

## Principles of Good Practice in Assessment

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
  - Assessment is successful when it is based on the institution's educational values.
  - Assessment is successful when it is used as vehicle for educational improvement.
  - Assessment starts with the institution's mission statement.
  
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, dynamic, and vital to the learning experience.
  - Effective assessment measures not only the breadth and depth of the learning experience, but also the imaginative, creative, and energizing aspects of the learning experience.
  - Learning can be measured in three ways: core content (traditional facts and learning), integrative learning (knowledge and processing skills), and attitudes and dispositions ("good citizen" attributes).
  - Effective assessment considers the reliability and validity of its measures.
  
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicit purposes.
  - The values and mission of an institution must be translated into meaningful and specific goals.
  - You must create or define measurable objectives or goals.
  
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes and to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
  - Assessment is concerned with outcomes.
  - Assessment also measures the teaching and learning process that leads to educational objectives.
  
6. Assessment works best when it is ongoing.
  - Successful assessment is an iterative process.
  - Assessment is powerful when it is considered part of institutional culture.
  - Assessment should be embedded in the program planning.

Excerpts from *Assessment in Practice Putting Principles to Work on College Campuses*, Trudy W. Banta, Jon P. Lund, Karen E. Black, and Frances W. Oblander, 1996.

7. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.

- Successful assessment is collaborative: it is not housed in one department, instead it is part of the curriculum and faculty development process.
- Having diverse participants does not guarantee success, but it does ensure all groups have “a voice.”
- Assessment is an active process of critiquing and improving educational performance.

8. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.

- The challenge is not only to collect data, but also to make meaningful connections to the data!
- Data should not sit on the shelf; it must be used to make good decisions to meet educational goals.

9. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.

- Institutions must view the information from assessment as vital to decision making.
- Assessment focuses on the what, improvement focuses on the what-you-do-with-it.

10. Assessment is most effective when undertaken in an environment that is receptive, supportive, and enabling. Assessment requires an environment comprised of:

- Effective leadership
- Administrative commitment
- Adequate resources
- Faculty and staff development opportunities
- Time.

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