



Assessment: A Primer

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Assessment

Assessment is the ongoing process of:

Establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning

Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes

Systematically gather, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches our expectations.

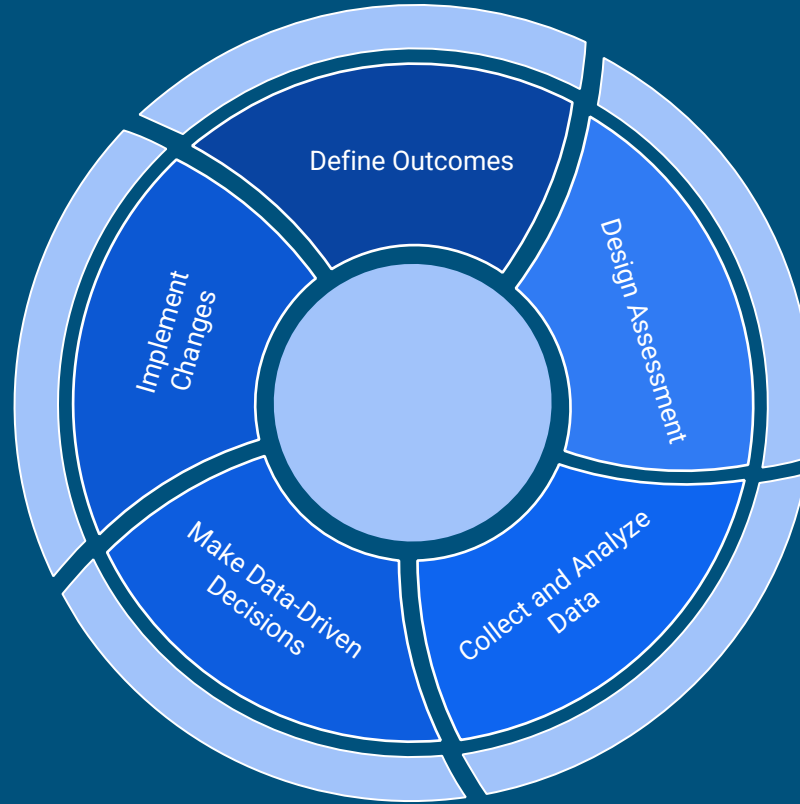
Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning

What Assessment is *NOT*

1. It is not grading
2. It is not program evaluation
3. It is not teacher evaluation

Typical Assessment Cycle

1. Define Outcomes- (SLOs) What do faculty think students should be able to know or do as a result of a unit of study?
2. Design Assessment- How will student attainment of the skills, attributes or abilities be measured?
3. Collect and Analyze Data- At the end of the unit of study, implement the assessment, gather the data, aggregate the data and analyze the data.



4. Make Data-Driven Decisions - Discuss the findings from the data. Make decisions about improving student learning.
5. Implement Changes - Close the loop. Institute the recommended changes and reassess.

