

Program Review and Assessment Committee

Thursday, May 9, 2019, 1:30-3:00 pm, AD 1006

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: L. Bozeman, N. Brown, L. Easterling, S. Graunke, T. Hahn, M. Hansen, W. Helling, S. Hundley, C. Kacius, S. Kahn, C. Keith, M. Kolb, J. Lee, S. Lowe, C. Marsiglio, D. Meester, T. Morris (IUPC), H. Mzmar, , K. Norris, A. Strakeljahn, C. Walcott, S. Weeden

1. Welcome, Review & Approval of Minutes (5 minutes)
2. Information Literacy Study – Sara Lowe, Educational Development Librarian, IUPUI University Library; and Steve Graunke, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment (20 minutes)
3. PRAC Assessment Reports Subcommittee – Susan Kahn, Director of Planning and Institutional Improvement Initiatives, and members of the subcommittee (20 minutes)
4. HLC Annual Meeting Debrief – HLC meeting attendees (10 minutes)
5. Meta-Trends in Assessment Discussion (PRE-READING) – Jeff Barbee, Assessment and Evaluation Specialist in the School of Medicine; Stephen Hundley, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor; and Susan Kahn, Director of Planning and Institutional Improvement Initiatives (30 minutes)
6. Discussion – recommended topics and presenters for next year (5 minutes)
7. Announcements and Adjournment

1. Welcome, Review and Approval of Minutes

- a. K. Norris called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.
- b. Motion made, seconded, and approved to approve the April 2019 minutes.

Kristin introduced our first speakers. Sara Lowe and Steve Graunke

2. Information Literacy Study – Sara Lowe, Educational Development Librarian, IUPUI University Library; and Steve Graunke, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment (IRDS)

Sara: This was a large assessment project at the Library to examine information literacy. Steve and IRDS conducted the data analysis. Information literacy (IL) is the set of competencies needed to find, use, and evaluate information effectively and ethically.

What do teaching librarians do?

- Scaffold IL through curriculum from first-year to capstone/graduate.
- Collaborate with faculty in assignment design re: information literacy.
- Library instruction sessions to support course projects, paper, etc.
- 1-1 student research consultations

Why should we care about IL?

1. IL competencies increase student success while in school.
 - Students are overwhelmed when starting research assignments.
2. Employers seek new hires with these skills.
 - Few feel students are well prepared in this area.
 - Recent college hires have a tendency to look for quick answers and lack the ability to dig deeply into research and critically analyze information.

Good IL quote on Twitter by Megan Donnelly: “Information literacy is a privileged skill. It’s not something consistently taught or credit bearing in the curriculum but yet it is an explicit requirement on most campuses.”

Thanks to Kristi Sheeler and colleagues for adding the IL learning outcome to the Profiles.

Project Overview

They did not have a baseline of where students were with their IL competencies

Study Research Questions

- 1) Is there a correlation between NSSE IL Survey responses and IL rubric scores?
- 2) Are there any indicators that correlate to IL performance in first-year students? (e.g., librarian in the classroom, high school, first-gen student, etc.)

The study employed used mixed methods:

Survey: NSSE IL module
First-year (n=473)
Upper-level/capstone classes (n=64)

Rubric: AAC&U Value Rubric
First-year (n=707)
Upper-level/capstone (n=65) papers
Readers (n=22)

Steve Graunke: The students were assigned different writing assignments that were then assessed by experts using the information literacy rubric.

Results scored with IL Rubric

Did students improve in their IL over time? It was expected that students will do better as they reach their upper level courses.

Imbedded Librarian in class or not. Who scored better? Those with the librarian scored a little higher. Controlling for high school GPA, SAT Score, first gen, and Pell grant, the difference is significant. There is something to be said for having librarians imbedded in these courses.

NSSE indirect results

Students reported that they were engaging in information literacy. The first-year was higher.

Kristin: What have been the implications? How are you using it?

Sara: We found the results we wanted. Kudos to the faculty members who brought in the librarian to their course. I would like to have departments recognize the importance of these skills (finding and evaluating information) for their students.

Susan: We are living in a time where information literacy is incredibly important.

Marcus: He wants Ivy Tech students to be able to look at some piece of media and be able to interpret it properly.

Sara: Look at a piece of information and determine how I am going to use this.

Susan: We are bombarded with information. We need to be able to make judgements about the credibility of sources.

Steve: I would like to get this in front of the FYS and TLC folks on campus

Sara: NSSE folks are working on a revision of the IL module.

3. PRAC Assessment Reports Subcommittee – Susan Kahn, Director of Planning and Institutional Improvement Initiatives, and members of the subcommittee

Susan: She and Karen Alfrey co-chaired the subcommittee.

The committee had a different charge this year. It's the PRAC reporting and recognition committee. It was hard to get everyone together at one time. The purpose of the PRAC report is to demonstrate that academic and co-curricular units are engaging in systematic assessment of student learning. For the last 10 years, this unit has given feedback to units on their PRAC reports.

We will get our feedback next week. They use a rubric to provide feedback.

Overall, the review process has seemed to help improve the reports. Much better than they were back in 2010. The quality has tended to flatten out.

Highlights of debriefing discussions: We saw a number of reports with weak links between learning outcomes and assessment measures.

Karen: The way we have constructed our assessment process may be ripe for reconsidering. There may be other, valid ways to get information on how to improve programs that does not come from direct measures of learning. The guidelines as written grew out of efforts to educate faculty across campus on how to assess a learning outcome.

Susan: Confusion among grading and assessment. Should we put more emphasis on formative assessment? Maybe guidelines should put more emphasis on continuous improvements. Are we expecting too much from a process that is designed to assess that all can't be measured.

Karen: On the subject of general education assessment, she chatted with Jay Gladden. The time is right to be thinking about this,

Susan: The other part of their charge was to consider whether to have an excellence in assessment designation --for both a unit and an individual. The committee recommended that we take a broad view of assessment excellence. Recognition will be based on annual PRAC reports. This has yet to be implemented. Recognitions designed to show that progress in Assessment matter. Stephen has offered \$2,500 to a department/program and \$1,500 to a person.

Next fall there will be a lot of work to do to pull this together. The May 2020 meeting would be a celebration of assessment excellence.

Karen: The committee looked at other campuses excellence in assessment designations.

4. HLC Annual Meeting Debrief – HLC meeting attendees

Susan: I went for peer review retraining and the pathways workshop. My biggest takeover was from the peer review training. I think that the HLC is a bit overwhelmed by the new federal

requirements by regional accreditors. As many of you know, they have instituted a four-year checkup. We also now have to propose and carryout a quality improvement initiative.

In 2012, there was a lot of emphasis on letting the campus know what was going on. It was a fear-inducing presentation of the accreditation process.

We are still required to do a self-study. She does not have the sense that it will not be an all-consuming process. The role is not to catch campuses. It used to be that campuses got dinged on assessment frequently. Because there is now this mid-cycle assurance report, odds of getting dinged are decreased. We are in good shape.

The report you do as a peer reviewer is very evidenced based.

In pathways workshop she heard nothing that she has not heard before.

Caleb: A lot of the general session were focused on the revision to the criteria. Another big push was talking about their focus on defining student success.

