



**Three Assessment Tenors:  
New Verses, New Songs**

**Assessment Institute in Indianapolis**

**Trudy W. Banta  
Linda Suskie  
Barbara E. Walvoord**




**3 Tenors**

**Harmony**

**or**

**Discord?**

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**Assessing and Improving Student  
Writing in College: A Guide for  
Institutions, General Education,  
Departments, and Classrooms**

**Barbara E. Walvoord**



**Five Dimensions of Quality: A  
Common Sense Guide to  
Accreditation and Accountability**

**Linda Suskie**



# **Assessment Essentials Second Edition**

**Trudy W. Banta  
Catherine A. Palomba**

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## **Three Questions**

- 1. Why so many books on assessment now?**
- 2. What changes over time and current issues in assessment stand out for us?**
- 3. What does the future hold?**

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## Why all the books?

- Increasing accountability pressures
- Outcomes assessment is not going away
- How do we do it?
- How can we demonstrate student learning?
- Can evaluation help us cut costs?

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**Barbara Walvoord:**

**Where is Assessment Today?  
What Has Changed?  
What Does the Future Hold?**

**Two Changes, Two Tensions**

## **Two Changes, Two Tensions**

**Change #1. More opportunity to focus efforts**

**But continuing tension between**

- **Focusing one's efforts and**
- **Being accountable for everything**

## **Practical Suggestions: Everything vs. Focus**

**Not SLOs in sequence over time,  
but quick opening scan of  
everything**

**Then focus on what needs work**



**Suggestion: Add Question to  
Assessment Reports from  
Instructors, Programs:**

**“Based on your assessment of student learning (described earlier in the report), what do you believe the department/ gen-ed/ institution should work on?”**



**Suggestion: For General  
Education, Institution**

- **Reports from programs: What needs work?**
- **Student/alumni survey: How well did you achieve each of these SLOs?**
- **Evaluation of student work for multiple SLOs: What needs work?**



## **Suggestion: For Departments/Programs**

- **Faculty reports on classroom assessment: What needs work?**
- **Student/alumni survey**
- **Evaluate end-point student work for multiple SLOs: Which needs work?**



## **Change/Tension #2**

- **Research establishing “best practices”**
- **But continuing tension around implementation and “best for US”**

## **Best Practice vs. Best for Us**

- **Example: First-year experience does not mean just add a one-credit orientation course taught by adjuncts and staff, without proper oversight.**

- **Example: Writing-Intensive courses have many dangers and may not be right for everyone**



## **Suggestion**

- **Read best practice literature within a best practice**
- **Identify what makes best practices work**
- **Assess the practice in your own setting**

**Danger: Focus and Best Practice may Blind us to the BROADER Problems that Limit Student Learning**

**~ Linda Suskie ~**

**What Do All These Books Say  
About Assessment?**

- **Moving beyond the basics**
- **More nuanced questions and needs**
- **Richer body of research**

**Where is  
Assessment Today?  
What Has Changed  
Over Time?**

## Less Pushback




### Five Stages of Assessment (from Elisabeth Kubler-Ross)

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

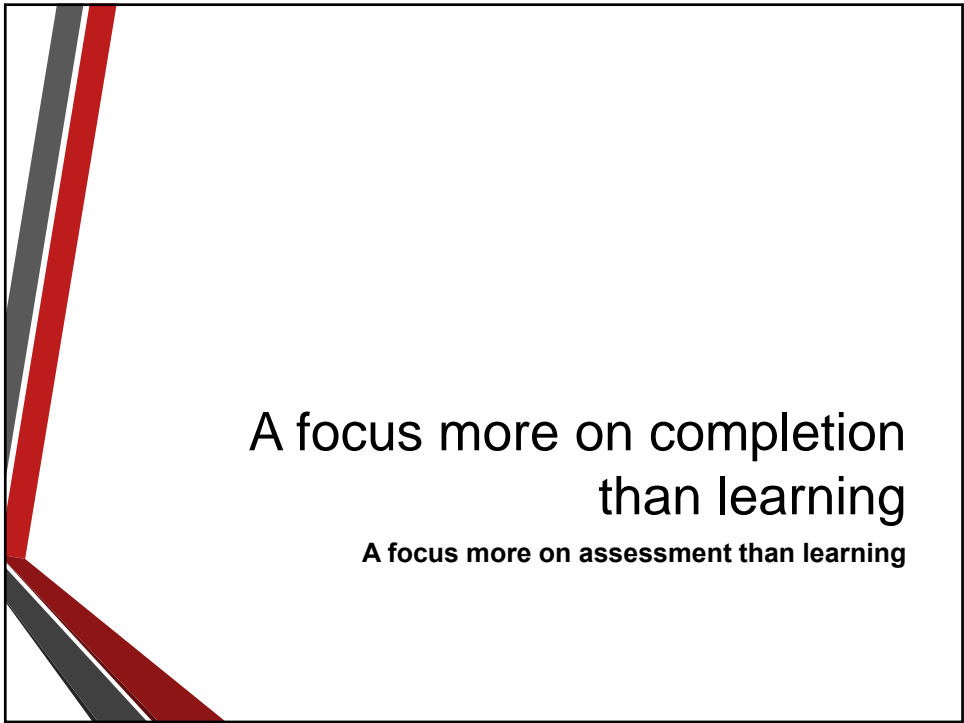
- More understanding of the basics
- More tools & technologies
- More research
- Colleges are sitting on piles of data.

