Using evaluation for innovation and improvement in language and humanities education

John M. Norris

Georgetown University
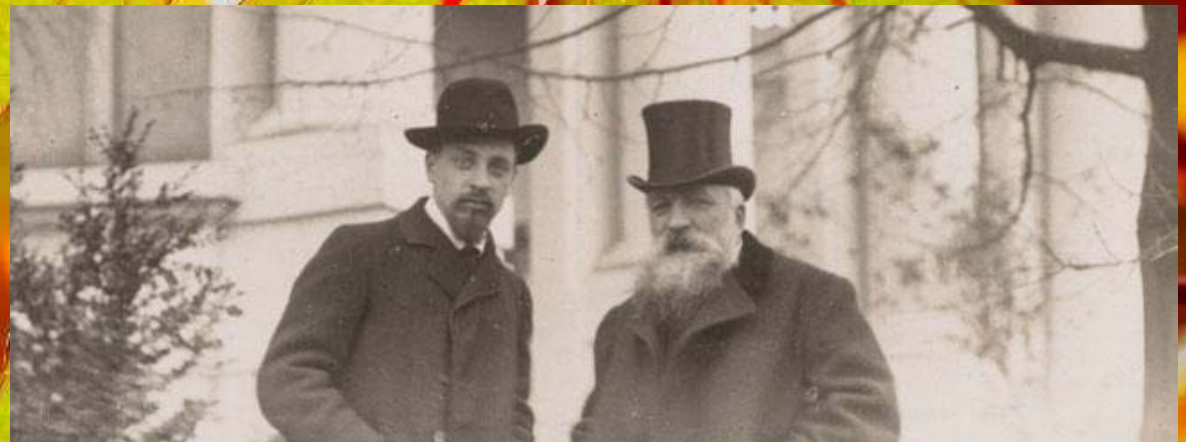
October 31, 2014

Please cite as:

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Rainer Maria RILKE

(1875 - 1926), * geboren in PRAG...

"Ich lerne sehen"
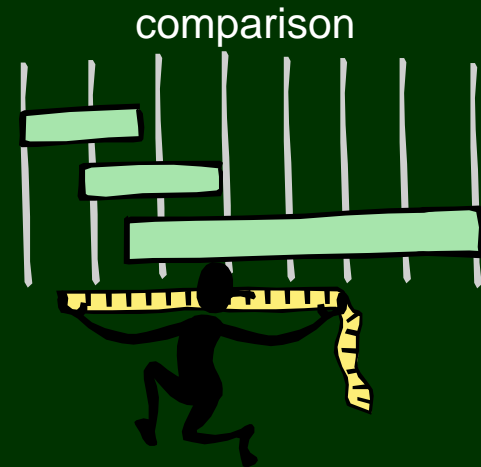
Evaluation is a way of seeing...

...our programs, curricula, classes, teaching, students—our educational efforts—with an eye towards understanding, expressing, and improving their value...
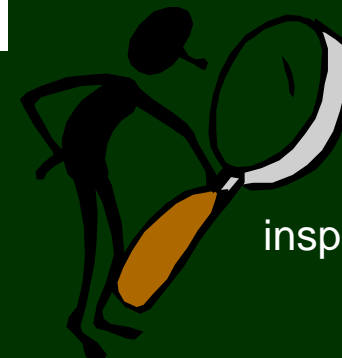
comparison

reflection

inspection

appreciation

Of course, seeing can be done in a variety of ways...

Visions of assessment and evaluation

"This emphasis compels us to justify our values and methods by translating them into the <u>quantitative, quasi-scientific methods</u>… 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 <u>demonstrate</u> their learning—and we are told that we must develop a quantitative instrument that will <u>measure these behaviors</u>."

Berger (2008)

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

Carstens-Wickham (2008)

Visions of assessment and evaluation

2 ways of seeing evaluation

Regulatory mechanism

→agent of change

→external, mandated

→quasi-scientificist

→quantitative measurement

→comparing, monitoring, managing

Educative process

→capacity for dealing with change

→internal, proactive

→pragmatic practice

→aligned assessments

→inquiring, understanding, improving

How do we choose to see it?

