Prioritizing the use and usefulness of assessment and evaluation in understanding and improving student learning

John M. Norris, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa
Facing change in college foreign language programs
Changing students

Since 1990... General characteristics

- #Students in college
- %Women and minorities
- $Cost of college
- %Working while in college
- #Courses taken in HS
- #Hours of homework/wk.
- ~Academic preparation

Students in the Humanities

- %Enrollments in majors

In 1890, 75% of bachelor’s degrees conferred in the U.S. were in the humanities; by 2000, 39% were in the humanities.

- $Salary for post-BA job

In 2002, average salary for BA-humanities grads was higher only than average salary for BA-education grads.
Changing understandings about learning

- Experiential, link to non-classroom world
- Collaboration, problem-based
- Individualization, self-efficacy
- Enculturation, disciplinary authenticity
- Pedagogic variation, diversified assessment

Learner-Centered
Changing disciplines

“Seismic shifts have altered individual disciplines in the humanities in the course of the twentieth century”
Patricia Meyer Spacks, Academy president

Patricia Meyer Spacks
Steven Marcus
Andrew Delbanco
Pauline Yu
Anthony Grafton

David Bromwich

A republic divided 5

Revolution in the humanities 11
From classics to cultural studies 15
American literature: a vanishing subject? 22
Comparative literature in question 38
History’s postmodern fates 54
The practice of art history in America 70
The quest for a black humanism 91
Law & the humanities 105
The rise of American philosophy 116
NCLB: K-12 school accountability in core academic subjects, “adequate yearly progress”

What gets assessed?
- Language arts (reading/writing)
- Math
- Science

What isn’t assessed?
- ‘Artistic’ arts...
- Foreign languages...
- Other subjects

What happens to FL/WL teaching and learning? (Rosenbusch, 2005)

Chinese
Hebrew
Navajo
Arabic
Italian
Korean
German
Japanese
Russian
Latin
ASL
French
Changing perceptions

“Viva la English”
Tribune Media: 10-26-2007

“I think that the fewer languages we have, the better off civilization will be.”

Andy Rooney
More than half of the world's 7,000 languages are expected to die out by the end of the century.

**BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY?**

Most of what we know about species and ecosystems is not written down anywhere, it's only in people's heads.

David Harrison (2007) - Living Tongues Institute
“At the state level, the humanities per se have a difficult task achieving any sort of prominence on the public policy agenda. Like the federal funding agenda, where billions go to science and a comparative pittance goes to the humanities, there is little hope that poetry, literature, and language can realistically compete with roads, prisons, and health care for direct support.”

Summers (2004), p. 68
Changing times

The failures of communication and understanding have already done their damage. We must provide an ongoing commitment to language education and encourage knowledge of foreign languages and cultures.

Daniel Akaka, U.S. Senator from Hawaii

“Americans need to be open to the world; we need to be able to see the world through the eyes of others if we are going to understand how to resolve the complex problems we face.”

Daniel Akaka, U.S. Senator from Hawaii
“The stakes are very high. The challenges college graduates face over the next 50, 60, and 70 years will intensify. They involve the understanding of different cultures, the balance of global power, the depletion of environmental resources, and the ability to continue to grow in a rapidly changing world. It is because the stakes are so high that I believe a focus on student learning is so critical and why FL programs have such an important role to play.” (Chase, 2006, p. 585).

Geoffrey Chase - Dean of Undergraduate Studies
San Diego State University
Who are we teaching and what do they need to learn?

Are we seeking survival skills, intercultural competence, or academic proficiency?

What are the values of FL studies, in the academy and beyond?

What are reasonable outcomes expectations for instructed L2 development?

What’s the most effective way to teach language(s)?

How do we develop and support teachers to meet current demands?
Facing change

Are we seeking survival skills, intercultural competence, or what?

What are the values of FL studies, in the academy and beyond?

What are reasonable outcomes expectations for instructed L2 development?

How should we go about understanding and improving language teaching and learning in the educational settings where it is needed and in response to the demands for change that it faces?

