Making Evidence of Student Accomplishment Consequential

George D. Kuh

Assessment Day 3.0: Maximizing Your Impact

University of Buffalo

November 14, 2014
Hard Truths

- Despite decades of assessment work, we have little to show in terms of improved student accomplishment and institutional performance.

- The potential of outcomes assessment to improve teaching and learning continues to be compromised by a culture of compliance that grips most institutions.
Making Assessment Matter
What Is Required to Make Evidence Meaningful and Consequential?

1. To be relevant and actionable, evidence of student accomplishment must have an **anticipated use**. Use of evidence must shape the methodology and set the stage for the eventual consequential impact of results. Anticipated uses of assessment work should be made explicit at the outset of an assessment effort; it may or may not materialize after the fact.
What Is Required to Make Evidence Meaningful and Consequential?

2. Presidents, provosts, and assessment professionals must identify and engage the key end users and partners – the consumers of assessment results. For both end users and partners, the animating impulse is whether the results of outcomes assessment are meaningful and useful to them.
Overview

- A word about NILOA
- Quality assurance: A national perspective
- The needed sea change in collecting and using student learning outcomes data
- Principles for the consequential use of evidence
Advance Organizers

What kind of information about student learning is compelling and useful for:
(a) guiding improvement efforts?
(b) responding to accountability demands?

What must be done to encourage the collection and effective use of evidence of student accomplishment to enhance student learning and institutional performance?
NILOA’s mission is to discover and disseminate effective use of assessment results to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

SURVEYS ● WEB SCANS ● CASE STUDIES ● FOCUS GROUPS ● OCCASIONAL PAPERS ● WEBSITE ● RESOURCES ● NEWSLETTER ● LISTSERV ● PRESENTATIONS ● TRANSPARENCY FRAMEWORK ● FEATURED WEBSITES ● ACCREDITATION RESOURCES ● ASSESSMENT EVENT CALENDAR ● ASSESSMENT NEWS ● MEASURING QUALITY INVENTORY ● POLICY ANALYSIS ● ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN ● DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org
Welcome to NILOA

Community Service Learning and Community-Based Learning as Approaches to Enhancing University Service Learning
Tue, Nov 11, 2014 - 08:00 am
Rhonda Lenton, Robindra Sidhu, Sidak Kaur, et al, for Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario
The study finds that programs that incorporate community service learning strongly engage students and improve learning outcomes, but requires commitment from students, instructors, and administrators. The skills students learn are applicable to their future careers, and the experience was described by students as deeply rewarding.

Lessons Learned on Competency-Based Education
Tue, Nov 11, 2014 - 08:00 am
Inside Higher Ed
Western Governors University (WGU)’s new website serves as a discussion space for its recent collaboration with ten community colleges focused on creating Competency-Based associate degree programs. The new website, CBEInfo, provides information on the development process for these direct assessment programs, and also encourages feedback / contribution from other faculty members and decision-makers.

Empowering Parents and Communities through Quality Public Reporting
Mon, Nov 10, 2014 - 08:00 am
Data Quality Campaign
While focused at various K-12 audiences (e.g. parents, school boards, and policymakers), the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) provides a series of reports with recommendations relevant for higher education on how to provide, find, and make use of education data to improve student learning outcomes.
Quality Assurance 2014

✓ Greater emphasis on student learning outcomes and evidence that student performance measures up
Public Skepticism

The University Has No Clothes

The notion that a college degree is essentially worthless has become one of the year's most fashionable ideas, with two prominent venture capitalists (Cornell '89 and Stanford '89), by the way) leading the charge...

By Daniel B. Smith
PUBLISHED May 1, 2011

The New Yorker

May 28, 2012

Price $9.99

Newsweek

Who Needs College?
Quality Assurance 2013

- Greater emphasis on student learning outcomes and evidence that student performance measures up
- Demands for comparative measures
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)
- Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
Which is a better athletic team, the Dodgers, the Patriots, the Redwings, or the Lakers?