What approach to evaluation fosters innovation?

Facing change in language and humanities education

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

• %Majors at Harvard

Humanities majors at Harvard fell to 20% in 2012 from 36% in 1954.

"We do have to worry about living after graduation. I don't want to be doing what I love and be homeless" (Harvard undergraduate student)

Changing understandings about learning/teaching

Experiential, link to non-classroom world

Individualized, self-efficacy

Collaborative, problem-based

Enculturation, disciplinary authenticity

Multiple pedagogies, diversified assessment

?

Learner-Centered
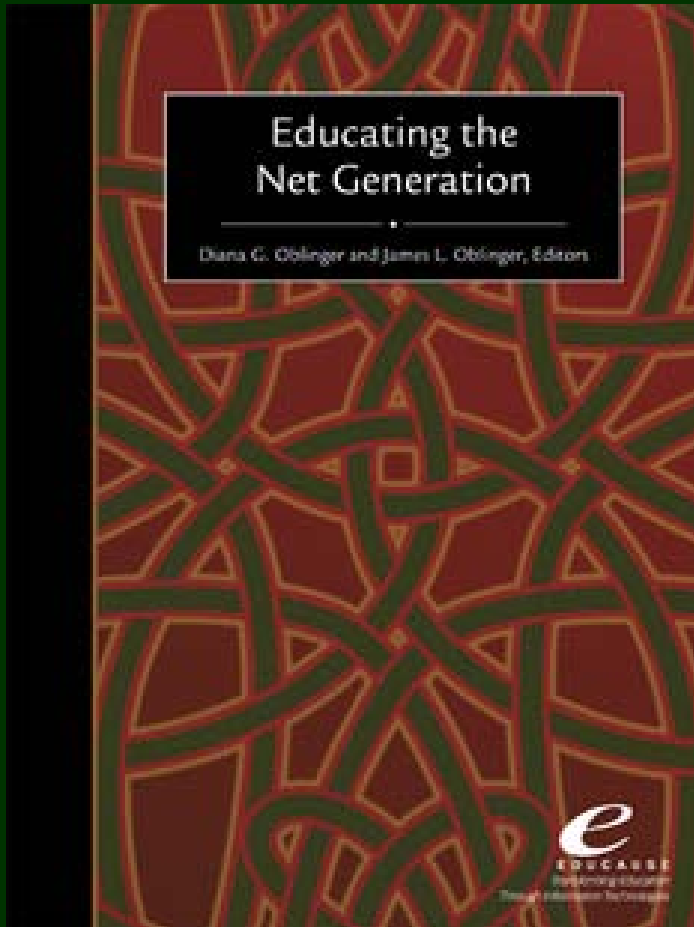
Changing understandings about learning/teaching

From "Millennials" to "Neo-millennials"

- Multimedia fluency

- Constant connection

- Distributed communities

- Collectivist, communal learning

- Active, embedded, reflective experiences

- Co-design and customization

24/7 teaching???

MOOC-mania?

Changing disciplines

Revolution

Vanishing

Question

Fate

Quest

↓

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

Changing scholarly perceptions

Stanley Fish, on the humanities...

