

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

Taking Stock of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

George D. Kuh

*Symposium on
Learning Outcomes
Assessment*

Toronto, Ontario
April 12, 2012

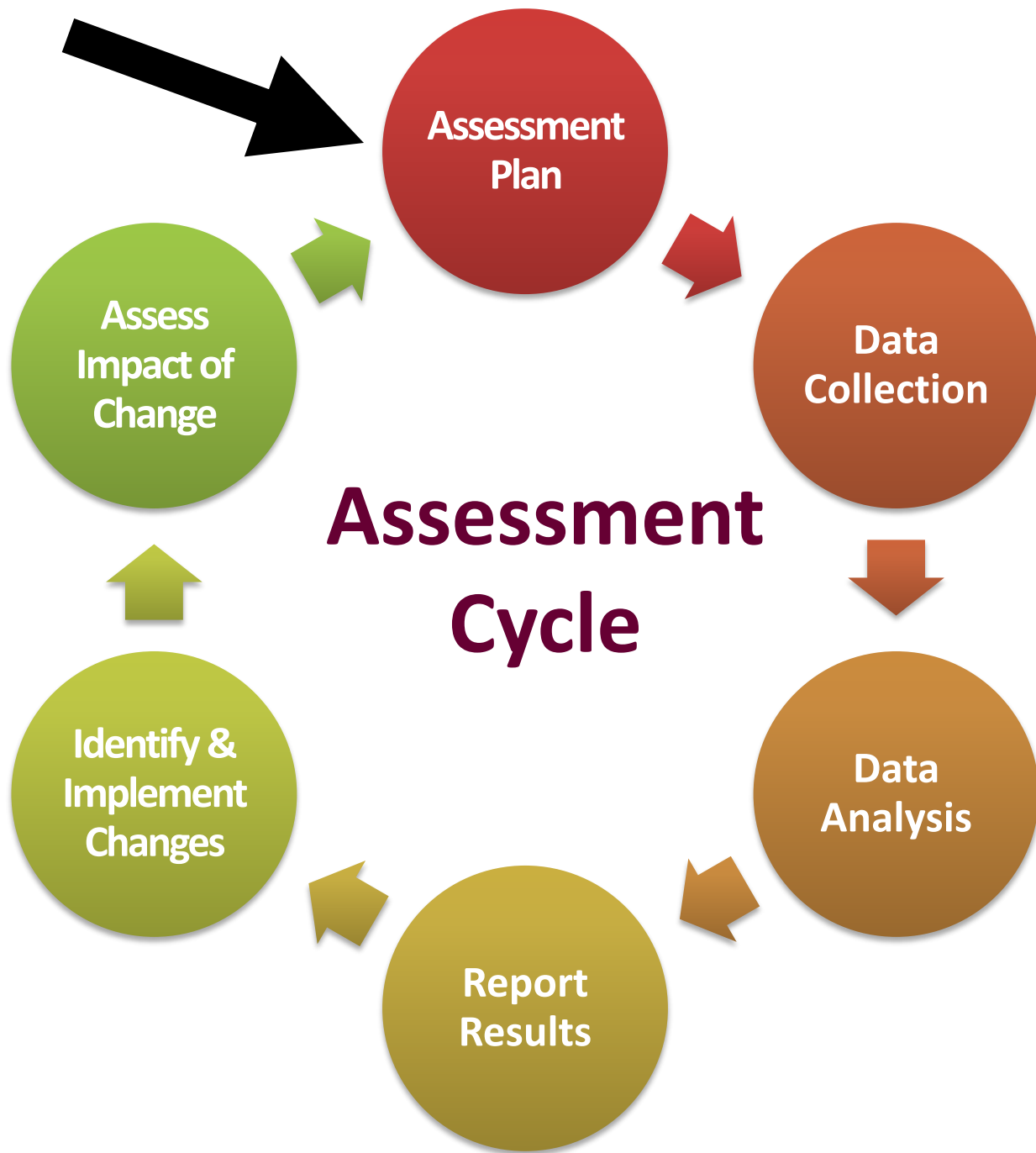


Working Definition

Assess (v.): to examine carefully

Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development

(Palomba & Banta, 1999, p. 4)



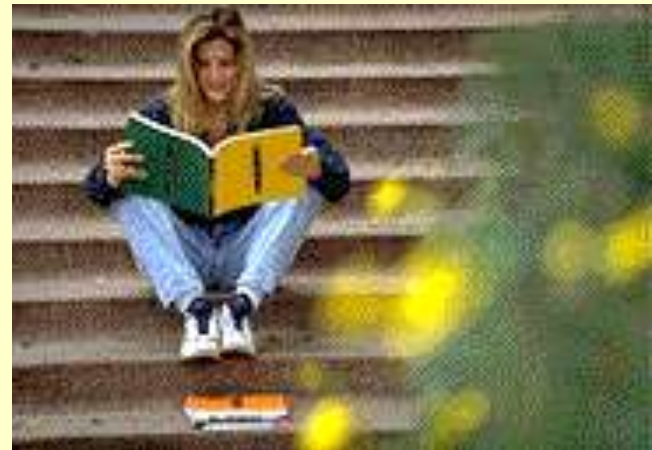
Overheard at the water cooler...

“Assessment is an attempt by social scientists to force the rest of us to adopt their disciplinary approach to the world.”

Anonymous Philosophy Professor

“Assessment means asking whether my students are learning what I think I’m teaching.”

Pat Hutchings, 2011



Overview



- **What the world needs now**
- **Assessment, accountability, and improvement**
- **Student learning outcomes assessment in the US**
- **A look around the corner...**

Advance Organizers

- **What are the achievements of the assessment movement on which we can build?**
- **What challenges must be addressed?**
- **What needs to be done to advance the learning outcomes agenda?**

Economy Defined by Greater Workplace Challenges and Dynamism

- **More than 1/3 of the entire US labor force changes jobs *ANNUALLY*.**
- **Today's students will have 10-14 jobs by age 38.**
- **Half of workers have been with their company less than 5 years.**
- **Every year, more than 30 million people are working in jobs that did not exist *in the previous year*.**

The World is Demanding More

- **There is a demand for better educated workers.**
- **There is also a demand that those educated workers have *higher levels of learning and knowledge.***

Employer expectations of employees have increased

% who agree with each statement

Our company is asking employees to **take on more responsibilities** and to **use a broader set of skills** than in the past



Employees are expected to **work harder to coordinate with other departments** than in the past



The **challenges** employees face within our company are **more complex today** than they were in the past



To succeed in our company, employees need **higher levels of learning and knowledge** today than they did in the past



Why the Need for Higher Levels of Learning?