5. Meta-Trends in Assessment Discussion (PRE-READING) – Jeff Barbee, Assessment and Evaluation Specialist in the School of Medicine; Stephen Hundley, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor; and Susan Kahn, Director of Planning and Institutional Improvement Initiatives

Stephen: We have a book coming out at the 2019 Assessment Institute; 46 people contributed to this book, including many members of PRAC.

Each chapter ends with a summary of major trends.

The final chapter pulls together all of that information. Every attendee will receive a copy of the book as part of their registration to the 2019 Assessment Institute.

Susan: The last chapter is on meta-trends. We tried to pull out the themes we saw occurring throughout the book. It is important that we having something to say and not repeat the same bromides from the late 1980s and early 90s. We talked about engaging more stakeholders, as well as inclusivity and equity.

We often use assessment synonymously with learning outcomes assessment. Perhaps we should not do this. We need to broaden our perspective and consider the new science on learning.

How can we find out more about the student experience and how and when learning occurs? Where they end up does not tell us why they end up there. Assessment remains a work in progress. It took 7 months to get this book written.

Stephen: We will merge items 5 and 6 of the agenda (Discussion of Meta Trends. What are PRACs reactions to the trends?

Kristin: Regarding topic # 3 in the chapter, interested in where assessment is housed at institutions.

Stephen: External ranking is not indicative of the quality.

We have a leadership crisis for assessment and improvement. We should talk about student learning more often than “we” do (senior leadership, etc.)

Marcus: We’ve done a good job of collecting, but not a good job of delivering on the revelatory change we argued that assessment would bring about.

Stephen: Please email him any thoughts on the chapter as well as items for discussion for PRAC next year.

Kristin: Scott Weeden’s story in his PRAC report was good.

Scott: If you create processes for people involved in student learning, you actually begin to generate interest. What have we learned from the PRAC report? Actions based on what the assessment is showing us. Reluctance can give way to genuine interest.

Susan: Another theme we saw throughout the book are the kinds of people we are producing in our education programs. Faculty often see assessment as reductionist. How can we look at learning in a learning and flexible way?

The meeting adjourned at 3:07pm.

Meta-Trends in Assessment: Perspectives, Analyses, and Future Directions¹

Stephen P. Hundley, Susan Kahn, Jeffery Barbee, and Partners of the Assessment Institute

INTRODUCTION

The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis is now the nation's oldest and largest event of its type, as many readers of this volume know. Over the years, we have developed partnerships with professional associations and research organizations devoted to the study, practice, and advancement of learning, assessment, and improvement in higher education. Each year, the Institute program is enriched by the intellectual contributions made by these valued partners, some of which appear in earlier chapters of this volume—the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) in Chapter 2, Indiana Campus Compact in Chapter 5, and the Center for Assessment & Research Studies (CARS) in Chapter 11. For this closing chapter, we asked leaders from the following additional Institute partners to summarize the major trends in assessment they foresee in the next three to five years, and to discuss how their organizations are preparing to address these trends:

- Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE)
- Association for Authentic, Experiential, and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL)
- Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS)
- Association for Institutional Research (AIR)
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
- Center for Postsecondary Research (CPR)/National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS)

¹ This draft chapter is excerpted from the forthcoming *Trends in Assessment: Ideas, Opportunities, and Issues for Higher Education*. Edited by Stephen P. Hundley and Susan Kahn. Stylus Publishing, LLC; release: October 2019.

This chapter presents the contributions from these partners. The chapter concludes with our synthesis of the larger meta-trends that recur throughout this volume, as well as in other current assessment scholarship.

A FUTURE FOR ASSESSMENT: TEAMS, INQUIRY, AND SUPPORT

Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE)

Monica Stitt-Bergh, Jane Marie Souza, and Jeremy Penn

AALHE provides resources and a forum to support assessment practitioners' professional development. Since 2009, the AALHE and its members have learned about and shared ways to benefit students, programs, and higher education institutions using the tools and processes of learning outcomes assessment. The seeds we see planted now, and expect to grow in the next several years, include a team approach to assessment, a culture of inquiry (research) for program- and institution-level learning outcomes assessment, and a stronger connection between assessment and student success in learning.

It Takes a Village

Past assessment literature emphasized the importance of institution leaders' commitment to assessment. Now we are beginning to recognize that assessment requires teamwork to engender student learning improvement and transform institutions into learning organizations. At a minimum, assessment teams need faculty and others with expertise in learning assessment and educational development/instructional design. Also important to teams are students, faculty and staff in co-curricular programs, institutional researchers, and advisers, along with institutional leaders. To support team approaches, AALHE and its members have increased efforts to connect

with other professional organizations in higher education like the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, the Association for Institutional Research, the POD Network, and others. In addition, technology providers can and should be more than business partners; as team members, we can collaborate with them on effective and efficient ways to capture learning evidence and present information.

Inquiry (Research) on Learning Outcomes Assessment

Initially, outcomes assessment efforts focused on implementation in programs and institutions. Now that the field has developed, inquiry about assessment is growing. Researchers are testing theoretical approaches and analyzing what works for whom, for example. The platforms for distributing knowledge about learning outcomes assessment will both continue to increase and allow for a variety of approaches to generating knowledge about assessment. AALHE, along with other organizations, will continue to promote and support the sharing of scholarly inquiry through conferences and publications. It is through vibrant scholarly research that learning outcomes assessment will thrive.

Assessment as Support for Student Learning Success

Accountability requirements have too often limited “student success” to retention, graduation, and employment rates. A growing number of faculty, assessment practitioners, educational developers, and others believe that learning quality should be part of the student success equation, and we are starting to see examples of assessment processes that advance learning quality for all groups of students. External stakeholders have the greatest potential to promote this trend and transform how student success is defined. We view accreditors as critical partners and are reaching out to both regional and specialized accreditors to join the conversation.

Because of their great potential to enhance learning, AALHE sees these emerging trends as positive. We therefore look forward to collaborating with others to nurture strong partnerships, promote rigorous assessment scholarship, and pursue success for all students.

Find AALHE at aalhe.org.

**MEANINGFUL, AUTHENTIC, AND ACTIONABLE: EPORTFOLIOS AND TRENDS
IN ASSESSMENT NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE**

Association for Authentic, Experiential, and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL)

Tracy Penny Light, Helen L. Chen, and C. Edward Watson

AAEEBL, the professional association for ePortfolio practitioners and researchers in the U.S. and abroad, has been deeply involved in advancing the informed implementation of ePortfolios since its founding in 2009. As such, it has been a forum for discussion of the role that ePortfolios play in assessment, but this discussion began even before AAEEBL's inception.

Historically, assessment was a starting point for ePortfolio implementation, as institutions and accreditors sought authentic evidence of student achievement of desired learning outcomes. Over time, though, ePortfolios caught the attention of different stakeholders, who identified varied assessment needs and interests as well as different understandings and definitions of "assessment" itself. A search for research on ePortfolios and assessment on the AAC&U "PEARL" database (eportfolio.aacu.org) reveals a wide range of studies that explore everything from traditional examples of evidence of learning outcomes or competencies visible in an ePortfolio to assessment of the effectiveness of new pedagogical and curricular designs, and to the ability of ePortfolios to demonstrate student identity development. These variations are

attributable to shifts in the wider interests of higher educators over the last decade, and to the ways in which ePortfolio practices have enabled a much broader group of stakeholders to leverage these practices to address their own assessment needs and interests. Three aspects of assessment continue to influence the work of stakeholders interested in both curricular and co-curricular learning.