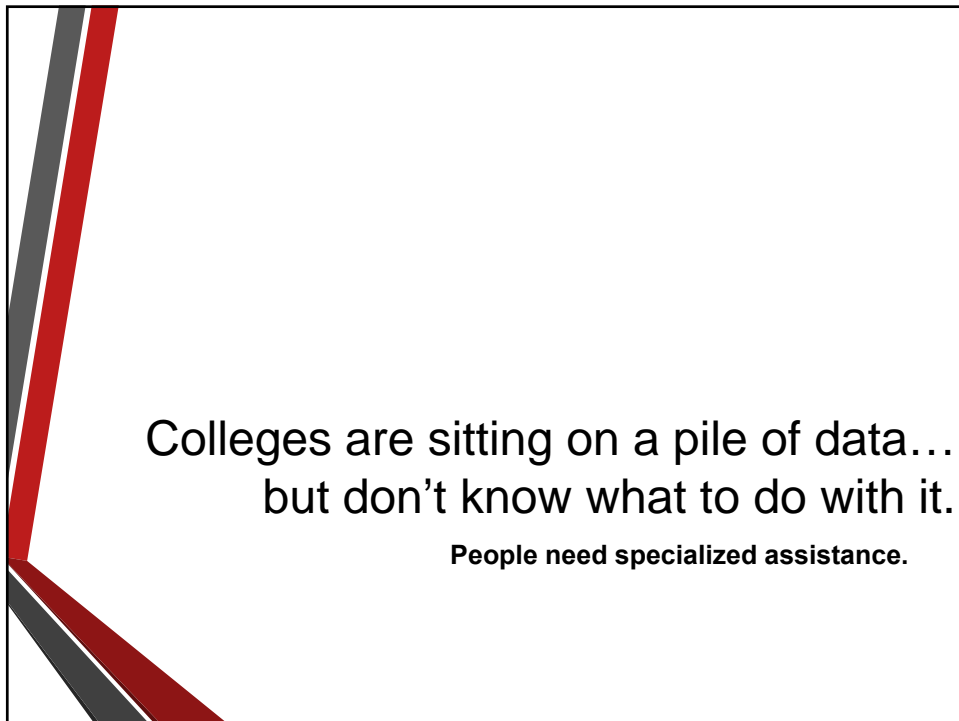


## **What Are the Current Issues?**



Quality continues to be  
defined by reputation, not  
effectiveness.







# What Does the Future Hold? What Issues Will We Face?



## Challenges

- Focus on providing a *great* education.
- Be relevant and responsive.
- Put our money where our mouth is.
- Fight complacency.
- Break down silos.
- Tell meaningful stories of our successes.

**~ Trudy Banta ~**

## **Current Issues & Changes**

- **More professional development**
  - **Workshops**
  - **Consultants**
  - **Webinars**
  - **Conferences**
  - **Graduate courses**

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## **Current Issues & Changes**

- **More interest in assessing**
  - **graduate education**
  - **high impact practices**
    - **service-learning**
    - **first-year seminars**
    - **undergraduate research**
    - **study abroad**

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## Current Issues & Changes

- **Diverse methods**
  - **ePortfolios**
  - **Rubrics, esp. VALUE**
  - **Competence-based assessment**
  - **Digital badges**

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## Current Issues & Changes

- **Involvement of students**
- **Involvement of student affairs professionals**
  - **Working to extend the classroom**
  - **Evaluating own programs**

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## **Build USE into Planning**

- **Who will review the results?**
- **What will interest them?**
- **What resources can be devoted to changes?**

- Wabash Center on Inquiry

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## **The Future**

- **More use of technology**
  - **to store and manage data**
  - **to individualize learning**
  - **to find out what works for whom**

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## The Future

- More collaboration on
  - rubric development
  - cross-instructor and cross-discipline grading

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## At the University of Tennessee

**CAAP**

**Academic Profile (MAPP, PP)**

**COMP (like CLA and withdrawn  
by 1990)**

**College BASE**

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## **In TN We Learned**

- 1) No test measured 30% of gen ed skills**
- 2) Tests of generic skills measure primarily prior learning**
- 3) Reliability of value added = .1**
- 4) Test scores give few clues to guide improvement actions**
- 5) Hard to motivate students to take these tests**

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## **An Inconvenient Truth**

**.9 = correlation between CLA and SAT/ACT  
means at the institutional level**

**thus**

**81% of the variance in institutions' scores  
is due to students' prior learning**

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## **Educational Testing Service 2012**

**(3 conditions in a controlled study)**

**Student motivation is a clear predictor of**

- **test performance**
- **value added scores**

**--Liu, Bridgeman, Adler  
*Ed Researcher***

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**“The choice of VAM can affect results”**

**Using HLM with CLA scores, reliability  
of value added = .75**

**“inadequate for making high-stakes  
comparisons” among institutions**

**- Jeffrey Steedle (CAE)  
2012, p. 637**

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## **Gates Context for Success**

**September 2012**

**“The majority (of the study group) felt that input-adjusted measures (of college outcomes) are too flawed to be incorporated in full-blown data-based performance evaluation.”**

**Synopsis Paper, p. 22  
Charles Clotfelter**

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## **The Future**

- Measures with their own problems**
  - Retention rate (% graduating)**
  - Time to degree**
  - Rates of employment**
  - Earnings of graduates**

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## **The Future**

**Need for continuing  
strong, supportive  
leadership**

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