How should we inform much needed FL educational reform?

How do we develop and support teachers to meet current demands?
Rethinking the value of FL education

STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING
Preparing for the 21st Century

High-quality teachers (2002)
NCATE - TESOL/ACTFL Teacher Development Program Standards

Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World
Rethinking the value of college FL education

MLA Teagle Foundation Working Group

“Language, Literature, and Liberal Education”

- Are there knowledge areas, competencies, and qualities that study in language and literature uniquely develops?
- What is the place of multilingualism in a liberal arts education?
- What do administrators hear from parents, students, employers, policy makers, alumni, donors about the value of liberal arts education?
- How might faculty investigate and document the knowledge areas, competencies, and qualities that students majoring in these areas absorb?
- What changes would improve the force and value of studies leading to bachelor’s degrees in language, culture, and literature?
For college students majoring in a language, in addition to basic communicative skills other concepts should be emphasized:

- the aesthetics of language, for which literature can be a primary source
- the correspondence between sharpness of thought and aptness of expression
- the usefulness of language for manipulating abstract ideas and understanding complex issues

The major should instill the value of intellectual and linguistic accomplishment instead of functionality and should stress language and literature as key to understanding human achievement.
Determining the value of college FL education

“What we assess is what we value”
--Lauren Resnick

“How we choose to assess will determine what gets valued”
--Norris
Determining the value of college FL education

2 ways of seeing assessment & change

- **Regulatory assessment**
  - agent of change
  - external, mandated
  - maintaining control
  - monitoring, managing
  - comparing, determining

- **Educative assessment**
  - capacity for dealing with change
  - internal, owned by us
  - taking responsibility
  - understanding, improving
  - defending, promoting

How do we choose to see assessment?
Problematizing the received view of assessment
Top 3 sources of pressure for assessment in college FL programs:

1. University administration
2. The dean
3. Accreditation process

"As part of its re-accreditation, the university has required all undergraduate programs to create and implement outcomes-oriented assessment plans."
(survey respondent)

Assessment mandate, e.g., WASC (2008):

*The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.*
Outcomes embody the essential purposes of an educational program: developments in knowledge, skills, dispositions of learners

Requires rethinking of educational programs as something more than the delivery of experiences or the exposure of learners to information

Calls for articulation of curriculum and instruction in support of targeted outcomes, demands integrated vs. isolationist thinking

Provides a clear statement of educational program value; answers the question “How do you know?” with evidence of educational effectiveness in discipline-specific terms
Perfunctory Process

• State outcomes
• Measure behaviors
• Analyze the results
• Then what?
• (Let the chair/dean do it)

“Time-consuming. Takes away from the business of teaching. Many aspects of learning can’t be measured.”

(survey respondent)
Large public institution

Accreditation pressures to assess learning

We have to assess our “liberal studies” core, ASAP!

How about an electronic portfolio?

Huge expenditure, $$, time, effort

Thousands of student portfolios created

BUT...
Responding to assessment: Just do it

Electronic Portfolio \rightarrow NEVER GOT USED

...faculty didn’t understand it...

...students thought:
1. *!%#$!@*
2. waste of time

...administrators wanted to do something with it but weren’t sure exactly what
Outcomes Assessment: No Gain, All Pain

By Bernard Fryshman

Something is certainly afoot. The public disclosure systems put forward by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the Voluntary System of Accountability from the country’s two big public university groups are major national initiatives encompassing some of America’s most impressive institutions. Miami Dade College’s effort to embed 10 desired learning outcomes into the curriculum, and a report of outcomes measurement by discipline, are two other accountability approaches that certainly bear watching.

Even homey old IPEDS has put on a fresh coat of paint, as the Education Department’s College Opportunities Online database (COOL, née PEER) has become Navigator, with an even more attractive set of tools, in the hopes that this time a few more somebodies will use the hundreds of millions of data elements sitting patiently by.

