Center for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning

Closing the Loop

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What is Closing the Loop?

Closing the loop is essentially using assessment results for program change and improvement. It is about sharing, not hiding, our assessment data even if that data shows we need to improve our program. Closing the Loop means that you do something with the data instead of collecting it and doing nothing.

Why do We Close the Loop?

We close the loop for four reasons:

1. Improvement of teaching and learning
2. Accountability
3. Planning and budgeting
4. Professional growth

Improvement

Improvement encompasses a lot of things such as improving the course offerings, course sequencing, or course content of your program. Your data may reveal that you need to add or delete courses, revise course content, review or change pre-requisites or co-requisites, and modify instructional strategies. You might find an issue with advising or other ways to improve the student experience in your program.

Accountability

You may be accountable to accreditation bodies, grant organizations, or even the State depending on your program. You likely also have stakeholders, such as employers and alumni, who are interested in your what's happening in your program.

Planning and Budgeting

You can also use the data for planning and budgeting. You may be able to use it to make a case for:

- Hiring new faculty
- Moving an open position forward
- new resources/software
- Program promotion/marketing
- Press releases
- Recruitment/retention initiatives

Professional growth

If there is a need for curriculum improvement this may be a time to engage faculty in professional development. There is also an opportunity to share your assessment results and interventions more widely through publications, conference presentations, and grant applications.

How do We Close the Loop?

Once you've completed data analysis follow this 3-step process to close the loop.

Step 1: Develop a Program Improvement Plan
Review assessment data and determine what changes need to be made. For each change (or recommended action) create an Action Plan.

Recommended Actions: What changes need to be made?	
Action step(s)	What action steps must be completed to implement the recommendation?
Estimated implementation date	When does the program expect to begin to implement the action steps?
Estimated completion date	When does the program expect the recommendation to be fully implemented and/or achieved?
Person(s) responsible	Who will take responsibility for seeing that the actions steps are implemented?
Expected Outcome	What is the expected impact/outcome the recommendation will have on the program, the students, and the college, etc. if it is implemented?
Status Update	Document progress made towards achieving the recommendation.

Improvement Plan Example

Recommended Actions: Add a 200-level research methods course to the curriculum as a required course. Eliminate HIST 190: primary source analysis	
Action step(s)	1. Remove HIST 190 from course catalog effective 2. Develop HIST 210: Intro to Historical Research Methods using backward design
Estimated implementation date	• The catalog paperwork for removal of HIST 190 will be completed by August 2020. • The new course will be developed in summer 2020 by two faculty members • The curriculum will be reviewed and finalized by November 2020 • The catalog changes will be made by December 2020
Estimated completion date	All work will be completed by December 2020 to ensure the catalog changes are in effect for the 21-22 AY
Person(s) responsible	• Dr. Ellis will oversee development of the new course • Dr. Coder, department chair, will oversee the catalog changes and progress on the course
Expected Outcome	Students are achieving far under the 80% benchmark for conducting original historical research upon graduation. Analysis of the research papers during program assessment indicates that the HIST 190 course is not sufficient in preparing students for source analysis, argument development, and using primary resources. Creating a 200-level methods course will better introduce the content covered in HIST 400, advanced historical research methods. We anticipate an improvement in students' ability to conduct original historical research upon graduation.

Step 2: Determine stakeholders

Review the stakeholders from when you developed your PLOs. These are likely the same stakeholders who are interested in your assessment data. Here is a list of potential stakeholders:

- Current students
- Department faculty
- Other college faculty
- Alumni
- Community members & groups
- Area high schools
- Colleagues at other institutions
- Employers
- Administration
- Accrediting agencies
- College committees & task forces
- Center for Teaching & Learning
- Student Development Office
- Marketing
- Campus Assessment Coordinator
- Institutional Research
- Board of Trustees
- Campus Assessment Advisory Committee

What do the stakeholders need to know?

For each stakeholder consider what information they need. Do they need to know all action plans for improvement, or do they need to know the data results? Do they need this in a full report, infographic, or shorter narrative?

For example, the department faculty and students should probably know the results of the assessments and how the program will use those results to improve the program. However, employers may only need to know the results of the assessments and how your program is preparing students for employment.

Step 3: Develop a Data Reporting Plan

Once you've determined your stakeholders you'll want to develop a reporting plan so that you provided important information to stakeholders in a way that is meaningful to them.

Reporting Plan Example

Reasons WHY share results?	**Stakeholders** WHO are data results shared with?	**Dissemination Plans** HOW and WHEN are data results shared?	**Who is Responsible?**
Example: For program improvement	*Department Faculty*	• *Department meeting (Every Spring semester)* • *Summary report (Every fall semester)*	*Department chair drafts summary report and leads meeting.*
Example: Planning and budgeting	*Campus administration*	• *Annual report* • *Verbal discussion with Dean in annual budget meeting*	*Department chair provides annual report to Dean*
Example: job placement	*Employers*	*Work with marketing to develop an infographic indicating student learning and benefits to new employers. This is updated every two years but sent annually*	*Administrative assistant works with marketing* *Chair of internship program approves infographic and mailing list*

Closing the Loop Templates

Program Improvement Plan Template

Recommended Actions:	
Action step(s)	
Estimated implementation date	
Estimated completion date	
Person(s) responsible	
Expected Outcome	
Recommended Actions:	
Action step(s)	
Estimated implementation date	
Estimated completion date	
Person(s) responsible	
Expected Outcome	
Recommended Actions:	
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Person(s) responsible	
Expected Outcome	

Data Reporting Plan Template

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References and Resources

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