

Ten Principles of Meaningful Assessment

1. You have more data than you think you do. Go find it.
2. Assessment should not be redundant. Instruments should be compared to gauge overlap, gaps, and deficits.
3. Big sample sizes don't equal progress. You need as much evidence as it will take to move the conversation forward.
4. Students should not receive assessment. Assessment should be part of the learning process.
5. If you collect it, you should use it – the good data, the bad data, and the ugly data.
6. What students think isn't necessarily what they can do. Assessment of student learning should be both indirect and direct.
7. Assessment should reflect, match, and advance the institutional mission.
8. Remember Plato: "Necessity is the mother of invention." If you need it, create your own assessment.
9. Assessment isn't just for outcomes. Assessment is for inputs, processes, and outputs too.
10. Assessment is only as good (and as limited) as your assumptions allow it to be.