Meaningful

One feature of ePortfolio assessment that has permeated the literature is their ability to enable students to document the many ways in which they make meaning of content and concepts presented in various curricular and co-curricular learning contexts. Assessment of learning that moves beyond demonstrating that an outcome has been achieved allows assessors to gain more insight into *why* and *how* meaning-making occurs. This capacity expands opportunities for quality assurance, as faculty and others can better understand which assignments and activities worked well, and the ways in which learners connect learning across learning contexts.

Authentic

By offering learners opportunities to document their learning within and among learning contexts, we enable them to engage in more authentic learning, and enable stakeholders to engage in more authentic assessment. As Susan Kahn notes (this volume), ePortfolios provide opportunities to assess a wide range of learning outcomes and activities, including “integrative learning, self-awareness, reflective practice, metacognition, and more.” By designing assessment strategies that leverage this flexibility, stakeholders can gain more insight not only into how learners engage with curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities, but also into how learning shapes individual identity development across the learning career.

Actionable

By attending to how learners engage authentically with the curriculum and co-curriculum across their learning careers, we can also find ways to make evidence gleaned from ePortfolios actionable, whether by undertaking curricular redesign and development, incorporating new learning activities to foster folio thinking, or by creating new learning opportunities that are more meaningful and authentic for *all* learners, regardless of their backgrounds or experiences.

Future Opportunities

As Susan Kahn notes (this volume), “higher education has not yet taken full advantage of the potential of ePortfolios to shed light on not only learning outcomes, but also the pedagogical, curricular, and co-curricular practices that shape students’ learning experiences.” We agree with this insight. By designing assessment strategies that leverage ePortfolios to provide meaningful, authentic, and actionable evidence of learning, stakeholders across our institutions can find ways to foster opportunities for learners to develop skills and abilities that they can transfer across contexts. At AAEEBL, we are working to enable sharing of the practices, pedagogies, research, and technologies that support meaningful, authentic, and actionable assessment across institutions and disciplinary communities.

Find AAEEBL at aaeebl.org.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF ASSESSMENT IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS)

John G. Frederick and Stephen Biscotte

AGLS is a community of practitioner-scholars that provides strategic, effective, and innovative support for peers engaged in the day-to-day work of general and liberal learning in 21st century

higher education. The AGLS mission statement is a guidepost for our practitioner-scholars, who focus on “all things Gen Ed” and liberal learning, including, among others, teaching and learning; assessment of program, course, and co-curricular learning outcomes; administration of general education programs; and general education program designs and models.

The most common assessment practices and needs continue to emphasize students’ demonstration of discrete learning outcomes or knowledge evidenced in student artifacts created for program assessment and/or accreditation purposes. AGLS has noted, however, that some institutions have intentionally integrated their general education curricula with co-curricular experiences, such as service learning, civic engagement, signature assignments, and experiential learning. Co-curricular transcripts to capture these experiences are gaining ground in value or in some cases blending with traditional academic transcripts. We are also seeing widespread introduction of new fields of knowledge to general education curricula; these fields include design thinking, computational reasoning, entrepreneurship, leadership, data analysis, and inter/multi/transdisciplinary and integrative learning opportunities. Assessment in these fields and of these forms of experiential learning depends on constant formative feedback and tools nimble enough for simultaneous use by collaborators from diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

As assessment demands grow and become more complex, AGLS members are further considering the extent to which computers can support assessment via adaptive learning modules, formative and summative assessment with tools embedded in the LMS (e.g., Canvas or Blackboard), collection of digital artifacts like videos and images as part of an ePortfolio, and ways in which technology might contribute to (or hinder) the pursuit of equitable assessment practices.

AGLS responds to changing trends in general education assessment by providing tools and resources directly to those in need as well as by bringing members together, both in person and virtually, to share best practices and lessons learned. Each September, the Association hosts a “Constitute,” structured around the best components of conferences and institutes, with a standing track dedicated to assessment issues. This track regularly accounts for over one quarter of the program, with sessions consistently well attended. Over the past two years, tracks on civic engagement and digital learning have been introduced to invite dialogue focused specifically on these trends.

In addition, AGLS is committed to remaining in constant contact with members and connecting them with each other through the LISTSERV, Google Groups and Twitter. AGLS has also published *Improving Learning in General Education: An AGLS Guide to Assessment and Program Review*, which takes a systems thinking approach to continuous quality improvement and invites institutions to review their commitment to the principles of a student-centered, outcomes-and-assessment approach to general and liberal education. In conjunction with the *The Guide*, AGLS provides consultations to individual campuses that seek assistance with general education revision, assessment and or innovation.

Find AGLS at agls.org.

A DATA-INFORMED FUTURE: TRENDS IN ASSESSMENT

Association for Institutional Research (AIR)

Leah Ewing Ross and Stephan C. Cooley

Data-informed decision cultures (cultures of evidence) are essential components of institutions' efforts to improve student success. As such, the AIR is committed to facilitating and supporting colleges and universities in their quests to realize and sustain such cultures.

The foundation of a data-informed decision culture is acknowledgement of all aspects of an institution's approach to data use and data capacity (formal and informal). Data are collected, stored, and analyzed in myriad units across the institution, including and beyond dedicated offices of assessment, institutional research (IR), and/or institutional effectiveness (IE). These practices mirror the trend toward growth of data use evident in nearly every industry and sector of the world economy, and almost every aspect of our personal lives. More data are available every day, the methods of gathering data are getting easier, the costs of storing data are decreasing, and advancements in analytical tools are expanding the number of people who can perform analyses. This trend will continue in the coming years, and the assessment field must be poised to address and exploit it.

Assessment, IR, and IE have always championed evidence-based cultures; use of data for decision-making leads to better decisions and better outcomes. But while all stakeholders want access to information to make decisions, the proliferation of data and analytic tools does not automatically translate to access to the right information at the right time. To ensure that stakeholders have what they need when they need it, a delicate balance must be achieved—and constantly facilitated—among attention to the question or problem at hand, access to data, provision of information, and follow-through. AIR provides the training, education, and resources designed to assist assessment, IR, and IE professionals navigate this space in terms of skill development, scholarship, and professional growth.

Strong data-informed decision cultures acknowledge all data use and capacity, including expanded sets of decision makers beyond traditional clients (e.g., presidents and provosts), and all data producers, including assessment professionals. Yet realization of a data-informed decision culture is not a destination. Rather, it is a journey that requires commitment to the use of data in decision-making and higher education professionals who think and strategize about data and their use across the institution, school, or program.

AIR supports institutions in this work by facilitating the evolution of the field, considered broadly as data professionals in a wide variety of roles, from assessment, IR, IE, business intelligence, and more. The association's contributions in this arena include assessing what currently exists (e.g., the National Survey of Institutional Research Offices), envisioning the future (e.g., development of new models for data production and data use in the *Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research* and *A New Vision for Institutional Research*), and providing education and training opportunities (e.g., webinars, IPEDS training, workshops, conference presentations) for professionals in a wide variety of roles.

Find AIR at airweb.org.