- **The capacity to drive innovation is the key strategic economic advantage in a globalized knowledge economy**
- **Scientific and technological innovations are changing the workplace, demanding more of all employees**
- **Global interdependence and complex cross-cultural interactions increasingly characterize modern societies and the workplace, requiring new levels of knowledge and capability**

Key Capabilities Open the Door for Career Success and Earnings

“Irrespective of major field or institutional selectivity, what matters to career success is students’ development of a **broad set of cross-cutting capacities...**”

*Anthony Carnevale, Georgetown University
Center on Education and the Workforce*

Narrow Learning is Not Enough: The Essential Learning Outcomes



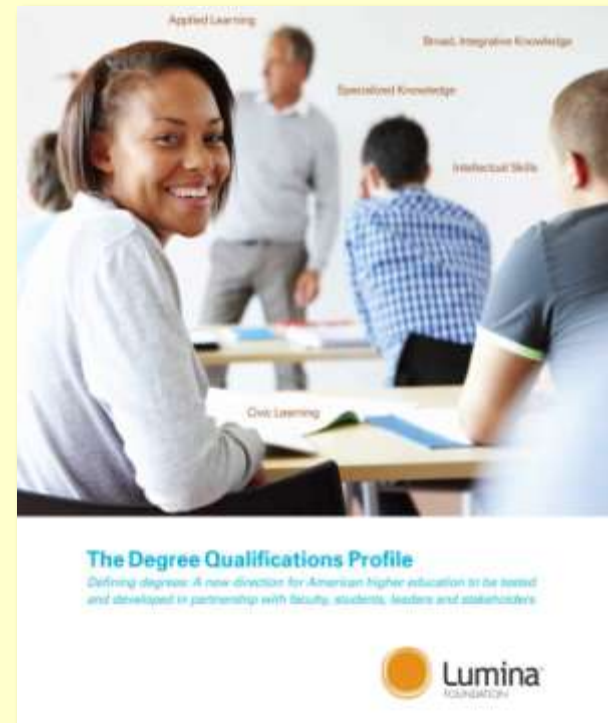
- ★ ***Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical & Natural World***
- ★ ***Intellectual and Practical Skills***
- ★ ***Personal and Social Responsibility***
- ★ ***“Deep” Integrative Learning***

Deep, Integrative Learning

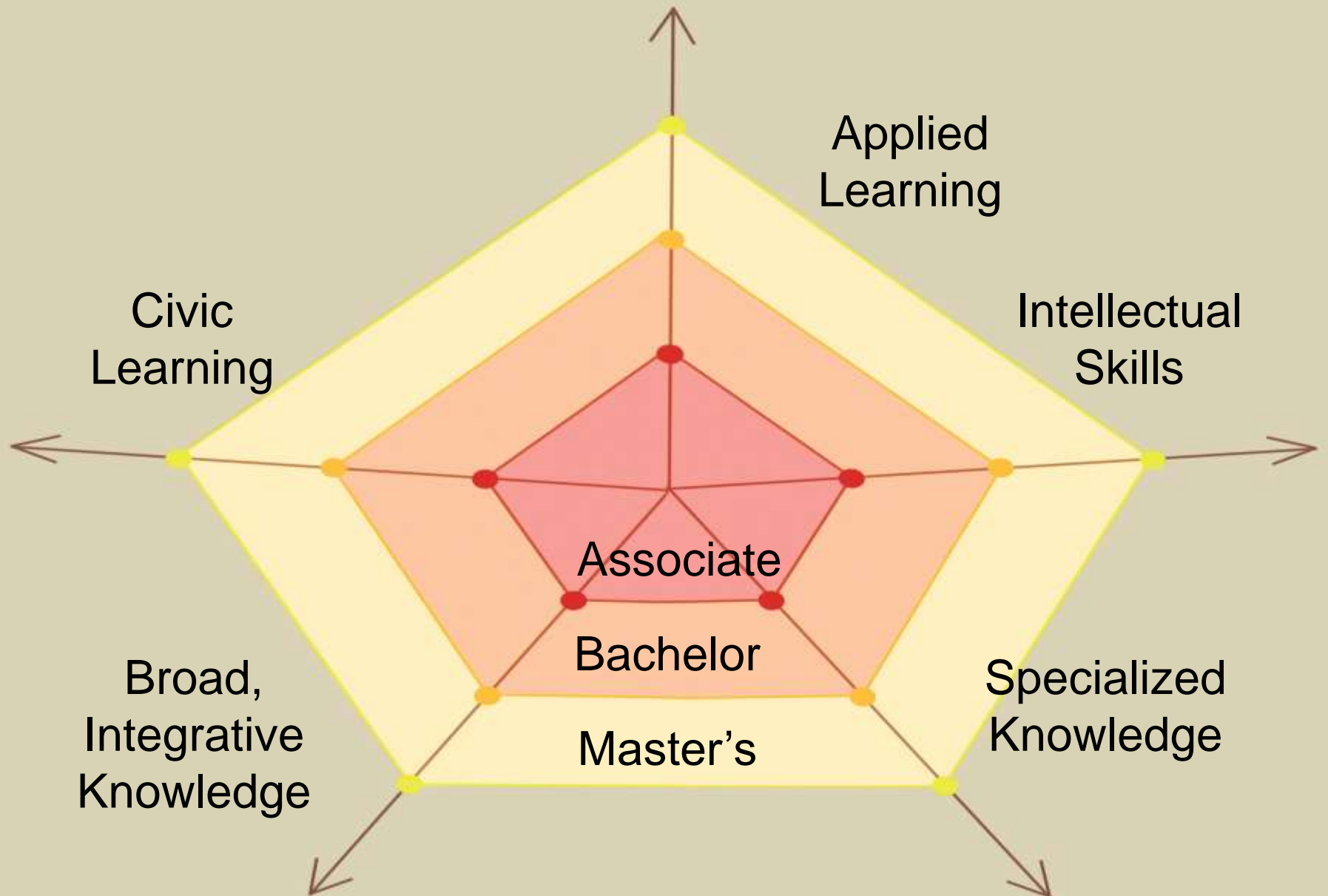
- **Attend to the underlying meaning of information as well as content**
- **Integrate and synthesize different ideas, sources of information**
- **Discern patterns in evidence or phenomena**
- **Apply knowledge in different situations**
- **View issues from multiple perspectives**

Degree Qualifications Profile

- **Broad, integrative knowledge**
- **Specialized knowledge**
- **Intellectual skills**
- **Applied learning**
- **Civic learning**



Degree Qualifications Profile



Why a DQP

or

Why Degree Level Expectations/Outcomes

Shift the focus from *what is taught* to *what is learned* by providing institutions with a template of widely agreed-upon competencies required for the award of degrees.

