Are you measuring what you think you’re measuring?

Matching measures to your SLOs
It all starts with SLOs

IHA - (I hate acronyms), but . . .

SMART SLOs

S - Specific
M - Measurable
A - Achievable
R - Relevant
T - Time-bound
SMART SLOs

• **Specific:**
  The outcome is based on what you want graduates entering your field to know, perform, or act like.

• **Measurable:**
  An appropriate measurement tool is used to assess the objective.
SMART SLOs

• Attainable:
  The outcome is within the program’s control (curriculum or instruction)

• Realistic:
  The outcome is feasible for the program and the skill or content is appropriate.
SMART SLOs

• **Time-Bound:**

  The outcome (and any change to the curriculum, instruction, or measurement process) is contained within a single academic year.
Tools and SLOs

Direct Tools:
• Student Portfolios and Projects
• Pre- and Post-Tests
• Exit Exams
• Embedded Techniques

Indirect Tools:
• Surveys of students, alumni, employers, transfer institutions
• Evaluation and Self-Evaluation Reports
• Interviews
• Focus Groups
What Tools Give You

Qualitative Data:

• Descriptive information (narratives, portfolios, etc.).
• Difficult to compare, reproduce, and generalize.
• Provide depth.
• Can be time- and labor-intensive.
• Pinpoint areas for interventions and potential solutions which are not evident in quantitative data.
What Tools Give You

Quantitative Data:

• Numerical or statistical values, using actual numbers (scores, rates, etc.) to express quantities of a variable.
• Easy to store and manage.
• Provide a breadth of information.
• Can be generalized and reproduced.
• Must be carefully constructed to be valid.
What Tools Give You Direct Data:

• Provide evidence of student knowledge, skills, or attitudes for the specific domain in question.

• Actually measure student learning, not perceptions of learning or secondary evidence of learning.
What Tools Give You

Indirect Data:

• Measure perceptions of learning or secondary evidence of learning.

• Do not directly indicate what a student actually learned.
You Get What You Measure

- The first and last question: 
  *Why is your program doing this?*
- Measure the important aspects of the program 
  *(see SLOs).*
- How can you use what you’re already doing? 
  *(assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, etc.)*
You Get What You Measure

• Real-World Tools:
  Evaluate a student’s ability to apply critical thinking and knowledge, or to perform tasks that may approximate those found in the workplace or other venues outside of the university.
You Get What You Measure

Assignment/Tool Combinations should . . .

• Contain Explicit Criteria:
  • Provide a clear definition of skills, knowledge or values.
  • Describe levels of mastery.
  • Provide data on content or skill deficiencies.
You Get What You Measure

Assignment/Tool Combinations should . . .

• Exhibit Reliability:
  • Repeat testing provides similar results.
  • Testing between students shows same skills or knowledge.
  • Not dependent on words or situations.
You Get What You Measure

Assignment/Tool Combinations should . . .

• Have Valid Content and Contexts:
  • Assess higher-level learning
  • Simulate real-world experiences
  • Include multiple domains
Primary Trait Analysis

• Identify the major traits or characteristics that are expected in student work (should be done with SLOs).

• After the primary traits are identified, specific criteria, with performance standards, are defined for each trait.

  (aaaaannd . . . . . .  you’ve got a rubric)
Use What You Already Have

Embed and incorporate your assignment/tool

• Embedded assessment occurs within classes or curricular activities.

• Assignments linked to SLOs through primary trait analysis serve both as grading and assessment instruments (i.e., common test questions, projects, or writing assignments).
Use What You Already Have

Embed and incorporate your assignment/tool

- Specific questions can be embedded on exams in classes across sections and courses.

- Embedded assessment can provide formative information for improving your curriculum and instruction.
And Suddenly . . .

Assessment isn’t just another addition to your workload.

It’s already part of your program.
Shift the Focus

• Your focus is on what information you can get from your assignment/tool combination, and how you can use that information.

• It’s NOT on what numbers you can crank out.
• It’s NOT on your report.
• It’s NOT about OIE.

• It IS about your students.