All of this activity is more a function of the skill of Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings in moving her agenda than it is a recognition that there is merit to the numerical assessment of student outcomes.
Higher Education Authorization

“Among the most controversial was an amendment by Rep. Robert E. Andrews, a Democrat from New Jersey, that stripped language from the bill that would have given colleges the primary responsibility for developing the measures of student learning that accreditors use to judge them.”

Before approving the bill this morning, the committee adopted two of seven amendments that members had offered during Wednesday’s debate.
Encountering assessment: Accountability

NO
CHILD
LEFT
BEHIND

College Leaving Exam

“Does the Spellings Commission think about language education at all?”

Michael Holquist (ADFL 2007 Summer Seminar West)
Encountering assessment: Accountability

NO COLLEGE STUDENT LEFT BEHIND

“Does the Spellings Commission think about language education at all?”

Michael Holquist (ADFL 2007 Summer Seminar West)
Assessment for ‘Us’ and Assessment for ‘Them’

Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education

“Students increasingly care little about the distinctions that sometimes preoccupy the academic establishment, from whether a college has for-profit or nonprofit status to whether its classes are offered online or in brick-and-mortar buildings. Instead, they care — as we do — about results.”

Assessment is done to show: “how much students learn in colleges and whether they learn more at one college than another...”

This expectation for assessment as accountability has forced many faculty members and administrators to seek out ways to balance assessment for “us”, or assessment for “improvement,” with assessment for “them,” or assessment for “accountability.”
“We’re going to stand strong on accountability”
--Margaret Spellings, former U.S. Secretary of Education

“If you want to hold schools accountable and make sure they are learning, you have to test.”
--Robert Black, spokesperson for the Gov. of Texas

Buckman (2007), on college student learning outcomes assessment:

“...equates with standardized testing, and standardized testing is among the worst things one can inflict on education, let alone higher education.”

Assessment = accountability-driven-standardized-testing problem
FL Dept.s need to develop
capacity for change
faculties of problem-solving

BUT...
managerial model of efficiency
not appropriate to academe

Perception of assessment

Domna Stanton (2007, ADFL Summer Seminar West)
What Do College Graduates Know?
A Survey of Arizona Universities

“...an examination of how much those graduating from Arizona’s three public universities—the University of Arizona, Arizona State University (ASU) and Northern Arizona University (NAU)—know about history, science, math, literature, arts, civics and other subjects. In other words, have they received a well-rounded, liberal education?” (p. 2)

24. Plato was a pupil of:
   a. Aristophanes
   b. **Socrates**
   c. Crito
   d. Aristotle

34. Renoir and Monet belong to which school of art?
   a. Surrealism
   b. Abstractionism
   c. Impressionism
   d. Realism

18. What are the four basic forces in the universe?
   a. **Gravity, electromagnetism, strong nuclear force, weak nuclear force**
   b. Gravity, electromagnetism, chemical force, atomic force
   c. Gravity, centrifugal force, centripetal force, Coriolis force
   d. Gravity, electromagnetism, thermodynamic force, quantum force

7. Identify Snoop Doggy Dogg.
   a. A rap singer
   b. Cartoon by Charles Schulz
   c. A mystery series
   d. A jazz pianist

“The vast majority of students surveyed earned a failing grade on our test of general knowledge and reasoning.”

40-item, multiple-choice test...
Responding to assessment: Just do it

RateMy Professors

Quality Rating Categories
😊 How easy?
😊 How fair?
😊 How good?

HOW HOT???
Swender (2002), on FL teacher professional development in assessment:

“After all, if teachers do not know how to measure what students can do with language, how will they be able to determine whether their students are measuring up to the expectations of the 21st century”.

Technocratic measurement problem
Encountering assessment: Measurement

Title VI National Resource Centers, funding proposal stipulations:

“Impact and evaluation: The extent to which the applicant provides an evaluation plan that is comprehensive and objective and that will produce quantifiable, outcome-measure-oriented data...”