Undergraduate Studies



Why Explicitly Articulate Degree Expectations and Outcomes

- Absent common public understanding of what degrees mean, the DQP “describes concretely what is meant by each of the degrees addressed.”**
- Not intended to standardize degrees or to define what should be taught or how**
- The DQP “illustrates how students should be expected to perform at progressively more challenging levels.”**

Assessment 2012



- ✓ **Greater emphasis on student learning outcomes and evidence that student performance measures up**



“That’s nice. What else have we learned at school?”

Assessment Purposes

- **Improvement**
- **Accountability**



Two Paradigms of Assessment

	<i>Continuous Improvement</i>	<i>Accountability</i>
Strategic dimensions		
Purpose	Formative (improvement)	Summative (judgment)
Orientation	Internal	External
Motivation	Engagement	Compliance
Implementation		
Instrumentation	Multiple/triangulation	Standardized
Nature of evidence	Quantitative and qualitative	Quantitative
Reference points	Over time, comparative, established goal	Comparative or fixed standard
Communication of results	Multiple internal channels	Public communication, media
Use of results	Multiple feedback loops	Reporting

Quality Assurance Tools

- ***Direct*** (outcomes) ***measures***
 - Evidence of what students have learned or can do
- ***Indirect*** (process) ***measures***
 - Evidence of effective educational activity by students and institutions

Direct Measures

- **ETS Proficiency Profile & Major Field Tests**
- **ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)**
- **Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)**
- **Competency and content tests (e.g., nursing, education)**
- **Demonstrations and performances**
- **Other examples of authentic student (e.g., writing samples)**
- **Culminating projects**

Indirect Measures

- **National Surveys of Student Engagement (NSSE/CCSSE/AUSSE/SASSE)**
- **Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)**
- **Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)**
- **Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)**
- **Your First College Year (YFCY)**
- **College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ)**
- **Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory**

Assessment 2012



- ✓ Greater emphasis on student learning outcomes and evidence that student performance measures up
- ✓ **Demands for comparative measures**
- ✓ **Increased calls for transparency --- public disclosure of student and institutional performance**
- ✓ **Assessment “*technology*” has improved markedly, but still is insufficient to document learning outcomes most institutions claim**

Measuring Quality in Higher Education

(Vic Borden & Brandi Kernel, 2010)

Web-based inventory hosted by AIR of assessment resources. Key words can be used to search the four categories:

- instruments (examinations, surveys, questionnaires, etc.);
- software tools and platforms;
- benchmarking systems and data resources;
- projects, initiatives and services.

<http://applications.airweb.org/surveys/Default.aspx>



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**Far too little is known about
assessment practices on
campuses**





NILOA

NILOA's mission is to document student learning outcomes assessment work, identify and disseminate best practices, and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

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FULL NAVIGATION >>

Welcome to NILOA

New to the website? For a general overview, click here.



November 2011: New NILOA report series released, "Making Student Learning Evidence Transparent: The State of the Art."

- ❖ [Occasional Paper 13](#)
- ❖ [Webscan Report](#)
- ❖ [Occasional Paper 12](#)
- ❖ [Occasional Paper 11](#)
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Featured pages

- [National Survey Results 2011](#)
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Western Washington University

Western Washington University's website is NILOA's Featured Website for its communication and creativity.

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New Publication from AAC&U

Mon, Apr 02, 2012 - 08:00 am

Association of American Colleges & Universities

"Assessing College Student Learning: Evaluating Alternative Models, Using Multiple Methods," by Robert J. Sternberg, Jeremy Penn, Christie Hawkins, and Sally Reed presents information about assessments plans and models in this publication. Institutional case studies are also provided.

