

**Moore's Musings:
Reflections on the *Creating Effective Learning
Environments* Conference**

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State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

May 2005

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[For those of you keeping track—both of you! J—my original goal was to produce Part II of the piece I started in the April eWAG regarding “loosely-coupled systems,” but my good intentions have run afoul of competing priorities and a looming deadline! I’ll return to that topic next month—meanwhile, it seems appropriate to muse about our recently-completed statewide conference...]

Our annual conference is behind us now; some 275 educators gathered last week to share expertise, questions, and libations in friendly downtown Spokane, and I think all in all it was a solid success. We had our usual assortment of critiques expressed in the evaluation forms we received, but we learned a long time ago you can't please everyone all the time, so even though we continue to try, we're still fairly upbeat when we fail to do so! I think we've learned that the best we can hope for is to provide as diverse a mix of activities as possible so that we spread the satisfaction (and disappointments) fairly evenly among the various constituent groups and perspectives in what has become a pretty broad “assessment community.”

What I do find particularly interesting, however, is some negative reaction we received about a lack of assessment-related sessions, presumably as a result of our focus shift toward teaching and learning issues. I wonder to what extent such a reaction is driven by the perception that not calling it an “assessment conference” and explicitly including a strand of sessions labeled as “scholarship of teaching and learning” would necessarily mean fewer assessment sessions. As I noted in my wel-

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Big Ideas Project

Big Ideas is a project focusing on introductory college-level courses with a central question: "Assuming for the moment that this introductory course in the LAST course the students will ever take in the area (as opposed to the first in a series of courses), what core discipline-specific ideas/concepts do you want ALL students taking the course to understand deeply, i.e., be able to apply and even transfer to other settings five years lat-

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eWAG is an e-publication of the State of Washington's public two-and four-year colleges and universities.

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er?" Following is a review of some of the work that has occurred around Big Ideas in Philosophy, Psychology, Composition and Literature, and History. Other discipline-specific summaries of faculty discussions can be found on the webpage.

BIG IDEAS IN PHILOSOPHY

Jeff Clausen, Green River Community College
jclausen@greenriver.edu

Hey philosophers, what's the big idea? Green River Community College hosted close to thirty philosophy instructors from across the State at a day-long *Big Ideas in Philosophy* workshop this past March 4th. The primary goal of the workshop was to identify the core concepts—"Big Ideas"—that are most significant for students to understand and use from an introductory level philosophy course. This goal is relevant to the scholarship of teaching and learning in that this initial list of "big ideas"

in philosophy can be used as a tool for self-examination about teaching and learning in introductory level philosophy courses. Sometimes this process leads to the realization that what we teach and test for in our philosophy classes is different from the things that we list as the "Big Ideas" in philosophy—that is, is different from what we say we want our students to be like or be able to do, even if they never take another philosophy course. This realization, in turn, can lead to important changes and modifications in course design, including changes in course goals, assignments, classroom activities, as well as in the assessment of student work. The overall goal of such an activity can be seen as an attempt to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to help our students be better citizens and to lead richer and more meaningful



lives.

The workshop turned out to be an overwhelming success, especially in terms of interest. In preparation for the workshop, the following primary question was sent out beforehand:

Assume that your introductory philosophy course is the ONLY course your students will ever take in the area (rather than being the first course for a major in the area), what core discipline-specific ideas/concepts do you want ALL students taking the course to understand deeply—that is, be able to apply and even transfer to other settings five (or more) years later?

Following a welcome by college president, Rich Rutkowski, Bill Moore, State Coordinator for Assessment, Teaching, and Learning, gave an overview of the big ideas projects and how they are being used across the State in various disciplines. And then, following a discussion centered around the question of why we think our students should study philosophy, small groups were formed in order to allow discussion of the various answers to the "Big Ideas" question. The small groups then reported back to the group at large and verbatim comments were recorded. Following the workshop, an attempt was made to go through all these verbatim comments and, looking for similarities and connections between the various suggestions, to come up with a summary of the "Big Ideas" in an introductory philosophy course. This resulted in a preliminary list of [Six Big Ideas in Philosophy](#). The list, along with a full report, was sent out to all workshop participants, asking for their feedback. The group can now use this list the as a tool, allowing them to reflect on their teaching in light of what they have, at least preliminarily, stated to be the core ideas and concepts of their classes. This reflection may lead to changes or modifications in

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Featured Website

Partnership for 21st Century Skills

<http://www.p21.org/>

Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a leader in bringing together the business community, education leaders, and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education and provide tools and resources to help facilitate and drive change.

