Developing Benchmarks and Targets

Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness

Office of Academic Programs and Educational Effectiveness

Lehman College, The City University of New York

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Workshop Learning Outcome

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Create measurable targets against which assessment findings can be benchmarked

Context

Accreditation Expectation:

MSCHE Standard V:

An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:

2. organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty and/or appropriate professionals, **evaluating the extent of student achievement of institutional and degree/program goals**. Institutions should:

a. define meaningful curricular goals **with defensible standards for evaluating whether students are achieving those goals**…

Context

Absence of Targets and Baseline Data Collection:

Academic Assessment:

2019-2020: 14% of assessment plans

2020-2021: 12% of assessment plans

AES Assessment:

2019-2020: 22% of assessment plans

2020-2021: 20% of assessment plans

Definitions

- **Target:** A goal, objective, or level of performance to be achieved.

- **Benchmark:** Something that serves as a standard by which others may be measured or judged. Addresses the implicit question: "What is success?"
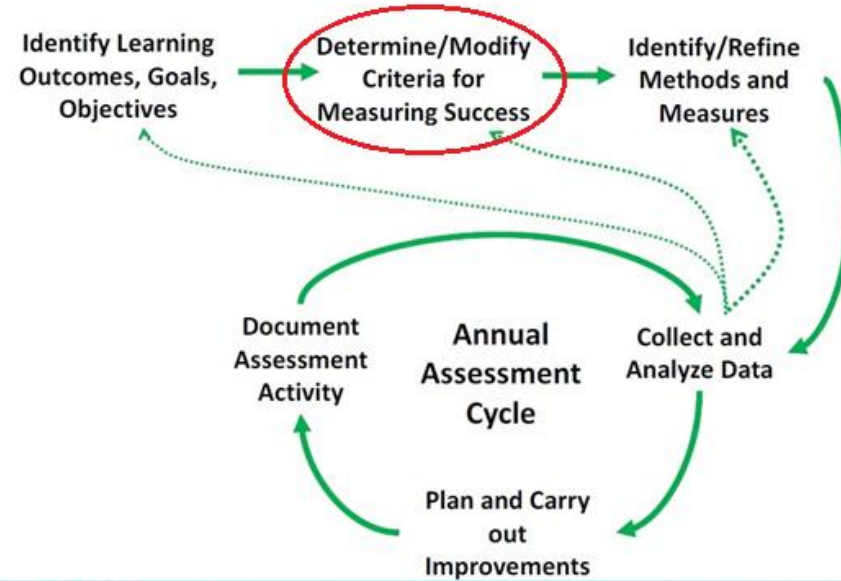
Targets/Benchmarks measure performance and are means toward continuous improvement
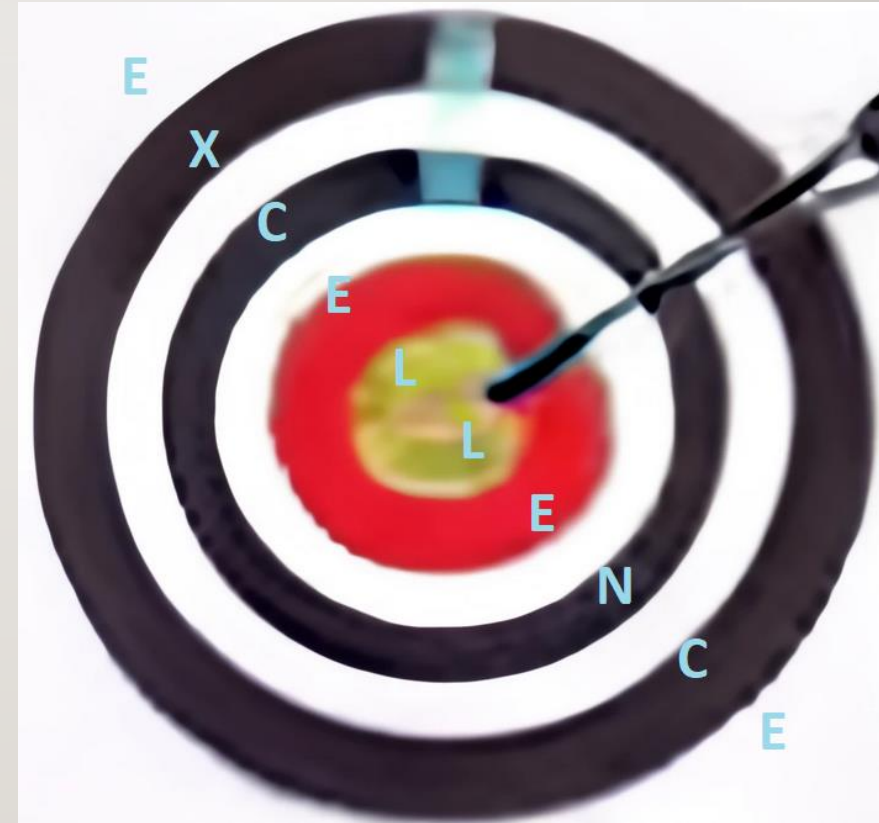
LEHMAN COLLEGE'S 6-STEP PROCESS

The Starting Point

Good outcomes are a requirement for setting targets.

