NSSE, FSSE and Assessment in the Humanities

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Presentation at the 2011 Assessment in the Humanities National Symposium
Outline

• Assumptions and assertions
• Student engagement in the humanities
• Faculty views of assessment
• Parting thoughts
Assumptions

• Discipline influences teaching & learning

• Improvement initiatives must deal with discipline

• Disciplinary socialization presents some challenges to improvement
Assertions

• Assessment can inform improvement

• Assessment is being done in the humanities, but maybe not by you

• Assessment is best as a formative exercise, to inform improvement
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE HUMANITIES
Student Engagement

Collegiate quality =

Institutions: Resources, curriculum

Students: Time and effort

Educationally purposeful activity
NSSE and FSSE

Collegiate quality =

Educationally purposeful activities
Assessment in the Humanities

General Approaches

• Criterion
  ▪ What do you expect from your students?

• Normative
  ▪ How do your students compare to peers?

• Longitudinal
  ▪ Have your students changed over time?
Assessment in the Humanities

Criterion Assessment

- Worked on assignments with classmates outside of class: 37%
- Discussed ideas with faculty outside of class: 39%
- Included diverse perspectives in class: 78%
- Research with faculty: 17%
- Internship or field experience: 41%

English Program

Desired

Actual

Percent “Often” or “Very often”

Percent “Done”
Assessment in the Humanities

Normative Assessment

- Worked on assignments with classmates outside of class
  - Percent "Often" or "Very often"
    - Psychology: 37%
    - Business admin.: 46%
    - Biology: 57%
    - English: 68%
  - Percent "Done"
    - Psychology: 10%
    - Business admin.: 17%
    - Biology: 28%
    - English: 37%

- Discussed ideas with faculty outside of class
  - Percent "Often" or "Very often"
    - Psychology: 22%
    - Business admin.: 27%
    - Biology: 39%
  - Percent "Done"
    - Psychology: 35%
    - Business admin.: 41%
    - Biology: 45%
    - English: 52%

- Included diverse perspectives in class
  - Percent "Often" or "Very often"
    - Psychology: 51%
    - Business admin.: 65%
    - Biology: 72%
    - English: 78%
  - Percent "Done"
    - Psychology: 37%
    - Business admin.: 46%
    - Biology: 57%
    - English: 68%

- Internship or field experience
  - Percent "Often" or "Very often"
    - Psychology: 35%
    - Business admin.: 41%
    - Biology: 45%
    - English: 52%
  - Percent "Done"
    - Psychology: 37%
    - Business admin.: 46%
    - Biology: 57%
    - English: 68%
Assessment in the Humanities

Normative Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>25%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>75%</th>
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<td>Selective Peers, English</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

English Program

Percent "Often" or "Very often"

Percent "Done"
Assessment in the Humanities

Faculty, importance

- Worked on assignments with classmates outside of class
- Discussed ideas with faculty outside of class
- Included diverse perspectives in class
- Research with faculty
- Internship or field experience

English Program

Percent “Done”

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
Assessment in the Humanities

Summary

• Surveys like NSSE and FSSE contain valuable pieces of information for the humanities
• Results inform and raise questions for collegial discussion
• Other sources of evidence are available to assessment professionals and you
Assessment in the Humanities

Summary

• Interdisciplinary sharing can foster creative approaches to teaching in your own discipline, and even to discover that such ideas are already adopted by your colleague at another place
FACULTY VIEWS OF ASSESSMENT
Arts & Humanities Views of Institutional Assessment

• 75% indicate institution is involved “Quite a bit” or “Very much”

• 62% indicate results are disseminated effectively

• 56% indicate that institutional assessment efforts are useful to them
That’s Pretty Good, But…

Usefulness of Findings

Dissem. Effectiveness

- 12%
- 50%
- 32%
- 6%
Findings Used?

• Faculty who indicated that institutional assessment informed teaching and learning improvement activities “Quite a bit” or “Very much”

  ▪ **45%** for *department* activities

  ▪ **43%** for *institutional* activities
Accreditation Matters?

• Faculty members’ perceptions of institutional assessment efforts vary by field

• Professional fields have more positive views than arts and sciences fields
Parting Thoughts

- Taking up assessment is not only an issue for humanities
- What will make assessment more useful to faculty in the humanities?
  - Re-socialization (e.g., questioning)
  - Speaking your language
- Are the humanities doing enough in the realm of assessment?
  - Need more encouragement?
Parting Thoughts

• When do results warrant action?
• What’s your role?
  ▪ Questioner, collector, interpreter, disseminator, consumer, convener
• Where do we want to situate this work?
For more information...

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