Identification of bottlenecks: Useful assessment tool for the combined purposes of accountability and improvement

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Why does your college/program conduct assessments?

Accountability

Improvement
If you are conducting assessments for accountability, how likely are you to identify areas need to improve?

Why not? Because:

- [x] Excellent
- [ ] Average
- [ ] Poor
Instead of asking to identify weaknesses, ask people to identify bottlenecks to success

• Where do student cohorts struggle?
  • Review semester to semester retention rates
  • Review student grades
  • Review student comments
Bottlenecks concept used in manufacturing

Bottlenecks are dangerous as their hurt the efficiency of the whole system
Used in academic programs to identify bottlenecks in student learning. Commonly used for continuous improvement (Pace and Middendorf (2004))
Identification of bottlenecks as assessment

- Turns assessment into looking for ways to improve
- Removes negative connotation of weakness
What are the common bottlenecks to graduation for undergraduate college students?
What are the common bottlenecks to completion for graduate students?
What are we doing to address these bottlenecks in higher education?
What Are the Choke Points In Your Program?

List student learning or efficiency of operations choke points

We will form groups to work on similar bottlenecks
Possible working groups

• Preparation of students to succeed in college
• STEM courses
• Completion of dissertation
• Financial barriers
• Student mental health
• Others?
Tasks for small group discussion

• Why does this bottleneck occur? Think beyond obvious
• Brainstorm appropriate data to collect and analyze
• Upon identification of trouble spots, develop steps to release bottlenecks
How can you use this concept of bottlenecks in your assessments?

• Use for accountability?

• Use for improvement?

• For student learning outcomes assessment?

• For operational assessment?
How can you close the assessment loop using bottlenecks?
Next steps?

Questions?