"...don't do anything, if by 'do' is meant bring about effects in the world. And if they don't bring about effects in the world they cannot be justified except in relation to the pleasure they give to those who enjoy them. To the question 'of what use are the humanities?', the only honest answer is none whatsoever."
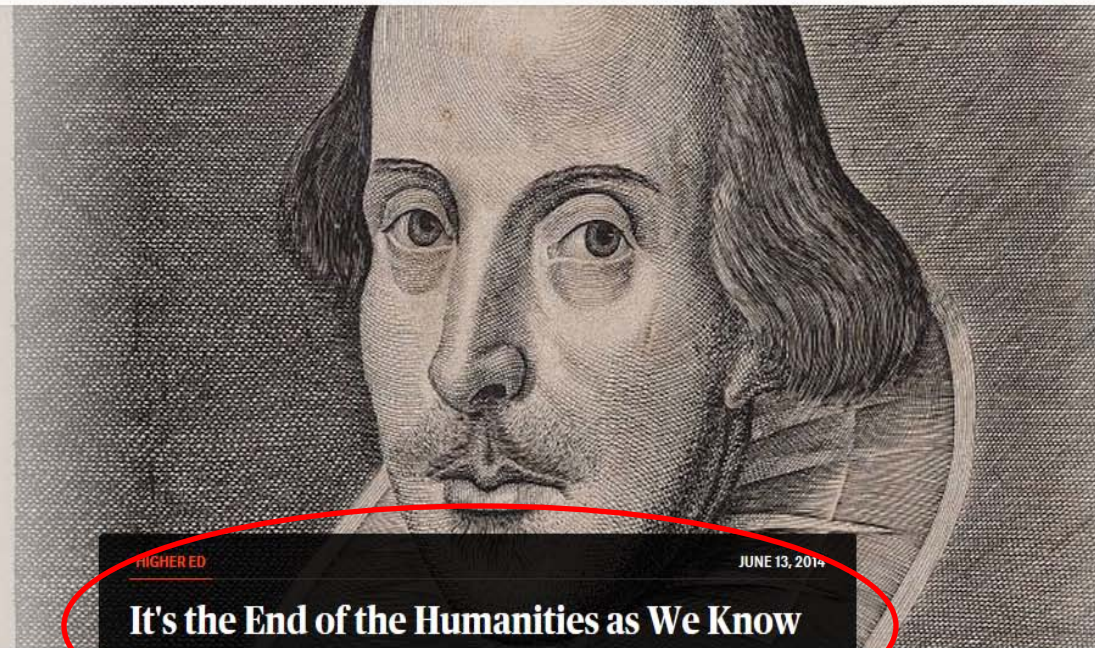
Changing scholarly perceptions

Changing economies

"… the humanities per se have a difficult task achieving any sort of prominence on the public policy 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 public perceptions
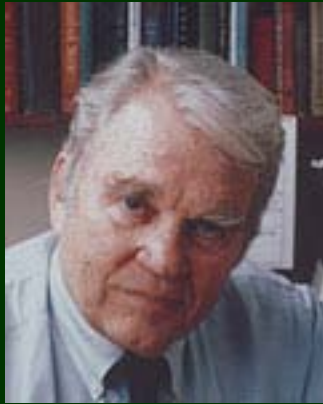
Andy Rooney

"Viva la English"

Tribune Media: 10-26-2007

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

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post

More Steps We Can Take Right Now
Beef Up the Country's Foreign Language Skills

"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

Changing times: 2012

Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs
OVERSIGHT *of*
GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE

WEBSITE
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Oversight of Government Management > Hearings

A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the Federal Government

Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia

May 21, 2012 02:30PM
Location: Room 342, Dirksen Senate Office Building

Changing times

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The Real Language Crisis

We are becoming a nation of second-language illiterates, and recent draconian cuts to language teaching in colleges and universities are exacerbating an already serious problem.
By Russell A. Berman

We in America are confronting a stark alternative: either open ourselves to an appreciation of human plurality and the diversity of cultures around the globe or limit ourselves to a narrowly normative culture. Will American schools and colleges provide students with opportunities to learn to understand other voices, or will our educational system succumb to the temptations of isolationism and xenophobia?

CHECK OUT THE CURRENT ISSUE

Rethinking the value of humanities education

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES

CHERISHING KNOWLEDGE · FOUNDED 1780 · SHAPING THE FUTURE

Home > Academy Projects > Initiative for the Humanities

Initiative for Humanities and Culture

New and increasingly complex challenges — political, cultural, technological, and financial — are profoundly altering conditions for the humanities in the United States. The Academy's Initiative for Humanities and Culture provides a framework for examining the significance of the humanities to our national culture and for developing resources and policies to ensure the health of the humanities in the 21st century.

