KEY ELEMENT #4: ASSESSMENT

Overview

How do you know if your PLC program is working? You need to properly assess the impact on students and advisors and develop a method of assessing the system as a whole. In this section, we suggest different assessment strategies that have been successfully used by other schools. These may prove useful as your school develops its own assessment programs.

Review below the literature excerpts on assessment of PLC programs. Note the range of assessment tools used and the range of outcomes being measured. Remember that how you assess an PLC program will vary based on the purpose(s) that has been chosen, the expectations of members of your school community, and on the specific program outcomes you are trying to measure.

What the Literature Says About Assessment

> "The key dimension to consider first is the evaluation's goal or purpose which, in turn, will influence what evaluation practices will eventually be selected from options available…Those options include surveys and questionnaires, observations, interviews, self-checklists, and shadow studies." (Schurr, 19982, p. 15-19)

> "To get an evaluation project off the ground it is desirable to identify the many reasons or purposes for doing and evaluation. Worthen (1990) suggests that most program evaluators agree that a constructive program evaluation can play either a formative purpose (helping to improve the program) or a summative purpose (deciding whether a program should be continued)."   (Schurr, 1992, p. 3-4)

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PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT CAROUSEL

Instructions

1. Coordinate with other teams/tables and choose a color marker that will be exclusive for your team throughout the exercise.
2. Note that there are four flipcahrts on the wall each with a different question:
   - Why assess - what purpose does it serve?
   - What type of data do you wish to obtain concerning your PLC Program and the peope in it?
   - What assessment tools would be helpful in obtaining the type of data you are looking for?
   - What are the biggest obstacles to creating, implementing, and sustaining successful assessment processes?
3. Write your response - with your asigned color marker on the appropriate flipchart . The facilitator will assign you a   flipchart to start with, and you will rotate through all four.
4. As you go from sheet to sheet, take note of what the other tables have written.
5. When the facilitator debriefs the exercise, contribute to the discussion involving all the teams' responses re: the rationale for the statements you wrote for each question.

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SCHOOL ASSESSMENT INVENTORY EXERCISE

Instructions

1. With your teammates, complete the charts on the following two pages.
2. Fill in the columns as follows:
   - Column A: Identify what is assessed in your school
   - Column B: Describe the methodology employed, to include who is involved and how often it takes place
   - Column C: Describe how effective the assessment method is with regard to the items below - assign it a score of 1 (totally ineffective) to 10 (role model - couldn't be better)
     - Having a positive impact on student achievement, civic responsibility, social/emotional growth, and post secondary preparedness
     - Keeping everyone's eye on the goal(s)
     - Generating data that is useful re: making course corrections and providing useful information on knowledge and skill gaps that can be addressed effectively with professional development activities.
     - Being frequent enough not to let things spiral out of control, or to miss significant performance decrements within a reasonable amount of time
     - Measuring the right stuff, i.e. the process is efficient and only targets those things that make a difference
     - Being cost effective, i.e., the level-of-effort and cost of maintaining the assessment process is clearly outweighed by the performance enhancements it accrues or maintains
     - Being self-corrective, i.e., the assessment process has its own feedback mechanisms to insure that it is working as designed
   - Column D: Evaluate whether that particular assessment methodology has application for the assessment of your PLC program
4. Be prepared to share your findings with another team per the facilitator's instructions

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A: What is Assessed? (describe)	B: Methodology Employed? (describe)	C. Effectiveness (1-10)? (explain)	D: Applicability to Your PLC? (rationale)

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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Instructions

1. Using all the analysis work you've done so far, summarize the major elements of your assessment design below.

STATEMENT OF ASSESSMENT:
What key assessment design elements will your school employ to ensure that individuals meet the expectations you have of them, that the stated purpose(s) of the program are met, and that program specific outcomes are measured? • • • • • • • • • •

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EVALUATION OF YOUR ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Instructions:

1. On your own, respond to each item.
2. When everyone is done, compare your results to those of your team members.
3. Use the items the team agrees are either a "no" or "somewhat" as input in refining the design you summarized on the prior page. In other words, a "no" or "somewhat" indicates some elements of your Assessment design may need tuning up.

ITEMS	YES	NO	SOME-WHAT
1. The assessment design will make sense to all stakeholders.			
2. The assessment elements support all aspects of your Purpose.			
3. The assessment design is not just pie in the sky - it is doable in your setting.			
4. The assessment design is practical, i.e., it is neither unwieldy nor too costly to implement and sustain.			
5. All elements of your assessment design are "intentional", i.e., you can provide a meaningful rationale for each element as it relates to achieving advisory goals.			
6. The design leverages your strengths as a school with regard to assessment methodologies currently being employed.			
7. The path to assessment design implementation is clear.			
8. The knowledge and skill development requirements associated with each assessment element are clear and can be addressed effectively.			