ASSESSMENT ROCKS

Needs Assessment Checklist

Instructions

Use this checklist as you develop your project. Although it is a checklist, the purpose of its use is not to "check" every item. Rather, the goal of this tool is encourage thoughtful reflection and consideration of critical aspects of the implementation an assessment project. Checking all the items on this list will not guarantee a perfect project, but the discussions you have regarding each item will help you improve your project. Finally, the tool is not designed to be used alone - it is best discussed with a team.

Ensure a Needs Assessment is a Good Choice

☐ Focus on the gap between "what is" and "what should be"

☐ Is a good choice when substantial turnover of those served or as part of program planning and development

☐ Is part of a broader set of processes that include making decisions, developing action plans, and implementing and monitoring plans

Types and Levels of Needs

☐ Type of need to be assessed is clear (e.g., short-term, long-term, facility, process, learning / development, etc.)

☐ All three levels of needs are considered (*primary*: students, clients, customers; *secondary*: those who deliver services to primary level; *tertiary*: those who support secondary level)

Conducting Needs Assessment

☐ Selected instruments and methods are adapted to suit a needs assessment

☐ National standards, benchmarks, division goals, outcomes, and so on are examined as possible candidates for "what should be" use

☐ Process is planned for identifying discrepancies (such as comparing the means between items or having assessment team members rate)

Prioritization of Needs

☐ Prioritization process is selected (e.g., group discussion, rank ordering, point allocation, team member scoring (number, contribution to mission, degree to which immediate action needed, magnitude of discrepancy, instrumental value), or embedded in strategic planning)

☐ Causal analysis (such as the "5: why" approach or a fault tree diagram) is used to identify root causes before identifying solutions

Follow-through

☐ Make decisions, develop action plans, implement and monitor plans

☐ Evaluate the overall needs assessment process

Other Tips

☐ Use of multiple measures recommended

☐ Ideally, process linked to planning, budgeting, goal-setting, strategic planning