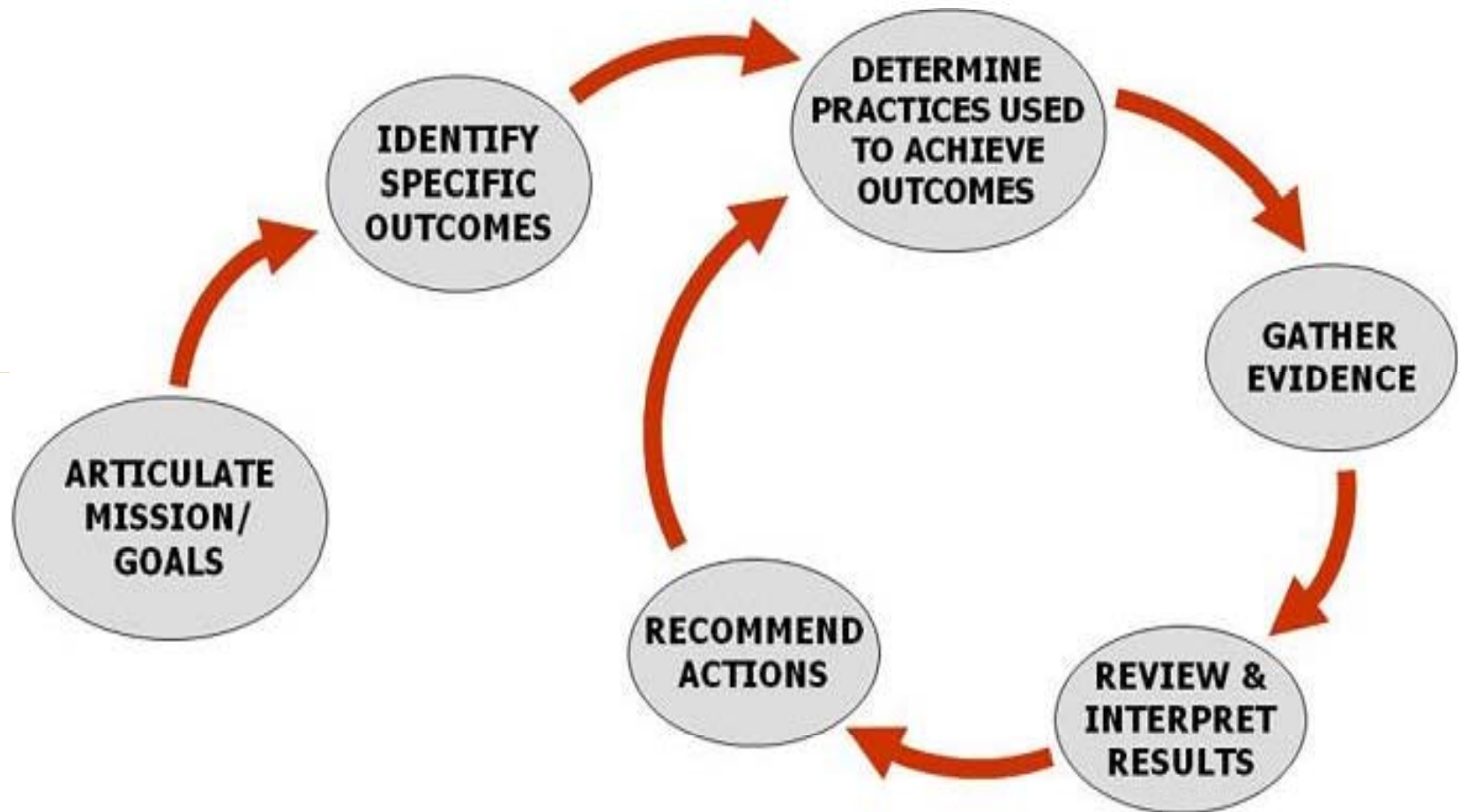
Credit: UC San Diego



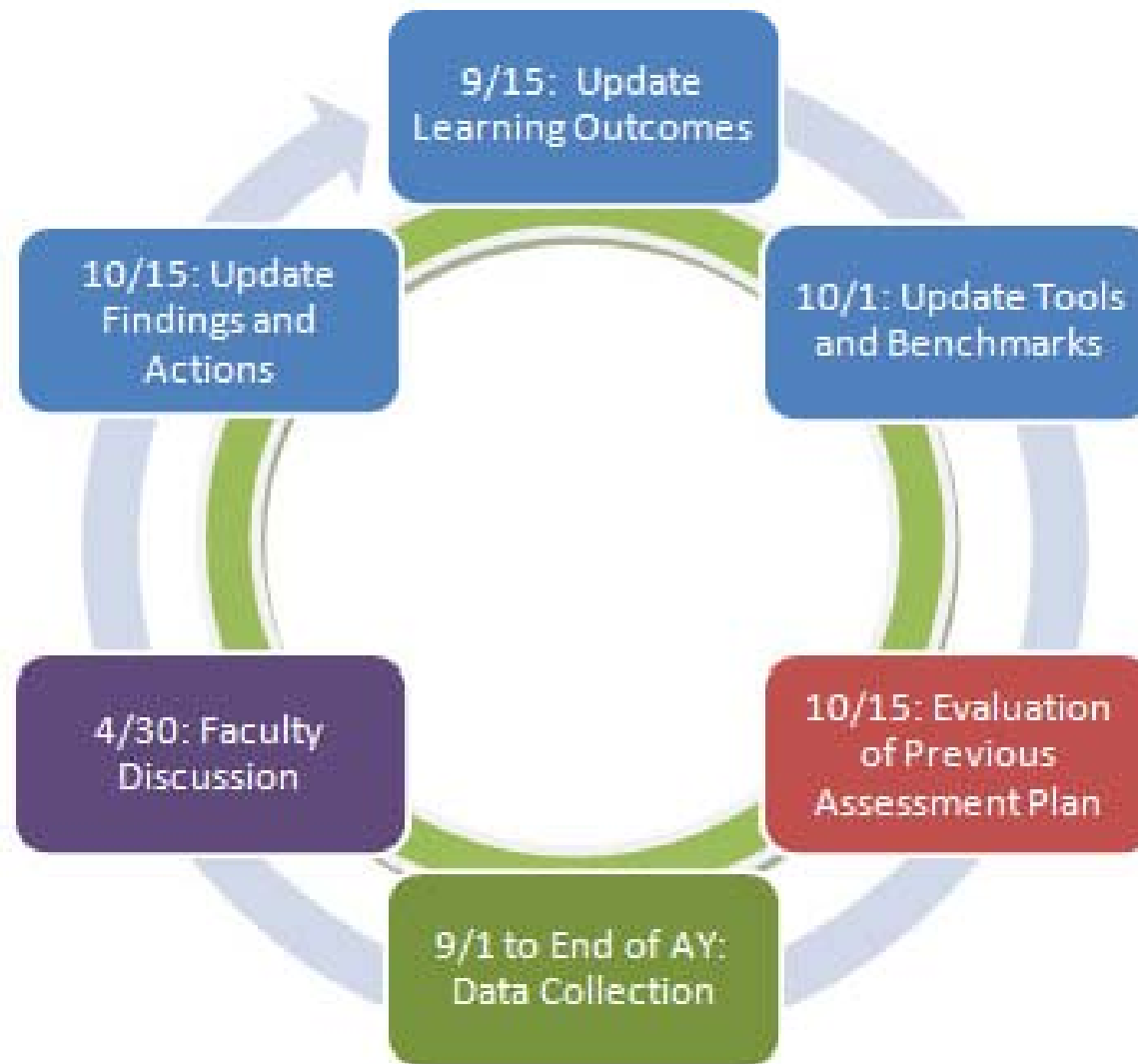
Credit: Denison University



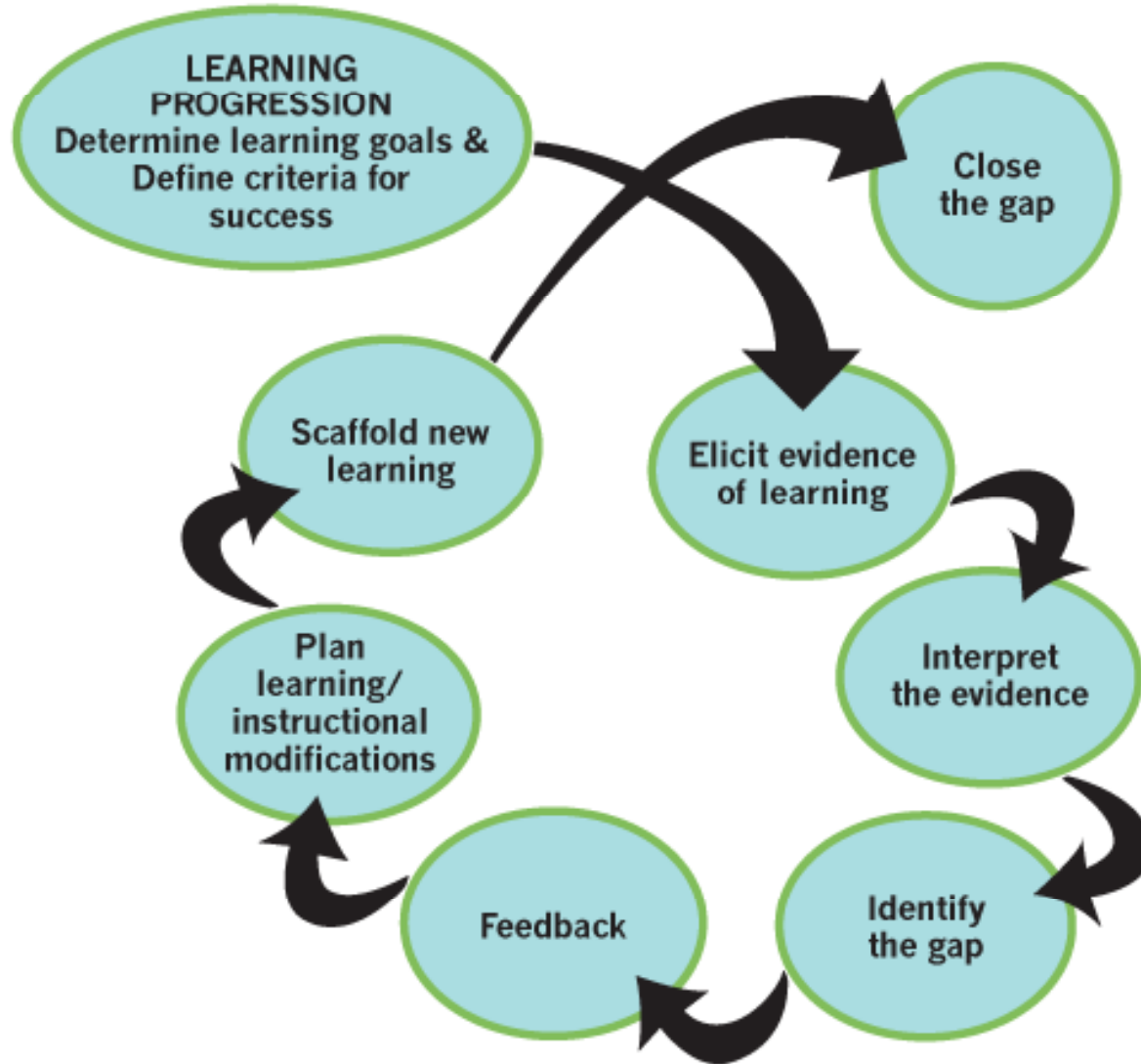
Credit: Westminster College



Credit: Loyola Marymount University



Credit: University of Idaho



Credit: UCLA

This session

Session objectives

Session themes

- Facilitating student engagement
- Five principles/best practices
 - Start conversations early
 - Integrate with broader learning
 - Minimize over-testing
 - Use strategic incentives and motivators
 - Standardize feedback methods
- Evaluation and extension

