Best Practices in Assessment

The assessment of student learning begins with educational values. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.