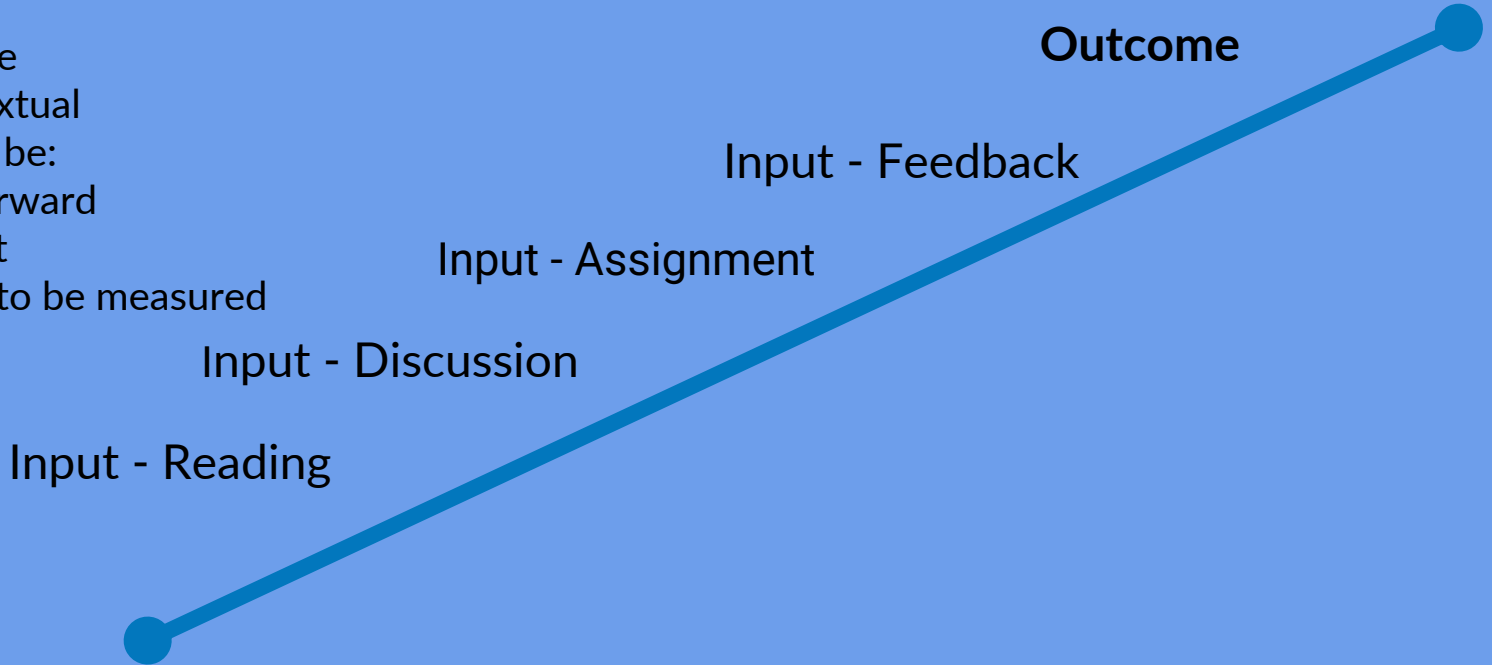
If Learning Were Linear

Teaching would be:

1. Easier
2. Predictable
3. Noncontextual

Learning would be:

1. Straightforward
2. Consistent
3. Not need to be measured



But Learning is Not Linear

Learning is

1. Messy
2. Contextual
3. Complicated
4. Inconsistent
5. Hard to Predict
6. Unique to the learner

Input - Experience

Input - Opportunities

Input - Culture

Input - Reading

Input - Discussion

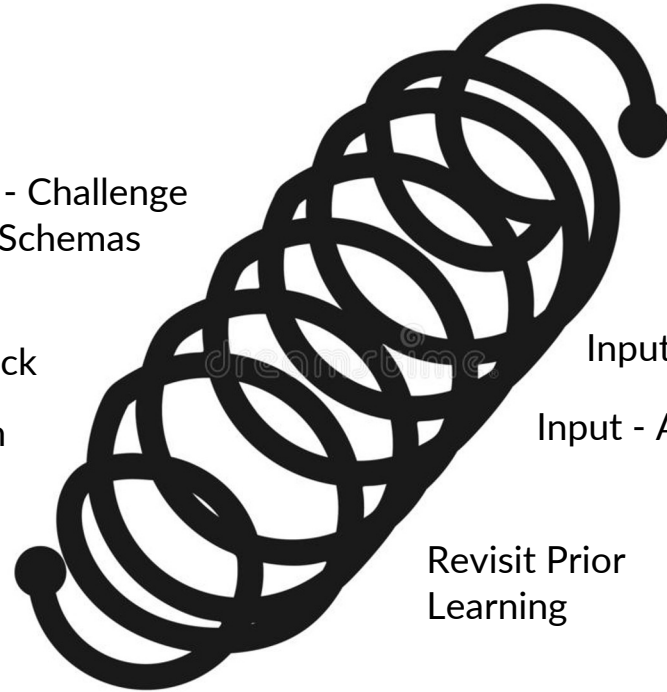
Input - Feedback

Input - Challenge
Prior Schemas

Input - Challenge
Prior Schemas

Input - Feedback
Input - Assignment

Revisit Prior
Learning



There are so many ways to assess student learning.

Begin with a question.

What do you want to know?

Why do you want to know it?

How are you going to find out?

What are you going to do about it?

1. CATS (Classroom assessment techniques)*
 - a. The muddiest point
 - b. Surveys
 - c. Concept Maps
2. Course Assignments
 - a. Papers
 - b. Projects
 - c. Oral Presentations
3. Exams
4. Portfolios
5. Observations
6. Standardized Tests



*Thomas and Cross 1993

Examples of Assessment

You have been discussing the Treaty of Versailles in your history course. You want to know that the students are understanding the implications the Treaty had on Germany.

Assessment:

You end the discussion a few minutes early and ask all of the students to write *in their own words* how they think the Treaty of Versailles affected Germany.

You spent the last half of the semester teaching students about resume building strategies. You have presented several examples of strong and weak resumes for students to dissect. You want to know if students are able to construct a strong resume on their own as a result of this.

Assessment:

As a final project, students are expected to submit a final, professional copy of their new resume.

Examples of Assessment (cont.)

Students who take Chemistry 101 must be able to apply the foundational concepts taught in the course in order to take Chemistry 102.

Assessment:

Students take a standardized Chemistry 101 exam to ascertain their ability to apply the foundational concepts taught in Chemistry 101 in order to register for Chemistry 102.

The college where you work expects that all students, regardless of program or major, should be able to collect, organize and analyze data effectively.

Assessment:

Every 6 six years as a part of an college-wide assessment cycle, students participate in an assessment that asks them to read a case study, collect the data provided, organize and effectively analyze it.

How Does Assessment Support Learning?

1. Assessment often provides data that supports what we know anecdotally.
2. Assessment results give us a foundation from which to make effective changes in teaching.
3. Assessment gives us a shared language in which to communicate about student learning needs and teaching practices.
4. Assessment allows faculty to make important programmatic decisions.
5. Assessment asks us to systematically look at learning as a regular part of our teaching practice.
6. Assessment provides multiple ways for students to show us what they know and are able to do.

Questions

The Assessment Committee will be meeting on Thursdays at 2PM this fall. If you would like to get involved, please contact me at jasimow@ccc.edu