(Continued from page 2) *Big Ideas Project*
course design and pedagogy, or to changes in the list itself.

Plans are already being made for continuing this process of reflection on the teaching and learning of philosophy. One of the workshop participants, Scott Cochrane (scochrane@tcc.ctc.edu) from Tacoma Community College, is making arrangements to host the group at his school this coming November 4th. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Anyone desiring a copy of the full notes from the *Big Ideas in Philosophy* workshop held at Green River Community College should contact Jeff Clausen at jclausen@greenriver.edu.

Six Big Ideas in Philosophy*
(Discussion Draft: Work-in-Progress)

A. The Good Life: Be acquainted with different theories as to the nature of the good life, and take a position that makes the most sense to you, and be able to argue for that position and against the competing positions. For example, have a view as to whether a life of rational egoism or a life involving some sort of moral commitments is more conducive to the “good life.”

B. Challenge Assumptions and Personal Biases: Be acquainted with the reasons given for why it is important to challenge basic assumptions, “cherished” beliefs, and personal biases. For example, see that social change/progress is only possible by a constant questioning of shared assumptions of “cherished” beliefs and by guarding against one’s own personal biases

C. The Nature of Knowledge: Be acquainted with the different positions on the possibility and nature of knowledge, and take a position that makes the most sense to you, and be able to argue for that position and against the competing positions. For example, adopt the view that all knowledge is fallible, and then be able to explain why or why not this view leads to skepticism about knowing.

D. The Nature of Truth: Be acquainted with the different positions on the possibility and nature of truth, and take a position that makes the most sense to you, and be able to argue for that position and against the competing positions. For example, in the normative sphere, take the position that morality is a process of discovery, and so, that there are such

things as universal moral truths (though any such claim is always fallible).

E. The Nature of Critical Thinking: Be acquainted with different concepts and tools that would be used by a critical thinker, and be able to apply these critical thinking techniques in the actual world. For example, understand the difference between the logical issue (e.g., deductive validity) and the truth issue (of the reasons) in an argument, and be able to use this understanding when evaluating arguments—like understand the notion of *counter-example* and be able to apply this concept in actual situations.

F. Familiarity with Key Philosophical Concepts: Be acquainted with some of the important concepts and distinctions made in philosophy, and be able to apply these concepts when doing analysis. For example, have a clear understanding of the difference between *metaphysical* questions and issues, and *epistemological* questions and issues, and be able to apply this understanding in concrete situations. For example, be able to explain why it is that even if you cannot (or do not) know X to be true, it does not necessarily follow that X is not true.

* These six “Big Ideas” represent a **draft** synthesis of a discussion among philosophy instructors who attended a day-long workshop at Green River Community College on March 4th, 2005. The purpose of the workshop was to identify the core ideas/concepts that are most significant for student to understand and use from an introductory level philosophy course. For a full report on this workshop as well as additional information about this ongoing project of reflection about teaching and learning in philosophy, contact Jeff Clausen at Green River Community College [jclausen@greenriver.edu]. A follow-up meeting to continue the discussion is set for November 4, 2005, hosted by Tacoma Community College.

BIG IDEAS PROJECT: PSYCHOLOGY

Participants from Lake Washington Technical College:
Dr. Leehu Zysberg, lead faculty
Leah Bridger, Charles McKain, Misha Schwartz
With special support and leadership from Mr. Doug Emory,
Dean of the General Education Division

Four psychology faculty at Lake Washington devised a two-part study to examine the potential benefit of the ‘Big Ideas’ process in introductory psychology courses. First, they agreed upon a list of ‘Big Ideas’. In the second

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step, 92 students were asked to identify the 'Big Ideas' they learned at the end of the introductory courses. Faculty then analyzed the similarities and differences between the two lists.

