

Assessing

for excellence

Welcome.

Central Carolina Community College is on a path toward assessment for excellence. Assessment discussions have been lively at CCCC over the past few years and with the recent award of an assessment grant, the assessment message is rapidly spreading to all of our 15 sites. This newsletter is one of two funded through the grant that will promote assessment. It is just one component of a larger initiative to make assessment at our institution a part of everything we do. In spring 2008, CCCC will welcome two assessment experts to the campus (page 12) and by May 2008 we will share a new assessment course through NC-NET.

The four articles featured in this issue offer insight, resources, and inspiration. We would like to hear from you. Please share your comments at assess@cccc.edu.

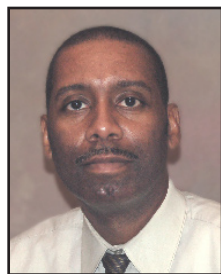
Celia Hurley, editor

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A newsletter promoting assessment excellence

Can Assessment for Accountability Complement Assessment for Improvement?

Trudy W. Banta

All of this focus, of the media, of quality assurance and of institutions, is on assessment as measurement. . . .we should design assessment, first, to support worthwhile learning . . . Standards will be raised by improving student learning rather than by better measurement of limited learning.

Graham Gibbs & Claire Simpson (2004)
Oxford University Open University, UK

These are times of great uncertainty and challenge for those of us who have devoted our energies to encouraging faculty and student affairs colleagues to assess student learning outcomes to obtain guidance for improving academic programs and student services and thus enhancing learning. We know the academy has been slow to realize the need for assessment to guide improvement, but now some faculty in virtually every institution are at least trying it out. Certainly the regional and disciplinary associations have been emphasizing outcomes assessment, and this influence is making a difference at most institutions today. Wonderfully creative work on new tools to assess critical thinking, reflective judgment, and deep learning are being developed by faculty, some individually and some in consortia such as the one Wabash College is leading (Wabash National Study, 2007). At last colleagues across the country are becoming aware of the potential for positive change offered by the kind of assessment we have championed for all these years!

Unfortunately, if we listen more carefully, we learn that the kind of assessment we believe is beginning to guide improvements in student learning is not what is being discussed by higher education policy makers. It is assessment for accountability, not improvement, that stakeholders outside the academy are proposing.

So those of us in the assessment community are asking each other, "Can assessment for accountability and assessment for improvement co-exist? Can the current accountability focus actually strengthen assessment for improvement? Or will an accountability tidal wave roll across the fields, crushing the fragile green sprouts of assessment for improvement that have begun to appear?" In this essay I suggest how assessment for accountability may begin to complement, and even strengthen, assessment for improvement.

Lessons from Grades K-12

On my campus I regularly convene a combined group of public school representatives and educators from multiple disciplines who are involved in preparing future teachers. From these colleagues I have heard the following comments, "Some of the most experienced teachers in my school have left the classroom because they feel the public has branded an F on their foreheads that only higher standardized test scores can erase." "Many who remain in the profession feel pressure to spend much of their time drilling students on the material

that will be on the state's accountability tests. They say their classrooms have become boring places for both students and teachers as creativity is no longer valued." "In some schools, the curriculum has been narrowed to focus on the English and math to be tested, so less time is spent on science and social studies, and physical education, art, and music are no longer offered." "Some students who know they are poor test-takers have given up, exhibit negative behaviors in class, and look forward to dropping out of school at the earliest possible date."

These educators know the literature and what is needed to create more effective schools—places that delight teachers and students alike, where learning is fun and student achievement is on the rise (see Allington, 1994). They know that for many students the school day and the school year should be longer, with 90 minutes each day for reading, writing, math, and science interspersed between periods for physical education, art, and music. Personalized instruction is based on diagnosed needs and learning styles and staff receive abundant opportunities for professional development that helps them make these things happen. The tests K-12 teachers value are not the high stakes state tests, but those that match their teaching objectives and tell them immediately where learning is effective and which skills need more work for which students. But all these improvements cost money and where will the dollars come from to implement them? To our chagrin, some stakeholders in our community seem more eager to call for spending millions on a second administration of the state-wide tests each year—spring as well as fall testing—than to advocate and find the money for the school improvements we know will enhance student learning. In the meantime, performance of U.S. students on international tests continues a downward spiral.

The Press to Make Higher Education More Accountable

Now we are on the brink of making the press to assess with a test a part of the higher education environment. In September 2006 the Commission on the Future of Higher Education made a number of recommendations, one of which is stated: "The collection of data from public institutions allowing meaningful interstate comparison of student learning should be encouraged and implemented in all states" (USDOE, 2006, p.24).