Humanities & Culture Initiative Information

▸ **Co-chairs:**
Denis Donoghue
(New York University),
Steven Marcus
(Columbia University),
Francis C. Oakley
(Williams College),
Patricia Meyer Spacks

"What <u>role</u> do the humanities play in American life? How have the humanities <u>evolved</u> over time? How should the humanities be <u>defined</u> in the twenty-first century? What can the humanities <u>teach us</u> about life, meaning, and the human condition?

Rethinking the value of FL education

Modern Language Association **MLA**

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Home > MLA Report to the Teagle Foundation on the Undergraduate Major in Language and Literature

MLA Report to the Teagle Foundation on the Undergraduate Major in Language and Literature

In 2006, the M
prepare white p
concentrations
the MLA broug
including colleg
professions and
group's report
language and l
report 📄 also

We know that today's students are less likely to choose language and literary study as majors than they were thirty-five or even fifteen years ago, and we wanted to explore ways to strengthen majors in our fields and attract new generations of students to what has been the traditional core of liberal study.

generations of students to a traditional core of liberal study: language, literature, and culture.

Rethinking assessment and change

Modern Language Association | MLA

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Home > From the President

From the President
Assessment Changes Everything

When I served on college admissions committees in the 1990s, a phrase that kept coming up was "the best students," in comments like "We've got to get the best students" or "Rival College X down the road is beating us out for the best students." I came to think of the mentality behind th... an... St... ad...

Had we been assessing outcomes all along in the normal course of our work, I doubt that the legislators and privatizers could have rushed in to fill the vacuum we created.

instruction! Sitting in admissions committee meetings, it was all I could do not to ask, "Hey, why don't we recruit *bad* students and see if we can actually teach them something?"

The experience helped me realize that, despite our undoubtedly sincere efforts to make higher education democratic, the top colleges and universities and their wannabe imitators are still set up for the students who are already the best educated rather than for the struggling majority that

2008 Articles

- Assessment Changes Everything (February 2008)
- A Message from 2008 MLA President Gerald Graff (January 2008)
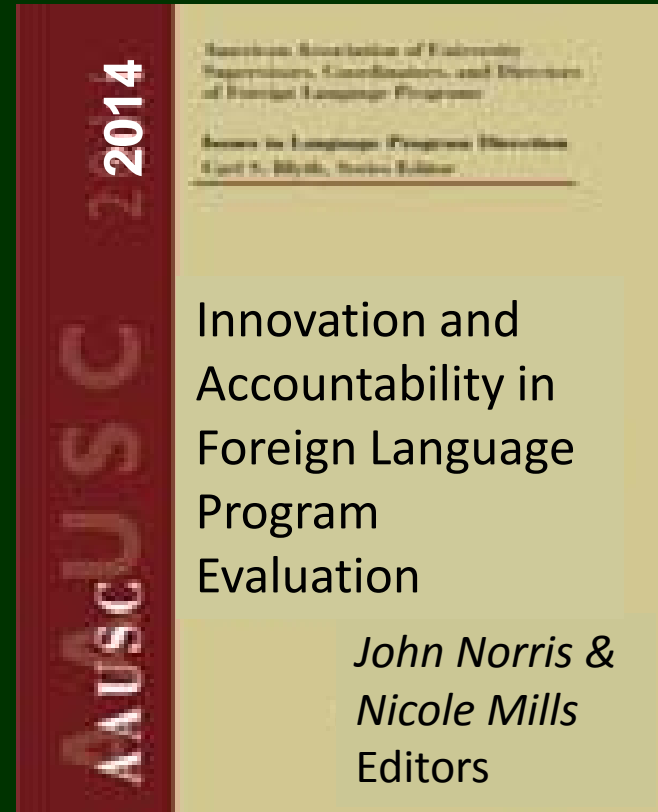
Evaluation as capacity for dealing with change

"Innovation in FL education today is an absolute essential: we adapt, or we do not survive. Evaluation offers a systematic basis for language programs to pursue innovations of various kinds."