"It was a good process," Dr. Zysberg reported. "The faculty who chose to participate were actively involved and committed. Whether one was a Freudian or cognitive psychologist, across various approaches and domains of expertise, we were able to agree on a core of knowledge students can be expected to acquire in introductory psych courses."



77% of the student list of Big Ideas correlated with those listed by faculty. "We were reassured that students were actually able to identify most of the same Big Idea outcomes as faculty." Interestingly, the students did add one Big Idea not on the faculty list – "understanding morality through a psychological perspective." This additional Big Idea may be the result of the students working to apply things learned in class to their lives. If so, it may suggest that students are undergoing much more than learning a new profession or specific skills – they may be going through processes of self-betterment and self-growth.

About 20% of the responses were unusable, either because they didn't correspond to the definition of Big Ideas that was given, or they were unintelligible. "This may reflect some of the challenges diversity poses to both instructors and students in the community college settings," he concluded.

"An interesting next step might be to create a core syllabus for psychology courses based on these shared Big Ideas," Dr. Zysberg suggests. Such a syllabus could be embellished by individual faculty and would have to be revisited every few years, but might provide a foundation for discussion and strengthening of the discipline.

For a couple of quarters, Zysberg has used this Big Ideas exercise as a summarizing project with his students and finds it a good assignment to help students review the quarter as well as providing him as an instructor with a check of how well concepts have been integrated. As a result of this doing this project, another instructor is going to try this as well.

BIG IDEAS IN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

This spring approximately 80 composition and literature faculty met at two workshops to work on these goals:

Further refine, clarify, and synthesize the Big Idea lists in composition and literature.

Create assignments that assess one or more of the big ideas in composition and literature and study the results.

The first day of the April retreat focused around the more philosophical aspects of the Big Ideas: unpacking our assumptions, brainstorming individual and group big ideas in discipline-specific groups, and working in small and large groups to revise both lists.

The second day focused on generating assignments to assess the big ideas in both disciplines. Participants split into teams of three to five and began the process of brainstorming and drafting. The SBCTC assessment initiative will provide stipends of \$200 to individual faculty to encourage them to pilot the assignments in their classrooms, provide supporting material to create a context, and write a reflective piece that discusses the effectiveness of the assignment to foster deep learning. These tools will be posted to the Big Ideas website for all faculty to access.

Findings and Goals: Several questions were raised as a result of the most recent retreat: for example, the literature list created an arbitrary divide between writing and reading, as well as an implicit hierarchy that privileged writing over reading. While the session participants revised the lists accordingly, the lists in both disciplines are still in draft stage, project leadership will continue to invite faculty to participate in brainstorming, drafting, and revising these core concepts.

The Focus Question:

Assume for a moment that the introductory course you offer in composition or literature is the LAST course the students will ever take in the area (rather than being the first course for a major.) What core discipline-specific ideas/concepts do you want all students taking the course to understand deeply—to be able to apply and even transfer to other settings five years later?

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(Continued from page 4) *Big Ideas Project*



BIG IDEAS IN HISTORY

Michele Marshman, Green River
Community College

With the desire to re-focus the assessment conversations on discipline content in the classroom, the SBCTC's* Assessment, Teaching & Learning office sponsored a series of focus groups winter and spring quarters 2003 around Big Ideas in introductory courses. The faculty were challenged to answer the question:

“Assuming for the moment that this introductory course is the LAST course the students will ever take in the area (as opposed to the first in a series of courses), what core discipline-specific ideas/concepts do you want ALL students taking the course to understand deeply, i.e., be apply to apply and even transfer to other settings five years later?”

Eight different disciplines, including history faculty with other social scientists, participated in these initial conversations. History faculty then had three follow up sessions, one at the May 2003 Assessment conference, a second at Green River Community College last April and another at the American Historical Association conference in Seattle in December.

At Green River, 27 history faculty from 14 Washington community and technical colleges spent the day sharing common passions and challenges. Dr. Michelle Marshman, who facilitated the gathering, said this was a rare opportunity for history faculty to discuss what they value.

“In this age of information, I think we all agree that more is not necessarily better,” when it comes to teaching history, she said. “The intent of a history course is to teach students what it means to think historically, evaluate evidence and find meaning in narratives. Big Ideas inspires discussions about such processes.”