(post on Chronicle of Higher Education, September 16, 2010)
Quality Assurance 2013

✓ 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
Transparency
Templates

✓ Voluntary System of Accountability (APLU/AASCUCU)
✓ U-CAN / Building Blocks for 2020 (NAICU)
✓ College Navigator (NCES)
✓ Transparency by Design/College Choices for Adults (WCET)
✓ Voluntary Framework of Accountability (AACC)
✓ Transparency Framework (NILOA)
Providing Evidence of Student Learning: A Framework for Transparency

Based on an examination of more than 1,000 institutional websites, the Transparency Framework provides guidance to institutions for effectively presenting learning outcomes assessment information on their websites.
Evaluation / Assessment

Components of Student Learning Assessment

- Use of Student Learning Evidence
- Student Learning Outcomes Statements
- Assessment Plans
- Assessment Resources
- Evidence of Student Learning
- Current Assessment Activities

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

IUPUI PUL Evaluation Matrix

Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC)

http://planning.iupui.edu/assessment/
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 all the 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
We need – and are poised for – a “sea change” in what counts as meaningful evidence of student progress and accomplishment.
It’s Time for a Narrative About What Happens in College Based on Authentic Student Learning

We need a campaign led by presidents, provosts, senior faculty, accreditors, and policy makers calling for evidence that all students meet established proficiencies in response to faculty-designed assignments that require students to show they can use and apply what they are learning to concrete situations on and off the campus.
Do we measure what we value?

or

Do we value what we measure?

Wise decisions are needed about what and how to measure the proficiencies demanded by the 21st century.
To Get the Right Kind of Evidence...

- We need assessment approaches sensitive to a wide variety of knowledge, abilities, proficiencies, and dispositions
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
Most Valuable Tools (according to provosts)

The top three…

✓ Classroom-based assessment
✓ National student surveys
✓ Rubrics
Indicators

- **learning outcomes**
- educational attainment (persistence, graduation)
- course retention
- transfer student success
- success in subsequent courses
- degree/certificate completion
- graduate school enrollment
- employment/employer evaluations
- capacity for lifelong learning
General Agreement on Desired Outcomes
“A COLLABORATION AMONG EDUCATORS, STUDENTS, POLICYMAKERS, AND BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS”
Narrow Learning is Not Enough!
The LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World**
  - **Focused** on engagement with big questions, enduring and contemporary

- **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
  - **Practiced** extensively across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

- **Personal and Social Responsibility**
  - **Anchored** through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

- **Integrative Learning**
  - **Demonstrated** through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems
Degree Qualifications Profile

- A learning outcomes profile consistent with LEAP outcomes favored by accreditors and employers
- Proficiency demonstrated through performance
- At 3 degree levels aligned with expectations for the respective degree
- For 5 key “consensus” learning areas
Degree Qualifications Profile

• **Knowledge – both integrated and applied**
  → using Broad/Integrative knowledge
  → demonstrating Specialized knowledge

• **Intellectual Skills**
  → honed and integrated across the curriculum, applied to challenging problems

• **Civic Learning**
  → demonstrated ability to integrate the work of responsible citizenship

• **Applied Learning**
  → demonstrated through assignments involving research, projects, creativity
DQP/Tuning Coaches

➢ To advance and accelerate campus initiatives to enhance student learning, DQP/Tuning Coaches are available to help colleges and universities with their improvement efforts.

➢ DQP/Tuning Coaches will make a one-day campus visit at no cost to the host institution. A coach will be paired with the requesting institution based on a match of interests, intended outcomes and expertise.

