Making use of outcomes results to “Close the Loop”

Operational Outcome (OO) Example 1

The Director of Human Resources at Tarrant County College District (TCCD) wanted to know how the hiring managers perceived the hiring process. After administering a survey of 5 questions randomly to 20 of the 50 or so hiring managers, he noticed that they were not happy with the speed of the hiring process. So he concluded that something needed to be done to quicken the process. After consultation with his staff it was agreed that they should target to reduce the hiring process time by 50%, from 8 weeks to 4 weeks. The 4 weeks was to include the time of the interview to the first day of work for the new hire. So the human resources department working in collaboration with the hiring managers began maintaining a log of all the interview dates for the various open positions, with the times and names of the interviewees and the first day the successful candidates reported to work. At the end of the academic year they analyzed the data and found out that they had managed to cut the average hire time by 25%, half of their targeted time frame. The human department identified a number of reasons that may be contributing to prolonged hiring process within the District. One of them was the hiring managers were not familiar with the hiring software and it took longer times for them to navigate the system. So the human resources department began offering classes of the hiring software to the hiring managers to facilitate the hiring process.

OO Example 2

The Director of Counseling at Southeast Campus noted the number of students seeking career services had slightly declined over the last two years. He wanted to know what could be causing this. In the first semester he developed a 5 minute survey for the students who sought counseling services. After analyzing the results he found out that there were several reasons that may be contributing to the decline of students seeking services at the Center. One of them was that the students did not know that the Office of Career Services existed until they were referred to by another campus office. In the second semester, the Director and staff began exploring ways to create more awareness among students of the services offered at the Office of Career Services. One of the avenues was to have posters in student centers and libraries across the campus to advertise their services. The Director developed an action plan to have
the posters developed and placed in strategic student spaces the following semester. At the end of the second semester, the Director noticed a 3% increase in the number of students who sought counseling services.

**Example 3**

The Learning Diagnostician at TCCD wanted to establish baseline data and improve the time it takes for referred students to have their disabilities diagnosed and obtain appropriate disability services. He however noted that he did not have baseline data to know the average time it takes for referred students to be properly diagnosed. He established a two year plan to realize his objectives. The first academic year he created a database of all the students that were referred to him and began maintaining a log of how long it took for them to be diagnosed and access the required disability services. From the data he gathered he found that the average service time was 1 month and he had 200 students for that year. He noted that the highest number of referrals was recorded in March and October. In the second academic year, he set out to reduce the 1 month turnaround time to 3 weeks for each student referred to him.

**Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Example 1**

Veterinary technology students did not score as well as needed in quantitative reasoning. Veterinary technology faculty redesigned several key assignments to build and document this particular competency in their students. Whereas previously students only read an article to learn about monitoring glucose levels in felines, the new assignment asked them to read the article, take a reading of a cat’s glucose level, and then use both sources to write an analytical report. This curriculum redesign created a more robust and discipline-specific quantitative reasoning experience for students and a richer set of documents to be collected and examined through ePortfolio. Addressing general education requirements throughout the program, according to the veterinary technology program director, means that “programs need to decide where they are addressing general education within the curriculum,” and using student artifacts collected through the ePortfolio “brings assessment to the forefront of the classroom.”

**SLO Example 2**
A faculty chair in business examined the results of program outcomes for learners who completed the program capstone course and found that for one of the outcomes, learners were performing below what he regarded as the minimum threshold. Through the curriculum maps and alignments linking learning activities in individual courses to program outcomes in the capstone, he was able to identify across the entire program which courses had the strongest alignment to the outcome in question. From there, he was able to delve deeper into individual learning activities, combine that information with additional data including course evaluations and, from the combined data, make detailed changes in specific courses and specific learning activities or assignments within courses. By the time participants in the revised courses and learning activities completed the capstone course, there was a measurable improvement in the particular outcome in question. The faculty chair involved in the process stated, “The concept of having an outcomes-based approach and having a strong theory of alignment all the way down to individual learning activities helps facilitate the use of assessment data.”

**SLO Example 3**

The religion department wanted to know if their students were writing at a desired level. Therefore, the faculty developed a writing rubric, gathered a random collection of student essays and had a faculty panel rate them. A report was generated from the ratings that outlined where students demonstrated or fell short on the outcomes in question. Areas where students fell short were used to refocus teaching as well as to rethink the sequence of courses and assignments within courses so as to better reinforce the desired outcomes and help students improve. A faculty member involved in this effort remarked, “It seems so modest to state it now – we identified an intended learning outcome, made rubrics, looked at essays and altered teaching – but that fairly modest process generated a holistic view of what students were doing well and what they were not doing so well, which allowed for minor adjustments. In a year or two these adjustments showed that students are doing better on a given outcome.