During this discussion, history faculty agreed on a list of [6 core concepts](#) they hope their students understand deeply after taking an introductory history course. They also broke into groups by course content (Ancient World Civilization, Modern World Civilization and Early U.S. History) to discuss the [Big Ideas each emphasizes](#).

“The best part of the spring meeting were these fact-to-face conversations,” Marshman said. “Some groups had

really productive, creative sessions, which stimulated more thinking” and some changes in pedagogy.

In her classes, for instance, she is much more explicit about the goal of training students to ‘think historically’. “I’ve reduced the number of names and dates in exchange for increased discussion and writing on certain themes,” she explained. “I verbally identify Big Ideas or themes, making more explicit the skeleton on which history in the class hangs, and then I repeat myself, and then I repeat myself.”

It would be helpful to figure out a way to continue these conversations, she concludes. Perhaps an informal survey could be done to see who is interested. The session at the historical association conference was lightly attended, but those who came were quite enthusiastic.

If you are intrigued about participating in a conversation with other history faculty, or have questions about the process, please contact Dr. Michele Marshman at Green River, mmarshma@greenriver.edu.

(Continued from page 1) *Reflections on the Creating Effective Learning Environments Conference*

coming remarks at the conference, we've always (or at least since I've been involved in shaping the program) been an "assessment, teaching and learning" conference, regardless of the nominal conference title or the strand labels we used. In the early years we made a conscious effort to be sure people had an explicit assessment emphasis in their session proposals, and at that time such an effort was necessary because the idea was relatively new to folks and people were unsure how to approach it. Now, I really do think that the assessment discourse has permeated so much of what so many of us do that it's less critical that we call it out explicitly—the questions and issues at the heart of the assessment "agenda," if you will, seem to be very much a part of the way significant numbers of faculty think about their work. From the sessions I attended at the conference, most of the "teaching and learning" strand sessions had a clear assessment component to them, as well they should, and we will continue to recruit and encourage sessions at our conference that reflect a seamless integration of teaching, learning and assessment in the service of improving the educational achievement of our students.

The other point here that is critical to remember is that this conference represents, for some of us much less abstractly than others, a genuine and significant "**community of practice**" around assessment, teaching and learning; in my mind part of what that means is that the conference depends on that community and is only as strong as that community allows it to be. Without all of you being willing to share your expertise, your successes, your works-in-progress, your reflections about thorny issues, without all of you seeing the value of taking a couple of days out of very busy schedules and lives to re-connect as a community and learn from each other, the conference wouldn't exist. So thanks for your hard work, time and energy, and if you're looking for different (better, more, ...) kinds of sessions at next year's conference, we welcome your proposals and ideas!!

Speaking of an "assessment agenda," a small group of folks, several of them new to the conference, stopped me Thursday evening while they were having an informal chat and asked me, "So what is all of this about anyway?" It startled me for a minute, but then I realized that I do tend to forget about the need to continually clarify some basic notions for people who are joining our 15-year, ongoing "conversation" for the first time. While it's true that on at least one occasion my approach to our work in assessment has been characterized (not uncharitably, I might add) as "aimless and unintentional" (a style I prefer to characterize as "leading as following"—that's my story and I'm sticking to it!), it's also true that I do believe that there are strong

philosophical and conceptual underpinnings to the assessment initiative, and this question reminded me that I could probably do a better and more consistent job of articulating clearly what those foundations are.

As it happens, Peter Ewell has recently done a marvelous job of addressing these issues, as he has so many times over the years. In General Education and the Assessment Reform Agenda (2004), a monograph written for "The Academy in Transition" series produced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Peter succinctly lays out a compelling argument for the need to address *abilities, alignment, assessment, and action* in the context of postsecondary general education. In doing so he articulates what I agree have been the fundamental tenets for many of us who have believed in the potential of assessment reform since the beginning of this movement (or at least this iteration) in the early- to mid-1980's:

- Begin with a vision of the "educated person" in our society and world (what some have called beginning with the end in mind);
- Emphasize the connection between this focus on learning outcomes and a re-thinking of curriculum and pedagogy that should flow from that shift in focus;
- Articulate what "defensible evidence" we need to have to decide how well our students are doing with regard to that vision;
- Encourage faculty (both individually and collectively) to pursue evidence-based inquiry on student learning outcomes and the conditions which effectively support and encourage that learning;
- Focus on feedback loops and continuous improvement efforts, in part as a way of clarifying to what extent, and in what ways, the educational experience of our students helps them achieve those ends—and how we might improve the coherence of that experience;
- View assessment not as a separate, add-on activity but as an integral part of a larger institutional improvement process.