Assessment at Duke, Trinity College

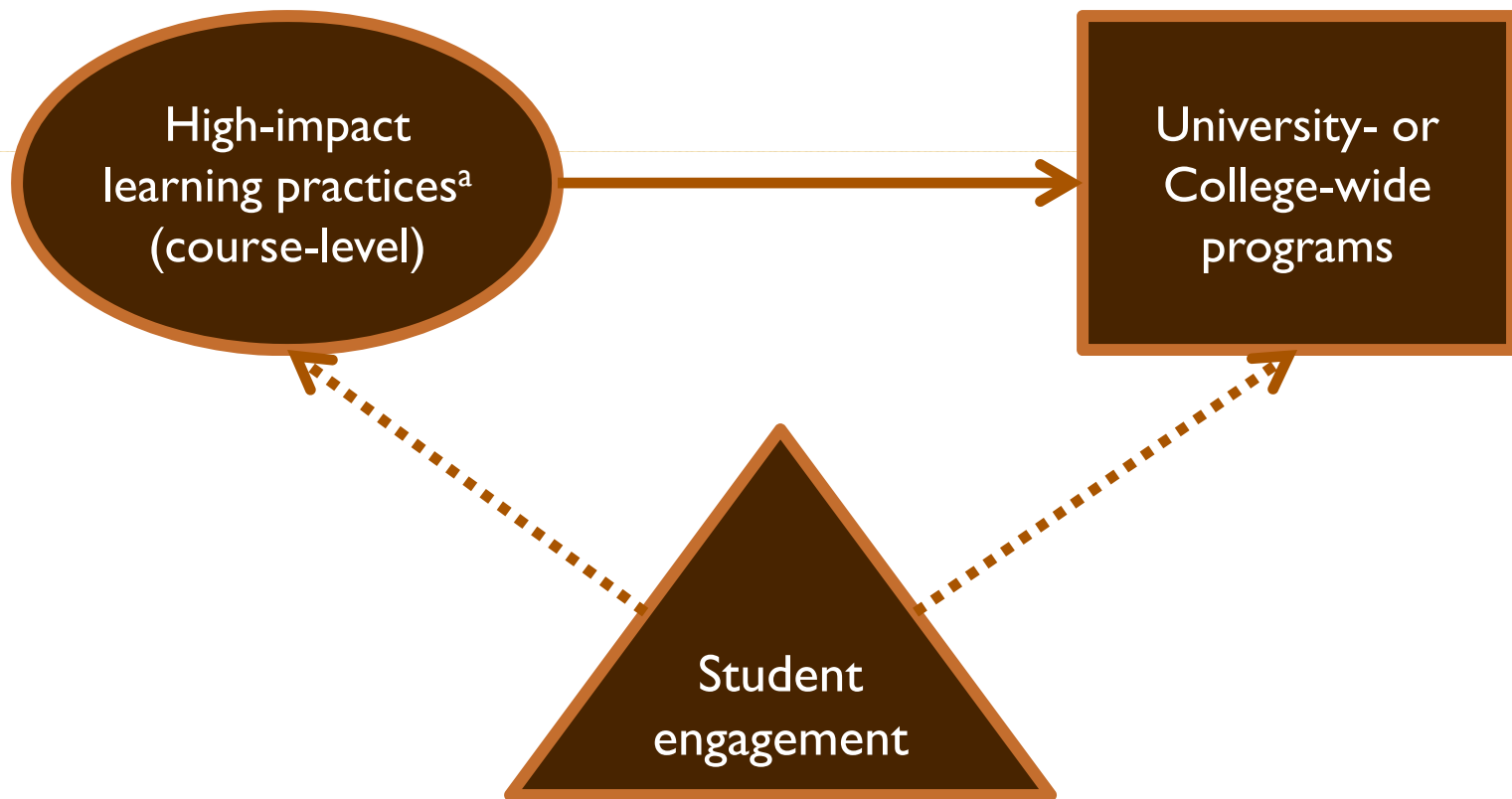
General education assessment

- serve as Institutional Research office of Trinity College
- provide on-going analysis and research on Duke's undergraduate curriculum, courses, departments and programs in efforts to enhance student learning
- Supply data products to College leadership