Study-Abroad Officials Are Under More Pressure to Prove Their Programs' Value

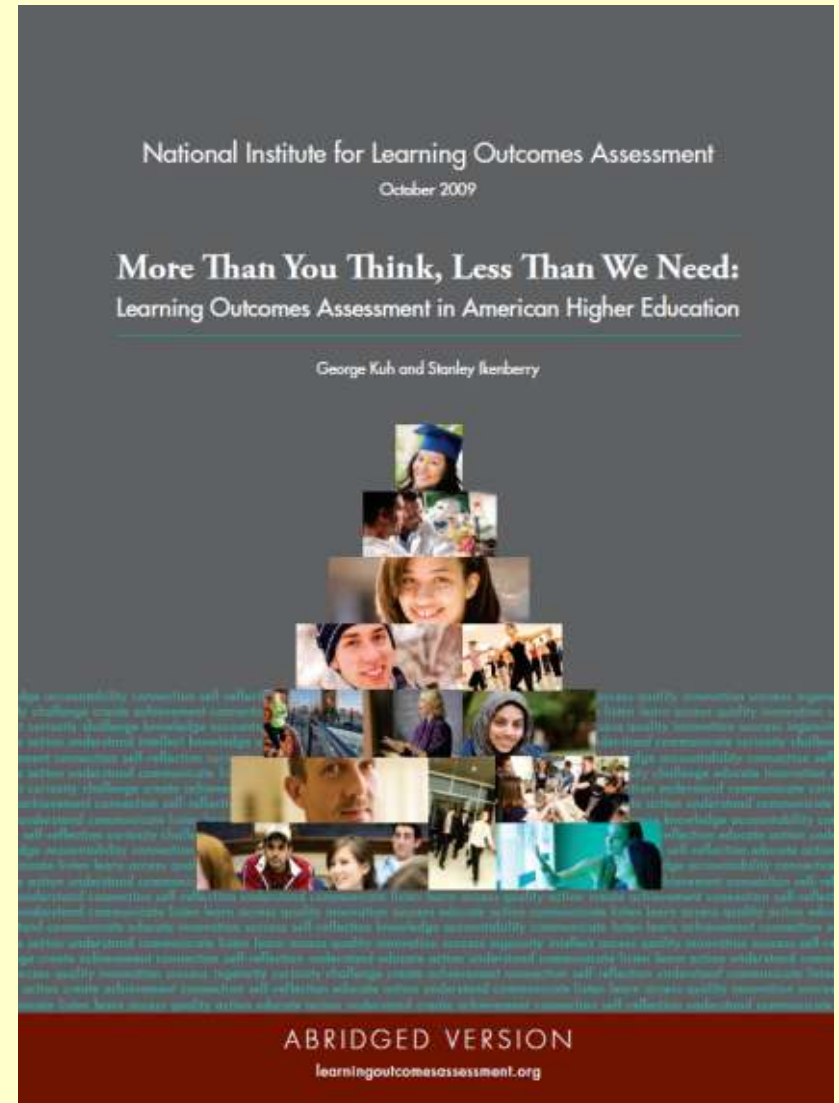
Mon, Apr 02, 2012 - 08:00 am

Ian Wilhelm in Inside Higher Ed

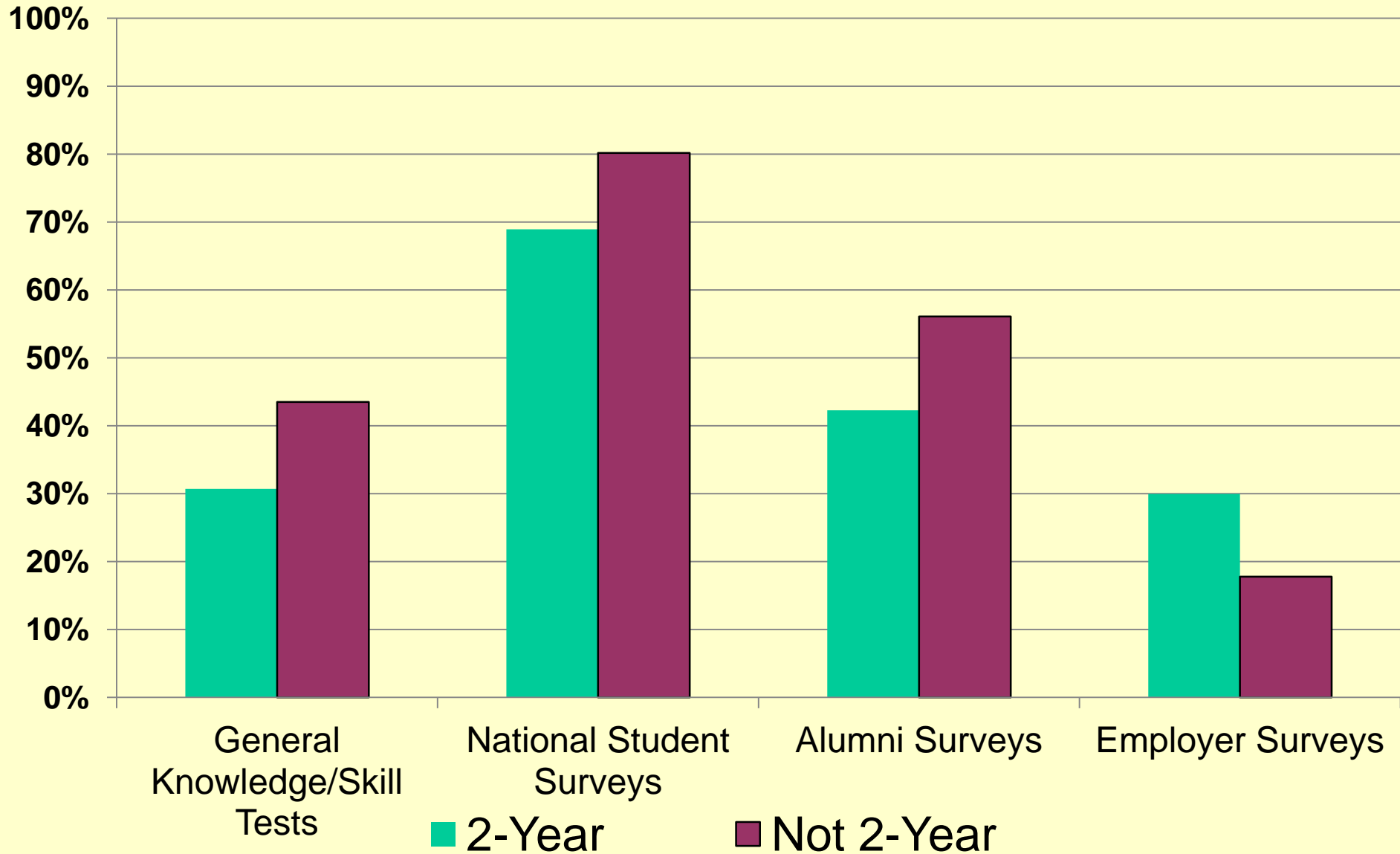
A short article about the value added to a student's education through study abroad programs.

Why Research Universities Must Change

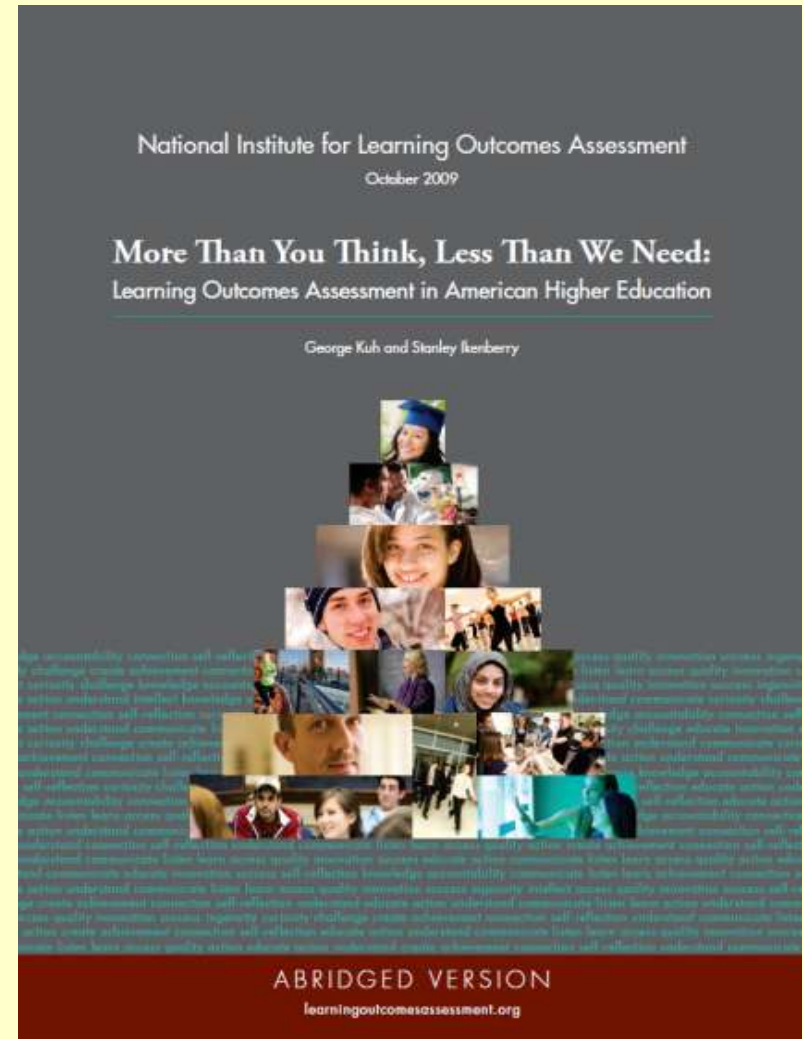
- We asked chief academic officers at every accredited 2 & 4 year US college and university about their campus assessment practices.
- 53% response rate