Norris & Mills (2014, p. 11)

2014

AAUSC

Innovation and Accountability in Foreign Language Program Evaluation

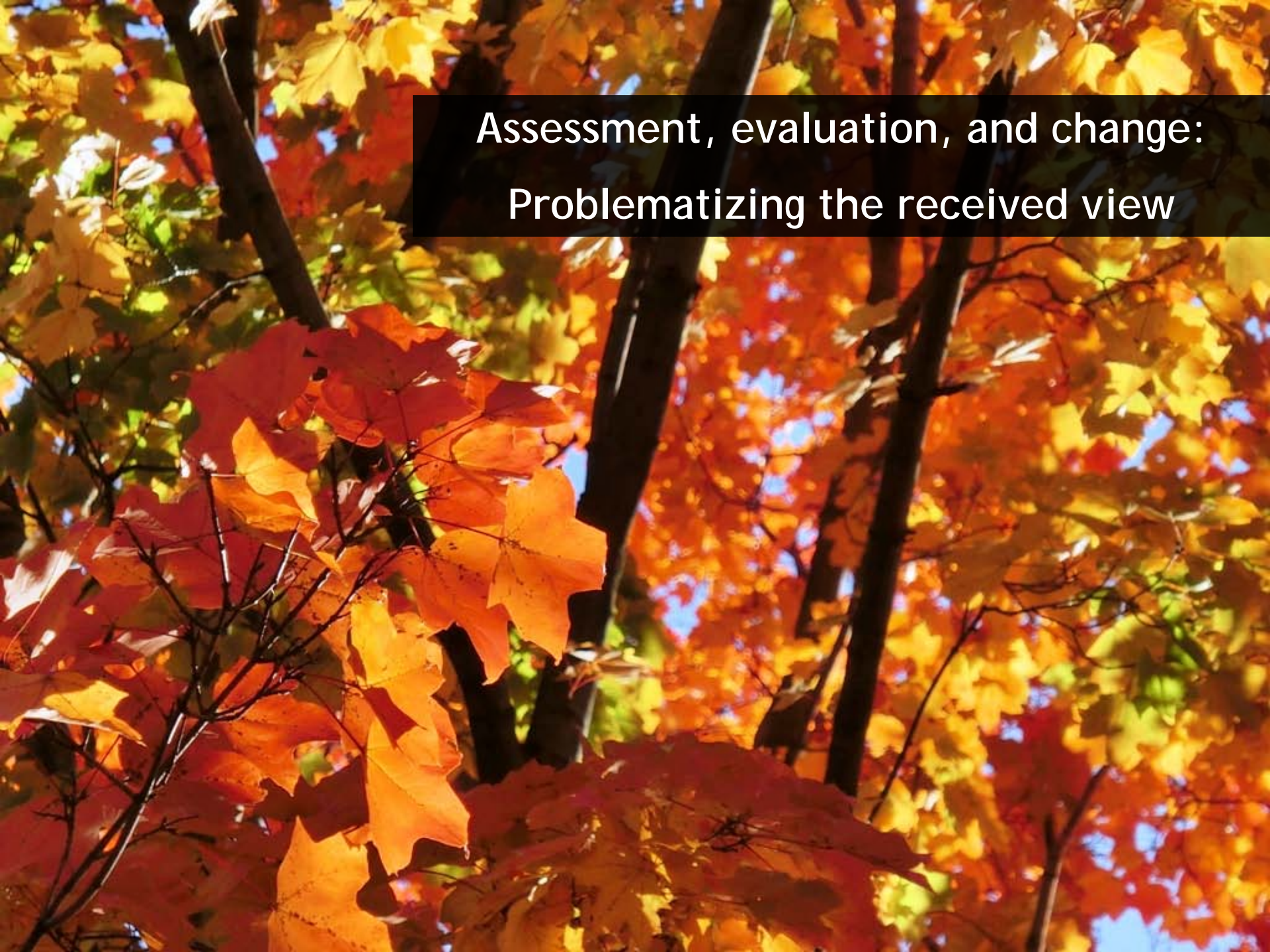*John Norris & Nicole Mills* Editors

How do we choose to see assessment and evaluation?

