Evaluation and Assessment (Meta-Assessment) of Your Advising Assessment

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“NACADA Review: Academic Advising Praxis and Perspectives”
OVERVIEW

• Academic advising as teaching and learning
• Effective academic advising
• Brief summary of assessment of advising
• Evaluation or assessment?
• Necessity for meta-assessment of advising
• Meta-assessment of academic advising
• Assessment of learning resulting from advising assessment
• Implications and conclusion
Academic Advising as Teaching and Learning
The *NACADA Concept of Academic Advising* (NACADA, 2006) emphasizes academic advising as a process involving teaching and learning which supports institutions’ missions and goals through the components of an advising *curriculum*, advising *pedagogy*, and *student learning outcomes* (SLOs) for academic advising (Robbins and Adams, 2013; Robbins, 2016a).
As Lowenstein (2005) asks in the title of his article, “If advising is teaching, what do advisors teach?”

Moreover, if advising is teaching, what do students learn?
Much has been written regarding assessment of student learning in higher education over the last few decades including assessment of student learning resulting from academic advising (Campbell, 2008; Hurt, 2007; Powers, Carlstrom, & Hughey, 2014; Robbins, 2009, 2011, 2016a; Robbins & Adams, 2013; Robbins & Zarges, 2011)
Effective Academic Advising
Studies on student retention have shown that effective academic advising is positively correlated to students’ satisfaction with their college experiences, persistence in college, and graduation (Brown & Rivas, 1993, 1994; McPhee, 1990; Novels & Ender, 1988).

Keup and Kinzie (2007) and Kuh (2008) further suggest that when effectively provided, academic advising also serves as a significant predictor of student engagement with the college environment.
Related is that *effective* academic advising connects students with learning opportunities (Campbell, 2008; Rinck, 2006; Schulenberg and Lindhorst, 2008)...  

...as well as positively (albeit indirectly) influences student self-efficacy and the development of study skills (Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, and Hawthorne, 2013)
Effective academic advising aligns (or should align) with other aspects of the institutional mission and goals such as the overall institutional plan, specific enrollment management planning, and retention, persistence, and completion strategies (Robbins 2016a)

But how do we know if academic advising is indeed effective?
Academic advising must be assessed in order to determine program *effectiveness* - whether students are getting out of academic advising what you want them to both educationally and developmentally (Maki, 2002, 2004; Robbins, 2009, 2011; Upcraft and Schuh, 1996)

The assessment is then followed by strategies, interventions, and improvements to advising processes and programming based on the results of assessment (Robbins, 2016a)
Brief Summary of Assessment
“Assessment is a process that focuses on student learning, a process that involves reviewing and reflecting on practice as academics have always done, but in a more planned and careful way.”

(Ewell, 2000)
“Assessment is an ongoing process of collecting information* that is aimed at understanding and improving student learning and personal development”

(Angelo, 1995)

* what we like to call “evidence”
“Assessment is the **systematic** collection, review, and use of information about educational programs* undertaken for the purpose of **improving student learning*** and **development***.”

(Marchese, 1993)

* Advising is part of the educational process, not simply a “service”
“Assessment is the means used to measure the outcomes of education and the achievement of students with regard to important competencies”

(Pellegrino, Chudowsky, and Glaser, 2001)
“...a lack of assessment data can sometimes lead to policies and practices based on intuition, prejudice, preconceived notions, or personal proclivities – none of them desirable bases for making decisions”

Upcraft and Schuh (2002)
Evaluation or Assessment?
• *evaluation* measures *perceptions*
• *assessment* measures *outcomes*
• assessment focuses on programmatic issues while evaluation focuses on individual performances of advisors
• assessment should be continuous and imbedded in the culture while evaluation is episodic
• evaluation of individual performance and evaluation of effectiveness of processes may be used as part of an overall assessment designed to measure program outcomes
Brief Summary of Assessment of Academic Advising
For Academic Advising...

“Assessment is the process through which we **gather evidence** about the claims we are making with regard to **student learning** and the **process/delivery** of academic advising in order to inform and support improvement”

(Campbell, 2008)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Mission Statement</th>
<th>Local Mission Statement</th>
<th>Specific Goal or Objective</th>
<th>Specific Student Learning Outcome (SLO)</th>
<th>Where Student Learning May Occur</th>
<th>By When You Want Outcome To Occur</th>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Data Instrument(s)</th>
<th>Minimum Performance Criteria for Success (Threshold)</th>
<th>Action(s) Based on Outcome Data</th>
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Adapted from
Historical Perspective

- The first professional development event focusing on assessment of academic advising was offered by NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA) in 2004 in the form of the NACADA Assessment Seminar, which evolved into the NACADA Assessment Institute the following year.