We need to remind ourselves of the promise and the power of this understanding of assessment, especially in these days of increased federal intrusion into education and increased pressure for an approach to accountability that at best conflicts with, and at worst contradicts, the tenets described above. I only hope that the community of practice represented by last week's conference continues to be a vehicle for reminding us of our common vision (as well as how we differ) and serves to sustain and strengthen our work together in the coming years!

STUDENT VOICES

Published in Centralia College's 1998 Byways, Sean wrote this evocative piece for Susan Hoyne's English 101 class. Can't you just see the cellist and feel the vibrations? Sean captured a moment, a feeling.

How the Cello Played

Sean Mason

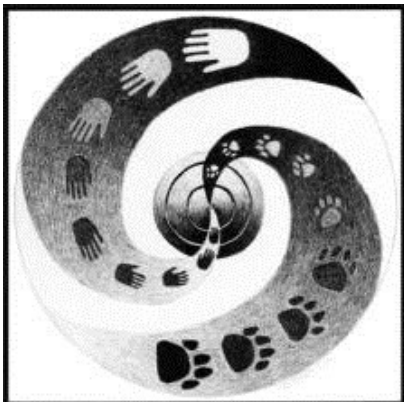
The cellist walked on stage. The air was still, and the audience could hear the faint scratch of the cello's spike on the floor. The cellist seated himself gracefully in the center of the stage, backed by a pianist and her page turner. The hairs of the bow gently touched the string and a single note emanated clearly. This note sliced through the air, and the air, as if stretched across a blade, sprang back as it was cut, freeing the note to jump across the room and fill every corner with melody. Every note rang clear and singular in its perfection and each variation on the tune was so fulfilling that the audience sighed, feeling secure. In the background, totally overcome by the rich voice of the cello, the piano added to the melody's beauty.



The cellist danced with his instrument, as if both listened to the music and moved to the rhythm. While he raced up and down the scales, his face would grimace and his head would turn away as if the notes were too crisp and poignant. The audience sat mesmerized, totally under the control of the instrument. Suddenly, jarring the watching people, the bow disappeared in a blur as hands flew around the cello, performing to the music instead of producing it. The musician became a sword-wielding musketeer thrusting and parrying the bow as if skillfully defending his life.

Then the frenzy ended and pure sweetness filled the hall again. The bow left the strings and the instrument became a heavenly harp, caressed by the artist to produce a sound so different, it made the ear listen in an entirely new way. All heads in the audience turned to properly appreciate the softer, plucked notes. But once again the cello changed form as the cellist plucked harder on the string producing an altogether new sound, sharp, raw, and in harmony with another. It waked the ears from their easy listening.

The cello captured the souls of the whole audience; it lined them up in a row and played to them. For two hours the audience was mesmerized until the first clap snapped them back to the realities of everyday life. Afterwards, leaving the theater, they remembered only how lovely the music was, thinking it funny how they couldn't recall a single melody.



STUDENT ART

SIGHTS OF THE SOUND

Linocut by Lindsay Erickson

A Gathering of Voices 1998
Whatcom Community College

Conferences and Workshops

National College Learning Center Association Excellence in Learning Center Practice and Professionalism

June 13-17, 2005, University of Wisconsin – Parkside,
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Much different from a conference, the NCLCA Summer Institute is an interactive small group professional development experience offered approximately every other year since 1988. At the Institute, mentors work closely with the participants to discuss issues related to a theme that is of interest to learning assistance professionals. It is designed to be helpful for both new and experienced Learning Center professionals.