Just as we know what works to improve learning in grades K-12, we also have good evidence of what it takes to improve student growth and development in college. Decades of research continue to demonstrate that students learn more if they engage actively in learning, spend more time studying, interact frequently with faculty and with student peers concerning intellectual matters, experience high expectations for their persistence and achievement, and encounter and interact with diverse people and ideas (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). Many students need academic support programs and lots of time with peer and faculty mentors. Most current faculty are not trained as teachers, so extensive faculty development is essential to share what we know about good practice in enhancing learning.

Just as weighing a pig will not make it fatter, spending millions to test college students is not likely to help them learn more. Equally important, faculty who are just beginning to use

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assessment aimed at improvement may ask why they should continue to do so if the quality of their institution is going to be judged on the basis of standardized test scores achieved by a small sample of students.

Without question, we will see more emphasis on assessment of learning in college using standardized tests of general intellectual abilities. The commercially available tests of these abilities that I have studied recently are surprisingly lacking in vital information about their reliability and validity—the very characteristics that we expect to give standardized tests the edge over ones faculty develop to test what they are teaching. Moreover, we in colleges and universities have not yet conducted the studies that are needed to test the validity of these exams in our own contexts. We don't even know how students' scores on these tests compare with those of students who have matured over the same 4-6 years, but who have not gone to college. The impact of what goes on in the classroom—only 15% of a student's time—and elsewhere on campus is very hard to tease out of change that is the result of simple maturation, as well as learning that occurs on the job, in the family setting, in the community, and in interactions with peers outside the campus setting. Before we commit millions of dollars to a national testing program, we need to see the results of such validation studies.

The fact that so much is left undone in developing the standardized measures of general intellectual abilities available to us today suggests that there is yet time to develop more meaningful measures of student learning in college. And the impetus provided by the current accountability wave could give such efforts a boost.

So What Can We Do?

In some states, the mandate to administer one or more standardized tests has already been issued. Elsewhere we have the opportunity to try out some of the instruments being suggested. If scores are going to be used to compare institutions, we have an obligation to learn all we can about these tests. An excellent guide for conducting this investigation is *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999). We can ask faculty groups to study the instruments and answer the following questions, among others.

- Do the tests have scales that match our goals for student learning? That is, if we aim to develop good writers and critical thinkers, do the tests give us scores for these skills?
- Do students in the norm group come from institutions like ours?
- Have valid techniques been used to draw samples of test-takers on these campuses?
- Are convincing studies available that demonstrate test-retest reliability, construct and content validity?
- Have items been studied to see if they function differentially for different groups?
- Are we ready to undertake studies to demonstrate the validity of the tests in our own contexts?
- Will faculty embrace the tests and encourage their students to take them seriously?
- Can students be persuaded to do their best work on the tests?

All of these questions must be answered affirmatively if institutional reputations are to be judged on the basis of scores on standardized tests.

Other options offer advantages over standardized tests for addressing the press for accountability. One possibility is a report card that uses research-based indicators of good practice in higher education. Good practice in promoting student learning, for instance, can be measured using the National Survey of Student Engagement. We can develop standardized methods for reporting retention and graduation statistics; portion of financial aid that is need-based; aspects of alumni satisfaction; job placement rates by field; proportions of students engaged in undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, and other engaging pedagogies.

Just as some standardized test providers have developed rubrics for scoring students' written work, faculty are capable of developing rubrics that can be applied to virtually every behavior that can be observed. Rubrics make seemingly immeasurable things measurable, and therefore comparable. We can share rubrics across campuses and conduct blind scoring of senior projects, capstone papers, and products of undergraduate research. Students can use rubrics to self-assess their performance in an internship or service learning setting and compare their perceptions with those of faculty and field supervisors using the same rubrics.

I have argued elsewhere that standardized testing in major fields will pay far richer dividends than standardized tests of general intellectual abilities [see Banta, 2007 (1) and Banta, 2007 (2)]. Many professional fields already have such tests and disciplinary associations in other fields can develop their own if we must test and compare.

The most authentic assessment will be achieved through electronic portfolios for which students themselves develop the content. On my campus, as at many others, we have developed expected learning outcomes in general education and the major field. Students select graded written, spoken, and artistic works from courses throughout their college careers, as well as photographs and videotapes of speeches, work-related events, and other leadership experiences on and off campus, to illustrate their achievement of the expected outcomes. They write reflective essays to demonstrate the connection between portfolio artifacts and the expected outcomes. Again faculty use rubrics to grade students' achievement of each outcome. Just as with written work on standardized tests, faculty can use the same rubric to grade student work on multiple campuses if we must compare institutions.

