Dr. Monica L. Heller
University of Saint Francis

Great Educators:

Author and Educator
Sir Ken Robinson

- convey information
- *mentor*
- *stimulate*
- *provoke*
- *engage*

LEARNING

Task of Teaching   vs.   *Achievement* of Teaching

Typical Mode of Evaluating Teaching

- ***University-driven course evaluations***

  end of semester, standardized collection of student ratings and feedback on course experience, curriculum, instructor

- ***Purpose:***

  – *Gives students an avenue to provide feedback*

  – *Instructor can learn from feedback*

  – *Make necessary changes to improve course*

Formative Assessment
"Checking the Temperature"

— methods used to evaluate student learning

— helps *form* instruction, guide us, and provide us feedback that is:

  ✓ supportive
  ✓ **timely**
  ✓ **specific**

So that learning can best be facilitated

(McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006; Shute, 2008)

Why should we do it? The Big Picture

Formal course evaluation results often arrive too late

↓

*Formative Assessment provides **TIMELY** feedback*

Information is:

- Gathered in timely manner
- Helpful to 'forming' our courses
- Beneficial to students <u>currently</u> in the course
- Ideally collected and used before a major 'bomb' event takes place

Why should we do it? The Big Picture

Formal course evaluations only tell part of the story

↓

Formative Assessment provides **SPECIFIC** *feedback*

Information obtained can be specific to:

- Content (e.g., topics, theories, formulas)
- Course
- Objectives
- Instructor strategies
- Classroom environment

WHY should each of us do it?

We owe it to ourselves

Assessments should be used to help teachers make better instructional decisions – in real time and for future course modifications (Popham, 2008)

- We can determine if what we *intended* to work is actually working in the course, **while there is still time for change**

- Provides <u>evidence</u> to support or modify our practices

- Students will show/tell us if we use methods to check

WHY should each of us do it?

We owe it to ourselves

- **A good practice with positive results!**
  - Fosters positive changes in faculty teaching methods
  - Increases use of teaching approaches that promote student involvement
  - Increases faculty sensitivity to the student experience
  - Enhances faculty satisfaction, interest in teaching, and facilitates discussions about education

(as reviewed in Peterson & Einarson, 2001)

WHY should each of us do it?

We owe it to our students

Our students:

- Invest A LOT in their education

- Trust us to provide a *quality* educational experience

- Faculty are more important to student learning than any other factor (Hoffman-Beyer & Gillmore, 2007)

- Their needs *should* matter, and not when it's too late to do something

WHY should each of us do it?

We owe it to our institution!

- As a whole, the collegiate experience is complex and diverse for our students – we can capture this and use it to inform our understanding and decisions, which can impact many areas of their education

- The university's reputation for quality academic programs and 'brand' is only as good as its educators

