

Nine Steps for Creating a Problem-Based Approach to Assessment

1. Identify an inquiry group or team to begin the investigative process.
2. Identify the learning outcome(s) that you will investigate.
3. Identify a problem you want to solve and convert this problem into open-ended research or study questions. These questions should be “higher order” questions (as opposed to yes/no questions.)
4. Identify others invested in answering the question. Could involve faculty in other departments, adjuncts or TAs, advisors, librarians, student affairs personnel, or the students themselves.
5. Read relevant educational research and literature. Have others addressed this problem and published results?
6. Identify sources of data and evidence. What kinds of direct and indirect evidence will you need to address your research question? What other data will you need? This could include data on admissions qualifications, course-taking patterns, participation in support services, participation in high impact practices, survey results.
7. Re-design your assessment plan. Your new plan will identify your research question, student cohorts, measures, responsible persons, timeframes.
8. Develop a timeline for implementing changes and assessing how the changes are affecting achievement.
9. Disseminate findings internally thru the CTL, externally through presentations at conferences, publications, etc.