Agent of change?

Capacity for dealing with change?

Assessment, evaluation, and change:

Problematizing the received view

Encountering evaluation: Accreditation

US Department of Education "DOE"

Council for Higher Education Accreditation "CHEA"

Recognize Regional Accreditation Agencies

Middle States Association - MSA

New England Association - NEASC

North Central Association - NCA

Northwest Association - NWCCU

Southern Association - SACS

Western Association - WASC

A C C R E D I T

Colleges & Universities

Accreditation and assessment mandates

Primary emphasis → Ensuring educational <u>effectiveness</u>

Primary indicator → Student <u>learning</u> outcomes

Primary mechanism → SLO <u>assessment</u>

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 <u>improvements based on findings</u> will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.

Accreditation and assessment mandates

Mandate to assess, yes, but...

- <u>Local ownership</u> over what outcomes, how assessed
- <u>Internal focus</u> and use for reform at program/dept level
- Intended to engender a culture of evidence & <u>self-regulation</u>
- Primary purpose is <u>program articulation and improvement</u>

Institution facilitates, reviews

Accreditors Ascertain

SLO Assessment:

Lived realities

Perfunctory Process

• State outcomes

• Measure behaviors

• Analyze the results

• Then what?

• (Let the chair/dean do it)

Why is this a typical kind of reaction…?

Encountering evaluation: Accountability

Accountability movement: using standardized tests to hold teachers and students to performance expectations

"We're going to stand strong on accountability"
--Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education

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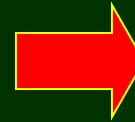--Robert Black, spokesperson for the Gov. of Texas

No Child Left Behind

Encountering evaluation: Accountability

Do 'comparison shopping' and 'league tables' lead to innovation and improvement?

INSIDE HIGHER ED
insidehighered.com
June 26

Assessment for 'Us' and Assessment for 'Them'

Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education

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

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."

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."
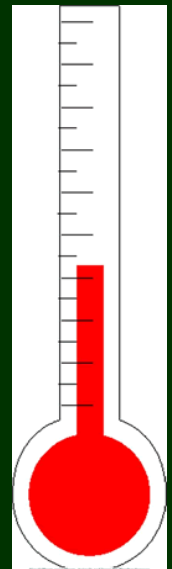
Encountering evaluation: Mis-representation

Spellings Commission (2007), on higher education accountability:

"...higher education institutions should measure student learning..."

Evaluation is measurement (only)

Encountering evaluation: Mis-interpretation

Falk (*Baltimore Sun*), Dean of Arts & Sciences, Johns Hopkins University:

"…the more we rely on standardized testing as our bellwether for the quality of education, the more we will value in education only those things that can be measured on standardized tests".

Is measurement all that is needed for improvement to happen?
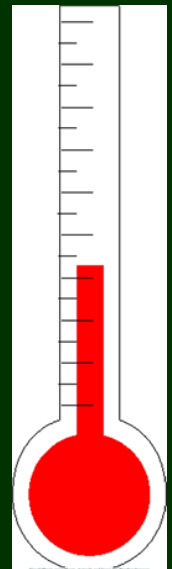
Encountering evaluation: Mis-guided practice

Testing/No Child Left Behind

Press Clips

Institute for Language and Education Policy

Putting Assessments to the Test

By Valerie Strauss

"There has been an explosion of mandates for more and more standardized tests with very little evidence to support their use"

--Walter Haney of Boston College's Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Policy.

