Beyond Surveys and Focus Groups: Using Other Assessment Methods to Gather Evidence
After participating in this workshop you will be able to:

• List the 7 step process of qualitative data analysis.

• Describe four alternative methods to gather assessment evidence.

• Determine how you could use one alternative assessment method in your work setting.
Reasons to Consider Other Methods

• Survey fatigue
• Time savings
• A fuller picture of outcomes (triangulation)
• Capitalizes on “incidental” data
Existing Measures

- Data has been collected for another purpose
- Can be in the form of documents or raw data
- Examples
  - Institutional data
  - Reflection papers
  - Applications or other materials
  - Incident reports
## Existing Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saves time and money</td>
<td>Access to raw data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having to manage response rate</td>
<td>Can’t manage response rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuts down on survey fatigue</td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What information already exists that could assist you in your assessment process?
Alternative Methods

1. Content Analysis
2. Reflections
3. Visual Methods
4. Observation/Unobtrusive Measures
Qualitative Data Analysis

The Process:
1. Organize the data
2. Give the data a “once-over,” noting initial impressions
3. Categorize the data
Qualitative Data Analysis

The Process (continued):

4. Determine the relative significance of each category by counting the number of times it occurs

5. Note responses that do not fit into the categories

6. Find compelling quotes to include in your assessment report

7. Take a step back
### Qualitative Data Analysis

Please list one thing you learned during the Excel Session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To go to my professor's office hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just to go to class and to pay attention to do well in school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to professors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the ways to do well in my classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about asking questions, and going to office hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester-hour expectations for each semester and graduation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You need to go to lecture halls!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pay attention in lecture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some expectations of the college learning environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to be a good student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be where you need to be and when you need to be there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The online classes you can take</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do my best</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't be afraid to talk to your professors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to classes/office hours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to go above and beyond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't remember</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please list one thing you learned during the Excel Session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Percentages (of 543)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t remember</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors/TAs (office hours, get to know them)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations (class, academics, professors)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility/Balance</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-management</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel/Challenge yourself/Set goals</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College versus High School</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit requirements/Grading</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Content Analysis

- Qualitative analysis
- Uses documents to glean: meaning, perspective, growth/change
- Can use training manuals, notes, portfolios, discussion boards, twitter, blogs, emails, papers, agendas, flyers, policies, meeting minutes, logs, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available and accessible (already there)</td>
<td>Context, decoding language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low cost</td>
<td>Not interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be more precise</td>
<td>Can’t generally follow up for more information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>Not all stakeholders will respond to this data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content Analysis Example: Resident Assistant Incident Reports

Resident Assistants should be able to:

• Refer residents to appropriate services
• Clearly convey important information in a timely manner
• Identify and interrupt behavior that is negatively impacting the community
RA Matt received a call at 2:38 a.m. on October 30 from the front desk saying that there was an alcohol incident in the fourth floor lounge.

RA Matt and RA Sam, who was with RA Matt at the time, explained the situation to the police and escorted them to the fourth floor lounge where there was a security guard waiting with Resident Pete. Resident Pete had a quarter of Hawkeye Vodka sitting on the table with him.

The two police officers took control of the situation, and received Resident Pete’s information. Throughout the process, Resident Pete was extremely compliant. After the officers
decided that Resident Pete was not very intoxicated, they issued him a PAULA and one of the officers took the vodka to dump out in the sink. RA Matt escorted the officer to the bathroom and watched him dump the alcohol down the sink.

The police officers then left and RAs Matt and Sam stayed and talked with Resident Pete about his actions and that they were going to have to fill out a report about the incident.

Resident Pete mentioned that he had just recently broken up with his girlfriend, and that is why he had turned to alcohol. He said that he knew it was stupid but he felt that he had no other place to turn. Resident Pete mentioned several times that he wanted to physically hurt someone in order to make himself feel better and that he has dealt with anger issues.

RAs Matt and Sam talked to Resident Pete about how that would not help the situation. RAs Matt and Sam stayed with him until he had calmed down sufficiently enough for them to leave him alone.
Content Analysis Example: Resident Assistant Incident Reports

Resident Assistants should be able to:
• Refer residents to appropriate services
• Clearly convey important information in a timely manner
• Identify and interrupt behavior that is negatively impacting the community

What evidence might you have, based on the incident report, that the above learning outcomes were or were not met?
Content Analysis Example: Resident Assistant Incident Reports

Refer residents to appropriate services.
• Did not refer Resident Pete to appropriate service e.g. UCS

Clearly convey important information in a timely manner.
• Explained the situation to the police

Identify and interrupt behavior that is negatively impacting the community.
• Spoke to Resident Pete about his actions
Analyzing Reflection

• Capturing reflection as assessment data (vs. an individual exercise) is a frequently missed opportunity

• Rubrics can be used to collect aggregate information about level of reflection (depth, quality, connection)
Analyzing Reflection

The level of reflection, as reported in Chabon & Lee-Wilkerson (2006), could be used for coding as follows:

- **Level 1 – Descriptive:** The participant provided evidence that **new knowledge was obtained**, which allowed him/her to make sense of new experiences or make links between old and new knowledge.

