

**HIED 840 Syllabus (Spring 2012)**  
**Assessing Student Outcomes and Evaluating Academic Programs**  
An On-line Course Offered by Penn State's Graduate Certificate in  
Institutional Research



**Required Textbooks:**

Suskie, L. (2009), *Assessing student learning: A Common sense guide*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company Inc. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)

[Replace/Update] Banta, T. W., Lund, J. P., Black, K. E. & Oblander, F. W (eds). (1996), *Assessment in practice: putting principles to work on college campuses*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). *Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How? New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

**Unit 1: Welcome, Introduction, and Effective Reporting**

After research design, data collection, and analysis, institutional researchers need to report their findings in an effective manner. Otherwise, our efforts will have been wasted. We discussed Effective Reporting in the Foundations course, but this lesson also reviews some best practices for reporting research results to diverse audiences, including written, visual, and verbal presentations.



**Reading Assignments**

***From Textbooks:***

Suskie, Linda (2009). Summarizing and analyzing assessment results. Chapter 16 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Sharing assessment results. Chapter 17 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Using assessment findings effectively and appropriately. Chapter 18 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 11 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

***From the Electronic Reserve:***

Smart, J. C. (2005). Attributes of exemplary research manuscripts employing quantitative analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, 46(4), 461-477.

**Optional Resources:**

Bers, T.H. & Seybert, J.A. (1999). *Effective reporting*. Resources in Institutional Research (No. 12). Tallahassee, FL: Association for Institutional Research. (Optional reading but free to AIR members)

Sanders, Liz and Filkins, Joseph (2009). *Effective reporting. Second Edition*. Tallahassee, FL: Association for Institutional Research. (Optional reading but free to AIR members)

## **Unit 2: The Assessment Context: Accreditation, Accountability, and Performance**

**Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- Understand the tensions arising within colleges and universities in regard to accountability and performance evaluation.
- Become familiar with some of the key trends in accountability and accreditation.
- Understand the drivers for assessment that serve as foundations for the knowledge examined throughout the course.



**Reading Assignments From textbook**

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 1 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

***From the Electronic Reserve or Internet:***

Dodd, A. H (2004). Chapter 2. Accreditation as a catalyst for institutional effectiveness. Chapter 2 in M. Dooris, J. Trainer, & W. Kelley, (Eds.), *Strategic Planning and Institutional Research. New Directions for Institutional Research*, (No. 123). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Ewell, P. (2009). **Assessment, accountability, and improvement: Revisiting the tension.** (NILOA Occasional Paper No.1). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

[http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/PeterEwell\\_005.pdf](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/PeterEwell_005.pdf)

Kuh, G., & Ikenberry, S. (2009). More than you think, Less than we need: learning outcomes assessment in American Higher Education. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).  
<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/NILOAsurveyresults09.htm>

Provezis, S. (2010). **Regional Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes: Mapping the Territory.** (NILOA Occasional Paper No.6). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.  
<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/Provezis.pdf>

Wergin, J. F. (2005). Taking responsibility for student learning: The role of accreditation. *Change*, 37(1), 31-33.

Wergin, J. F. (2005). Higher education: Waking up to the importance of accreditation. *Change*, 37(3), 35-41.

### Unit 3: A Model of Institutional Effectiveness

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to understand the five-step model of institutional effectiveness, which provides the foundation for the other topics in this course.



#### Reading Assignments

##### *From Textbooks:*

Banta, T. W. et al. (1996). Chapter 16: Developing a campus-wide approach to the assessment of institutional effectiveness. In *Assessment in practice: putting principles to work on college campuses*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 2 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

##### *From the Electronic Reserve:*

Volkwein, J. Fredericks (2007). Assessing Institutional Effectiveness and Connecting the Pieces of a Fragmented University. Chapter 7, pp. 145-180, in *Fixing the Fragmented University* (Joseph Burke, Ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

### Unit 4: Institutional Effectiveness - Academic Program Evaluation

**Upon completion of this lesson, students will:**

- understand the importance of academic program evaluation and how it can be used to demonstrate goal attainment, educational quality, and institutional effectiveness.
- know the basic steps in the most common program review process and see the points at which institutional research is able to contribute.
- develop an appreciation for some of the most prominent evaluation models and program review practices that are implemented by institutions, state agencies, and regional or national accreditors.