Use of Different Measures



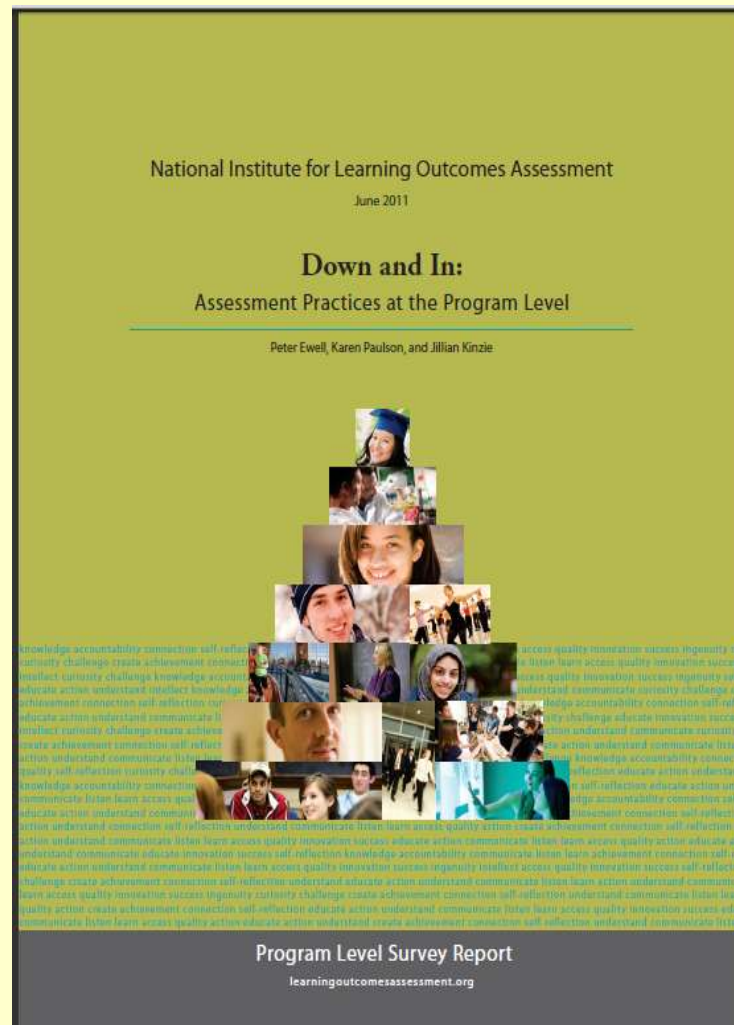
- **QA/Accreditation matters**
- **¾ have common outcomes statements**
- **76% use a national survey; 39% a standardized test (e.g., CLA, CAAP).**
- **Assessment approaches and data use vary**
- **Most conduct assessment “on a shoestring”**
- **More investment and faculty involvement needed**
- **More going on than some think**



Down and In: Assessment Practices at the Program Level

Peter Ewell, Karen Paulson & Jillian Kinzie

To follow up the 2009 (NILOA) report on institutional assessment activity described by chief academic officers, NILOA surveyed program heads in the two and four-year sectors to gain a more complete picture of assessment activity at the program or department level.





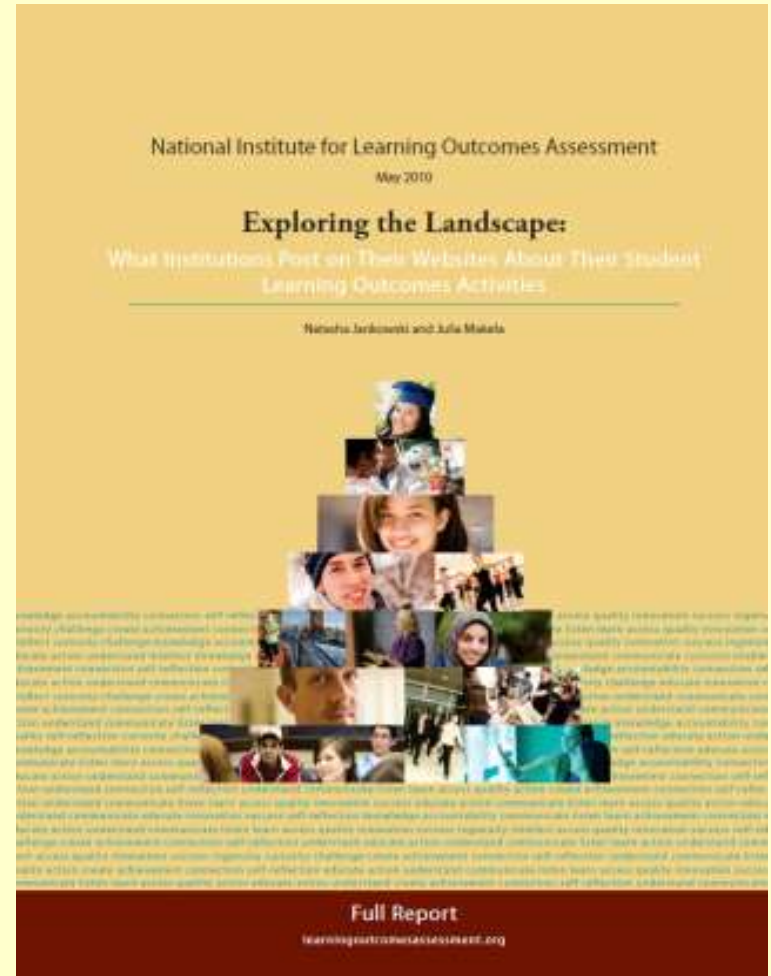
❖ Key Findings

- ✓ Perceptions of CAOs and programs differ
- ✓ Specialized accreditation matters a lot
- ✓ Disciplinary differences matter even more

