

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

ASSESSMENT UPDATES

September 2008 Newsletter

Where Rocky Balboa Meets Assessment

Lee S. Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, wrote an interesting recent article on the potential for collision between coaching and testing. He suggests that the coach provides five processes for change for those they mentor:

- 1) technique, learned through endless drills;
- 2) strategy, that allows the person who is coached to become capable of a conception of the work that will turn out to be pivotal in their eventual victory;
- 3) motivation, which produces a "Rocky-like" level of commitment that will help them exceed their own and others' expectations;
- 4) vision, where players come together in a new vision of the process and their capabilities for success; and
- 5) identity, whereby the protagonist not only wins, but is transformed, with an internalized new sense of self.

The effect of such coaching may meaningfully impact the outcome of any measured performance. In contrast, psychometric analysis, Shulman argues, is focused on identifying the "true score" which reflects the "underlying 'true' capability," that is identified through individual, unmediated, assessment. Such scores in higher education, like the ACT or SAT, measure inputs rather than outcomes.

Please remember to submit your 2007/08 Department Assessment if you have not already done so.

Need more information on assessment?
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Shulman posits that much of what we meaningfully measure in higher education is mediated by coaching/teaching that alters the performance in important ways. He suggests that "a composition written in the presence of [an] editing team [may] be a better indicator of future writing competence" than an essay written without the mediation that the editing provides. In fact, most of our assessment in higher education is intended to measure the "value added" by the mediation, rather than simply the underlying capability.

To get additional information on "value-added" assessment, consider the following links:

Defining Learning Outcomes
<http://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/caa/assessment/resources/toolkit.shtml>

Domains of Student Learning
<http://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/caa/assessment/resources/toolkit.shtml>

Steps of Assessing in the Classroom
<http://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/caa/assessment/resources/toolkit.shtml>