**Reading Assignments**

***From the Electronic Reserve or Internet:***

AACU (1992). Program review and educational quality in the major: The faculty handbook. Project on liberal learning, study-in-depth, and the arts and sciences major. Washington, D.C.: AACU.

Barak, R.J. and Sweeney, J.D. (1995). "Academic Program Review in Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment." Chapter 1 in Robert Barak & Lisa Mets (eds.), Using Academic Program Review. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, No. 86. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., pp.19 – 36.

Ewell, P, Paulson, K, & Kinzie, J. (2011). Down and in: assessment practices at the program level. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/NILOAsurveyresults11.htm>

Gardner, Don E. (1977). Five Evaluation Frameworks. *J. of Higher Ed.* 48: (Sep/Oct) 571-593.

Mets, L.A. (1995). "Program Review in Academic Departments." Chapter 2 in Robert Barak & Lisa Mets (eds.), Using Academic Program Review. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, No. 86. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., pp.19 – 36.

Shirley, R. C., & Volkwein, J. F. (1978). Establishing academic program priorities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 49 (5), 472-488.

Volkwein, J.F. (1984). Responding to Financial Retrenchment: Lessons from the Albany Experience. *J. of Higher Ed.* 55 (May/June): 389-401.

**Unit 5 and 6: Overview of Student Outcomes Assessment I & II**

**Upon completion of this two-week lesson, students will:**

- Learn about definitional, methodological, educational, and organizational issues in assessing student outcomes.
- Understand the connections among the WHY, WHO, WHAT, and HOW of student outcomes assessment.
- Become familiar with existing outcomes models and methods used by institutional researchers in their assessment practices.



### Reading Assignment

#### ***From Textbooks:***

Suskie, Linda (2009). Understanding Assessment? Part One, Chapters 1-3 in *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Why assess student learning?. Chapter 4 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Promoting an assessment culture. Chapter 5 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Supporting assessment efforts with time, infrastructure and resources. Chapter 6 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Organizing an assessment process. Chapter 7 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Developing learning goals. Chapter 8 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Terenzini, P. (2010). "Assessment with open eyes." Chapter 3 in J.F. Volkwein (Ed.). "Assessing Student Outcomes: Why, Who, What, How?" *Assessment Supplement, New Directions for Institutional Research*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Winter, 2009. Reprinted from *The Journal of Higher Education*, 1989: 60(6), 644-664.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 4 in "Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?" *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

#### ***From the Electronic Reserve or Internet:***

Banta, T.W., Griffin, M., Flateby, T.L., & Kahn, S. (2009, December). **Three promising alternatives for assessing college students' knowledge and skills.** (NILOA Occasional Paper No.2). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment.

<http://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/AlternativesforAssessment.pdf>

Volkwein, J. Fredericks (2003). "Using and Enhancing Existing Data to Respond to Campus Challenges." Chapter 12 in *Research in the College Context: Approaches and Methods*, Francis K. Stage and Kathleen Manning (Editors). NY: Brunner-Routledge, pp. 183-207. .

Volkwein, J. F. (2011, September). **Gaining Ground: The Role of Institutional Research in Assessing Student Outcomes and Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness** (NILOA Occasional Paper No.11). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.  
<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/Volkwein.pdf>

Go to the AIR Website and click on the "Measuring Quality" button. Explore the inventory of assessment instruments compiled there by AIR and NILOA. This online resource replaces the 2001 publication by Borden and Owens.

Go to the NILOA Website and explore the Occasional Paper Series.  
<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapers.htm>

## Unit 7: Basic Skills

**Upon completion of this lesson, students will:**

- Understand the foundations and purposes of basics skills assessment.
- Understand the process of assessing basic skills.
- To become acquainted with various instruments for assessing basic skills.