- **Level 2 – Empathic:** The participant **expressed thoughts or emotions about others and self**. S/he reflected their experience (emotions, attitudes, beliefs) onto how future participants may feel or react to the experience. Participant empathizes with those around him/her.
Analyzing Reflection

• Level 3 – Analytic: The participant demonstrated the **application of learning to a broader context** of personal and professional life. Entry provided evidence of learning/growth in order to contrast, compare, or plan for new actions or responses. Participant also noticed unexpected positive or negative outcomes related to the project.

• Level 4 – Metacognitive: Participant demonstrated **examination of the learning process**, showing what learning occurred, how learning occurred, and how newly acquired knowledge or learning **altered existing knowledge**. Participant plans to change future behavior based on the project experience and its outcome(s) on his/her life.
“I think the person I identify the most with would be Jesse. He’s an overachiever and just wants his parents love and support. I know how hard it can be to want to make a difference and be a leader, but people won’t let you, not because of being unqualified, but just being looked down on for being different. Honestly it has shaken my confidence in my ability to succeed. I really look up to Jesse. He was so strong and pushed as hard as he could until the end and it paid off.”
Visual Methods

- Captures images as main form of data
- Examples: pictures, videos, art work, sculptures
- A more structured method of self-reflection
  - If learning is the goal, it needs to be built into the process/structure

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The old cliché – “A picture says a thousand words”</td>
<td>Smaller number of perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could use images for multiple uses</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Photos as Assessment Data

• Photo elicitation:
  – For example, asking students to take a picture that captures something they learned during an event or program and include an explanation why they took that photo
  – Photos and explanations can be analyzed to determine common themes

• Photo taxonomies:
  – Birnbaum created a taxonomy of impressions students want peers to form of them, based on Facebook photos. E.g., Red solo cups = “partier”
“Adjusting to college life includes having to clean up after yourself... And maybe your roommates.”

-Mercedes
“After participating in a leadership role in Dance Marathon I learned just how much effort goes into the big event. Organizing this event has taught me how to manage a large project and work with a group toward a goal.”

-Joel
What settings in your work might benefit from visual aspects of assessment?
Unobtrusive Measures/Observations

- Naturally occurring
- Observing what is there
- Can be qualitative or quantitative in nature

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data is usually there waiting to be collected</td>
<td>Have to think about what you are measuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can track change over time without relying on participant response</td>
<td>Privacy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural setting can be an asset</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example: Don’t Wait, Walk

• Point-of-decision prompts literature indicates:
  – Signs placed by elevators or escalators to encourage individuals to take the stairs rather than the escalator or elevator
  – Found to be effective in various locations
    • Subways, shopping centers, banks, airports, college buildings

• Question: Will point-of-decision prompts placed at Cambus stops increase the proportion of students who walk rather than ride the bus?
Ten Cambus sites selected:

- Sites greater than a 15-minute walk from campus were excluded
- Clustered into
  1. Residence Hall site
  2. Main campus site
  3. General campus
- Randomly assigned to intervention or control group
Methods

During first week, baseline data collected at each site:

- Counted number of individuals who waited for bus
- Counted number of individuals who boarded bus
- Excluded those who ran to catch the bus
Methods

- Signs reading “No time for physical activity? Don’t wait, walk!” were posted during week 2 at intervention sites.

- Same data collected during week 2
  - Same observers
  - Same times
  - Same weather
Conclusions

- Point-of-decision signs were effective at increasing number of students who walked rather than rode the bus at specific sites.
- Significant sites had more visible signs.
Other Observational Measures

- Dining swipes
- Hand hygiene adherence
- Shadowing
- Observing officials, instructors, trainers
- Others?
Photo Credits:

- Fatigued Student Photo: http://www.franklin.edu/blog/5-ways-to-avoid-academic-fatigue/
- Brain Photo: http://phenomena.nationalgeographic.com/2013/04/02/a-new-push-to-explore-the-brain
- Women Talking Photo: http://thenetworkingstrategist.wordpress.com/
- Student Thinking Photo: http://www1.uwindsor.ca/internationalregistration/4/accept-your-offer
- Washing Hands Photo: www.281janitorial.com