

History of Learning Assessment



Historical Methods of Learning Assessment

19th Century

- Bachelor's degree students had show what they had learned.
 - Often conducted orally in senior declamations
 - The results of learning were expected to be demonstrated to be considered educated. Successful students earned a degree

Late 1800's

- Enrollment in Undergraduate education increased
 - A degree became more of a completion of courses vs overall knowledge in an area (Wehlburg, 2010).



Historical Methods of Learning Assessment

1935 study showed 252 colleges required graduates to complete a comprehensive exam (Hutchings and Marchese, 1990).

- As access to higher education and enrollments increased, colleges requiring a comprehensive exam decreased (Wehlburg, 2010).



Historical Methods of Learning Assessment

Mid 20th Century

Scholars such as Chickering (1969), Astin (1977), and Pascarella and Terenzi (1991) researched student learning allowing “those in higher education to understand better the results of a long-term, value-added approach to studying student learning” (Wehlburg, 2010).

1960's

Interest in quantitative data grew



Four Eras of Assessment of Student Learning

The assessment of college learning evolved through four eras:

1. the origin of standardized tests of learning: 1900–1933;
2. the assessment of learning for general and graduate education: 1933–47;
3. the rise of test providers: 1948–78;
4. the era of external accountability: 1979–present (Shavelson, R. 2007).



History of Accreditation

- Founded in 1890's
 - Due to rapid increases in the numbers and types of higher education institutions created.
 - Initial focus to deem institutions trustworthy and of quality
 - 1950's regional accrediting bodies formed similar to what is in use now.
 - Originally more quantitative to current qualitative and mission centered



Assessment and Accreditation

There has been a greater focus on Accreditation and Assessment over the past few decades.

- It can be perceived that this focus has reduced the emphasis on teaching and learning.
- Accreditation may be important, but learning needs to matter most.
- Without accreditation, the assessment movement would not be where it is today.
- Accreditation provided the opportunity for institutions to take to critically view learning outcomes and how to measure to use results for improvement.



Why We Assess

- Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning— Benjamin Franklin
- *We don't assess to prove... but to improve*-D. Stufflebeam
- We can't get better if we don't measure-George Watson, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Delaware.
- Assessment is thinking about what you're doing and doing it better- Colorado College Professor.
- Steven Colbert's view: <http://www.cc.com/video-clips/kiwt0s/the-colbert-report-bill-gates> (Start at 2 minutes 10 seconds) (Copy and Paste)



References

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Chickering, A. W. *Education and Identity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969.

Hutchings, P., and Marchese, T. "Watching Assessment: Questions, Stories, Prospects." *Change*, 1990, 22, 12–38.

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