### Reading Assignment

***From Textbooks:***

Suskie, Linda (2009). Using a scoring guide to plan and evaluate an assignment. Chapter 9 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 5 in "Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?" *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

***From the Electronic Reserve or Internet:***

Carter-Wells, J. (1996). Raising expectations for critical reading. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 96, 45-54.

Click, A. L. III (1996). Educating students to write effectively. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 96, 31-44.

Dougherty, C. and Fantaske (1996). Defining expectations for problem-solving skills.

*New Directions for Higher Education*, 96, 55-66.

Rubin, R. B. and Morreale, S. P. (1996). Setting expectations for speech communication and listening. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 96, 19-30.

Kutner, Mark, Greenberg, Elizabeth, & Baer, Justin (2005). *A first look at the literacy of America's adults in the 21st century* (Report No. NCES 2006470). Jessup, MD: U.S. Department of Education.

Ory, J. C., (1991). Suggestions for deciding between commercially available and locally developed assessment instruments. *NCA Quarterly* 66(2), 451-457

Thomas, K. M. (2004). The SAT II: Minority/Majority test-score gaps and what they could mean for college admissions. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(5), 1318-1334.

Go to the AIR Website and click on the "Measuring Quality" button. Explore the inventory of Basic Skills assessment instruments compiled there by AIR and NILOA.

## Unit 8: Personal-Social Growth- Optional

This lesson is optional for extra credit. It contains a quick overview of material that is covered in greater depth in our on-line course HiEd 598C/830- Studies of Students and Student Affairs Programs.

**Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- Understand social and personal development theories
- Become familiar with what non-cognitive outcomes are important to student success in college and beyond
- Become familiar with assessment instruments that measure personal-social growth



### **Reading Assignment From Textbooks:**

Banta, T. et al. (1996). "Assessing student development and progress." Chapter 13 in Banta, T. et al. *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses*.

Schuh, J.H. & Gansemer-Topf, A.M. (2010). **The Role of Student Affairs in Student Learning Assessment** (NILOA Occasional Paper No.7). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

<http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/StudentAffairsRole.pdf>

Suskie, Linda (2009). Assessing attitudes, values, dispositions, and habits of mind.. Chapter 12 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 8 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

***From the Electronic Reserve or Internet:***

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. p. 20-33.

Strange, C. (2004). Measuring up: Defining and assessing outcomes of character in college. Chapter 3 in J. Dalton, T. Russell, & S. Kline (Eds.), *Assessing character outcomes in college. New Directions for Institutional Research* (No. 122). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Yamikoski, R. (2004). Leadership perspectives on the role of character development in higher education. Chapter 2 in J. Dalton, T. Russell, & S. Kline (Eds.), *Assessing character outcomes in college. New Directions for Institutional Research* (No. 122). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Go to the AIR Website and click on the "Measuring Quality" button. Explore the inventory of assessment instruments measuring attitudes, values, and personal growth compiled there by AIR and NILOA.

## **Units 9 & 10: General Education and Liberal Learning I & II**

**Upon completion of this two-week lesson, students will be able to:**

- Understand the foundations of general education.
- Understand general education issues and challenges.
- Summarize a process for general education assessment.
- Identify general education assessment methods, measures, and instruments.



### **Reading Assignment**

***From Textbooks:***

Banta, T. W. et al. (1996). Chapter 12: Assessing student achievement in general education. In *Assessment in practice: putting principles to work on college campuses*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Writing a traditional test.. Chapter 11 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Selecting a published test or survey.. Chapter 14 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 6 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

***From the Electronic Reserve or Internet:***

Shavelson, R. J. & Huang, L. (2003). Responding responsibly: To the frenzy to assess learning in higher education. *Change*, 35(1), 11-19.

Go to the AIR Website and click on the "Measuring Quality" button. Explore the inventory of General Education assessment instruments compiled there by AIR and NILOA.

## **Unit 11: Attainment in the Major Field of Study**

**Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:**

- Understand the foundations of assessing attainment in the major field of study.
- Understand the process of assessing attainment in the major field of study.
- Be acquainted with the instruments and strategies used for assessing attainment in the major field.



