“Closing the Loop”: Using Assessment Data to Improve the Program

The real purpose of program assessment is to assure that all of our students have the opportunity to learn what we really care about them learning. It is not enough simply to collect data for program assessment; these data must be used to “close the assessment loop,” that is to continually improve the quality of the program and the experiences that enable significant learning.

Thus, if your assessment data show that in the aggregate, students are doing less well than you want them to on one objective, it is important to change the way that issue is being taught or to offer additional coursework in that area, or to rethink whether the objective is appropriately defined.

Also, if all of your measures are highly positive, it might be time to think about increasing the level of challenge or considering how you might push the program to the next level.