- Other NACADA professional development offerings also include aspects of the assessment of academic advising, such as the NACADA Administrators’ Institute and the NACADA Summer Institute.

- The NACADA Academic Advising Speakers and Consultant Service has recorded an increase in higher education institutional consultations on assessment of academic advising from none in 2013 to nine during the 2015-2017 period (NACADA, 2018a).
Historical Perspective

- The number of presentations on assessment of academic advising at the annual NACADA Conference has increased from 9 in 1997 to more than 20 in 2017, with a peak of 37 in 2003 (NACADA 2018b).

- The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS; 2015a) likewise emphasizes assessment as a critical process for higher education functional areas. In addition to developing standards, CAS identifies assessment of student learning and development outcomes and program effectiveness as a required general standard.
Historical Perspective

Most recently, the 2018 collaborative initiative between NACADA and the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education (Gardner Institute) - known as the Excellence in Academic Advising (EAA) Project - includes assessment of student learning as a necessary and key component in the enhancement of academic advising programs (NACADA and Gardner Institute, 2018)
Necessity for Meta-Assessment of Academic Advising
Given the aforementioned focus on assessment of academic advising, an ensuing concern is:

how to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of the assessment process for a specific academic advising program
The process of **evaluating the effectiveness of an assessment program** (Ory, 1992; McDonald, 2010; Schoepp and Benson, 2016), termed “meta-assessment,” has become a subsequent step in the evolving assessment process in higher education.

Meta-assessment involves consideration and the examination of:

- the initial need for assessment
- the elements included in the assessment process
- the necessary and sufficient conditions required for a valid assessment process to occur
- whether the appropriate actions were taken based on the assessment results
In 2014 the accreditation body the Middle States Commission on Higher Learning provided the following key questions for evaluating the assessment process:

• How engaged are institutional stakeholders in the process?
• How collaborative has the assessment process been?
• How well are the assessment results related to goals and objectives?
• To what extent do the assessments have potential for revealing the true state of things no matter how uncomfortable?
Suskie (2009) suggested that in order for any assessment to be effective, it must:

• provide accurate information on what students have learned to inform decisions
• have a clear purpose
• engage all appropriate stakeholders
• become a part of the campus culture
• focus on clear and important student learning outcomes
While meta-assessment of assessment of academic disciplinary programs is a growing occurrence (cf. St. Cloud State University, 2015; James Madison University, 2017), it is not yet formally happening for academic advising assessment.

Just as the assessment process has been adapted for academic advising in recent decades there is now a need for meta-assessment of academic advising.

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Meta-Assessment of Academic Advising
The aforementioned Middle States Commission on Higher Learning (2014) key questions and Suskie’s (2009) suggestions regarding effective assessment are good places to start identifying questions for a meta-assessment of advising assessment.
In addition, based on...

- the existing literature regarding the assessment of student learning in higher education (Angelo, 1995; Cumming & Miller, 2017; Ewell, 2000; Huba & Freed, 2000; Maki, 2002, 2004; Palomba, 1999; Pelligrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser, 2001; Sims, 1992; Suskie, 2001, 2009; Walvoord, 2010; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996)


- the CAS Standards for Academic Advising (2015b)

...additional questions that can be asked when conducting a meta-assessment of academic advising assessment processes are numerous.
Possible Meta-Assessment Questions to Ask
It is important to note that many of the following meta-assessment questions were likely explicitly or implicitly considered when developing and performing your assessment of academic advising.

Meta-assessment allows for a formal and documented consideration of whether the ideal conditions were in place when conducting your assessment of academic advising...

...and in turn, whether your assessment outcome data is valid.
• Were all appropriate stakeholders included in the assessment planning?
• Does a comprehensive list of desired individual student learning outcomes (SLOs) exist?
• Are the delineated desired SLOs relevant to the advising program’s goals?
• Does a comprehensive list of desired individual process/delivery outcomes (PDOs) exist?
• Is each delineated desired PDO linked to a specific corresponding SLO?
• Has an assessment cycle been identified for each individual desired outcome?
• Do the assessment methods used capture data relevant to the desired outcomes?
• Are the questions asked via the measurements linked to specific desired outcomes?
• Were the assessment methods utilized in a manner that captured all desired information on student learning (for assessment of SLOs)?
• Were summative assessments used?
• Were formative assessments used?
• Were mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) used?
• Were multiple measures used to assess each desired outcome?
• If a desired outcome was not achieved, does the data inform why?
• Does the outcome data inform what needs to be done to improve student learning (for assessment of SLOs)?
• Was the appropriate technology to support and enhance academic advising considered?
• Do the assessment processes allow feedback to students as learners (for assessment of SLOs)?