Menken, K. & Solorza, C. (2014). No child left bilingual: Accountability and the elimination of bilingual education programs in New York City schools. *Educational* Policy, 8(1), 96-125.
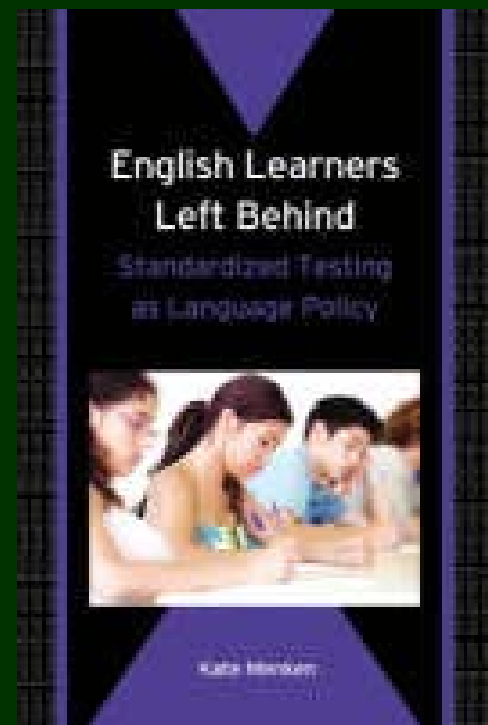
Despite the intentions of accreditation and accountability…

Evaluation is presented to us in higher education as a regulatory mechanism, guided by forces external to the academy, and founded on measurement practices.

…so, how do we respond?

Responding to evaluation: Rejection

INSIDE HIGHER ED
insidehighered.com
Nov. 13

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.

LITERARY STUDY, MEASUREMENT, AND THE SUBLIME: DISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT

Editors
Donna Heiland and Laura J. Rosenthal

With the assistance of
Cheryl Ching

Teagle Foundation (2011)

Responding to evaluation: Rejection

Holquist (2011), on dangers of outcomes assessment:

"...to sacrifice all other goals in the service of standardized outcomes across the board, no matter what the effect might be on different areas of scholarship, university systems, or individual students and professors—the humans who are the subject of the humanities." (p. 79)

"But in the end, it is only in the scale of a whole lifetime that the worth of literary education may be measured, and that is a scale that cannot be 'tuned.'" (p. 86)

Misperception that outcomes assessment = standardized measurement

Responding to evaluation: Rejection

Barrington (2003), on assessment in the liberal arts:

"To design and administer (intellectually honest) assessment plans that will measure such capabilities with a dozen or more standardized 'learning objectives' is next to impossible" leading to "pestilent repercussions" for the truly valued learning objectives that constitute the liberal arts, in that it "discourages teaching such skills because they are difficult to measure".

MLA website blogger:
"What I would much rather see is a definitive statement from the MLA rejecting the assessment madness altogether. Let's admit that, when all is said and done, what we do is not something that we can 'know', or that can be measured…"

Misperception that outcomes assessment = standardized measurement

Responding to evaluation: Rejection

Survey of US college FL educators, on evaluation:

"frankly, a waste of time; it just causes us to jump through meaningless hoops. Good FL instructors already assess their students constantly both inside and outside of class and in a variety of ways. It's what we do. Much of the assessment craze seems to be a waste of time for us."

My main concern is… "That it would not be a waste of everyone's time with no concrete results. That the people running it would be so afraid of stepping on toes that they just babble about quality without looking at the details."

"Although required by our university and accrediting association, faculty see it as a burden that is essentially a waste of time. Some faculty refuse to participate. Conclusions drawn from evaluations have little, if any, impact on decision making."

"Sometimes we think they are just collecting dust on some administrator's shelf in the Dean's office, cause we never hear anything from them…So, I'm not sure what those program evaluations are really accomplishing in our college or in our university."
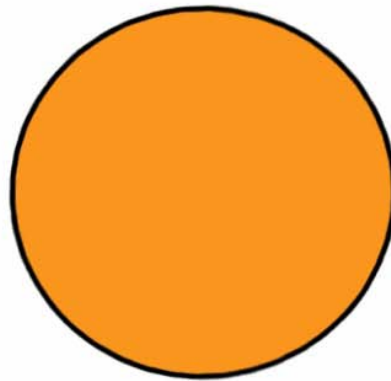
"Evaluation is a colossal waste of everyone's time!"

