



Using and Communicating Results 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 for using and communicating results. 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.

Using Results

Answer your assessment question and address your project’s purpose

- Write out, in 1-2 sentences, how your results answered your assessment question.
- Identify how your assessment results address the purpose of the project.
- Use the results in the manner described in your purpose statement (from Module 1) and as appropriate for the type of study you selected (e.g., participation assessment, cost effectiveness, instrument development, needs assessment, satisfaction assessment, implementation fidelity, student learning and development outcomes, retention and persistence).

Improve the program or service

- Identify strengths and potential areas for improving the program or service.
- Engage staff members responsible for the program or service in discussing results and identifying potential improvements.
- Engage key stakeholders (such as students) in discussing the results and discussing potential improvements.
- Make changes to the design or structure of the program or plan. Consider using a Program Planning template if you are not already using a similar tool to track changes and clearly delineate the design. Do not be afraid to consider eliminating the program if results show it is not effective or if it no longer meets its mission.
- Modify the objectives, learning / development outcomes, or goals of the program or service if they no longer seem appropriate.

Improve the assessment process or determine if a different assessment project is needed

- If the program is being improved or changed, consider re-assessing the program to ensure the changes have had the intended effect.

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process. Was it able to answer the question of interest?
- Modify the assessment process so it will be more meaningful, manageable, and rigorous in the next cycle.

Communicating Results

Audience

- Identify the audiences for your results. (Ideally, work with these audiences throughout the assessment process, not just at this step.)
- Determine the methods of communication that are most likely to engage each identified audience. Clear communication does not happen accidentally.
- Consider the interests and stakes for each audience when crafting the central message.
- Craft the key message for each identified audience.
- Vary the depth of reporting based on each audience's needs and interests.
- Even for a single identified audience, multiple communication methods are needed.
- Consider using social media tools such as infographics.

Ethics

- Avoid reporting in ways that distract from the overall message (for example, avoid "calling-out" an individual person by anonymizing written comments).
- Carefully follow any assumed or promised anonymity by making sure results are disaggregated carefully.
- Make sure the report is accurate and fair.

Sharing

- Keep a copy of all reports available locally for use the next time the program is offered.
- Remember to share a copy of your report with your department's assessment coordinator and your Division or Institution's assessment director!