**THE VALUE OF LIBERAL EDUCATION AND AMERICA'S PROMISE: TRENDS
AND TENSIONS**

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

Terrel L. Rhodes

Given the adage that the more things change, the more they stay the same, the likelihood of big changes in assessment would not be a good bet. Coupled with the frequent observation that

higher education does not demonstrate a history of rapid change, one might expect modest, if any, change occurring in the next three to five years. Laying out trends thus would normally require a longer time horizon, yet some shifts have already begun and will indeed accelerate in their influence on and challenges for higher education more immediately.

In brief: technology will continue its dance with higher education as it tries to become a solution to improving efficiency and access; support in terms of public perceptions and financial resources will continue to decline or will remain constant; and tensions and shifting demands for answers will persist. So, what can we expect that is also new?

Integration/Bundling

Technology, coupled with needed broadening of access to college education for all people, will put pressure on higher education to *not* settle for easy, simplistic, disintegrative, and reductionist focus and content. We now have the means to deliver what we do more conveniently and efficiently. We do not need more one-off, take-a-course approaches. Instead, we need to nurture more higher-order skills and abilities to think, inquire and act to bring diverse learning experiences together. Our mission is Higher Education, not Lite Education. More integrative, higher-order learning experiences and outcomes are central necessities. AAC&U continues to develop frameworks for assessments and pedagogies that integrate learning: VALUE rubrics and the VALUE Institute, Purposeful Pathways for Faculty, Roadmaps for Community College Leadership, and General Education Maps and Markers (GEMs).

Cost Allocation and Quality

There was a time when popular perceptions equated quality with higher cost/price. In the next few years, we need to shift the discourse from win/lose to win/win. Research overwhelmingly supports the importance for students of essential, cross-cutting, higher-order

skills and abilities that can be practiced in multiple settings. The public is beginning to recognize that an education credential does not equate to high-quality learning, regardless of the cost.

Assessment for learning is on a rising trajectory. AAC&U continues to offer summer workshops, focused conferences on best practices, four journals on theory and implementation, and cross-sector opportunities for discussion and collaboration among higher education institutions.

Public Good/Equity and Extrinsic/Intrinsic

Higher education remains a key to individual flourishing, intrinsic worth, self-concept, and agency as well as to the public good, societal equity, social capital, and global survival. If higher education confines itself to cognitive and formal education without integrating affective and introspective/reflective practice, we will fail in our mission to improve the future of humanity.

AAC&U thus continues to engage with Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity, agency through student ePortfolios, signature work, and High-Impact Practices. We have the knowledge and tools to achieve desired change; we now need the resolve to act.

Find AAC&U at aacu.org.

PERSPECTIVE ON ASSESSMENT AND TENSIONS AND THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Center for Postsecondary Research (CPR)/National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Jillian Kinzie

Twenty years ago, when NSSE was created, the designers had two core objectives in mind: to refocus the national discourse about college quality on teaching and learning and to provide colleges and universities with diagnostic, actionable information to inform efforts to improve the

quality of undergraduate education. These goals are still relevant in higher education's current climate of assessment and accountability, yet most institutions are now better equipped with evidence of the quality of the undergraduate experience, and many have incorporated student engagement results into their institutional improvement efforts. The availability of valid, reliable, and comparable data about students' exposure to practices that matter for learning have enhanced assessment initiatives and seem to have advanced educational quality.

In the next three to five years, I expect that higher education's focus on accountability for improving completion rates and reducing equity gaps among students will persist. We will see an even stronger emphasis on assuring learning outcomes achievement for *all* students, along with a continuing emphasis on experiences that prepare students for the 21st century workplace. With these goals in mind, assessment trends will likely include:

- Reliance on a wider range of data about quality and equity in undergraduate education and, in particular, student learning.
- Tighter connections between assessment and teaching and learning.
- Increased assessment and documentation of the value of experiential learning within and outside the classroom.

Data on Quality and Outcomes

The need for a wider array of data on the quality of undergraduate education is certain to be an assessment trend. Student learning outcomes will continue to be consequential, and will require evidence from a broader range of assessment methods, including measures of authentic student learning, such as classroom-based performance assessments, rubrics, and capstones. To fully portray the complexity of college student learning, assessment regimes will need to blend evidence from national surveys, authentic measures, real-time analytics, and homegrown

assessment tools. Documenting the achievements of “new majority students” and assuring equity in outcomes will take on even greater significance.

Connections between Assessment and Teaching and Learning

Current efforts to use assessments to inform improvements in instructional practice and learning support and ultimately improve student outcomes are likely to intensify. Strengthening connections between assessment and teaching and learning will allow institutions to be accountable not only for gathering evidence of student learning, but also for responding to these findings in ways that demonstrably improve teaching, learning and student success.

As the pressure to demonstrate the value of higher education for preparing students for employment and productive citizenship grows, assessment efforts must define the experiences that contribute to essential skills and employability and citizenship outcomes and demonstrate institutional and program quality with respect to graduates’ skills in these areas. Employment six months post-graduation is an important metric, but it falls short of demonstrating quality and identifying the in- and out-of-class experiences that contribute to student gains. Institutions and students need to know where and how well these skills develop.

Finally, assessing students’ experience with empirically confirmed educational practices will be as important in the near term as it was at NSSE’s inception. Seeking feedback from students about their experience is an important way to honor students as accurate, credible reporters of their activities and the ways they have benefited from their college experiences. It is both reasonable and appropriate that we pay attention to what college students say about their undergraduate education and then use this information to improve.

Find the Center for Postsecondary Research at cpr.indiana.edu.

Find the National Survey of Student Engagement at nsse.indiana.edu.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS: FUTURE TRENDS IN ASSESSMENT

Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS)

Charles Blaich and Kathleen Wise

HEDS has been bringing private colleges and universities together to share both data and best practices for nearly 40 years. Early on, these efforts focused on sharing operational data, such as admissions, salary, and workload information. In the last decade, however, the consortium's work has shifted toward assessment. In 2016, HEDS recognized this shift by revising its mission from a focus on institutional data to "sharing data, knowledge, and expertise to advance undergraduate liberal arts education, inclusive excellence, and student success at member institutions."

We believe that the most important issue for the future of assessment is not the extent to which institutions are developing assessment programs, but the extent to which the assessment programs institutions have developed are paying off in improvements to student learning and faculty/staff teaching skills.

Accreditation requirements have been a critical factor in promoting the expansion of assessment in higher education (Jankowski, Timmer, Kinzie, & Kuh, 2018). It is not surprising, therefore, that the way institutions do assessment is shaped by the accreditation-based forces that continue to propel its growth. As Peter Ewell has noted (1987, 2009), assessment motivated by external requirements tends to be structured in fundamentally different ways than assessment that emerges from organic improvement efforts within an institution. In our experience, this means that assessment conducted primarily to meet accreditation standards is more likely to be rote,

quantitatively heavy, and meaning-lite. It's also more likely to be experienced by faculty and staff as disconnected from their efforts to improve student learning.