  Therefore, it is essential all faculty members are engaged in formal assessment
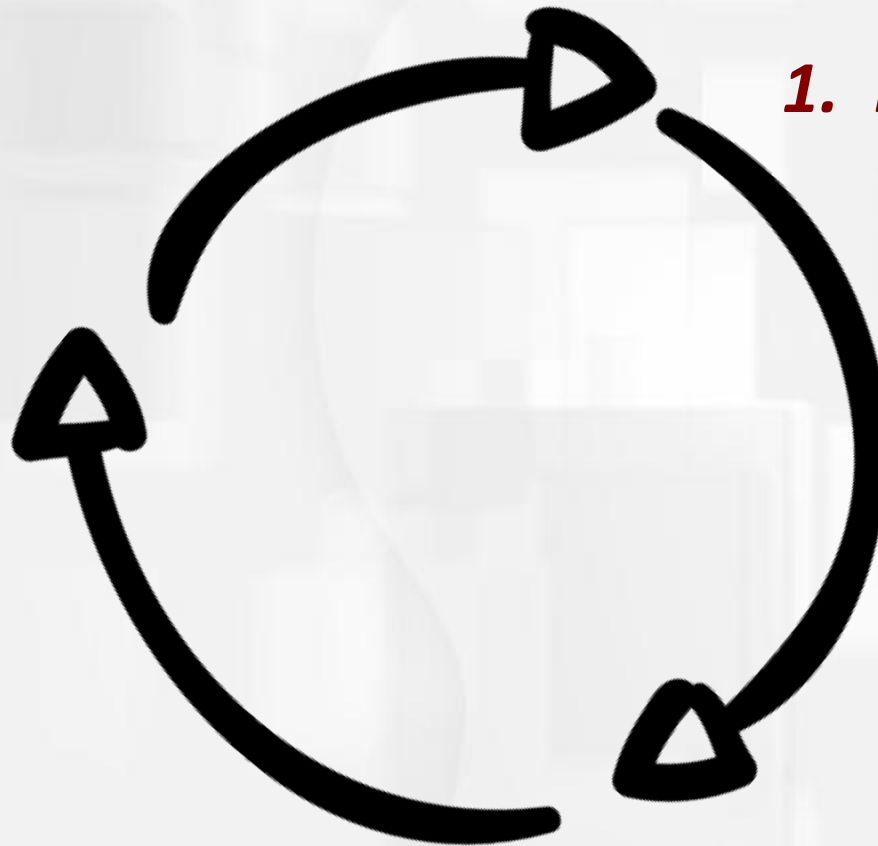
  (Ekman & Pelletier, 2008)

WHEN should we utilize assessment?

Routinely!

Student formative assessment contributes the most to improvements in performance (teacher and thus student) when utilized as a consistent, rather than episodic, activity (Wolff, 1992)

HOW should we utilize assessment?
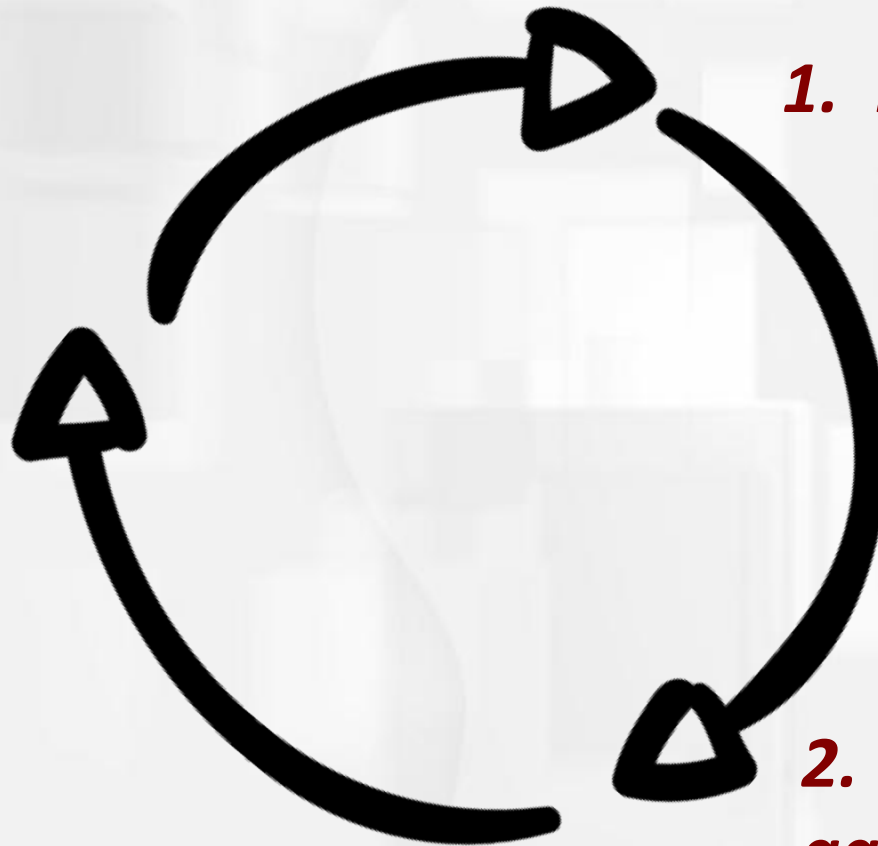
Assessment for Improvement → A "Loop System"

1. Identify potential trouble areas of student learning

(Flick, 2014)

HOW should we utilize assessment?