Technocratic measurement problem
Berger (2008), on assessment in the humanities:

“This emphasis compels us to justify our values and methods by translating them into the *quantitative, quasi-scientific methods*... We are not asked to identify what we want our students to know or understand or be prepared intellectually to grapple with. Rather, we are asked for the behaviors that our students will exhibit that will demonstrate their learning—and we are told that we must develop a *quantitative instrument that will measure* these behaviors.”
Responding to assessment: Just do it

WebCAPE Foreign Language Placement Exam

Assessment as de facto student learning outcomes
"The Versant test of spoken Arabic will allow DLI and other organizations to get an accurate assessment of the language abilities of employment candidates or students in language learning programs."

J. Bernstein, chief scientist

"Test takers are measured for proficiency in sentence mastery, vocabulary, fluency and pronunciation in spoken Modern Standard Arabic" …in a 15 minute automated test.

What about outcomes like: Graduates will view themselves as agents for promoting understanding and dialogue between the Islamic World and the West, with the ability to articulate cultural differences between the two particularly in regard to politeness and interpersonal relations, and to interpret current Middle Eastern events from a variety of viewpoints, explaining how others view those events. (BYU Arabic)
Testing becomes teaching & learning, for example:

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (1986, 1999), & OPI

- A “common yardstick”...
- An “organizing principle”...
- A “proficiency movement”...
- A “quiet revolution”!!!

U.S. foreign language education
What is the appropriate proficiency level to adopt as a student learning outcome for the 2-year language requirement?

INTERMEDIATE - LOW
“If our testing encourages smug or thoughtless mastery--and it does--we undermine the liberal arts. If our assessment systems induce timidity, cockiness, or crass calculations about grades and the relevance of today's assignment, we undermine the liberal arts. If our assessments value correctness more than insight and honesty, we undermine the liberal arts. If our assessments value ease of scoring more than revealing to students the errors or tasks that matter most, we undermine the liberal arts.”

Grant Wiggins (1994)
Assessment presented & perceived as regulatory mechanism
External to what we do and value in the humanities
Associated with technocratic measurement practice
Realized in perfunctory, commercial, and debilitating ways

→ Misplaced, unscholarly reactions to assessment
→ Missed opportunities for educative uses of assessment

So, what are the alternatives?
Drake University language programs...

- Low enrollments, student dissatisfaction, poor external reviews
- Faculty refuse instructional development support
- Faculty refuse to create strategic plan for improvement
  - No acknowledgement of need to change
  - No engagement with evaluation findings
  - NO MORE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, NO MORE FACULTY!

What are the alternatives?
Re-envisioning assessment and evaluation in college foreign language education
Let’s take a test...

Item 1: In one minute or less, define the three terms and explain the relationship between them to a colleague.

Bonus points: Which of the three terms is the super-ordinate category?
Resolving terminological confusion

*Measurement* is the consistent elicitation of *quantifiable indicators* of well-defined constructs via tests or related observation procedures; it emphasizes efficiency, objectivity, and technical aspects of construct validity.

Norris (2006) *MLJ Perspectives*
Assessment is the systematic gathering of information about student learning in support of teaching and learning...It may be direct or indirect, objective or subjective, formal or informal, standardized or idiosyncratic...It provides locally useful information on learners and learning to those individuals responsible for doing something about it.

Norris (2006) *MLJ Perspectives*
Evaluation is the gathering of information about any of the variety of elements that constitute educational programs, for a variety of purposes that include primarily understanding, demonstrating, improving, and judging program value; evaluation brings evidence to bear on the problems of programs, but the nature of that evidence is not restricted to one particular methodology.

Norris (2006) *MLJ Perspectives*
The nature of useful evaluations

Evaluation gets used when...

(a) intended users of evaluation participate;
(b) evaluation is pursued as a process, not an end-game;
(c) sufficient time and resources are allocated;
(d) evaluation produces interesting, credible, relevant findings;
(e) findings are reported in a timely fashion;
(f) Interpretations and recommendations are contextualized.

