Assessment Cube of Misunderstandings
Added Layers

Behind each side of the cube there are:

1. Theories about how students learn
2. Beliefs around what can be assessed
3. The “best” or “proper” means to assess student learning
4. How to warrant arguments about what students know and can do as a result of education
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All with no agreements, leading to disputes built around unclear assumptions that impact praxis with people dismissing other sides
Compliance

Documenting institutional quality assurance through reporting frameworks

*Is assessment destroying the liberal arts?* ~Karin Brown

- Bureaucratic
- Laborious
- Time consuming
- Separated from teaching and learning
- Add on
- Accountability and quality assurance
- Reporting and archive
Submit Reports

Write Outcomes

Package Results

ACCREDITATION

Identify Assessments

Gather Results

Package Results

Submit Reports
Measurement

Built upon scientific principles or empirical research, objective, rational, validity, and reliability

The Multi-State Collaborative: A Preliminary Examination of Convergent Validation Evidence
~Mark Nicholas, John Hathcoat, & Brittany Brown

- Testing and standardization
- Must be measureable
- Argue narrowing of curriculum
- Goal driven
- Focused on process
- Interventions
- Pre/post
- Comparisons
VALUE report
But where are the students...?
Student-Centered Learning

Focus on pedagogy, understanding of student experience, informing program improvement, embedded in curricular design and feedback, builds student agency

_Does continuous assessment in higher education support student learning?_ ~Rosario Hernandez

- Driven by faculty questions regarding their praxis – is what I am doing working for my students?
- Improvement oriented
- Focus on individual students
- Students as active participants – not something done to them
- Formative
- Feedback
- Collaborative
- Assessment for learning
For Learning

- Communicate Expectations to Learners
- Collect Student Work
- Determine Extent of Learning
- Strategize New Student Success Plans

Learners
Examples

IOWA GROW®
Learning, Connecting, Reflecting

Employment during college helps contribute to student success when meaningful connections between learning in the classroom and learning on the job are made evident. IOWA-GROW® uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help students connect the skills and knowledge they are gaining in the classroom with the work they are doing, and vice versa. IOWA GROW® is focused on making student employment a “high-impact activity” - one that requires students to reflect on their learning and connect their learning within and beyond the classroom.

Four Quick Questions
1. How is this job fitting in with your academics?
2. What are you learning here that’s helping you in school?
3. What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
4. Can you give me a couple of examples of things you’ve learned here that you think you’ll use in your chosen...
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

January 2017

Equity and Assessment:
Moving Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment

Erick Montenegro and Natasha A. Jankowski

Occasional Paper #29
www.learningoutcomesassess.org
Epistemology

Assessment is fundamentally about epistemology – what does it mean to say a student knows or fails to demonstrate that they know something? How do we know students have learned? How can we say that students are learning or acquired knowledge? But what are our epistemologies?

- Compliance assessment – propositional knowledge describing a state of affairs – that students have learned
- Measurement models - set of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions which determine whether someone knows something
- There are beliefs – but that is not enough because our beliefs may not necessarily describe the ways things actually are so we need to justify our beliefs.

- It’s also questions of ethics and ontology – who gets to learn? Who are the learners?
Philosophy of Assessment

We need a philosophy of assessment that is ripe for undertaking what it means to know within the culturally diverse learning population and power structures of who gets to validate that students know and/or have somehow acquired knowledge.
What does good assessment look like for us here?

Why do we think that what we are doing, for these students, will lead to enhanced learning, at this time?
Causal Statements

The ability to make causal claims about our impact on students and their learning

Institutional structures and support + student = enhanced learning
Difficulty of Causal Statements

Mobility of students
Untracked changes
Changes in courses add up to program level change
Lack of clarity on what even counts as a program
Life
Levels at which use occurs
Longer than a year cycle
Loosely coupled relationships
But...

Toulmin (2003)

Evidence → Claim

Warrant

Warrants
Arguments
Theories of Change

Why do we think the changes we make will lead to better outcomes?

What is assumed in the changes we select as it relates to how students understand and navigate higher education?
For instance...

Coverage and content
Opportunities and support
Intentional, coherent, aligned pathways

Within each of these is the belief about root causes – why students were not learning or not meeting the outcome and the mechanism by which the institution can help them succeed
Discussion Questions

What are some of the underlying principles or foundations of each school of thought?

Can you think of any other schools of thought?