Exploring the Landscape: What Institutions Post on Their Websites About Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Activities

Natasha Jankowski & Julia Makela

Campuses report doing more assessment than they make accessible on their institutional websites. The typical institution shows only an average of two assessment activities. When information is posted, it is more often intended for internal institutional audiences





Web Scan Guiding Questions




- **What does the institution display on its website regarding student learning outcomes assessment?**
- **On which web pages is information about assessment of student learning outcomes located?**

Show Me the Learning...


- ✓ **Public institutions show more assessment results than private ones.**
- ✓ **Institutions that have recently undergone accreditation/QA review show more assessment information, results, and use.**
- ✓ **Institutions that participate in national initiatives are more likely to show assessment results.**

Templates

✓ *Voluntary System of Accountability* (APLU/AASCU)



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FAQ's

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www.collegeportraits.org

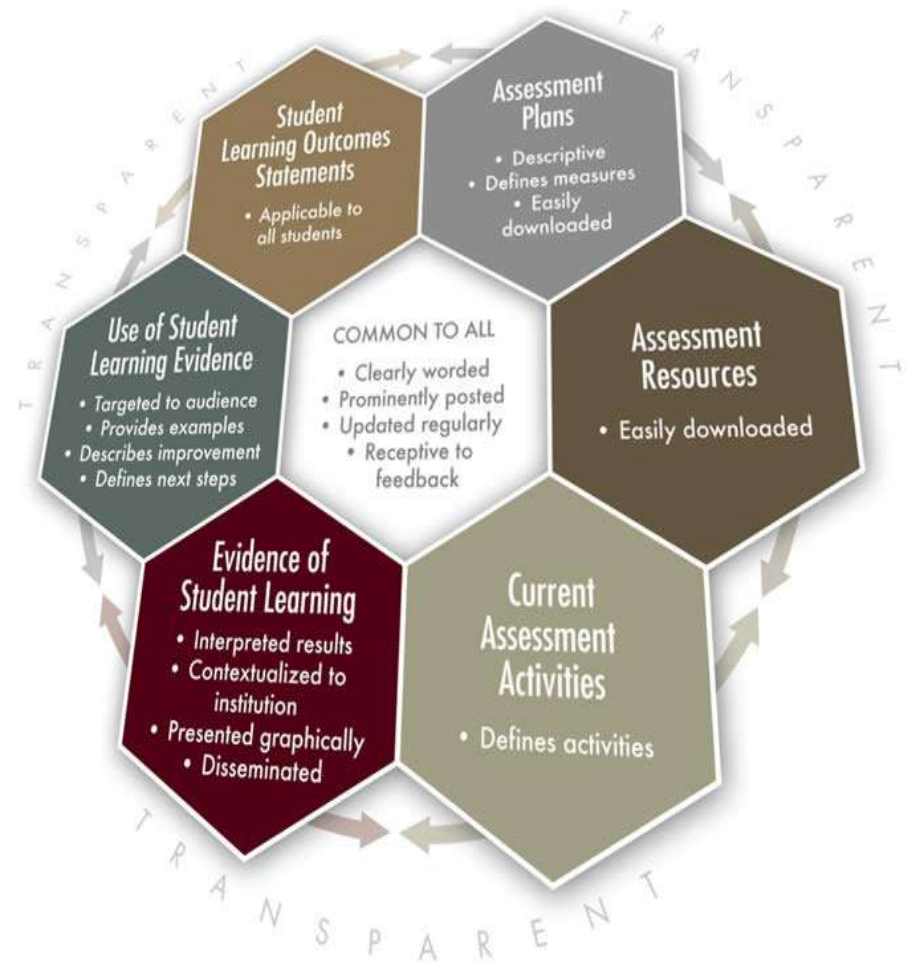
Templates

- ✓ *Voluntary System of Accountability* (APLU/AASCU)
- ✓ ***U-CAN / Building Blocks for 2020*** (NAICU)
- ✓ ***College Navigator*** (NCES)
- ✓ ***Transparency by Design/College Choices for Adults*** (WCET)
- ✓ ***Voluntary Framework of Accountability*** (AACCC)
- ✓ ***Transparency Framework*** (NILOA)

Providing Evidence of Student Learning: A Framework for Transparency

Based on an examination of about 1000 institutional websites, the Transparency Framework provides guidance to institutions for effectively presenting learning outcomes assessment information on their websites.

Transparency Framework





ASSESS
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PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

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2011 Assessment Institute
October 30th- Nov 1st,
2011

IUPUI PUL
Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation / Assessment

Components of Student Learning Assessment



Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC)

<http://planning.iupui.edu/assessment/>

Taking Stock: What's Been Accomplished?

- ✓ **Assessment Seen as Legitimate**
- ✓ **Learning Goals and Outcomes Established**
- ✓ **A “Semi-Profession” for Assessment**
- ✓ **Better Instruments and Methods**

Taking Stock: What Remains to be Done?

