
Measuring Value-Added Through Large Scale Testing and Surveying

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Packet Contents:

1. Presentation Slides
2. Assessment Cohort Test Tracking Information
3. Example of Student Life and Learning Publication

Prepared for the 2001 Annual Meeting of the Commission on Colleges

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December 2001*

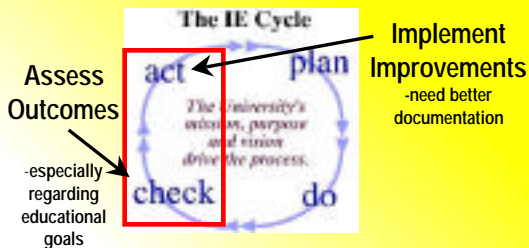
About Appalachian

- Comprehensive Institution in the University of North Carolina System
- 12,800 undergraduates mainly of traditional age + 1000 graduate students
- Currently wrapping up reaffirmation of accreditation self-study (visit in April 2002)
- Last visit resulted in recommendation on use of results of evaluation
- Last visit resulted in suggestion on evaluating effectiveness of core curriculum



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Institutional Effectiveness



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Existing IE / Assessment

- Program review (both internal and from UNC System)
- Sophomore, Senior, Alumni, Employer Surveys (UNC System)
- Five-Year planning documents using COC language



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Improvements to Overall Institutional Effectiveness

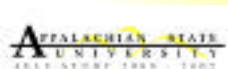
- Inclusion in annual reports of IE documentation from all units
- More direct linking of planning, reporting and assessment
- Transition from core assessment to major assessment – using Focus days and new Assessment Office



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Focus and Assessment Days

- First Assessment Day (Focus Day) in Fall 1998
- Original plan: a Focus Day each semester:
 - Thursday after Labor Day
 - Thursday after Martin Luther King holiday



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The Core Curriculum

- **Subject Requirements**
 - 6 sh English (composition and literature)
 - 12 sh humanities (including lit and fine arts)
 - 4 sh mathematics
 - 8-10 sh laboratory science
 - 2 sh physical education / wellness
 - 6 sh history (world civilization)
 - 6 sh social science



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The Core Curriculum

- **Skill Requirements (designators)**
 - 4 Writing across curriculum (2 included in core)
 - 2 Writing in major
 - 4 Multicultural (2 included in core)
 - 2 Numerical Data (1 included in core)
 - 2 Computer
 - 1 Cross Disciplinary
 - 1 Speaking in major



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Cohort-Based Method

- Each freshman cohort assessed on a cognitive skill
- Follow-up assessment 3 or more semesters later
- Cohort tracking began in 1995 with a collection of surveys administered to new freshmen during summer orientation



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Cohort-Based Method

- Large-scale testing began in 1997 using various CAAP tests (e.g., critical thinking, Writing, Reading) and locally produced and scored writing test
- Follow-up tests of the 1997 cohort were conducted in January 1999 and January 2001



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W-Designator Assessment

- Began in a limited way with the 1997 cohort
- Expanded with the 1998 Freshman Cohort to include essays by all freshmen at matriculation and three semesters later



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Other Designator Assessment

- Speaking Assessment
 - 1999, 2000, and 2001 cohorts
- Computing Assessment
 - 1999 cohort with follow-up in January 2001



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Other Cognitive Assessment

- Math/Science Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Social Sciences
- Critical Thinking



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UNC Surveys

- UNC Freshman Survey
- UNC Sophomore Survey
- UNC Senior Survey
- UNC Alumni Survey



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Other Surveys and Inventories

- CIRP
- NCTLA Pre-College Survey
- NCTLA Follow-up Survey
- CSXQ
- CSEQ
- NSSE



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Other Surveys and Inventories

- Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (Form A)
- Learning Community Survey
- Survey of Academic Orientation
- Speaking Experiences/Skills Survey



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Sample Outcomes: Writing Assessment

- Locally produced and CAAP tests
- SATV effect
- Significant change in Freshman to Sophomore scores
- W Designator course effect
- Readers' judgments



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Lessons Learned

- Discontinue Spring Focus Day
- Emphasize qualitative research more
- Integrate core curriculum assessment with other operations
- Focus on course-based or discipline-area assessment



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Lessons Learned

- Small, statistically significant gains in scores on cognitive tests do not disaggregate sufficiently to show treatment effects or sub-group distinctions.
- The whole enterprise depends upon student effort, which may be unreliable.
- Large-scale testing is expensive in time and money.



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Next Steps

- Periodic large-scale testing of general knowledge and skills (e.g., critical thinking)
- Application of qualitative research methods
- Continuation of Fall Focus Day



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More Information

- Core curriculum assessment:
http://www.appstate.edu/www_docs/depart/irp/irapmenu_as.html
- Student Life and Learning Assessment:
<http://www.sllresearch.appstate.edu/>
- UNC System Assessment:
<http://www.ga.unc.edu/UNCGA/assessment/>
- Self-Study:
<http://www.selfstudy.appstate.edu/>
- Planning:
http://www.appstate.edu/www_docs/depart/irp/irapmenu_pt.html



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