Student Affairs Assessment Seminar

Pennsylvania State University, June 22-24, 2005

The Student Affairs Assessment Seminar, presented in partnership with the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Pennsylvania State University, is a three-day workshop designed to help campus teams develop, implement, and enhance student affairs assessment programs. Researchers, scholars, and administrators use a combination of interactive presentations, small group discussions and exercises using the *Assessment Planning Tool CD*. This CD is based on John Schuh's and Lee Upcraft's *Assessment in Student Affairs: A Guide for Practitioners*. Topics include: Ethics of Assessment, Useful Tools, Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies, Influencing Policy and Practice, Community Colleges, and Outcomes Assessment.

The Mathematical Association of AMERICA (MAA)

Revitalizing Your Developmental Mathematics Courses: A Context-Driven, Activity-Based Approach

June 19-24, 2005, University of California, Berkeley

The MAA is offering a 5-day workshop that will explore ways to incorporate more student-active and contextually-rich experiences into developmental mathematics courses. The cost is a \$250 registration fee plus travel to Berkeley (MAA pays for room and board).

Transition Math Project (TMP)

2005 Summer Math Institute

June 28-July 1, 2005, Leavenworth, WA

The TMP is a private-public partnership committed to developing and disseminating clear and consistent information about math expectations. The project's goal is to ensure students successfully transition from high school math to college-level math and beyond.

League for Innovation in the Community College

2005 Conference on Information Technology
October 23-26, 2005, Dallas, Texas

The League for Innovation's annual Conference on Information Technology (CIT) offers a diverse program and cutting edge exposition exploring the intelligent application of information technology in community and technical colleges.

Summer Institute on First Year Assessment

Aspiring to Excellence

July 24-26, 2005, Asheville, North Carolina

Sponsored by the National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition, the Summer Institute on First-Year Assessment, now in its fifth year, is designed to provide practical, useful, and theoretically grounded information. Unlike many other assessment events, this Institute sharply focuses on the critical first year of college. Providing both breadth of topic coverage and depth in dealing with critical concepts, the Institute will offer a variety of extended workshops and concurrent sessions. Designed for assessment novices and seasoned assessment professionals alike, this Institute will engage participants in understanding the role of assessment in improving the first year.

The 18th Annual International Conference on Technology in Collegiate Mathematics (ICTCM)

March 16-19, 2006, Hilton in the Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, Florida

Hosted by Valencia Community College, Sponsored by Addison-Wesley and Prentice Hall

For more information, or to receive a 18th Annual ICTCM Program, contact Joanne Foster, 1-800-472-6288.



WEB RESOURCES

State Board for Community & Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

Provides resources and information on activities/events related to assessment, teaching and learning in Washington State's Community and Technical Colleges.

Office of Adult Literacy Competencies/EFF

Equipped for the Future (EFF) is a National Institute for Literacy research project that seeks to improve the quality of adult education services by offering the field a comprehensive content framework, better-defined results, and standards that enable programs to focus on achieving those results.

Policy Center on the First Year of College

The Policy Center on the First Year of College has as its basic mission the improvement of the first college year through enhanced learning outcomes and the success of first-year students. A particular focus of the Policy Center is the development and dissemination of a range of first-year assessment procedures and tools that can be used to strengthen or confirm practices in the curriculum, the co-curriculum, and institutional policy. In addition to improving practice, this process will contribute to the body of research on best practices in first-year programs.

First Year Assessment Listserv

The First-Year Assessment Listserv (FYA-LIST) is sponsored by the University of South Carolina's National Resource Center on the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition and the Policy Center on the First Year of College. The Policy Center is an initiative funded by a grants from The Atlantic Philanthropies and Lumina Foundation for Education and hosted on the campus of Brevard College in Brevard, NC.

This list is designed to promote nationwide dialog among college and university faculty and academic and student affairs administrators on methods and tools for evaluation first-year programs, policies, and procedures. It is intended to help

gather and share information on best practices and procedures for assessing the first college year. People responsible for the administration, assessment, and instruction of first-year programs (such as faculty, academic administrators, student affairs professionals, institutional researchers, and accrediting agency personnel) are encouraged to participate actively in the electronic forum by posing questions and sharing qualitative information that could aid other subscribers

Student Learning Outcomes: Recommended Reading Western Washington University, Bellingham.

