**Data Informed Decision Making**

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| What is data informed decision making? | Data informed decision making is the process of (a) collecting existing information and data, and (b) interpreting it to (c) guide a decision. |

**What does data informed decision making look like?**

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|  | Using data to make decisions | Making decisions using data |
| What does this look like? | Use data as a factor in decision making, it’s not the only factor considered but it is a key input. | When you look at the data and results, what change should take place based on what they tell you? |
| When does this happen? | When you need to make a decision, you look for data first and ask questions of it while making the decision(s). | When you have collected data, a very important step is to make recommendations based on what it tells you. |
| What is the process? | 1. You need to make a decision 2. Scan and collect existing relevant information 3. Review existing relevant information and deduce what questions it generates and how it contributes to the needed decision 4. Make decision 5. Document the process | 1. You collected data 2. Analyze the data 3. Write up the findings and recommendations based on the data 4. Share the findings and recommendations 5. Document the process |

You might have also heard of data driven decision making, this is when every decision is based on data (term from business sector).

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| **Principles for building a data informed culture** |
| 1. Focus assessment efforts on specific problems or questions.    * Example: Let’s redesign staff recognition      + What data exists?      + What does the data say?      + Draft the new recognition      + Present to VPC for approval      + Implement 2. Harness accountability for internal improvement.    * Accreditation gets a bad reputation, as being this external process we must comply with. It is best used when leveraged to nudge institutional change forward    * Example: assessment plans      + We need to document and showcase ongoing improvement in DOSA      + Create a template      + Make the template as flexible as possible      + Share the template and how to use it      + Set expectations      + Collect the filled in templates for archival and HLC 3. Communicate results widely.    * Collected data should be shared widely. The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment features institutional profiles of how institutions have done this to fit their institutional context    * The intention of the data gala is to be a big data sharing event.    * But also we need to decide to share data along the way as it is generated    * And build towards setting an expectation for how it is shared both within DOSA, within the university with partners and stakeholders, and what is put online (why and where) 4. Make time to reflect.    * When results are collected the ‘closing the loop’ step is easily forgotten or scheduled over    * Reflect at the level at which data is generated: are we getting the information we need to improve? Are we reaching the most inclusive audience? Are we collecting information that is no longer useful? Are there others who could benefit from knowing what we now know?    * And reflect organizationally: are we going where we want to? Are we reaching our target audience? Who is missing? |

Principles adapted from Baker, Jankowski, Provezis & Kinzie’s [*Using Assessment Results: Promising Practices of Institutions that Do It Well*](https://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase_FINAL.pdf)(2012).

Cautionary Notes When Looking at Data

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| Over Interpretation | Correlation and Causation | Explained Variance | Sample Sizes |
| Do not derive more meaning than the information warrants. | Variables being correlated does not mean causality. | Significant results do not equate a reasonable amount of variance. Explaining 5% of a model isn’t laudable. More explained variance does indicate a stronger association among variables. | They matter. Ask questions of sample size in relation to population. |