Finally, we can use the "Assessment for accountability is coming!" warning to mobilize colleagues to do their own pioneering work in developing measures of critical thinking, reflective judgment, and deep learning. Instead of throwing in the towel, let's roll up our sleeves and show our critics how creative we can be in developing our own instruments to assess and report on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions our mission statements say we value. And let's argue for the use of multiple measures—questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups as well as various direct measures of learning—since no single measure is perfectly reliable or valid.

Conclusion

Should we prepare ourselves to imagine a time when our students' scores on a standardized test become an important component of judging our own effectiveness for promotion, tenure, and raises? Will the college curriculum then be narrowed, as it has been in grades K-12, to focus students' attention on attaining the knowledge and skills

defined by the content of these tests? Instead of reading the Great Books, will students have workbooks that help them drill on the concepts on which they will be tested? If so, the United States will fall ever farther behind in the global economy. It is knowledge creation, not knowledge reproduction, that creates competitive advantage. The strength of American higher education has been in the diversity of opportunities we provide for students and faculty with diverse interests and talents. Will standardized testing across all institutions make higher education more homogeneous? And if assessment becomes synonymous with standardized testing, what will happen to the future of assessment undertaken for the purpose of guiding improvement in instruction, curricula, and student services?

As suggested in the examples above, we must work together with our stakeholders to make assessment for improvement and assessment for accountability complement, even strengthen, one another. Ralph Wolff, executive director of the Senior College Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, noted recently that accreditors ask each institution “to define its learning outcomes, and to assess the achievement of those outcomes . . . to determine whether improvement is needed. We believe we should keep that locus of responsibility at the institutional level” (Lederman, 2007). If the recommendations of the Commission on the Future and subsequent actions of the USDOE related to accountability can provide the impetus for more of the activity Wolff describes, assessment undertaken to guide improvement will be broadened and strengthened. ■

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Interested in contributing to the March 2008 newsletter? The deadline for submissions is Friday, February 29, 2008. To learn more: assess@cccc.edu.

(Re)Thinking Assessment

John R. Slade Jr.

The idea of determining the effectiveness of what and how we teach students really is a simple concept, and something all institutions believe is worthwhile. What prevents the “simplicity” of the concept from transferring to a plan and implementation strategies are such issues as what should or can be assessed, what counts as an assessment activity or instrument, and who is responsible for carrying out assessment initiatives. Colleges struggling with any of the aforementioned issues or challenges like them would benefit from stopping long enough to be sure they have chosen an assessment strategy based upon simplicity and an embedded nature that should mark any good assessment approach.

First, the importance cannot be overstated of articulating the definition of assessment for the entire institution. Of course, this definition should be based upon what has generally proven sound in the profession, but that still does not mean that such a definition should be complicated, convoluted, or unintelligible. At Central Carolina Community College, assessment is defined as “the measurement, analysis, and use of information by faculty, staff, and students to make effective decisions that enhance learning, teaching, and support services.” This definition forms an umbrella for the college and its assessment initiatives that covers all assessment activities – whether originating from an academic department, a college service, or the institution’s Quality Enhancement Plan.

Whatever definition of assessment currently operates at the institution, check it for simplicity. Whether the institution is the smallest community college in the state or a top-tier university, assessment remains no more than asking how the institution is performing, how does the institution know, and what will the institution do with what it discovers from its assessment results. As Barbara Walvoord, a well-respected voice on assessment, more formally states, assessment of student learning is “systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning” (2004). Put another way, it is the process that looks seriously at learning goals; gathers, analyzes, and interprets information to determine how well performance matches goals; and then uses the results to document, explain, and improve that performance. It really is that simple.

The concept is easy to comprehend; however, designing and implementing an assessment strategy is a little more complex to accomplish. In assessing courses, programs, and the institution (as in general education competencies), institutions often struggle with what to assess, especially at the course and program levels. The solution to this dilemma is to ask a few critical questions: What does the program expect students to learn? What should students be able to do as a result of their educational experience? What does the faculty or institution want or need to know and for what purpose?

