

Why do we Assess?

There are multiple reasons to assess student learning outcomes; however the central function is to improve student learning. In addition, assessment efforts are also driven by an increased demand for accountability of educational institutions.

Improvement: Simply put, the purpose of assessment is improvement of student learning, academic programs, and college processes.

Accountability: Institutions of higher education are under increasing scrutiny from governing bodies and stakeholders to provide evidence of effectiveness.

Accreditation: Assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness is also a key component to all accreditation criteria.

Planning and decision making: Assessment results can be used to improve planning and decision-making processes.



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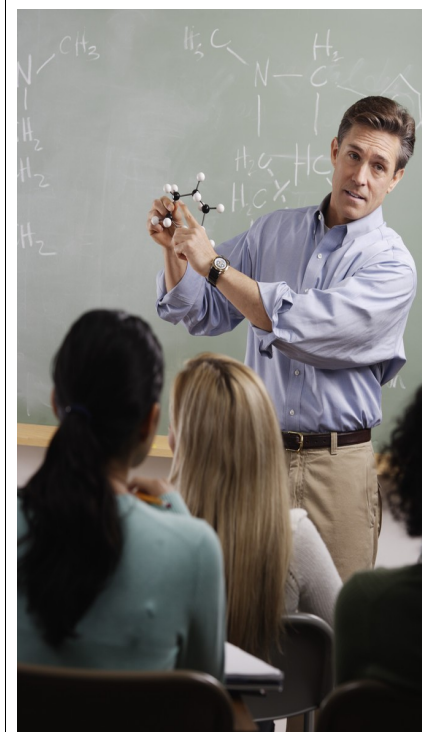
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Making Education
Possible

Assessment of Student Learning



Bluefield State College

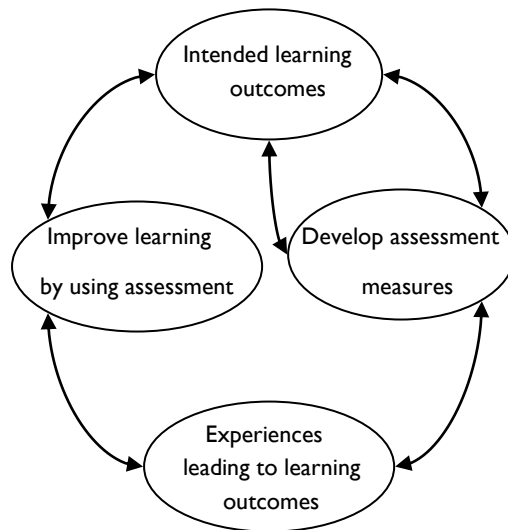
What is Assessment?



Assessment is the systematic gathering and discussing of a variety of information from students' educational experiences in order to gain a fuller understanding of

what students know, understand and can do with the knowledge they have gained. The assessment process must be student centered and take place at all levels within the institution (i.e., institutional, program, and course).

The Assessment Process



Higher Learning Commission's View of Assessment

The Commission posited in October 1989 that assessment of student academic achievement is an essential component of every organization's effort to evaluate overall effectiveness. The experience of the past fourteen years has demonstrated that it is key to improving student learning. Assessment of student academic achievement is fundamental for all organizations that place student learning at the center of their educational endeavors (see Section 3.4-2 of the HLC Handbook of Accreditation for full statement).

9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use an illuminates questions that people really care about.
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions.
9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

REMEMBER



Assessment IS...

- an attempt to understand what students are or are not learning,
- an opportunity to provide feedback to reinforce student learning,
- a method to investigate and improve teaching strategies, in order to improve student learning.



Assessment is NOT....

- solely an administrative activity,
- a means of punishment (it is for improvement!),
- an intrusion into a faculty member's classroom or an infringement on academic freedom.

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