Program consultation

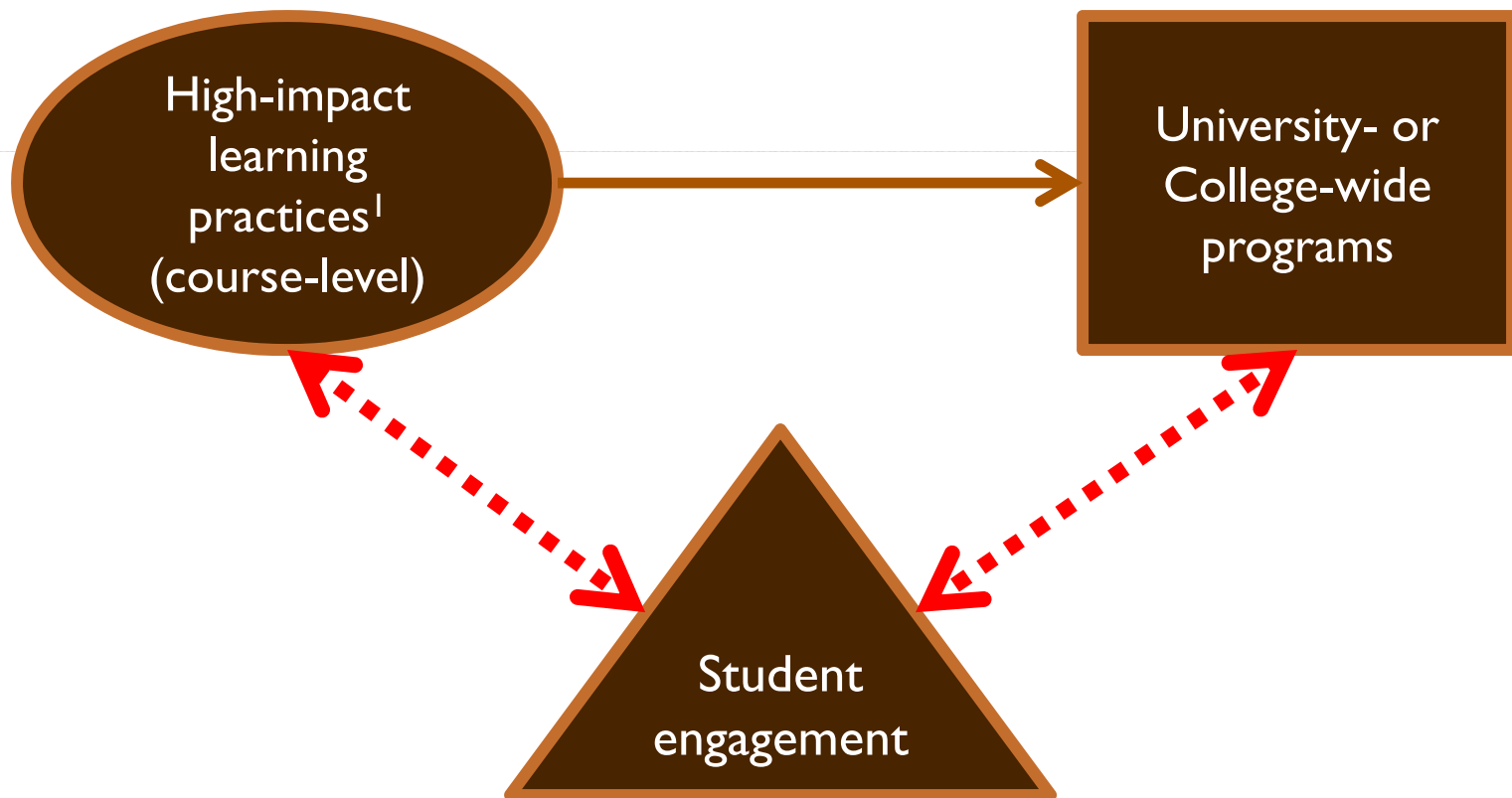
- serve as a resource for departments and faculty
- partner with academic and co-curricular programs to develop and answer questions about student learning
- share technical expertise on assessment methods and technologies

Common consensus on in-class formative and summative assessment



^a See also: http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/hip_tables.pdf

Common consensus on in-class formative and summative assessment



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Five principles of early engagement

I. Start conversations early in the students' tenure

Purpose: To introduce to students their responsibility for program enhancement. Set expectations for their roles in the learning community. Introduce and define student learning objectives and outcomes.

How to: Use multiple media, formats, and venues for communicating with students. Emphasize voluntary participation.

Five principles of early engagement

2. Assessment should be integrated into broader learning

Purpose: To make assessment a seamless part of the overall learning experience. Connect assessment to curricular and co-curricular experiences.

How to: Use strategic partnerships to embed assessment into course or program activities. The administration *and* the communication of results should be contextualized for students, faculty, and other stakeholders.

Five principles of early engagement

3. Carefully minimize over-surveying, over-testing

Purpose: To reduce assessment burden on students. Increase students' motivation and commitment to the task. Enable the collection of necessary data at the appropriate points in the students' tenure or program lifespan.

How to: Keep comprehensive documentation of completed assessments to prevent redundancy. Develop or commit to College-wide policies or procedures for survey sampling and the timing of an administration.

Five principles of early engagement

4. Use strategic, targeted incentives

Purpose: To engender goodwill among students. To recognize students' time and effort as valuable.

