Moving Towards a Learning System: Implications of Assessment for Learning

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NILOA

NILOA’s mission is to discover and disseminate effective use of assessment data to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

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Assessment Cube of Misunderstandings

- Definitions
- Levels
- Uses
- Purposes
Added Layers

Behind each side of the cube there are:

1. Theories about how students learn
2. Beliefs around what can be assessed
3. The “best” or “proper” means to assess student learning
4. How to warrant arguments about what students know and can do as a result of education

All with no agreements, leading to disputes built around unclear assumptions that impact practice with people dismissing other sides
CURRENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
The Learning Systems Paradigm

The Learning Systems Paradigm changes the way we conceptualize the organization of the institution, how we work within that organization, and whom we involve in that work. It encourages:

- Working collaboratively across typical divisions
- Intentionally aligning learning experiences
- Addressing needs of the institution's particular students
- Building transparency for all participants and stakeholders
Consensus-based

Through faculty-led conversations, reflections, and explorations with employers, alumni, and others, a shared understanding and consensus is reached on learning outcomes. This shared understanding serves as the foundation for revising outcomes for enhanced clarity and designing educational experiences.
Alignment

Using the agreed upon learning outcomes, faculty and staff align educational experiences throughout the institution for intentional integration, coherence, and fostering of multiple pathways. Alignment involves curriculum mapping, scaffolding, assignment design, mapping of career pathways, and co-curricular engagement.
Learner-Centered

The educational system reorganizes educational experiences around *all* students and their learning. Taking a student view includes consideration of issues of equity, learning-focused transfer, alternative delivery models, flexibility in offerings, integration of prior-learning assessment, ensuring stackable credentials, and building multiple pathways.
Communication and collaboration with students and other audiences through transparent discussions around the outcomes and educational system works to make the implicit explicit. Communication involves exploration and integration with advising, alternative transcripts, admissions, and employers.
Implications

In addition to the implications that are organizational and systematic, such as altering promotion and tenure review policies, we offer a few implications to consider for assessment.

Positions assessment for learning as an integral part of the entire educational experience

Focuses on the coherence of curricula as interlocking learning experiences, allowing developmental movement of learners across modules at programme level, therefore assessment at programme level

Builds learning overtime by integrating feed forward approaches across modules

Supports co-creation of learning experiences with students, enhancing cultural responsiveness of assessment

Supports cross institutional engagement in broad stakeholder conversations around collaborative support of learning over time
US Initiatives

A variety of initiatives in the US have demonstrated the productive possibility for working within a learning systems paradigm.

Degree Frameworks (Degree Qualifications Framework and those produced in Tuning)

Liberal Education & Americas Promise essential learning outcomes

Valid Assessment of Liberal in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) Rubrics

Educational Pathway Projects

Employer/Innovation Challenges
Discussion

Thank you!

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Three Schools of Thought

Measurement

Compliance

Student-centered Learning