


**Assessing
General Education**

Challenges & Choices
SACS-COC Summer Institute July 21, 2009

**Selected
Slides**

**Assessing
General
Education** **Getting acquainted**

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**Assessing
General
Education** **Overview**

Our situation
Challenges
Choices

- ▶ Motives
- ▶ Organization
- ▶ Learning objectives
- ▶ Assessment methods
- ▶ Responses

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Our situation

Parents & Students

**HIGHER
ED**

Employers

Government

Accreditors

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Expectations

The institution . . .

- ▶ identifies college-level general education competencies and
- ▶ the extent to which graduates have attained them.

(SACS 3.5.1)

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Expectations

The institution . . .

- ▶ provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.

(SACS 3.3.1)

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We are called . . .

To have a clear sense of **purpose**.

To **discover** what students are learning.

To **act** on what we find.

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Dare we . . .

Express our **real hopes** for students, knowing we cannot fully control the "outcomes"?

Trade our beliefs about what students are learning for **evidence** of learning?

Assess **learning we care about**, not merely what's easiest to measure?

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Motives

Do you want to assess . . .

The general education **program**?

General education **goals**?

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Motives

Are you doing this . . .

- To be **accountable**?
- To **improve** teaching and learning?

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Motives

What do you believe . . .

about the relationship between
assessment and teaching?

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Assessment & teaching: What do you believe?

- "Assessment can inform those who aren't in the classroom, but it can't tell teachers much they don't already know."
- "Assessment can help faculty decide what to teach and how to teach it."

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Organization

Goal To equip students to resolve conflicts nonviolently and solve problems creatively, often by working with others.

Objective Students will be able to define problems before seeking solutions to them.

Outcome Students are able to describe the steps in Dewey's sequence.

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Organization

Goal An intention or desire

Objectives Knowledge, abilities or values which, if attained by students, fulfill the goal.

Outcomes Observations from which attainment of objectives may be inferred

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Organization

	Goals	Objectives	Assessments
A)	Program	Program	Program
B)	Program	Program	Courses
C)	Program	Courses	Courses
D)	Courses	Courses	Courses

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Learning objectives

Which has your institution defined?

- Goals
- Learning objectives
- Outcomes

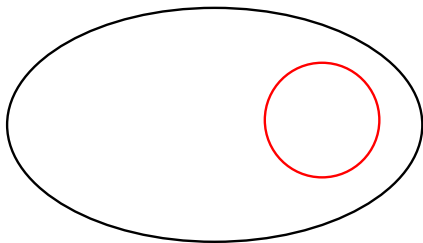
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Learning objectives should . . .

- ▶ Describe knowledge, abilities or values students will possess.
- ▶ Concern learning you hope will **endure**.

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Learning that endures



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Learning that endures

Think of a general education course of interest to you:

- 1) Identify something students learn in the course that you don't expect them to remember (and that's OK with you).
- 2) Identify something students learn in it that you hope they will retain.

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Learning objectives should . . .

- ▶ Describe knowledge, abilities or values.
- ▶ Concern learning we hope will endure.
- ▶ Be **real**.

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Assessment options

- ▶ Testing
- ▶ Evaluating student work
- ▶ Student self-reports
- ▶ Faculty discussions

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Pairing objectives & assessment methods

Which learning objectives do **decision-makers** expect you to report on?

Which objectives do **you** care about?

Which might **surprise** you?

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Responding to assessments

Can you **trust** what assessments say?

- ▶ Student motivation
- ▶ Sampling

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Responding to assessments

Do your assessments inform action?

- ▶ Can you break out findings for use by departments and teachers?
- ▶ Are findings sufficiently detailed?

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Responding to assessments

Who may act on findings?

- ▶ Faculty
- ▶ Academic support staff
- ▶ General education committee
- ▶ Administrators

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Stay in touch

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