Going forward, the HEDS consortium will focus on increasing the return-on-investment of assessment efforts at institutions. In our view, a key step towards doing this is to acknowledge and build connections between three important, but different, forms of assessment:

Assessment to monitor learning

Assessing to monitor learning means collecting evidence designed to “keep an eye” on learning outcomes or experiences (Blaich & Wise, in press). This form of assessment is akin to creating a dashboard warning light. The complexity of the data collection is sufficient to let you know the extent to which students are meeting learning goals, but insufficient to respond effectively and improve areas where student learning falls short. The action that this form of assessment prompts is further investigation into what's happening.

Assessment to improve learning

Here, we refer to collecting evidence to understand whether students are meeting or missing learning goals, along with evidence on the curricular, experiential, and pedagogical factors that may be contributing to these different levels of learning. This kind of assessment requires evidence of sufficient quality to ensure that interventions have an impact on student learning (Fulcher, Good, Coleman, & Smith, 2014).

Assessment for improving teaching skills

Many assessment programs are based on the belief that presenting faculty/staff with assessment data will, on its own, lead to improved learning. Improving the quality of teaching requires deeper conceptual changes, however, than those that emerge when confronting discomfoting data (Henderson, Beach, & Finkelstein, 2011). To promote improvement in teaching, assessment

evidence needs to be linked with research-based understandings of how to support wider adoption of effective teaching practices (Bryk, 2015).

Going forward, HEDS will focus on developing and integrating these different forms of assessment for institutions.

Find HEDS at hedsconsortium.org.

META-TRENDS IN ASSESSMENT: A SUMMARY OF IDEAS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

As we conclude this volume on *Trends in Assessment*, we acknowledge with gratitude the many authors who have contributed their ideas about assessment's enduring principles and future directions. Together and individually, they have provided thoughtful discussions, resources, references, and examples of how assessment trends are unfolding in courses and programs, across campuses and in our communities, and in international contexts, and they have shown us how assessment can do more to engage students in educationally purposeful and meaningful activities. Following are *ten meta-trends in assessment* that appear as recurrent themes throughout this volume, and in work disseminated elsewhere by assessment leaders, researchers, and practitioners.

1. Assessment makes important contributions to understanding and improvement of student learning and success.

Systematic approaches to assessment both demonstrate and ensure that institutional stakeholders take student learning and success seriously, and that results of assessment are communicated transparently to various internal and external audiences. Such approaches help to cultivate a

culture of evidence-based decision-making throughout the institution (Ewell, 2008). Assessment efforts have offered faculty and staff opportunities to better understand the learning strengths and challenges of their particular students across courses, programs, co-curricular activities, and entire campuses. But too few institutions are collecting actionable data, or integrating and using their data as effectively as possible (Parnell et al., 2018). Importantly, as Middaugh (2011, p. 15) reminds us, institutions need to demonstrate “in tangible ways that assessments are being *used* to inform planning, decision making, and resource allocation at the institution.”

2. The need to navigate tensions between accountability and improvement in higher education still exists.

Access to and participation in higher education are expanding at a time of heightened public scrutiny of the aims, purposes, and return-on-investment of a college education. Concurrently, pressures to retain and support students to timely degree completion compel institutions to perform efficiently in moving students through their educational pathways while still designing and implementing meaningful learning experiences for those students. One initial impetus for assessment was to provide accountability to external stakeholders for the teaching and learning undertaken in and produced by colleges and universities. But assessment for accountability alone will not improve student learning or higher education institutions. Instead, faculty and staff need to take the lead in designing processes whereby they can carry out meaningful assessments, examine findings, determine changes needed, implement those changes, and investigate subsequent impacts, all in the context of striving for improvement. Our focus should be on improvement; by focusing thus, we will also generate evidence that addresses accountability needs (Ewell, 2009).

3. Assessment requires leadership and broadened stakeholder engagement.

How do institutions communicate commitment to student learning and to the assessment and improvement efforts that undergird this commitment? It begins with senior leaders—presidents, provosts, and institutional governance leaders—who set the “tone at the top” through their words and actions. Faculty leadership is also essential to ensuring a collective focus on student learning and widespread adoption of thoughtful assessment practices at all levels of the institution (Hundley, 2019). The range of stakeholders involved in assessment also includes those who work in areas like community engagement, global learning, and student affairs, among others, as we have seen in this volume. As Banta and Blaich (2010) point out, high turnover rates in faculty and administrative leadership for assessment often make it both a challenge and a priority to sustain assessment and improvement efforts.

4. Assessment strategies and approaches need to be inclusive, equity-oriented, and reflective of the diverse students our institutions serve.

Ensuring that students have equitable access to learning experiences and resources and are able to benefit from them must be a priority for higher education. Inclusive assessment strategies seek to determine who has opportunities to engage in particular learning experiences, disaggregate assessment findings to determine which groups of students are more or less successful, and develop interventions to close equity gaps. Learning experiences should be designed to acknowledge and include diverse perspectives and ideas, and we must empower students to bring their own voices and lived experiences to the learning environment and to have them valued. As McNair et al. (2016, p. 5) suggest, “a student-ready college is one that strategically and holistically advances student success, and works tirelessly to educate *all* students for civic and economic participation in a global, interconnected society.”

5. Assessment must broaden its perspective on outcomes to include students' personal, academic, and professional development.

A recurrent theme in this volume and other recent higher education literature is that colleges and universities are responsible for supporting students' holistic development (e.g., Bok, 2006; Cronon, 1998; Nussbaum, 2016). Higher education institutions shape the citizens, professionals, scholars, and leaders of the future. Indeed, Zahl, Jimenez, and Huffman (this volume) remind us that this is true at the graduate/professional as well as at the undergraduate level. Today, especially, the new majority students who fill our classrooms must learn to see themselves as capable of academic and professional success, and develop the self-awareness and other habits of mind that will support their success in and beyond their higher education experiences (Ben-Avie, Kuna, & Rhodes, 2018; Kahn, 2019). This means that learning environments and experiences must be designed to promote both disciplinary knowledge and the development of what Kuh, Gambino, Bresciani Ludvik, and O'Donnell (2018) term "neurocognitive" and "dispositional" skills. Yet, too often, assessment has treated students as packages of discrete competencies—a stance that both disregards the larger values, attitudes, and dispositions we cultivate in students, whether intentionally or not, and alienates faculty who understand a higher education as something more than sets of competencies acquired. We must develop and adopt assessment strategies and methods that enable us to better understand these sometimes "ineffable," but powerful, aspects of student learning in our institutions.

6. Authentic measures of student learning, from a range of experiences and contexts, are increasingly necessary and valued.

One of the strongest arguments for authentic assessment is that students themselves can offer the most direct and richest information about what they are learning and what they are struggling

with. The best authentic measures offer actionable insights into *how* and *why* students learn, in addition to *what* they learn. Innovations and interventions that generate more meaningful authentic evidence and improve assessment of this evidence are needed. This volume discusses several promising practices: *assignment charrettes*, which center assessment on intentionally designed authentic assignments aligned with outcomes; *High-Impact Practices*, which, when done well, include thoughtful design and well-guided reflection; *ePortfolios*, which support integrative learning and identity development, and give us insights into student perceptions of learning experience; and *VALUE rubrics*, which are designed for assessment of authentic student work. Comprehensive Learner Records represent another emerging concept that supports authentic assessment. These records encourage student engagement in a wider range of learning activities; incorporate what students learn in both classroom and co-curricular spaces; and help students integrate and evaluate their learning through documentation valued by students, employers, and others (Green & Parnell, 2018). Practices like these can offer us the kinds of actionable information that are most useful for determining needs and strategies for improvement.