The last question may depend upon any variety of factors. At my own institution recently, a question arose based on a local prerequisite of developmental biology required of students who enroll in anatomy and physiology. Even though the department exempts recent high school graduates who passed biology, one instructor recognized that a sizeable number

of the exempted students struggle in anatomy and physiology and either withdraw or perform poorly. She contemplated studying the performance of students in this category and comparing them with other students who enrolled in and completed the local developmental biology prerequisite. This assessment activity becomes even more authentic and useful if all of the biology instructors have some input into this issue and if analyses and interpretations of the results are presented for all to consider. Should the results show that the exempted students perform significantly worse than the other group, then perhaps the department will decide to rethink whether to allow students to clear the prerequisite in the manner described. If the performance of the compared groups is the same, then results inform the biology instructors to explore other reasons for the performance of their anatomy and physiology students.

Contrary to popular belief, even grades can play a part in assessment.

This real-life example also points to the misperceptions that the only aspects of learning worth measuring are entire programs and that any assessment derived from anything other than a nationally normed instrument is of little value. Neither assertion could be more wrong-headed. Contrary to popular belief, even grades can play a part in assessment. No, this is not an argument that a “C” grade means students have achieved the intended competencies. It is an

argument, however, that a well-developed grading process that includes graded activities designed to measure learning goals can be a valid assessment instrument. The process must include a systematic method of sharing information about students’ strengths and weakness to instructors and others who will use the results to make program improvements (Walvoord, 2004). Likewise, grades might trigger a need for assessment. For instance, lower than expected grades in a literature course might be examined to determine the reasons students are struggling. I argue that this becomes authentic assessment if it is articulated how the students should be able to perform, information is gathered to evaluate and explain their actual performance, and the analysis and results are used to address whatever is causing the weak performance.

Here are some basic factors for an institution to consider in building a meaningful assessment program:

- If the institution does not practice within an assessment culture or is experiencing various programs and departments dancing to their own assessment beats, then recognize it and set about either building, reviving, or focusing assessment for the institution.
- Use the institutional planning and effectiveness mechanism to devise an umbrella definition and philosophy for the institution. Be careful not to require all programs to do exactly the same thing; however, all programs should embrace the college’s belief and understanding of assessment. Emphasize the obvious: Assessment should be a core value of every program.
- Akin to providing a general understanding is the need to recognize what may already be happening on campus in the assessment arena. Administrators and faculty who have

been involved with programs with outside accrediting bodies are likely to have a deeper understanding and appreciation for assessment, as such programs are normally engaged in ongoing assessment activities as a requirement of maintaining their accredited status. Build on this prior experience and understanding, but there may be little benefit in insisting that a program such as dental hygiene already versed in assessment use a strategy identical to that of industrial systems.

- However, do not allow programs and faculty to provide themselves with an assessment “pass” with the claim that they are already doing assessment. One of the greatest deterrents to improvement is “good enough.” Even programs that already understand and practice assessment in ways the institution can support should be reminded that they should always be striving to get better.
- Make faculty and program heads responsible for assessment of their entire program, not just the core pieces they teach. It seems logical that teachers of communication courses should measure communication competencies and that the computer department should measure computer literacy skills for all students. Think about it. Is it more logical that the automotive instructors will know better whether their students can apply computer skills that relate to the work automotive instructors are training their students to do? Should they find the application of those skills lacking, the results of their assessment will guide their discussions with the computer faculty on what needs to be done to improve their students’ computer skills.

Perhaps the first thing to re-think about assessment (and maybe this should have been said at the start) is why the institution is worrying itself with assessment in the first place. Too often, an external influence such as an accrediting or governmental agency serves as the college’s main inspiration to take assessment seriously. Trudy Banta, another leading thinker on assessment, points out that institutions should undertake assessment “for their own purposes: seeking credible evidence that their programs and services are as effective as they can be in promoting student growth and development and using their assessment findings to make warranted improvements” (2004). As with so many other forced initiatives colleges undertake, it will be difficult to gain genuine support from faculty, student services professionals, and other key stakeholders necessary to build a sustainable assessment culture if the driving force does not come from within the institution. Take Banta’s simple cue: “The responsibility for advancing student learning, and the assessment thereof, is everyone’s responsibility” (2004). ■

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Designing Student-Centered Assignments and Assessments

Patricia Akers

Are your current grading/assessment practices working for you? Are you providing feedback on assignments that inspire students to “want to learn?” Are the students in your classrooms focusing on the end result – the grade, rather than the process of learning itself? Assessing student learning is a challenge and can only be effective when you know what you want to measure. Angelo & Cross (1993) stated: “Assessment should assist our students in diagnosing their own learning. That is, assessment should help students become more effective, self-assessing, self-directed learners. Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning.”