N.B.: Points will be subtracted for excessive listing of superfluous characteristics.
Light (2001) on outcomes assessment:

“...a process of evaluating and improving current programs, encouraging innovations, and then evaluating each innovation’s effectiveness. The key step is systematic gathering of information for sustained improvement. And always with an eye toward helping faculty or students work more effectively.”

Richard Light (2001, p. 224)
Acknowledging multiple legitimate purposes

- Accountability
- Raising Awareness
- Improving teaching
- Motivation
- Program Development
- Justifying $ requests
- Illumination
- Revising curriculum
- Improving learning
- Diagnosis
- Articulation
- Certification

*PURPOSES*
Aligning methods with purposes

- Tests
- Performance assessment
- Quizzes
- Self-assessment
- Observations
- Peer assessment
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Journals
- Surveys
- Portfolios
- Language Profiles
- Meetings
- Observations
- Self-assessment
- Standardized assessment

METHODS
Item 3: What is the starting point for developing useful assessments? Provide a visual depiction for use in explaining your ideas to colleagues.

N.B.: Accuracy and aesthetics will be weighted equally in grading your answer.
Proceduralizing useful evaluation & assessment

1. **Participation** - stakeholders, representatives, primary intended users
2. **Prioritization** - challenges, questions in immediate need of answers
3. **Instrumentation** - what information will answer the questions?
4. **Collection** - how can we get info with available time/resources?
5. **Interpretation** - what do findings mean in context?
6. **Utilization** - what decisions & actions are taken?

Foreign language educators are ultimately responsible for what happens in FL education.

Participation by FL educators is essential throughout all phases of evaluation if contextual relevance is sought.

A focus on specific intended uses for evaluation findings is essential from the outset, if evaluation is to make any difference.
An evaluative approach to assessment

**Products:**

(a) *public documents* on the exact roles to be played by assessments in the FL program and the different forms that those assessments take

(b) *program policies* on assessment practice at the individual, classroom, and program levels

(c) *assessment methods* that lead to local actions

(d) *justification* for specific assessments and their uses

(e) *Identification* of other factors in need of evaluation (i.e., beyond student learning itself, what helps/hinders?)
Why bother?

- Deepen understanding of program & value by participants

- Enhance communication among program stakeholders

- Increase the likelihood that data will be used by increasing investment in them

- Decrease frequency and number of (useless) evaluations & assessments

- Decrease the pejorative effects of evaluation by increasing relevance, meaning, ownership

- Raise awareness & buy-in among teachers, students, others about assess/evaluation

- Actually do something on the basis of evaluation and assessment, instead of just doing it!
Why bother?

Received view of assessment:

What do we test? How do we test? What tests are available?

Evaluative Vision:

What questions do we have about our learners, courses, and programs? How do we gather information appropriate to answering those questions? In what ways can we utilize that information to resolve the challenges we face?
Why bother?

Needs?
Courses?
Course sequences?
Learner preparedness?
Articulation?
Resources?
Curriculum?
Co-curriculum?
Materials?
Teachers/teaching?
Awareness?

Student Learning Outcomes
• Achieved?
• Valued, valuable?
• Helpful?
• Comprehensive?
• Reasonable?
• Clear?
• Embedded?
• Comparable?
• Etc.
What does it look like?

Using assessment and evaluation in college FL programs
How do we assess the ‘ineffable’ constructs associated with FL studies?

**Outcome:** Graduates view themselves as agents for promoting understanding and dialogue between the Islamic World and the West, with the ability to articulate cultural differences between the two particularly in regard to politeness and interpersonal relations, and to interpret current Middle Eastern events from a variety of viewpoints, explaining how others view those events.