Assessment for Improvement → A "Loop System"

1. *Identify potential trouble areas of student learning*

2. **Use the info gathered to improve**

(Flick, 2014)

HOW should we utilize assessment?

Assessment for Improvement → A "Loop System"

1. Identify potential trouble areas of student learning

2. Use the info gathered to improve

3. Later, gather evidence regarding success of changes and interventions
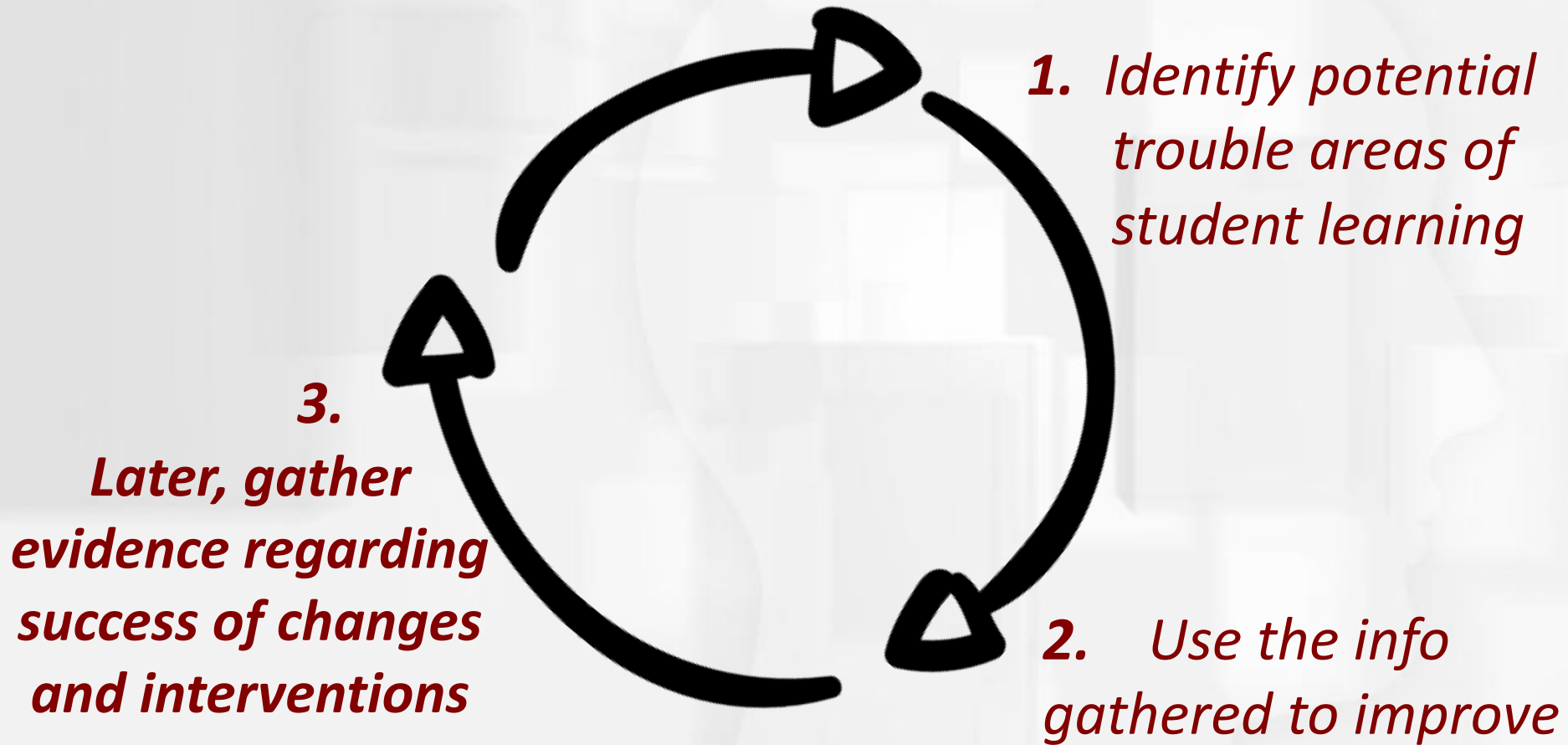
(Flick, 2014)

