

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

ASSESSMENT UPDATES

June 2008 Newsletter

Assessment for Learning Versus Assessment for Success



Big thanks to those departments who submitted their 2007/08 Program Assessments!

In a recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, Stanley Katz draws a number of interesting conclusions about what can and should be assessed in higher education. He takes issue with the recent statement issued by the Council on Higher Education Assessment and the Association of American Colleges and Universities that urges that evidence should be gathered “about how well various programs are achieving learning goals across the curriculum and about the ability of [the institution’s] graduates to succeed in a challenging and rapidly changing world.” While Katz concurs with the notion that learning must be measured, he demurs when it comes to measuring success, which he believes places emphasis on income and social status, rather than achieving learning goals.

Katz urges that appropriate assessment must first define as a “general or liberal education” a process that he suggests will require “massive reimagination.” Lest such a task seem unduly daunting, he acknowledges that as an “incrementalist and a pragmatist,” the task involves improvement, rather than perfection. He concludes that, “We need to create the norms and benchmarks that will not only help institutions to help themselves improve learning but also enable higher education to move

ahead nationally to improve the quality of undergraduate education, and even, with a lot of luck, to reconceive our goals.”

For more information on the discussion of what we ought to assess and why, please visit the following web-sites:

[Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning](#)

[What is “Good” Assessment? A Synthesis of Principles of Good Practice](#)

[VALUE: Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education](#)

[AACU’s resources on Liberal Education](#)



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