

The Context for Outcomes Assessment – Industrial Age or Information Age Education?

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Jack R. Warner

Commissioner

RI Board of Governors for Higher Education

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment — Why all the Fuss?

Information age requirements set the context – What are they?

- More Degrees
- Higher Standards for Academic Performance-linked with modern workplace requirements
- Documentation that institutions and students meet performance standards

Why More Degrees?

- Public and private benefit
 - Aggregate economic benefits to states and nation
 - Quality of life
 - Earning gaps, trends since 1973
 - Higher salaries and quality of life for individuals

1. **More Degrees**—How are we Doing?

- Predicted shortages
- Degree attainment is leveling
- US is losing ground internationally
- Large numbers of students drop out, K-16
- Large achievement gaps exist among racial/ethnic groups and income strata

The Good News

- US ranks 2nd of 30 OECD Countries in Baccalaureate attainment (2001) of 25-34 year olds (US = 30%, Mean = 18%)
- US ranks 6th of 25 OECD Countries in graduation rates from Ph.D. Programs (2000)
- US ranks 6th of 17 OECD Countries in Baccalaureate graduation rates.

Source: OECD Statistics at a Glance 2002, reported in Postsecondary Education Opportunity, January 2003

The Bad News

- US ranks 13th of 26 OECD Countries (2000) in entry rates to Bachelor's Education (US=43%, Mean=45%) and 10th out of 20 such countries in entry rates to Associate's Education (US=14%, Mean=15%).
- US ranks 10th of 13 OECD Countries in High School Graduation Rates (US=74%, Mean=77%)
- US ranks last of 14 OECD Countries in change in share of population ages 18-21 enrolled in postsecondary education between 1990 and 1999

Source: OECD Statistics at a Glance 2002, reported in Postsecondary Education Opportunity, January 2003

Achievement gaps

– Facts (Census 2000)

- Good news – just under half of students enrolled in higher education nationally come from households with family incomes less than \$20,000 and 30% of total enrollment is from students of color.
- Bad news – these students earn college degrees at far lower rates than do their wealthier counterparts – only 21% of the lowest income students complete a baccalaureate within 5 years vs 96 % from the highest income group.

- Poor are 11 times less likely to earn a college degree than are the rich, compared with four times less likely in 1979 (Mortenson, 2003)
- 76% of students in top fifth in income and achievement earn a college degree; 36% in top fifth in achievement but in the bottom fifth income bracket are able to earn a degree
- 35 states received an “F” in Affordability in Measuring Up 2004

Initiatives to Improve Degree Attainment

- Establish educational attainment goals
- Form PK-16 Structures
 - Set standards of achievement for all students at all schools-link standards with higher education admissions and course placement
 - Invest in early intervention and early awareness programs
 - Improve teacher education programs-quality and quantity

Degree attainment initiatives, continued

- **Emphasize grades, class ranks, strength of the curriculum, defined competencies, and criterion-referenced tests in admissions to avoid the adverse impact of norm-referenced standardized tests on low-income and minority students**
- **Provide more extensive support systems in higher education, especially for at-risk students**
- **Improve progression from two-year to four-year institutions**

2. Higher Academic Standards— How are we Doing?

- Higher Education struggles to document what students know and are able to do
- Measuring Up state report card gives gives all states an “Incomplete” in 2000 and 2002, and all but five in 2004, on assessment of student learning

Initiatives to Improve Academic Quality

- Raise admission standards – move toward competency based standards
- Focus on student learning and student success
- Document student learning gains through assessment
- Document acquisition of skills and knowledge from general education and programs of study
- Increase use of instructional technology

Quality initiatives, continued

- Increase rigor of new academic degree program approval process
- Increase frequency and rigor of review process for existing academic programs – include performance measures and documentation of learning outcomes
- Move toward grounding academic credits in competencies rather than seat time

What do students need to know and be able to do in the Information Age?

- **Critical Thinking**
- **Literacy and Communication**
- **Collaborative Problem Solving and Decision-Making**
- **Numerical and Scientific Reasoning**
- **Computer Fluency and Use of Technology**
- **Subject Matter Proficiency**
- **Understand Social, Organizational, and Technological Systems**

- **Personal Qualities – Individual and social Responsibility, Self-Management, Integrity, Teamwork, Creativity, Enthusiasm, Initiative, Leadership**
- **Understanding of ethics, values and how society, government and business works**
- **How to cope with change and how to lead change**
- **How to be assertive enough to get your concerns addressed**
- **How to take charge of your own learning**
- **How to manage personal and emotional relationships**

3. Documentation of Performance

There is emerging a *gradual* shift in the way the quality of the undergraduate experience is documented—from input measures to outputs and outcomes

Examples--Input Quality Indicators:

- Total Resources/Student
- State Appropriations/Student
- Academic Profile of Entering Students
- Faculty/Student Ratio
- Average Class Size
- Admission Acceptance Rates
- Yield Rate

Output Quality Indicators

- First Year Persistence Rates
- Course Completion Rates
- Student Advancement Rates
- Minority Student Enrollment and Advancement Rates/Goals
- Low Income Student Advancement Rates/Goals
- Time to Degree
- Graduate Rates
- Graduates/FTE Enrollment

Outcome Quality Indicators

- Criterion Referenced Assessments
Reflecting General Education Goals –
Multiple Chances to Succeed
- Employment and Wage Tracking
- Performance in Graduate School
- Pass Rates on Licensure Exams
- Portfolio Assessments

Outcome Quality Indicators: (cont.)

- Performance in a Capstone Integrative Experience
- Student/Alumni/Parent Employer Satisfaction
- Assessment of Content Knowledge in the Major
- Value-added Assessment

Accountability Initiatives

- Move toward outcomes assessment, documentation of value-added, and skills and knowledge acquired**
- Benchmark performance indicators against peer institutions**
- Replace up-front regulation with greater autonomy when performance and accountability are demonstrated**
- Increased use of “report cards” and other public reporting of performance indicators**

Exercise leadership in changing mindsets

FROM (industrial age)	TO (information age)
Access as freshmen enrollment	Access to degree attainment
We teach, you learn	Faculty and student share joint responsibility for student learning
Select and screen	Challenge and support
Normative testing that sorts along a scale	Competency based learning with multiple chances to succeed
High expectations and standards for some	High expectations and standards for all
Disconnected systems K-12 – higher education	PreK-16 seamless systems
Time-bound, place-bound learning	Ubiquitous, continuous learning