1. "Day 1" Assessment

Gather info in the very beginning before you start moving into content

Purpose:

- Obtain lots of valuable information that can help 'form' what you may do the rest of the semester, within a few minutes

- Get a general 'feel' for your class

- Tackle simple challenges right away

- **Fosters greater success from the very beginning**

Examples

- **A PRE Quiz/Exam**
  - surveys "baseline" understanding of content

- **"Introduction" assignment/extra credit:**
  - Opportunity to introduce themselves
  - Gauge interest, motivation
  - Learn about any areas of concern
  - Identify challenges that might impede learning

2. "En Route" Assessment

Gather info throughout the semester

Purpose:

- Everyone has a good feel for the class by now

- Usually major tasks or class experiences can promote valuable insight from 'learner' perspective, so always good to have opportunities for reflection

- Can identify necessary changes and implement while plenty of time is still left

Examples

- **<u>Self-Assess</u> on their Paper/Exam submission:**
  - describe their perception of performance
  - reflect on their approach to completing the task
  - identify topics still challenging, muddy, etc
  - explore ideas to improve for future task success (exam/ paper)
  - plan for next time - what would do again or differently

- **<u>Polling</u>-** phone/laptop real-time response to quick questions

- **<u>Problem-Postings</u>**- online forum for anonymous, open posting of topic challenges; opportunity for peer responses

3. "Close the Loop" Assessment

Gather info near end of the semester

– Use a non-standard format that is tailored to your course, objectives, what YOU want to know. Allow for some ratings and open commentary on items.

Purpose:

– Collect feedback that you can immediately implement for next group of students

– Can measure success of any changes you introduced during the semester

Example: Capstone Course Survey

Instructions:

*There are **6** goals outlined by the APA which guide the curriculum and requirements in our **PSYC 495 Psychology Major Capstone Course**. The following items ask you about the extent to which you believe **this course** challenged you to meet each of these goals by the conclusion of the semester. Using a scale of 1-4, with 4 indicating 'completely met' and 1 indicating 'not met', please select the rating that best represents your belief:*

Example: Capstone Course Survey
(Rating Item)

Goal 1:

Student will demonstrate an understanding of ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world.

- ○ **1 – Not Met**
- ○ **2 – Somewhat Met**
- ○ **3 – Mostly Met**
- ○ **4 – Completely Met**

Example: Capstone Course Survey
(Open-Ended Item)

Please provide any additional feedback regarding the Senior Psychology Capstone Course and/or the course under my instruction. I will review the feedback and carefully consider student positive commentary in regards to what was enjoyable, what was working well, and what I should keep doing. I also appreciate any student constructive feedback in areas that could be improved upon. Your responses are anonymous and very helpful to me as I work to continue to enhance this curriculum for future students.

Acknowledge their Efforts

Help students feel you are trying to stay 'in-tune' to their learning, that you are genuinely interested in any results that come out of what you may ask of them

- Communicate in class, use LMS to post comments that:
  - acknowledge progress
  - admit goof-ups
  - point out specific ways you are willing to adjust

- Make quick use of "en-route" methods

Keep our
students' education
and learning
at the forefront