7. Assessment must focus on both learning *processes* and learning *outcomes*.

Many assessment leaders call for a focus on learning outcomes in assessment (Banta & Palomba, 2014; Suskie, 2018). Indeed, we often refer to assessment as “outcomes assessment.” But, as we noted above, authentic measures, such as reflective ePortfolios, can also help us to understand the experiences, practices, and environments that encourage learning and development to occur. A focus on the learning processes that generated (or not) desired learning and developmental outcomes can move us toward more truly learner- and learning-centered assessment and improvement practices, as called for by Fulcher and Prendergast (this volume). The

Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) initiative is another new approach that engages students and faculty in discussing learning goals and processes. As Winkelmes (2013, p. 48) describes it, TILT makes assignments “transparent, requiring explicit conversation among teachers and students about the processes of learning and the rationale for required learning activities.” A focus on learning processes, practices, and experiences provides more actionable information for improvement than outcomes alone can offer. Indeed, teaching and learning practices and experiences have long been at the center of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

8. Ongoing professional development is essential to systematic, well-designed assessment practices.

Institutions committed to effective assessment practices strive to develop capacity for this work across the campus. Professional development opportunities can be offered through teaching and learning centers, campus and unit assessment bodies, and other venues. Capacity-building for assessment often engages assessment and institutional research professionals in providing internal consulting and assistance in developing interventions and measures and interpreting findings. Banta and Palomba (2015, p. 27) suggest that “development opportunities are essential during the entire assessment cycle—from the outset as plans are developed, through the implementation phase, to interpretation of results, and use of results to make improvements.” Leveraging the capabilities of institutional systems and processes that support assessment, including the learning management system, institutional accreditation and program review processes, and the work of campus-wide councils and committees, is another important capacity-building strategy.

9. Assessment work must be valued and recognized in order to result in sustained improvement.

Too often, the time, energy, and effort needed to effectively engage in assessment work is not sufficiently valued by administrators and colleagues. This must change. Rewarding, recognizing, and promoting assessment work involves incorporating assessment into ongoing institutional practices and processes. These include annual merit increases, incentives that target strategic institutional priorities, and promotion, tenure, and advancement opportunities. This approach is consistent with longstanding calls to reconsider faculty roles, rewards, and recognition in a manner that is more holistic and consistent with institutional missions (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). In order for assessment to sustain improvement, the reward and recognition systems for assessment must be embedded in the institution's culture, transcend individual leaders' priorities, be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that they continue to meet their intended purposes, and reflect a larger set of values derived from institutions' teaching and learning missions. Today, external recognitions like the *Excellence in Assessment designation* are available to institutions that demonstrate exemplary integration of assessment across the institution (Kinzie et al., 2017, p. 1); individuals and programs that contribute to a culture of effective, evidence-based teaching and learning practices should be similarly recognized internally.

10. Assessment remains a work in progress.

Despite numerous examples of assessment methods, practices, and outcomes demonstrating credible evidence of progress, experts agree that assessment still has a long way to go to realize its full potential. Now is the time to reconsider what and how we assess, and, most importantly, how assessment results can best be used to foster genuine improvements in student achievement,

especially as our student body becomes ever more diverse. Kuh et al. (2015) identified strategies for supporting more meaningful and consequential assessment. These included aligning assessment with relevant issues facing students and their learning today; engaging key end-users of assessment results by treating them as partners in learning; and focusing on the anticipated use of assessment results by making them relevant and actionable. We would further recommend that assessment should more intentionally incorporate scientific understandings of learning developed in the past few decades, and should be tied more closely to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, which has historically sought to design more effective teaching and learning practices. Assessment is more complex than some of its proponents have recognized, and learning is even more complex. While much has been discussed, written, and debated about assessment in higher education in the past 35 years, it nonetheless remains a work in progress.

CONCLUSION

The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis, along with its partner associations and research organizations, remains committed to being a principal venue in which various assessment work can be showcased. We invite you to join us by contributing to the annual program your own important issues, ideas, and opportunities for higher education. To learn more about ways to become involved, please visit **assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu**.

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Trends in Assessment: Ideas, Opportunities, and Issues for Higher Education. Edited by Stephen P. Hundley and Susan Kahn. Stylus Publishing, LLC; release date: October 2019.

Provides readers with the information, strategies, and resources on assessment concepts and approaches that have endured and matured over the past twenty-five years, along with emerging and future assessment ideas and opportunities in a host of specific areas. A unique feature of this book is the diverse array of assessment trends in several special emphasis chapters, each authored by acknowledged experts in the corresponding field.

Each attendee at the 2019 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis will receive a special Institute edition of *Trends in Assessment* as part of their conference registration.

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See reverse side for discussion questions

Discussion Questions for Meta-Trends in Assessment

1. What are your reactions to the meta-trends in assessment?
2. Which trends are most affirming to you? Are there trends that are vague, confusing, or in need of further development/explanation?
3. Are there trends missing from this list? Why are these missing trends significant?
4. Which trends would you like to learn more about, through either additional readings or guest speakers at future PRAC meetings?
5. Please share additional feedback, if any, about meta-trends in assessment.



Information Literacy Assessment

Steve Graunke, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment
Sara Lowe, Educational Development & Assessment Librarian

SECTION 1

Introduction & Project Overview

SECTION 1A

Information Literacy

Information Literacy (IL)

The set of competencies needed to find, use, and evaluate information effectively and ethically.



What do teaching librarians do?

- Scaffold IL through curriculum from first-year to capstone/graduate.
- Collaborate with faculty in assignment design re: information literacy.
- Library instruction sessions to support course projects, paper, etc.
- 1-1 student research consultations.



Why should we care?

1. IL competencies increase student success while in school.
 - Students are overwhelmed when starting research assignments.
2. Employers seek new hires with these skills.
 - Few feel students are well prepared in this area.
 - Recent college hires have a tendency to look for quick answers and lack the ability to dig deeply into research and critically analyze information.

Hart Research Associates 2015, Head & Wihbey 2014, Head 2012, Head 2013





Megan Donnelly

@library_megan

Follow



Information literacy is a privileged skill. It's not something consistently taught or credit bearing in the curriculum but yet it is an explicit requirement on most campuses. [#critlib](#)

9:03 AM - 26 Apr 2019

10 Likes



1



10



Megan Donnelly @library_megan · Apr 26



How can students learn a skill that is *apparently* so critical if it does not hold consistent space in the curriculum? [#critlib](#)