These outcomes are:

- Specific, clear, and concise

- Measurable

- Centered on those being served (students, customers, faculty, etc.)

Establishing Good Outcomes

Underlying questions:

- Student Learning: What do we want students to know/be able to do?

- Support (or student support): What do we seek to do to help students succeed?

- Performance (operational): What does this unit do? What do we want to accomplish?

All questions are addressed from the perspective of who is served.

Outcomes

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE:

- Detailed Expectations of Students
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Disposition
- About the Impact of the Unit on Students

SUPPORT OUTCOMES ARE:

- Detailed Expectations of Support Provided by Units
- Focused on the Delivery of Services, Processes, Activities, or Functions to Students, Faculty, or Staff
- About the Nature of the Unit

Source: Christopher Shults, PH.D. and Tammie Cumming, PH.D., "Building the Framework for Effective AES Assessment: Developing Mission, Goals, And Outcomes, May 11, 2018.

Setting Targets

- Can be binary: A task or project was completed (a new Admissions system was rolled out), or it wasn't

- They quantify outcomes (How many? What level?)
  - Can include ranges (minimum and ideal outcomes)
  - Can be percentages, rates of change, numbers

Setting Targets

Characteristics of Targets:

- Meaningful: Connected to important goals or requirements

- Realistic: Anchored to historical or baseline data

- Ambitious: Fulfillment should lead to demonstrated improvement over time

Targets are informed by benchmarks.

Benchmarking

Benchmarks can be developed from:

- Historical data

- Baseline data

- Accreditation demands (programmatic or institutional)

- Professional standards

- Industry data

Benchmarks should be informed by evidence.

Benchmarking

Example of an Accreditation Requirement

Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education:

IV-C. Licensure pass rates demonstrate program effectiveness.

This key element is not applicable to a program that does not prepare individuals for licensure examinations or does not yet have individuals who have taken licensure examinations.

Elaboration: Programs with a pre-licensure track demonstrate achievement of required program outcomes regarding licensure. The program demonstrates that it meets the licensure pass rate of 80% in any one of the following ways:

- the NCLEX-RN® pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for first-time takers for the most recent calendar year (January 1 through December 31);
- the pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeaters who pass) for the most recent calendar year;
- the pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for all first-time takers over the three most recent calendar years; or
- the pass rate for each campus/site and track is 80% or higher for all takers (first-time and repeaters who pass) over the three most recent calendar years.

For each campus/site and track, identify which of the above options was used to calculate the pass rate.

Benchmarking

Example of an Accreditation Requirement

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation:

Component RA3.2 Candidates Demonstrate Academic Achievement and Ability to Complete Preparation Successfully

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The provider sets admissions requirements for academic achievement, including CAEP minimum criteria (group average college GPA of 3.0 or group average performance in top 50th percent of those assessed on nationally normed assessment), the state's minimum criteria, or graduate school minimum criteria, whichever is highest, and gathers data to monitor candidates from admission to completion.

Some Examples

LEH 101: Student Orientation:

Students will be able to locate the Undergraduate Bulletin and find the Lehman College's academic integrity policies.

Target:

Minimum: 80% of students who participate in orientation will be able to locate the Undergraduate Bulletin and find the section related to academic integrity policies.

Ideal: 100% of students will be able to locate the Undergraduate Bulletin and find the section related to academic integrity policies.

Some Examples

CLI 101: Introduction to Climate Change:

Students will be able to identify the major climate forcings and distinguish between natural and anthropogenic forcings.

Target:

80% of students will be identify solar irradiance (natural), volcanic activity (natural), land use (anthropogenic), and greenhouse gases (anthropogenic).

Some Examples

Internships:

Students who participate in internships will improve their oral and written communications skills.

Target:

80% of students who participated in internships will agree or strongly agree that they improved their oral and written communication skills during their internship in a post-internship survey.

Note: employers could be surveyed to see if employer and student perceptions are consistent.

Some Examples

Budget Office:

Lehman College will strengthen its financial position during the fiscal year.

Target:

Lehman College will increase its CUTRA balance by 5% during the fiscal year.

Additional Considerations

- Targets are not permanent

- Changes in external and internal variables can make existing targets obsolete and/or require the development of new targets in new areas

- The sequence of changes in targets over periods of time can provide insight into the overall direction of unit, program, or institutional performance

- Targets can be communicated to intended beneficiaries to impact behaviors/conduct that lead to the attainment of such targets (e.g., if students know that 80% are expected to meet a level of performance, they will know that the area being measured is important and will be proactive in pursuing success)

For Further Information

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