▪ Go to www.degreeprofile.org for more information.
And We Need to Ask the Right Kinds of Questions of People Who Want and Can Use the Answers…
Evidence That Matters Begins With Consequential Questions:

- What assignments are used in introductory, advanced, and capstone courses, and what can be learned from them in terms of student performance and pedagogical effectiveness?
- Does the evidence of student learning outcomes align with and confirm our institution’s stated learning goals?
Evidence That Matters Begins With Consequential Questions:

- Are there disparities in academic performance among students from various backgrounds?
- Are our students able to transfer knowledge learned in one course to another in the same discipline and/or in allied disciplines?
- How does student-faculty interaction influence our students’ success and learning outcomes?
The Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle

1. **Plan & Identify Outcomes**
2. **Collect Data**
3. **Analyze Data**
4. **Share Results**
5. **Identify & Implement Changes**
6. **Assess Impact of Change**

The cycle starts with the easiest step (Collect Data) and ends with the hardest step (Assess Impact of Change).
Principles for Consequential Use of Evidence

1. Backward design. That is, begin assessment activity with the end use in mind. What practical questions are of greatest interest to potential partners—faculty, administrators, staff, and intended internal and external end users? How might they use the results? What do partners and end users expect to find?
Principles for Consequential Use of Evidence

2. Identify users of evidence when designing assessments and its anticipated uses at different levels within an institution. What institution-wide or program-level goals and audiences can be influenced by results? Present assessment and the questions it explores in a way that persuades people that the results of the inquiry will have practical value in their work, at their level.
Target of Opportunity

Design assignments that elicit the student behaviors that demonstrate the desired outcomes.

3. Find x.
DQP Assignment Library & Charrettes

➢ To advance efforts to strengthen undergraduate education, NILOA is helping develop an online library of high-quality, peer-reviewed assignments linked to DQP outcomes.

➢ The interactive library will build on and further stimulate institutional efforts already underway,

➢ 40 assignments developed so far by faculty participating in two charrettes.

Go to www.assignmentlibrary.org for more information
What’s a “charrette”?  

"Charrette" (Fr.) means a small cart. Because architecture students once deposited their assignments in it as the cart was rolled through the studio, architects now use the word to refer to an intense creative effort in a limited time period.
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
November 2014

Catalyzing Assignment Design Activity on Your Campus:
Lessons from NILOA's Assignment Library Initiative

Pat Hutchings, Natasha A. Jankowski, & Peter T. Ewell

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org
Principles for Consequential Use of Evidence

3. Leverage the accreditation process for meaningful campus action to improve student learning. Ensure that the campus benefits from all the time and energy that accreditation requires by framing this work as more than an act of compliance—as a process to move the campus toward improvement in learning, teaching, and institutional performance.
Principles for Consequential Use of Evidence

4. Connect assessment work to related current national initiatives and projects. Membership associations, national organizations, foundations, and other collective initiatives provide a broader context in which to embed assessment work, to learn from the work of other institutions, and to increase the impact, legitimacy, and value of assessment results.
Principles for Consequential Use of Evidence

5. Link assessment work to campus functions that require evidence of student learning (e.g., program review, center for teaching & learning). Action and improvement are more likely if (a) assessment work is sustained, not episodic; (b) campus structures and processes are in place to report results, discuss implications, and plan needed action, and (c) key end users and partners are engaged in the process.
Principles for Consequential Use of Evidence

6. Student learning outcomes assessment is a continuous process. Taking evidence-informed action is important, but it also marks the beginning of a new cycle. What was the impact of the change? Did student performance improve? Follow-through and taking time to evaluate the impact of evidence-based change is essential in fostering a culture that supports the meaningful use of assessment results.
Principles for Consequential Use of Evidence

7. The value of assessment work is a function of the extent to which results are used. Are assessment priorities shaped by questions and concerns for student success that anticipate the productive application of results? Is work too often stalled in the data collection stage? Does the sharing-results phase tend to terminate the cycle? Where does the cycle get stuck, why, and what might free it up?
The things we have to learn before we do them, we learn by doing them.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Discussion Questions

- What kind of information about student learning is compelling and useful for:
  (a) guiding improvement efforts?
  (b) responding to accountability demands?

- What must be done to encourage the collection and effective use of evidence of student accomplishment to enhance student learning and institutional performance?