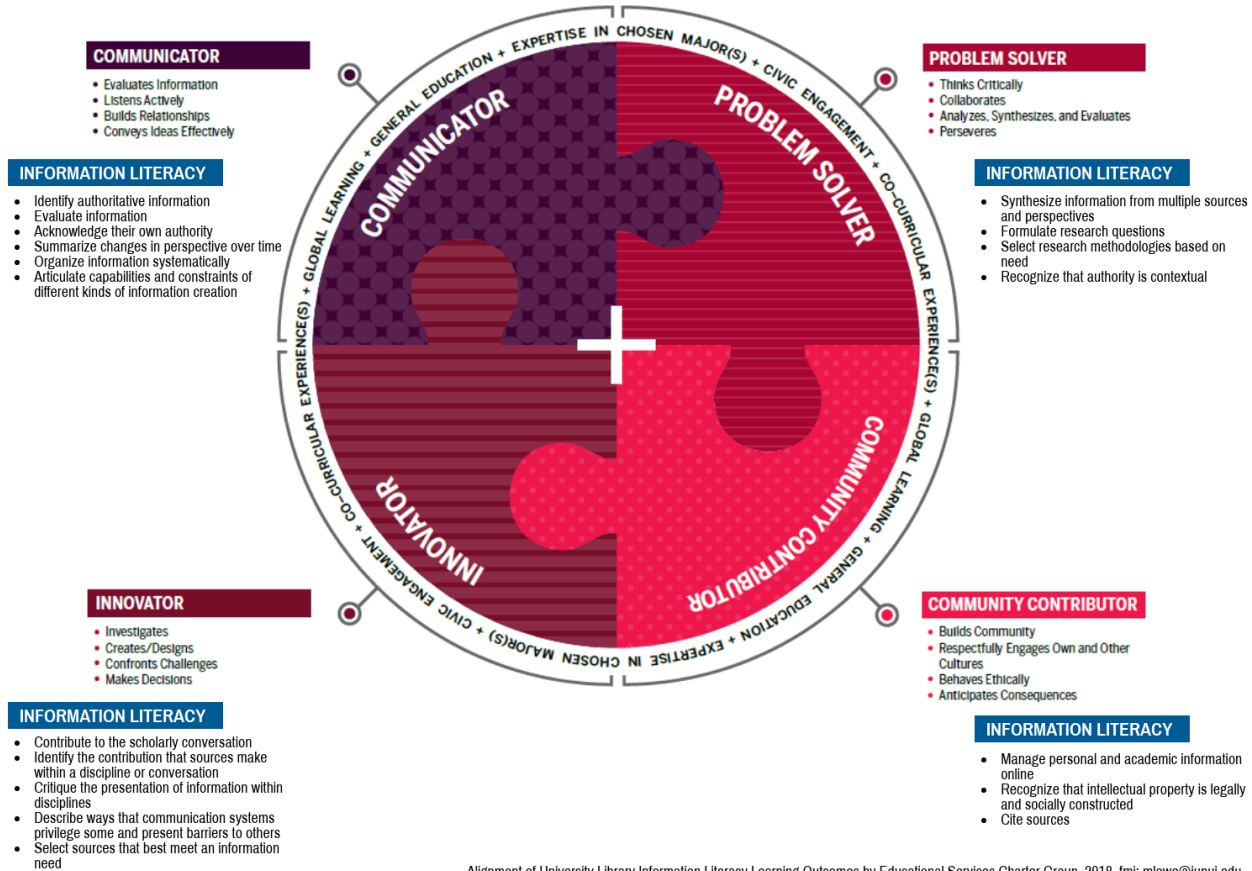


11



IUPUI

IUPUI+ & Information Literacy



Alignment of University Library Information Literacy Learning Outcomes by Educational Services Charter Group, 2018, fmi: mlowe@iupui.edu



SECTION 1B

Project Overview

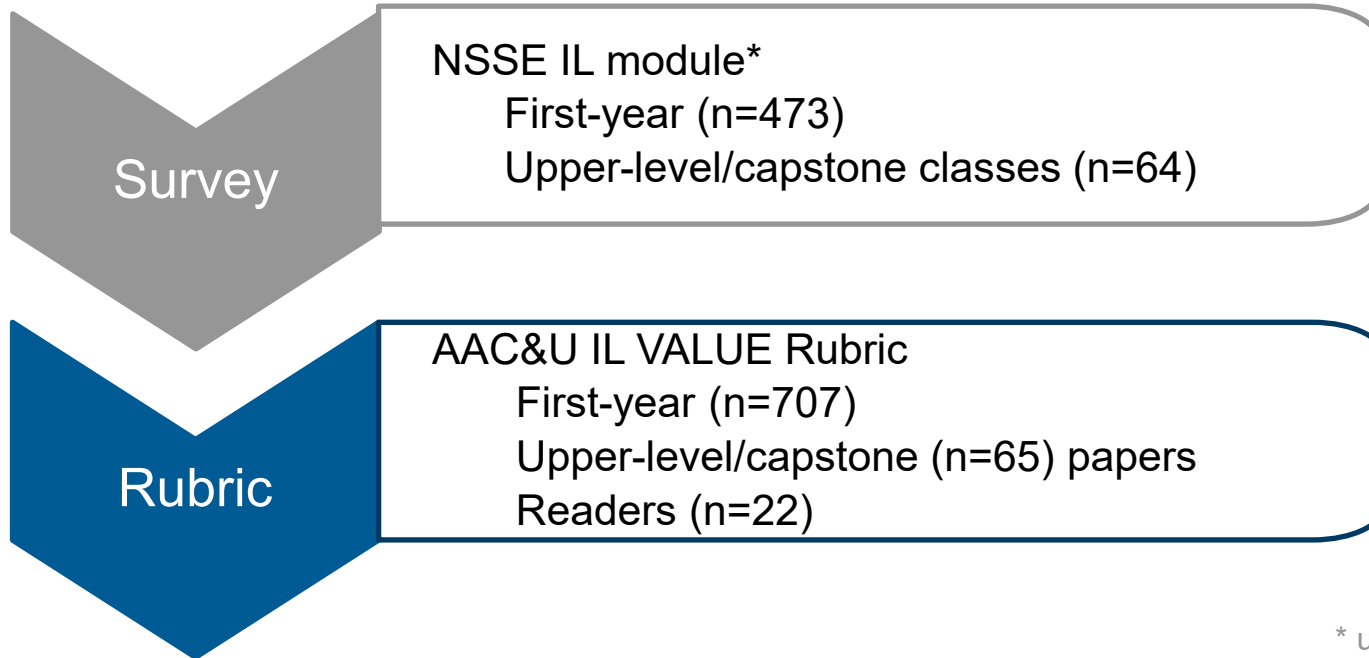
Research Questions

1. Is there a correlation between NSSE IL survey responses and IL rubric scores?
2. Are there any indicators that correlate to IL performance in first-year students? (e.g., librarian in the classroom, high school, first-gen student, etc.)

Study approved by IU IRB.