**Assessment??**
Intercultural competence portfolio

Longitudinal prompted journals

Pre-post learning questionnaires

Selected essays and presentations

Log of intercultural activities

Student:
Reflective narrative & summative statement

Faculty:
Ratings on outcome-specific rubric; cross-student pattern identification

Example: Assessing challenging constructs
Example: Needs assessment for curricular revision

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<th>Role of assessment</th>
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<td>• Relevance to learners’ wants and needs?</td>
<td>• Identify teachers’ perceptions of same</td>
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<td>• Shifting standards for college FL learning</td>
<td>• Identify gaps between the two</td>
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<td>• @50 instructors</td>
<td>• New expectation to pursue performance outcomes</td>
<td>• Prioritize outcomes expectations for 2-yr. program</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Diversity of students, diverse uses of Japanese</td>
<td>• How to evolve? What values to prioritize?</td>
<td>• Provide basis for revision of materials</td>
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Context:
- Japanese at University of Hawaii
- 2-yr. requirement (mostly non-majors)
- @1000 students per year
- @50 instructors
- Diversity of students, diverse uses of Japanese

Problem:
- Perception of curricular ‘antiquation’
- Relevance to learners’ wants and needs?
- Shifting standards for college FL learning
- New expectation to pursue performance outcomes
- How to evolve? What values to prioritize?

Role of assessment:
- Identify learners’ perceived L2 needs
- Identify teachers’ perceptions of same
- Identify gaps between the two
- Prioritize outcomes expectations for 2-yr. program
- Provide basis for revision of materials
Example: Needs assessment for curricular revision

Instruments and Procedures

Questionnaires

L2 Use Domains

Academic

Social

Occupational

Tourism

Likert scale ratings of priorities + Open-ended responses

Teachers \((N = 46)\)

Students \((N = 688)\)
Example: Needs assessment for curricular revision

Identified Learner Needs

Teachers + Learners Prioritize

In Hawaii...
- Academic routines
- Socializing
- Hosting guests
- Working retail
- Interacting w/tourists
- Using computers

In Japan...
- Academic routines
- Socializing
- Surviving as a tourist
- Participating in complex discussions

Learners Prioritize, Teachers do not

In Japan...
- Medical interactions
- Residing long-term (housing, etc.)
- Working abroad
- Formal ceremonies
Example: Needs assessment for curricular revision

Other Curricular Implications

- Instruction moves too rapidly
- Overemphasis on Kanji memorization
- Not enough attention to culture
- Not enough focus on situation-specific speaking tasks, performance practice
Using Assessment for Curricular Change

- Basis for changes in texts, materials, & pedagogy (less kanji, more tasks)
- Revised 2-yr expectations emphasize speaking, culture, performance
- Focus on Japanese use in Hawaii & long-term residence abroad (both authentic to learners)
- Development of performance-based outcomes assessments
- Revised balance/pace of instruction

Related Changes

- Dean commits to Department-level Assessment Specialist
- Evaluation utilized as campus-wide example of ‘closing the loop’ back to curriculum
- Increased enrollments, improved course evals
- Principal Investigator tenured...

Example: Realizing the curriculum via assessment

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<td>• New curriculum, new instruction, old assessment</td>
<td>• Operationalize curricular expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New curriculum: <em>Developing Multiple Literacies</em></td>
<td>• Accuracy of curricular learning trajectories?</td>
<td>• Provide evidence regarding learner development &amp; outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fully integrated Language &amp; Content instruction</td>
<td>• Students meeting expected outcomes?</td>
<td>• Enable between-level, and intensive/non comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Task- &amp; genre-based</td>
<td>• Feasible expectations for intensive and non?</td>
<td>• Fit seamlessly into teaching and learning processes!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advanced L2 literacy target</td>
<td>• Relevance of external assessments?</td>
<td></td>
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Example: Realizing the curriculum via assessment

Prototypical performance writing tasks

- Level performance profiles
- Task assignment sheets
- Sample student performances

Development → Revision
Analysis → Deliberation
Example: Realizing the curriculum via assessment