How to: Non-pecuniary incentives are preferred. Chief incentive should be detailed and contextualized results (communicated to students in a timely manner). Pecuniary incentives should be immediate and commensurate with students' time investment.

Five principles of early engagement

5. Develop standardized, timely, accessible feedback methods

a. To student participants

- Contextualize within the College's strategic goals, institutional mission, program objectives, and/or program student learning outcomes
- Write in accessible language and with easy to follow graphics
- Make it personalized and prompt
- Deliver via a secure medium, protecting confidentiality
- Invite students for optional, confidential discussions of their results. Include resources for further information.

Five principles of early engagement

5. **Develop standardized, timely, accessible feedback methods**

b. To the college community

- Online, password-protected warehouse for dissemination of assessment findings
- Results reported in the aggregate only
- Includes appropriate research question and/or study context

Other ideas include outreach through assessment blogs, student publications, and social media sites.

Five principles of early engagement

Key points

- Start conversations early
- Integrate into broader learning environment
- Minimize over-testing
- Use strategic incentives and motivators
- Standardize feedback

Compliance in most assessment studies is voluntary: students should value participation in the process and have a stake in program/course enhancement.

These points emphasize the importance of self-reflection and self-assessment.

Application to study design

Principle	Project
Start conversations early	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Integrate into broader learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Minimize over-testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Use strategic incentives & motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Standardize feedback methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••

Case study I: New matriculate assessment initiative

Principle	Project
Start conversations early	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statement on culture of assessment in matriculate handbook• Summer email• Orientation meetings and social media postings
Integrate into broader learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enculturation into membership in a learning community• Project homepage provides introduction to the practice of assessment, explanation of the study, access to instruments, and resources for further reading
Minimize over-testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are excused from similar assessments over the next year
Use strategic incentives & motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Variety of incentives are used, but remote administration prevents immediate distribution
Standardize feedback methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Email delivery of individual and group results, including explanatory summary• Occurs within 6 weeks of project completion

Case study 2: First-year assessment of critical thinking

Principle	Project
Start conversations early	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target first-year students in a multi-course interdisciplinary program.
Integrate into broader learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment facilitated by program director.• Intended to be closely connected with a shared course, and contextualized in terms of their coursework. A natural part of the course experience.• Test itself is based on real problems that are multidisciplinary in nature
Minimize over-testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are excused from similar assessments over the next year
Use strategic incentives & motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staggered, personalized incentives used
Standardize feedback methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are emailed individual and group results and an explanatory summary within one term of project completion

Case study 3: Advising surveys

Principle	Project
Start conversations early	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primer email from Director of Academic Advising Center
Integrate into broader learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey items ask students to reflect on multiple curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities, present and future• Second-year survey is embedded in the long-range planner required of the declaration process
Minimize over-testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each survey is a full census of first-year and sophomore students• Reminders are limited and sent only to non-respondents
Use strategic incentives & motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No incentives provided
Standardize feedback methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can opt-in to receive a copy of their survey submission via email• Aggregate report posted on Assessment website

Case study 4: ePortfolios in four-year professional school preparation program

Principle	Project
Start conversations early	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular, personal communication with program director emphasizing the process of reflection and self-assessment
Integrate into broader learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artifacts presented to and evaluated within the ePortfolio are drawn from curricular and co-curricular experiences• Assessors include program faculty and academic advisors affiliated with the program
Minimize over-testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are excused from similar assessments over the next year
Use strategic incentives & motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No incentives provided
Standardize feedback methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students receive immediate feedback from assessors within the ePortfolio

Exercise: Small group discussion

Please gather in small groups to discuss one or two example assessment projects or ideas from your home institutions.

- Your goal is to deconstruct the project(s) into the five components of engagement.
- Identify opportunities to expand or enhance the project. Work through anticipated challenges.
- Document your discussion (worksheet)

Return to the large group

What opportunities do we have in common? Common challenges?

Would anyone like to “show-and-tell” their assessment project or plan, broken down by the five principles?

Summary

Current issues, common challenges, & good opportunities

- Apathy, especially among graduating students and faculty
- Study incentives, limitations of tangible incentives
- Survey and assessment fatigue
- Mobile devices in assessment
- Spread of effect: Measuring the community-wide impact of a course or program
- Assessing decision-makers' use of assessment information



Thank you for joining us!

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