- ✓ **Authentic Faculty Ownership**
- ✓ **Assessment Still an “Add-On”**
- ✓ **Use of Information for Improvement is Underdeveloped**
- ✓ **Sincere Institutional Engagement with Accreditors in Assessment**

Moving the Assessment Agenda Forward

- **Reconcile (or at least reduce) the tensions between the accountability and improvement purposes and uses of assessment**

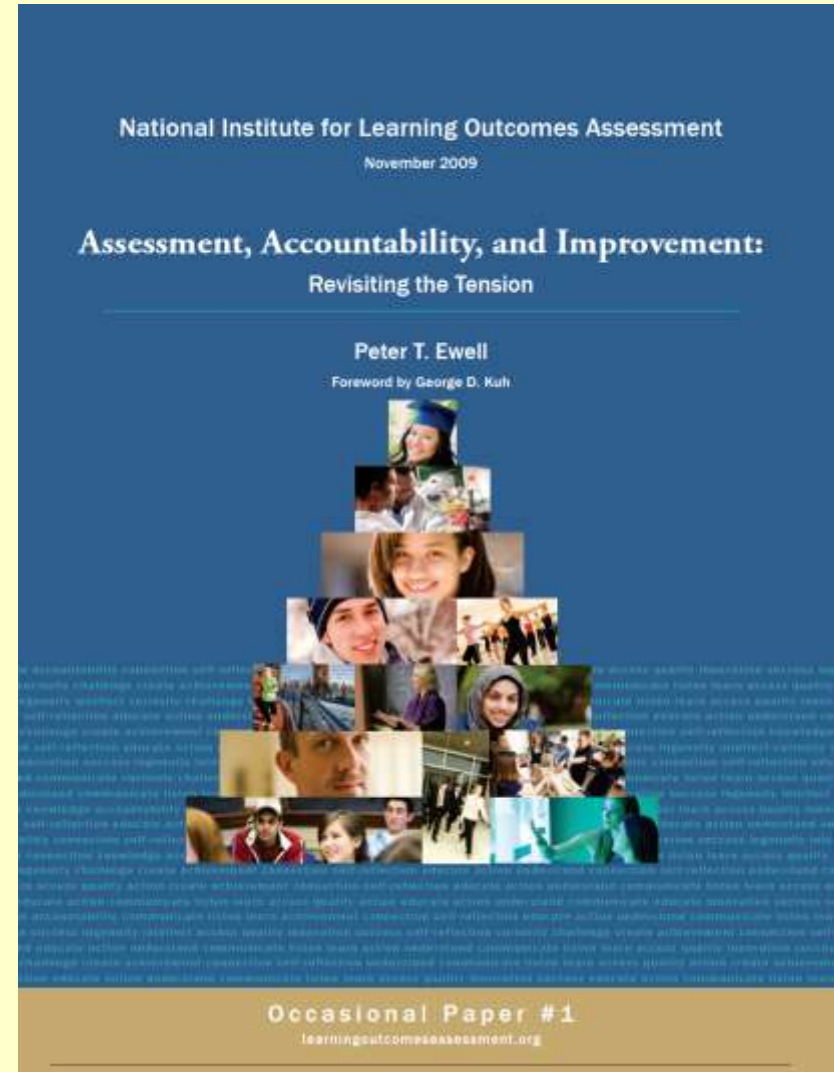


Occasional Paper #1

Assessment, Accountability, and Improvement

Peter T. Ewell

Assessments of what students learn during college are typically used for either improvement or accountability, and occasionally both. Yet, since the early days of the “assessment movement” in the US, these two purposes of outcomes assessment have not rested comfortably together.



Moving the Assessment Agenda Forward

- Reconcile or ameliorate the tensions between the accountability and improvement purposes and uses of assessment
- **Develop assessment approaches sensitive to a wide variety of knowledge, abilities, and dispositions (DQP, alumni studies)**

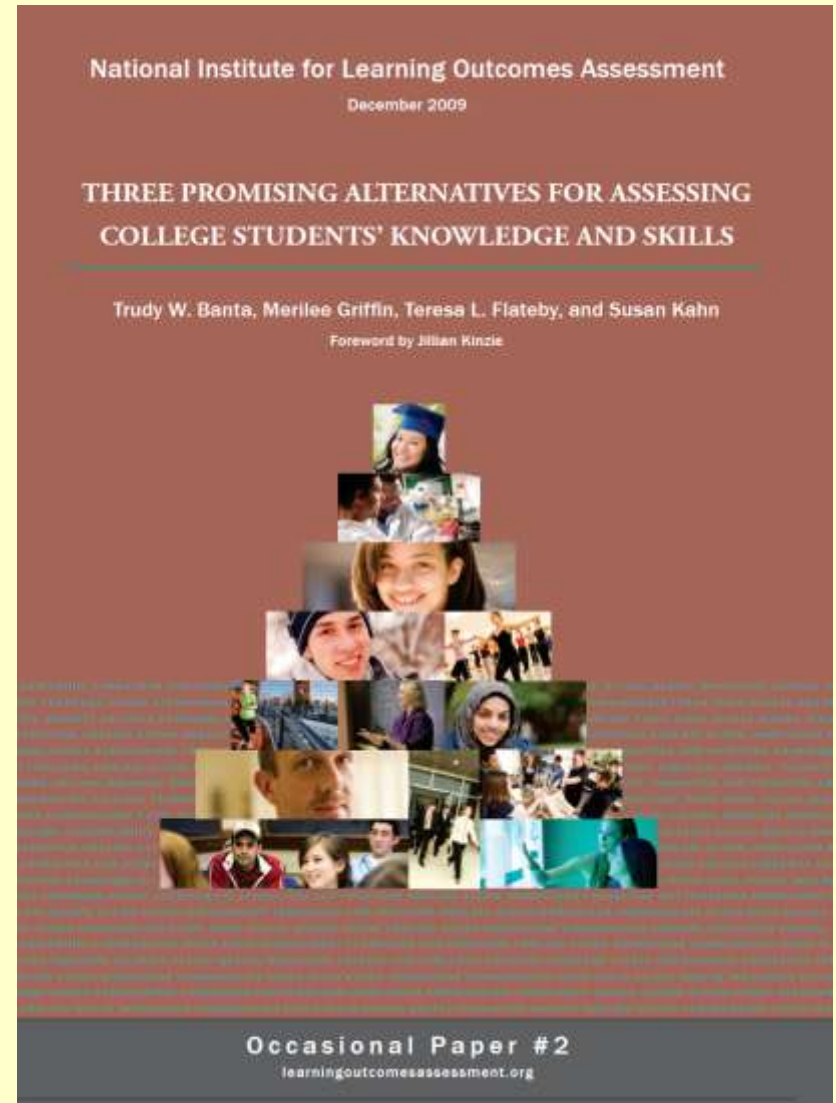


Occasional Paper #2

Three Promising Alternatives for Assessing College Students' Knowledge and Skills

Banta, Griffin, Flateby & Kahn

Of the various ways to assess student learning outcomes, many faculty members prefer what are called “authentic” approaches that document student performance during or at the end of a course or program of study.





Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) Rubrics

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Reading
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Civic knowledge and engagement
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
- Integrative learning



AAC&U VALUE Project – 15 Rubrics



Association
of American
Colleges and
Universities

FALL 2008 VALUE INTEGRATIVE LEARNING METARUBRIC DRAFT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

This rubric is the first step in a rubric development process that will produce additional drafts, each responsive to the feedback received. Feedback deadline is February 15, 2009. The next draft of this rubric will be available in May 2009. For more information or to give feedback, please email Wende Morgaine at wendemm@gmail.com. Thank you!

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a **zero** to any performance that doesn't meet level one performance.

	4	3	2	1
Connections to experience <i>Connects relevant experience & academic knowledge</i>	Shows evidence of combining fields of study and one's own perspective on classroom content as well as life situations to illuminate and deepen one's analysis, synthesis, or interpretation(s).	Demonstrates an understanding of the influence of fields of study with one's own experience outside of the classroom.	Begins to appropriately associate one's own experience outside of the classroom with fields of study.	Demonstrates some understanding of how one's own experience outside of formal classroom relates to fields of study.
Connections to discipline <i>Sees (makes) connections across disciplines, perspectives</i>	Extends and recombines theories/frameworks using examples and facts to deepen analysis of issues or define/solve problems; takes multiple perspectives on a range of issues.	Uses examples, facts, and theories from beyond a field of study, and identifies multiple perspectives.	Includes an example, fact, or theory from outside a field of study; acknowledges the presence or possibility of other perspectives.	Stays within the confines of a discipline in the context of assignments; and articulates one perspective.
Transfer <i>Adapts knowledge, concepts, and/or tools from one discipline to another</i>	Adapts familiar frameworks for new uses.	Synthesizes familiar frameworks into new uses.	Applies familiar frameworks to new situations.	Connects familiar frameworks to new situations.
Communication <i>Balances form and content in communication choices</i>	Within context of portfolio (or artifacts being reviewed), demonstrates clear ability to integrate or synthesize content, medium, and form to skillfully communicate complex learning.	Begins to use medium and form to contribute and respond to content.	Demonstrates of an awareness of how form can contribute and respond to content.	Uses medium and form adequately to convey content.
Identity as Learner <i>Reflects on</i>	In challenging learning situations, articulates one's identity as a learner and contributor to a variety of settings, which may include academic work, campus and civic environments.	Articulates one's identity as a learner, beginning to contribute in environments characterized by ambiguity and risk.	Articulates one's own learning strengths and sets goals for improvement.	Begins to identify one's self as a learner, differentiating appropriately one's self from what one is learning.

Moving the Assessment Agenda Forward

- Reconcile or ameliorate the tensions between the accountability and improvement purposes and uses of assessment
- Develop assessment approaches sensitive to a wide variety of knowledge, abilities, and dispositions (DQP, alumni studies)
- **Experiment with ways to “roll up” program level results into meaningful institution-level profiles of student accomplishment**

Moving the Assessment Agenda Forward

- Develop “next generation templates” that tell the student learning story more fully and effectively

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Recommendations

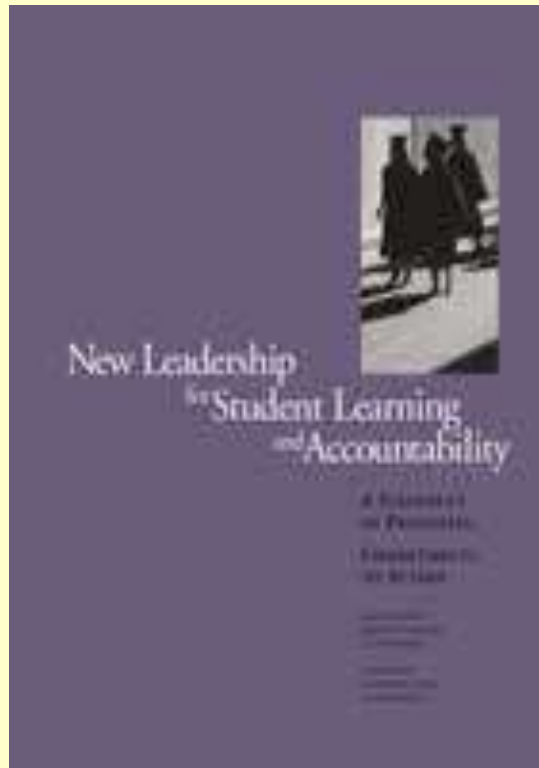
- ✓ Use state-of-the-art communication technologies targeted to specific audiences.
- ✓ Contextualize and frame information around questions of interest to intended audiences.
- ✓ Allow a range of assessment tools and approaches.
- ✓ Implement strategies to draw traffic to the student learning outcome pages.
- ✓ Expect institutions to illustrate how they are using student learning evidence to improve.

Moving the Assessment Agenda Forward

- Develop “next generation templates” that tell the student learning story more fully and effectively
- **Shift the motivation for assessment work from a compliance mentality to one of faculty and institutional responsibility**



new leadership
ALLIANCE 
for student learning and accountability



Moving the Assessment Agenda Forward

- Develop “next generation templates” that tell the student learning story more fully and effectively
- Shift the motivation for assessment work from compliance mentality to institutional responsibility
- **Show how assessment results are being used to modify curriculum and teaching and learning approaches *and* enhance student learning**

Summary: Four Principles

- ✓ **Clear and ambitious goals for student attainment**
- ✓ **Rigorous benchmarked methods**
- ✓ **Use results to improve**
- ✓ **Report evidence publicly**

Goals

- ✓ **Achievement levels set (e.g., Lumina DQP; OUCQA Degree Level Expectations/Outcomes)**
- ✓ **Guide curriculum and pedagogy, not just assessment**
- ✓ **Mapped to curriculum and assignments**
- ✓ **Communicated everywhere**

Rigorous Methods

- ✓ **Clearly articulated assessment plans for all programs**
- ✓ **Multiple methods**
- ✓ **Ongoing, sustainable and integrated into faculty work**
- ✓ **Benchmarked for appropriate comparisons**

Use Results

- ✓ **Collective mechanisms to determine evidence is available**
- ✓ **Close the loop with action**
- ✓ **Continuously monitor impact of changes**

Report Evidence

- ✓ **Multiple channels tailored to on- and off-campus stakeholders**
- ✓ **Meaningful data accessible and easily understood**
- ✓ **Report actions and contexts as well as evidence using effective templates (e.g., NILOA Transparency Framework)**

Do we measure what we value?

or

Do we value what we measure?

Wise decisions are needed about *what* to measure in the context of campus mission, values, and desired outcomes.





Questions & Discussion