AAHE American Association for Higher Education

The AAHE Assessment Forum is the primary national network connecting and supporting higher education stakeholders involved in assessment. It promotes thoughtful, effective approaches to assessment that involve faculty, benefit students, and improve the quality of teaching and learning. It helps campuses, programs, and individuals to plan, implement, and share the results of their assessment efforts by publishing, networking, and sponsoring an annual national conference.

AIR Internet Resources for Institutional Research

The Association for Institutional Research (AIR) is a professional association of more than 3,100 institutional researchers, planners, and decision-makers from higher education institutions around the world. AIR exists to benefit its members and help advance research that will improve the understanding, planning, and operation of higher education institutions.

Outcomes Assessment Resources on the Web

Provides links to web sites related to assessment in higher education and educational evaluation in general. They are loosely organized into eight categories: University Assessment Pages, General Resources, Agencies, Institutes and Organizations, Assessment Instruments and Techniques, Assessment Papers and Reports, Commercial Resources on Assessment, Benchmarking, and Software.

Check out these Resources:

From Jossey-Bass:

Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty

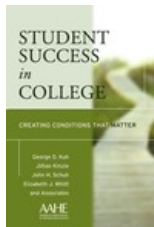
Elizabeth Barkley, K. Patricia Cross,
Claire Howell Major
October 2004



Engaging students in active learning is a predominant theme in today's classrooms. To promote active learning, teachers across the disciplines and in all kinds of colleges are incorporating collaborative learning into their teaching. *Collaborative Learning Techniques* is a scholarly and well-written handbook that guides teachers through all aspects of group work, providing solid information on what to do, how to do it, and why it is important to student learning. Synthesizing the relevant research and good practice literature, the authors present detailed procedures for thirty collaborative learning techniques (CoLTs) and offer practical suggestions on a wide range of topics, including how to form groups, assign roles, build team spirit, solve problems, and evaluate and grade student participation.

Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter

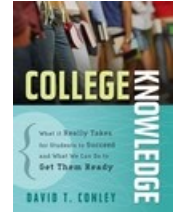
George D. Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, John H. Schuh, Elizabeth J. Whitt, and Associates
March 2005



Student Success in College describes policies, programs, and practices that a diverse set of institutions have used to enhance student achievement. This book clearly shows the benefits of student learning and educational effectiveness that can be realized when these conditions are present. Based on the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) project from the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University, this book provides concrete examples from twenty institutions that other colleges and universities can learn from and adapt to help create a success-oriented campus culture and learning environment.

College Knowledge: What It Really Takes for Students to Succeed and What We Can Do to Get Them Ready

David T. Conley
April 2005

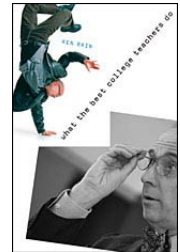


Although more and more students have the test scores and transcripts to get into college, far too many are struggling once they get there. These students are surprised to find that college coursework demands so much more of them than high school. For the first time, they are asked to think deeply, write extensively, document assertions, solve non-routine problems, apply concepts, and accept unvarnished critiques of their work. *College Knowledge* confronts this problem by looking at the disconnect between what high schools do and what colleges expect and proposes a solution by identifying what students need to know and be able to do in order to succeed.

From Harvard University Press:

What the Best College Teachers Do

Ken Bain
April 2004 Harvard University Press



What makes a great teacher great? Who are the professors students remember long after graduation? This book, the conclusion of a fifteen-year study of nearly one hundred college teachers in a wide variety of fields and universities, offers valuable answers for all educators.

The short answer is--it's not what teachers do, it's what they understand. Lesson plans and lecture notes matter less than the special way teachers comprehend the subject and value human learning. Whether historians or physicists, in El Paso or St. Paul, the best teachers know their subjects inside and out--but they also know how to engage and challenge students and to provoke impassioned responses. Most of all, they believe two things fervently: that teaching matters and that students can learn. In stories both humorous and touching, Bain describes examples of ingenuity and compassion, of students' discoveries of new ideas and the depth of their own potential. *What the Best College Teachers Do* is a treasure trove of insight and inspiration for first-year teachers and seasoned educators.