

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

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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
- Large numbers of students drop out, K-16-in RI for every 100 ninth graders-72 grad. HS-40 enter college-23 earn bachelor's in 6 years
- Large achievement gaps exist among racial/ethnic groups and income strata
- US is losing ground internationally

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

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**
 - **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**

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 all states an “Incomplete” in 2000 and 2002, and all but five in 2004, on assessment of student learning**

Initiatives to Improve Academic Quality

- Specify intended student learning outcomes from general education and programs of study—what do we want students to know and be able to do?
- Document achievement of intended outcomes through assessment—How do we know it when we see it?
- Move toward grounding academic credits in competencies rather than seat time
- Establish competency-based admission standards and link them with K-12 standards
- Increase use of instructional technology

What competencies are important for students to possess to thrive in the Information Age?

- **Inquiry, Interpretation and Critical Thinking Skills**
- **Literacy and Communication**
- **Collaborative Problem Solving and Decision-Making**
- **Numerical and Scientific Reasoning**
- **Technological Fluency**
- **Subject Matter Proficiency**
- **Understanding of Social, Organizational, and Technological Systems**

- **Individual and social responsibility, Self-Management, Integrity, Teamwork, Creativity, Enthusiasm, Initiative, Leadership, Global awareness, Appreciation of diversity**
- **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 integrate knowledge from many sources**
- **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 based on intended general education and program outcomes – 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
- Assessment of engagement in learning
- Student/Alumni/Parent Employer Satisfaction
- Assessment of Content Knowledge in the Major
- Value-added Assessment

Accountability—How will “we” and “they” use results?

- Evaluate students against intended outcomes**
- Improve alignment of curriculum and instruction with intended outcomes**
- Provide evidence that students possess requisite knowledge and skill**
- Improve general education and program quality (formative purpose)**
- Use evidence to assure quality for program reviews and accreditation (summative purpose)**

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 students share joint responsibility for 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-based, place-bound learning	Standards-based, ubiquitous and continuous learning