• Is assessment valued as part of the program’s culture?

• Is the assessment process sustainable?

• Did all relevant stakeholders participate in the review of assessment processes?

• And any other questions important to you locally or required of you by administration, accreditors, etc.
Assessment of Learning Resulting From Academic Advising Assessment
Of corollary interest is what stakeholder learning has occurred as the result of participation in academic advising assessment, considered here as “assessment of learning outcomes resulting from participation in the assessment of advising process”

(this is actually assessment of assessment, while “meta-assessment” is evaluation of the assessment process)
Desired learning outcomes for involved stakeholders you would like to achieve as the result of participation in the assessment of academic advising can be identified and assessed as well.

Included may be:

• specific things you would like your students participating in the assessment process to have learned

• what you would like your assessment team to have learned from the experience

• what you want your peers to have learned

• and so on for all relevant stakeholders
Identifying specific learning outcomes for your stakeholder cohorts and appropriately measuring whether those outcomes were achieved – basically assessing the learning resulting from the assessment process – moves beyond meta-assessment (or evaluation of the advising assessment process) and into assessment of learning resulting from participation in the assessment of academic advising.
Possible Learning Outcomes for the Assessment of Academic Advising Process
Please note that the term “appropriate” is used here to describe those specific stakeholders you want to achieve the identified learning outcome.

Depending on the goals for your academic advising program not all stakeholders of all types may need to achieve any, all or even the same desired learning outcomes.
• Appropriate stakeholders involved know the definition of assessment in higher education
• Appropriate stakeholders involved know the differences between evaluation and assessment
• Appropriate stakeholders involved identify the general processes for engaging in assessment of academic advising
• Appropriate stakeholders know what outcomes are being assessed during any given assessment cycle
• Appropriate stakeholders understand the necessity of using multiple measurements for assessment of any individual desired outcome
• Appropriate stakeholders value the necessity of valid data to determine whether a desired outcome has been met
• Appropriate stakeholders appreciate the role of technology in gathering outcome data
• Appropriate stakeholders value the cyclical nature of assessment as dynamic
• Appropriate stakeholders value the cyclical nature of assessment as on-going
• Appropriate stakeholders understand the connection between the assessment process and programmatic decision-making
• Appropriate stakeholders understand the connection between the assessment process and institutional decision-making

• Appropriate stakeholders involved recognize how assessment can impact day-to-day academic advising experiences for students

• Appropriate stakeholders involved know how the outcome data will be used to improve student learning resulting from academic advising

• Appropriate stakeholders involved identify opportunities for integrating assessment into professional development for academic advisors
• Appropriate stakeholders recognize how assessment can be used in the development of advisor evaluation structures

• Appropriate stakeholders recognize how assessment can be used in developing advisor reward structures

• Appropriate stakeholders identify strategies to acquire resources to act on assessment results

• Appropriate stakeholders understand the significance of evaluating the previous cycle of assessment to prepare for the next cycle of assessment for any given desired outcome

• Appropriate stakeholders have a positive perception of the assessment process
• Not every sample outcome must be answered to determine the learning resulting from your assessment process

• The most relative and significant ones to assess for your academic advising program should be used

• There may be additional learning outcomes you want to assess as well

• You may even want to develop separate rubrics to assess the learning from different cohorts of stakeholders
The ideal approach is to start with the end in mind, or perform backwards design (Wiggins and McTighe, 2006, Robbins, 2009, 2011, 2016a), as with the initial assessment process for your academic advising program.

Once you identify what you would like identified stakeholders to learn as the result of participating in the assessment process you can develop your initial assessment processes to include the opportunities for such desired learning to occur.
Implications and Conclusion
• Meta-assessment of academic program assessment processes is a relatively new concept, while meta-assessment of academic advising is not yet occurring.

• The primary reasons for conducting meta-assessment of academic advising is to ensure that the individual components included and steps taken in your assessment were all appropriate for your needs and that the outcome data is reliable and therefore useful for your academic advising program.

• The purpose of the assessment of learning resulting from your academic advising assessment process is to determine what students and other stakeholders have learned from the process and what should be added in future assessment cycles to answer any additional desired learning outcome questions.
• The next logical step is for academic advising programs conducting assessment to use such questions to develop rubrics in their meta-analysis and assessment of learning resulting from those academic advising assessment processes and to provide data on the use of the rubrics.

• Such data will be helpful locally for any given academic advising program, while the collection of such data across academic advising programs nationally and globally would benefit the field of academic advising as a whole.
Questions?
Thank You!