

The CLA In The Assessment and Accountability Space

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Themes

- Undergraduate education as a common pool problem and the role of assessment
- The CLA
- CLA 2.0
- The new individual student-based protocol
- Benefits to Participants in CLA
- The way forward
- FAQ's

Undergraduate Education As A Common Pool Problem (CPP)

- CPP's arise whenever a group of people depend on a public good that everyone uses but no one owns and where one person's use affects another person's ability to use the good, and either the population fails to provide the resources, over consumes, and/or fails to replenish it.

Nature of the Undergraduate Education CPP

- Massive access deficits, low graduation rates and quality issues combined with rising costs and declining revenues
 - 47 million high school dropouts
 - 57 percent graduation rates within 6 years
 - 40 percent of entering college students require remediation
 - Surveys and recent studies identify lower than acceptable quality of student learning in colleges

The Coming Test for Institutional Redesign

- CPP combines with continued rising costs and declining revenues, the emergence of human capital as our key national resource, and the disruptive impact of Internet-based education solutions---for profit colleges, Open Education Resource (OER) movement
- National debate on CPP is coming soon
- Next decade likely to bring into focus the need to improve teaching and learning in undergraduate education

Standardized Assessment Is Needed

- To provide comparative benchmarks for institutions
- As part of move to outcomes-based governance/internal accountability system
- To benchmark and analyze gaps in student learning between racial/ethnic groups
- To provide a metric against which to evaluate ideas for improvement in productivity
- To give students additional information about their performance they can use for a variety of purposes

Implications for Accountability

- Post secondary institutions and systems should take charge of the imperative for more evidence of student learning building on the values of the Academy,
 - Respect for relative faculty autonomy
 - A focus on improvement of student learning
 - A protocol that combines comparative-based standardized assessments with local-based formative assessment
 - Use the principles of peer review for reporting

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) In Context

- The performance tasks are designed to measure higher order skills, critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem solving and writing initially at institution level of analysis.
- CLA is now joined by the ETS Proficiency Profile and ACT's CAAP multiple choice tests that also measure critical thinking.
- Both standardized and formative assessment essential
- CLA performance assessments are used for both formative and summative (standardized) purposes.

Swiftaire 235

- You advise the president of DynaTech
- DynaTech makes airplane navigation and communication equipment
- DynaTech's sales manager suggests buying a Swiftaire 235 to visit customers and demo its products
- Recent accident – wing came off in flight
- Student's tasks
 - Review document library
 - Write memo discussing pros and cons of DynaTech getting a Swiftaire 235
 - Justify your recommendations

Document Library

- Newspaper article about recent accident
- Transcript of interview about accidents
- DynaTech email exchanges regarding reasons to buy a Swiftaire 235
- Trade magazine article that compares Swiftaire 235's performance and safety characteristics to similar planes
- Manufacturer specifications and required pilot training for Swiftaire 180 and 235
- Charts about airplane accidents and sales

Status of the CLA, 2010-2011

- 283 institutions testing in U.S. (roughly mirrors the Carnegie classification)
- CLA, one of three national critical thinking tests recommended by Voluntary system of Accountability (VSA) of APLU/AASC&U
- Feasibility study for OECD's Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) underway---Korea, Norway, Finland, Mexico, Kuwait, Egypt, United States (?)

The Continuous Improvement System

- Do comparative institution-based testing with CLA
- Drill down for additional analyze
- Carry out variety of responses, particularly those focused on the classroom
- Re test using CLA value added institution-based testing
- Repeat the cycle

CLA 2.0

- Reengineered scoring rubrics to provide additional information to students about their responses and how they might have scored better
- Results aggregated to provide colleges with a sense of overall response quality on four scales: analytic, including quantitative reasoning, and evaluation, problem solving, writing effectiveness and writing mechanics

CLA 2.0 (2)

- Improved value-added model for estimating institutional contributions to student learning
- Machine scoring of all performance tasks

CLA 2.0 (3)

- CLA Education Program: teach, learn, assess
 - Offers performance task academies to help faculty learn 1) how to develop their own tasks and 2) how to teach the types of complex problem solving skills employed in the CLA performance tasks
 - 50 academies held so far with close to 2,000 faculty/ many more planned
 - Open Education Resource (OER) being explored to get core CLA intellectual property on Internet platforms for faculty to access without charge.

Benefits of Participation In CLA

- Consortia approach---developing and sharing best practice teaching and learning approaches, the Council of Independent Colleges
- Systems of Accountability, the case of the University of Texas System
- How to use the information---Bluefield State, Cabrini and Kalamazoo Colleges examples

Sample Topics From CLA Conference

- Performance is Reality---Developing a Performance Task (PT) in Legal Studies
- Using CLA in the Classroom Performance Tasks for Assessment in a Quantitative Reasoning Course
- A Cognitive Psychology PT: A Referendum on Cell Phone Use While Driving
- A CLA-based biology course: development of a protocol for breast cancer treatment

The Case for An Individual, Student-Based CLA Test

- A reliable and valid individual-based protocol would provide students with information about their strengths and weaknesses that are benchmarked to the performance of students at their own and other colleges when they enter college.
- Graduating students could receive a certified report of results which they could choose to use for job applications and other purposes

The Goal: Create A Test of Value

- The goal is to create a testing protocol with stakes for the students taking it but not the kind of high stakes exemplified by the SAT, ACT or licensing tests.
- The test should reveal important additional information about the student's skills but not have a significant effect on the student's academic future.

A Test of Value (continued)

- The students should view the test benchmarking results they can choose to use publically if they decide to do so.
- The test will therefore have sufficient stakes to encourage students to take the test and do well on it.

A Test of Value (Continued)

- Because there will be significant benefits to the students taking the new protocol as graduating seniors it will be appropriate for colleges to let their seniors know that taking the test is optional---they can take the test if they wish and pay for it. The cost of the test will be in the range of the cost for the SAT or ACT.

Benefits

- Freshmen will receive important information about their strengths and weaknesses
- Since the mean GPA is 3.0 for graduating seniors in public colleges and 3.5 in private schools, students would have additional information they can provide employers

Benefits

- For the college the costs of testing shift to the student. This means the college would have greater incentive to recommend larger numbers of students to test with the new protocol which would give the school more information. The institution could still compute its value added scores. Eventually, some schools may consider establishing minimum proficiency levels

The Way Forward

- Identify dimensions of the CPP problem in detail based on evidence
- Raise the CPP issue to highest policy priority
- Understand that recognition of existence of a CPP is the first step in solving it
- Multiple partnerships must be created, including between adherents of formative and standardized assessment

Suggestions for WICHE Public Policy Leadership

- Identify CPP issues in WICHE's 15 states and publicize them
- Encourage systematic efforts to attack CPP issues, reporting on positive efforts
- There are now at least 3 national tests of higher order skills, ETS's Proficiency Profile, ACT's CAAP, and CAE's CLA. AAC&U, NSSE and other groups are rich information sources for assessment. Encourage collaboration
- Develop vision and strategy to attack CPP

FAQ's: Critics Assertions, 7 Red Herrings

- Scientific measurement not possible
- Comparison not warranted
- Teacher/student interaction in classroom the key
- All assessments are alike
- One size fits all tests Are Inappropriate
- Content is what is important, thus majors
- Testing results will be used against colleges

FAQ's Continued

- What evidence is there that the CLA is reliable and valid?
- Is not motivation a large problem in the current CLA protocol?
- Are there interaction effects between the CLA performance tasks and academic majors?