

As Easy as Apple Pie! (A Baker's Guide to Assessment Plan Development)

What follows is a somewhat tongue-in-cheek guide to putting together an assessment plan, couched in culinary terms. This has been done to give a more familiar and tasteful context to commonly used terms of assessment and evaluation.

State the Mission

(Example: To support research, education, and public service to further knowledge of apple pies.)

Describe the Program Purposes

(Example: To produce outstanding apple pies at the 9", 11", and the "piled higher and deeper" levels; to provide support to other baking programs; to collaborate on interdisciplinary efforts with ice cream and cheese programs.)

Specify the Intended Objectives/Outcomes

(Examples: Emerging pies will exhibit high standards of taste; consistent and technically correct crust characteristics; outstanding olfactory communication skills; and will create "life-long yearners" for more apple pie in a society dominated by fast food.)

Specify Procedures, Measures, and Criteria

Operationally define what is to be assessed within each objective/outcome (Examples: Taste will be uniformly good from first to last bite; the crust will be baked to a golden tan; the aroma of emerging pies will be mouth-watering.)

Determine where in the process each assessment will take place

(Betty Crocker's classic recipe will be followed; most assessment will take place during the senior capstone baking sequence.)

Specify assessment methods for each objective/outcome

(Examples of some possible methods: All pies will be visually inspected; a toothpick will be inserted into a representative sample of pies after 45 minutes; we will measure the placement rate in bites per minute of pie slice into the mouths of visiting relatives; a panel of expert taste testers will conduct periodic site visits.)

Develop performance criteria for each objective/outcome

(Example for taste: each bite will be judged uniformly delicious at least 90% of the time by a panel of expert taste testers.)

Develop Assessment Implementation Plan

(Example: Pies will be randomly sampled every 2 hours. The tester in charge will conduct the sampling, analyze the results, report the findings, and attempt to keep his/her weight down.)

Conduct Assessments and Write Up Results

(Example: Conduct the visual inspection, toothpick test, and bites-per-minute placement measurement; periodically invite the panel of expert taste testers. Create report on findings to be shared with program chefs.)

Determine Feedback Channels

(Example: Call the chefs together and share the results; let the apple growers know; inform the movers and bakers who may have an interest in "core" program outcomes.)

Document Use of Results for Program Improvement

(Example: Were the pie performance criteria met? Do we need to adjust the baking time? Document the changes to the recipe and why you made them; let your relatives know so they can adjust their gastronomic expectations.)