Student-centered assignments/assessments let teachers allow for differing student learning styles. Providing multiple approaches and experiences for assessing student learning help students learn from their own mistakes, reach deeper levels of learning and apply information to different situations. Both student and teacher can learn from effective assessments. All participants become learners when assessment results are used as a barometer to measure the strength of learning and as a compass is used to show the direction of future improvements. Improving the quality of learning involves not just determining to what extent students have mastered course content at the end of the course; BUT, determining how students are mastering content throughout the course. The seven suggestions below offer examples to help you enhance learning by designing effective student-centered assignments and assessments.

1. Begin with student outcomes: Review the student outcomes/expectations on your syllabus before designing assignments or assessments. Student outcomes help teachers consider whether the assessment strategies are really measuring what they intend to measure.

Examples: Use a student outcomes tracking chart when developing class sessions, activities and tests. This tool will help show that you are accountable for what you teach. Just place the outcomes at the top of the chart and the assignments on the left and check which outcomes are achieved through which assignment. Bloom’s taxonomy is a great resource for writing student outcomes, as it provides action verbs and is organized by different levels of critical thinking.

2. Involve students: Self-assessment allows students to reach a deeper level of learning and to monitor their own progress throughout the course. Involving students may also motivate them.

Examples: Reflective journals are an excellent way to evaluate student learning. Journal writing can be an effective way to gather insights into student attitudes and a practical format to enhance student-teacher communication (Robinson, 1995). Another example is to provide students with opportunities to submit and/or analyze test questions, reports, and to participate in peer evaluations. Observation tasks are good tools to use to involve students. Place the criteria on a checklist and have students observe the progress of another. Use the Classroom

Assessment Technique (CAT), the Background Probe, that asks students a series of questions about a new topic in order to assess what they already know and to determine a starting point for new instruction. In addition, use Concept Maps, a technique in which the teacher directs students to draw or diagram the mental connections between a major lecture concept and other concepts they know.

3. Diversify your assignment and assessment approaches: You allow students to be at their best when you provide a wide range of assignments and approaches to assessment (Wiggins, 1996).

Examples: Allowing “choices” among exam questions is a start. Providing flexible approaches to presenting reports, i.e. written report, oral report, skit, research article, or debate, can enhance the learning experience. Offering choice in topics for assignments tends to help students more quickly grasp a topic. To help attend to students’ different test taking styles, mix question types by including multiple choice, short answer, essay, case studies etc.

4. Use alternative assessment approaches: Provide assessments/assignments that present students with real-world challenges requiring them to apply their relevant skills and knowledge.

Examples: Using student portfolios is a good way to measure student learning over time. Learning logs are an example of how students capture the application of concepts they learn. Essays and oral presentations are also alternative assessment approaches where rubric criteria can be shared with students beforehand. Other examples of alternative assessment approaches include writing a case study, engaging in and reporting on a fieldwork experience, and leading a discussion panel. A CAT helpful in motivating students is the Do It Yourself Quiz in which students are asked to write out five questions about the key points in the reading and then answer each. This assignment allows the teacher to determine who has completed the reading and the comprehension levels of the readers.

5. Provide ongoing assessment activities: Assessment is a process, not just an event. Ongoing assessment can provide instant feedback for students and give teachers useful information about student learning in a timely manner.

Examples: Classroom Assessment Techniques, learning logs, diagnostic journals. One information tool is the “Ticket out the Door”, an assessment technique that allows students to provide feedback on how well they understood the content presented. Self-assessment encourages students to reflect on their progress.

6. Motivate students: Assignments and assessment that motivate are those that spark the students’ interest and are relative to their own life experiences.

Examples: Challenge students to find ways their content is being used in current events. Test early to demonstrate testing style. Early student feedback is crucial to student motivation and progress.

7. Provide timely feedback: Learning is enhanced when students recognize what they have and haven’t learned. Specific feedback positively reinforces good learning and constructively provides opportunity for students to improve in weak areas.

Examples: Testing early and often tends to keep students on task. Testing often offers students much feedback and keeps them on their toes for class preparation. Return test/exams, projects, and reports in a timely manner; design assignments in stages so students can receive feedback before the final product is due; provide detail in your feedback, not just “this is poor writing.” Using specific Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) provide critical feedback in the learning process. Use CATs such as Focused Listening which gives students a main term or concept and asks them to generate as many related terms as possible. Practicing this technique can help students learn to focus attention and improve recall. Documented Problem Solutions is a CAT that asks students to document the steps they take in solving a problem. Students will gain more awareness of and control of their problem solving routines and receive immediate feedback. Another CAT helpful in providing feedback is the Diagnostic Learning Log which requires students to keep records about assignments they have done and the kind of errors or successes they experienced. At regular intervals ask students to go back over these logs and reflect on their learning strategies.