### **Reading Assignments**

***From Textbooks:***

Banta, T. et al. Chapter 11: Assessing student achievement in the major. In *Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses*.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Creating an effective assignment. Chapter 10 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Suskie, Linda (2009). Assembling assessment information into portfolios. Chapter 13 in L. Suskie, *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. Bolton, MA: Anchor Publishing.

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 7 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

***From the Electronic Reserve or Internet:***

Applebaum, M. I. (1989) Assessment through the major. In C. Adelman (Ed.), *Performance and judgment: Essays on the principles and practice in the assessment of college student learning*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of education. pp. 117-137.

Ratcliff, J. L. (1992). What can we learn from coursework patterns about improving the undergraduate curriculum? *New Directions for Higher Education*, 80, 5-22.

Go to the AIR Website and click on the "Measuring Quality" button. Explore the inventory of assessment instruments compiled there by AIR and NILOA.

## Unit 12: Alumni Studies

This lesson examines the dual purposes of alumni research—to demonstrate institutional effectiveness (usually within the context of maintaining accreditation) and to enhance alumni giving (usually within the context of attaining financial goals). The lesson describes the value of alumni studies within an overall effectiveness strategy; reviews the relevant alumni outcomes identified in various studies; considers the advantages and disadvantages of locally designed vs. published survey instruments; and shares ideas for enhancing institutional effectiveness and fund-raising via alumni research.



### Reading Assignment from Textbook

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 9 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

### *From the Electronic Reserve:*

Borden, V. M. H. (2005). Using alumni research to align program improvement with institutional accountability. Chapter 5 in D. Weerts, & J. Vidal, (Eds.), *Enhancing alumni research: European and American perspectives. New Directions for Institutional Research*, (No. 126). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Cabrera, A. F., Weerts, D. J., & Zulick, B. J. (2005). Making an impact with alumni surveys. Chapter 1 in D. Weerts, & J. Vidal, (Eds.), *Enhancing alumni research: European and American perspectives. New Directions for Institutional Research*, (No. 126). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Ewell, P. T. (2005). Alumni studies as instruments of public policy: The U.S. experience. Chapter 2 in D. Weerts, & J. Vidal, (Eds.), *Enhancing alumni research: European and American perspectives. New Directions for Institutional Research*, (No. 126). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Kuh, G. D. (2005). Imagine asking the client: using student and alumni surveys for accountability in higher education. In J. Burke (Ed.), *Achieving accountability in higher education: balancing public, academic, and market Demands* (pp. 148-172). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Volkwein, J.F. (1989). A model of alumni gift-giving behavior. Paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Atlanta, Georgia, November 1989.

## Unit 13: Measurement Issues in Assessment

**This lesson provides a brief overview of the following selected issues in assessment:**

- Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)
- The inadequacy of course grades
- Standardized Testing
- Self-reported measures
- Missing Data
- Weighting Data
- Conditional Effects
- Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) versus Ordinary Least Squares (OLS)
- Causation and Correlation



### Reading Assignment

#### ***From Textbooks:***

Volkwein, J.F. (2010). Chapter 10 in “Assessing Student Learning: Why, Who, What, How?” *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (Assessment Supplement). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Wiley, Inc., Publishers.

#### ***From the Electronic Reserve:***

Pascarella, E. T. & Terenzini, P.T. (1991). Appendix: methodological and analytical issues in assessing the influence of college. In Ernest T. Pascarella & Patrick T. Terenzini. *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research*, pp. 657-691.

Pascarella, E. T., Cruce, T., Umbach, P. D., Wolniak, G. C., Kuh, G. D., Carini, R. M. Hayek, J.C., Gonyes, R. M., & Zhao, C. (2006). Institutional selectivity and good practices in undergraduate education: How strong is the link? *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77 (2), 251-285.

Pike, G. R. (2002). Measurement issues in outcomes assessment. In T. Banta and Associates, Ed. *Building a scholarship of assessment*, pp.131-147. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Terenzini, P.T. (1994). The case for unobtrusive measures. In J.A. Stark, A. Thomas., Eds. *Assessment and program evaluation: ASHE Reader Series*, pp. 619-628. Boston: Pearson Custom.

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