Curricular level expectations

Task

Content

Language

Consistent assignment framework

Assignment 1
Assignment 2
Semester...
Assignment 3
Assignment 4

Explicit performance criteria

Prototypical Performance Writing Task
“Assessment in this kind of a context is, I would almost say probably an indispensable aspect in order to clarify any number of things. Because it is in the discourse about assessment and how we would do that that our knowledge became articulated or the holes in that knowledge became clearer to ourselves. Or the cover-ups that we had engaged in were no longer possible if we wanted to be honest with ourselves about it.”
Using Assessment for Curricular Change

- Forced the curriculum to become real
- Close specification of L2 progress within/across curricular levels
- Disambiguation of learning outcomes in terms of task, content, language
- Curricular ‘map’ for use by teachers and learners (what happens when?)
- Forged agreement between levels on what can and cannot be expected

Related Changes

- Clarified link between assessment, instruction, and curriculum
- Courses: improved instructional consistency
- Teachers: awareness of learner development, role of feedback
- Learners: Understanding of learning targets, value

See Byrnes (2002)
What can we learn from these examples?

**Received View**
- Generic, one-size-fits all
- Accountability-driven
- Measurement-based
- One-shot, absolute
- Problem-identifying
- Imposed, required

**Useful Evaluations**
- Contextualized: specific language programs
- Intentional: multiple purposes and uses
- Diversified: methods articulated to uses
- Iterative: change takes time
- Problem-solving: improve via understanding
- Engaging: stakeholders (especially educators) take interest in and act upon evaluation
Embracing change:

Learning to see assessment and evaluation as useful processes
Embracing change

“Focusing on student outcomes [...] has resulted in a cluster of new pedagogies [...] Starting with the outcomes that students are to achieve at each course level, we have created evaluation criteria, assessment instruments, and course content that are designed to help them incrementally improve toward those targeted goals in linguistic, cultural, and analytic abilities.”

Windham (2008, p. 35)

“...[M]ore students are attracted to our program because the improvements in teaching and curriculum that grew out of the assessment process, which include increased emphasis on oral proficiency and culture for all languages, have enabled them to better move toward their goal of communicating fluently in the target language and acquiring an improved understanding not only of the target culture but also of their own.”

Carstens-Wickham (2008, p. 42)
Embracing change

Gerald Graff, MLA President, on Outcomes Assessment

• What we expect our students to learn: all of them, not just the best
• Requires us to think and act as a team, in relation to our colleagues
• Requires us to create genuine programs, not collections of isolated courses

“But it should also help humanists more generally to clarify to a wider public the critical reading and thinking competencies we stand for and to show that those competencies are indispensable enough to the workplace and democratic citizenship to merit greater investment.”

“Rather than reject assessment and circle the wagons, however, we should actively involve ourselves in the process, not only to shape and direct it as much as possible but to avoid ceding it by default to those who would misuse it.”
“The intent is to encourage the foreign language field to recognize program evaluation as indispensable for enhancing student learning and program quality, and to enable the field to articulate and demonstrate—internally and externally—the unique contributions of language studies in a pluralist and globalized world.”
A few resources...
Language Assessment, Measurement, and Program Evaluation

Welcome to the home page of LAMPE at the University of Hawai‘i. We are a group of faculty and student scholars with interests in the areas of language assessment, measurement, and program evaluation. The contexts for our work range broadly and include: (a) foreign, second, and bilingual education, (b) language for academic and professional purposes, and (c) the role of language in education and society. Housed within the Department of Second Language Studies, LAMPE features several graduate degrees, numerous courses, and a variety of funded research projects. We invite you to browse our web site, or contact us, for further information on opportunities to study and work at the important interface between second/foreign language learning and use, on the one hand, and, assessment, measurement, and evaluation, on the other.

Our mission:

Faculty and students teach and learn about, conduct research on, and disseminate ideas in Language Assessment, Measurement, and Program Evaluation in order to promote:

1. Useful, fair, and accurate assessment of language users/learners in educational, occupational, and other social settings,
2. Rigorous and appropriate use of measurement in second and foreign language research,
3. Effective evaluation of language programs and projects, including both processes and products, with an emphasis on improvement.
http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation
Mahalo!