Mixed Methods

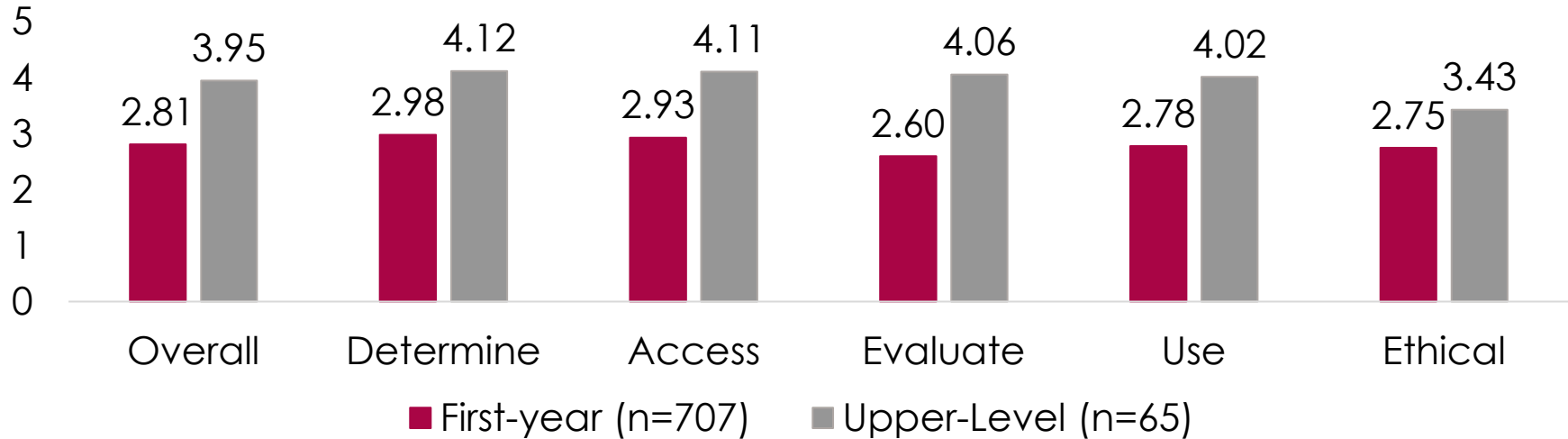


* used with permission

SECTION 2

Data & Results

Rubric Scores (n=772)

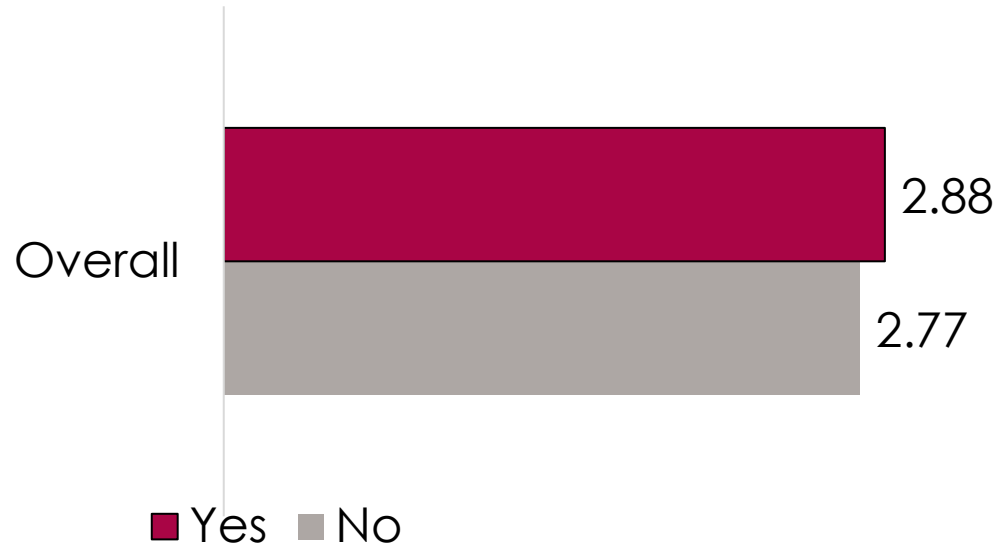


Scale: 1="Below Benchmark", 2="Benchmark", 3= "Milestone 2" 4="Milestone 3" 5="Capstone"



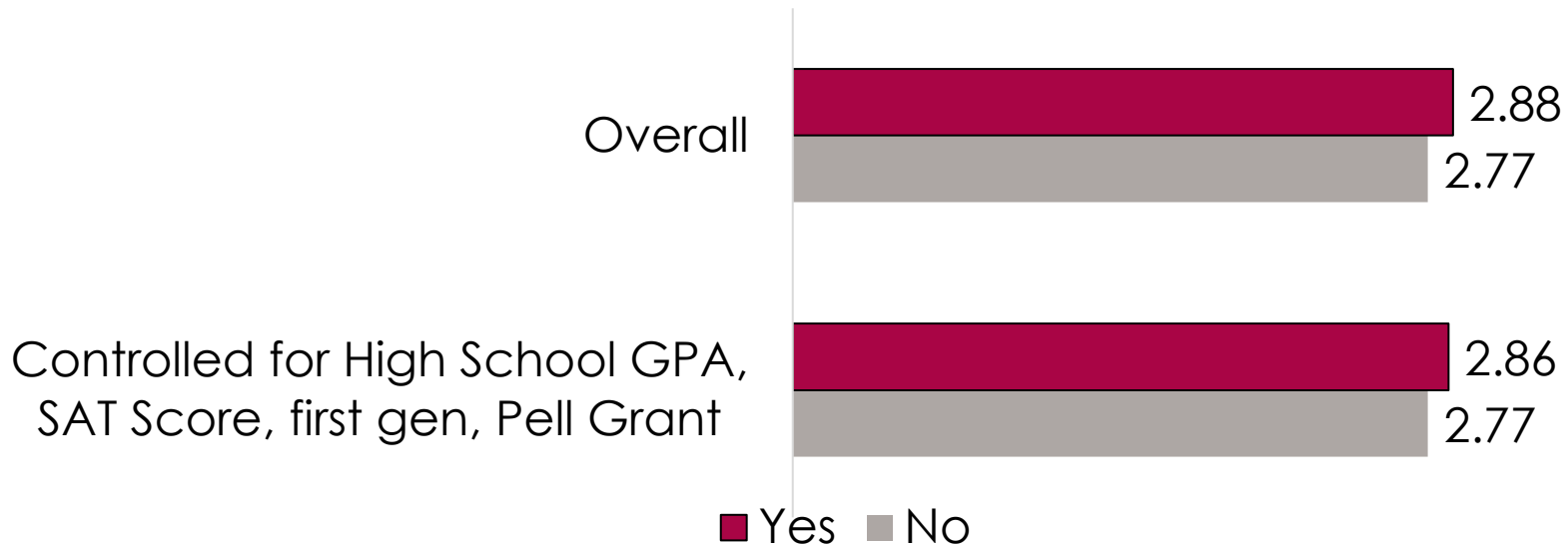
First-year Rubric Scores

Librarian in the class (yes) or not (no)



First-year Rubric Scores

Librarian in the class (yes) or not (no)



NSSE Survey Results (percent Very Often and Often)

During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?	First-Year and Sophomore	Upper Division
Worked on a paper that had multiple smaller assignments.	(436) 76.6%	(95) 48.4%
Received feedback from an instructor that improved your use of information resources.	(436) 70.9%	(95) 42.1%
Changed the focus of a paper or project based on information you found while researching the topic.	(436) 54.4%	(95) 32.6%
Identified how a book, article, or creative work has contributed to a field of study.	(435) 52.2%	(94) 37.2%



NSSE Survey Results (percent Very Often and Often)

During the current school year, how much have your instructors emphasized the following?	First-Year and Sophomore	Upper Division
Appropriately citing the sources used in a paper or project.	(435) 94.0%	(95) 80.0%
Using scholarly or peer-reviewed sources in your course assignments.	(435) 82.8%	(95) 67.4%
Questioning the quality of information.	(433) 78.3%	(95) 65.3%



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