In summary, effective teaching is measured not only by what is taught but most importantly by what is learned. Becoming partners in learning and assessment with students is a Win/Win for all. Good Luck!

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Dr. Pat Akers has 28 years of experience in community colleges and currently operates her own business, P. A. Training Solutions, in High Point NC, a company that provides leadership and instructional design training.

Spring 2008 Assessment Events

Dr. Stephen Spangehl

Director of the Academic Quality Improvement Program, Higher Learning Commission

Thursday, February 14, 2008, 1 - 3:15 p.m.

Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center, Sanford, NC

Dr. Jeffrey Seybert

Director of Research, Evaluation, and Instructional Development, Johnson County CC

Wednesday, April 16, 2008, 9 a.m. - 1:30 pm

Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center, Sanford, NC (registration required)

Assessment and Accreditation Support Resources

Larry Kelley

K-CAPS

Larry Kelley Educational Services Center for Assessment and Planning Support (K-CAPS) will open its new office in Auburn, Alabama, on November 1, 2007. K-CAPS has provided support for classroom faculty and other “frontline” practitioners dealing with the day-to-day challenges in educational assessment and accreditation activities since it was established in Monroe, Louisiana, in 1998.

The new center will emphasize the following:

- Assistance with Program and Institutional Accreditation
- Professional Development Workshops (Open and In-service)
- In-service Activities Focusing on Unit/Program-Specific Assessment and Planning Work
- Long-Term Consulting Work with Units, Departments, Colleges, etc., to Develop and Implement Assessment and Planning Programs
- One-on-One Planning and Assessment Assistance

Go to <http://kelleyeducation.com> to access the K-CAPS homepage.

Regional Networks

K-CAPS will also host the Regional Networks for Assessment and Accreditation Support. The Regional Networks feature support groups for the following areas: Strategic Planning, Academic Assessment, Non-academic Assessment, Data Management, and Professional and Regional Accreditation. Further, the organization seeks consulting projects for members as outside evaluators, anonymous raters and focus group interviewers, and provides opportunities for grant writing, fund raising and conference coordination activities.

Additional services follow:

- Locating model assessment plans and reports
- Developing an effective annual assessment plan
- Finding and/or creating assessment instruments
- Creating and administering on-line surveys
- Conducting traditional and on-line assessment activities
- Analyzing assessment data and creating effective reports
- Utilizing an assessment database/tracking system (included with membership)
- Locating external evaluators for assessment projects
- Finding individuals to serve on focus group interview teams

Go to <http://www.angelfire.com/ia/kelley/RegionalNetworks/homepage.html> to access the Regional Networks homepage.

Primer on Embedding Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in Regularly Scheduled Assignments

Dr. Larry Kelley has conducted over 190 workshops or in-service programs on course embedded assessment in more than 30 states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico. He has also provided 21 on-site consultations on this topic. This work has culminated in the development

of a practical handbook or primer on how to implement the embedded assessment process. The primer describes a faculty-friendly process that uses course embedded assessment to measure students' acquisition of knowledge in the major and/or general education knowledge and skills, application of the same in practical situations, and subsequent communication/reporting abilities. Specific topics include developing measurable student learning outcomes, creating formal annual assessment plans, embedding assessment procedures in ongoing assignments, building performance assessment rubrics, collecting and analyzing data, reporting assessment findings and using results to make changes/improvements.

The handbook will be available in early spring, 2008. For further information, contact Larry Kelley at aukelley@aol.com or aukelley85@yahoo.com. ■

Dr. Larry Kelley is the owner of Larry Kelley Educational Services - Center for Assessment and Planning Support, and Executive Director, Regional Networks for Assessment and Accreditation Support, Auburn, Alabama

Upcoming Conferences

8th Annual Texas A&M University Assessment Conference

Partnerships in Assessment: Succeeding Together
February 17-19, 2008
Hilton Conference Center
College Station, Texas
<http://assessment.tamu.edu/conference/index.html>

2008 NC State Undergraduate Assessment Symposium

Breaking Barriers: Building a Culture of Assessment
April 25-27, 2008
Embassy Suites
Cary, North Carolina
<http://www.ncsu.edu/assessment/symposium/>