Responding to evaluation: Cynical survivalism

How to approach a self-study evaluation for program review:

Write "reports" using "data"

Figure 1. How awesome we are

Really awesome

SOURCE: Because we said so

freshspectrum.com

Responding to evaluation: 'Just do it' mindset

Common ~~European~~ Framework of Reference for Languages

↓

One size fits all…?

A new measure to solve all of our problems?

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Responding to evaluation: 'Just do it' mindset

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)

idi

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

ETS

Major Field Tests

MAPP – Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress

elumen ™ Magnifying the power of learning outcomes

Respectable efforts at assessments for common outcomes, but…

Too easily adopted without articulation to individual programs and their values

Assessing intercultural learning in study abroad:

Denial

Intercultural
Development Inventory

Starting point? →

Defense

Minimization
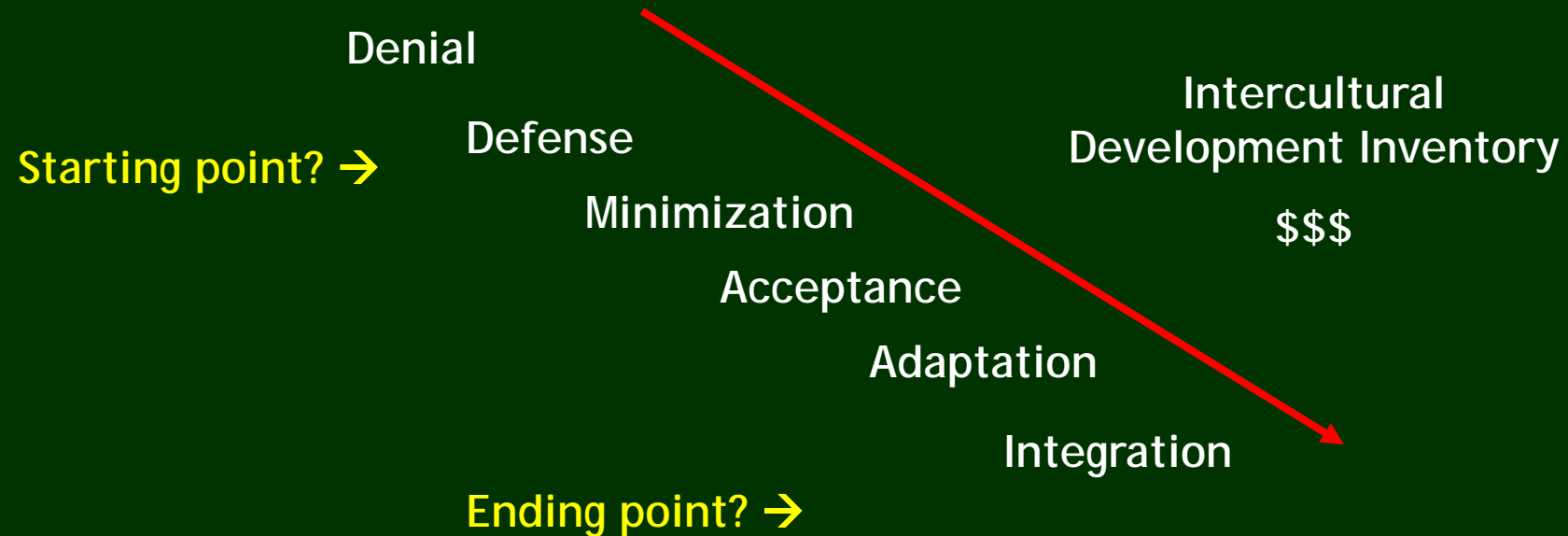
$$$

Acceptance

Adaptation

Integration

Ending point? →

Other intercultural outcomes not assessed?

Knowledge? Skills? Awareness? Etc.

What Do College Graduates Know?
A Survey of Arizona Universities

24. Plato was a pupil of:

a. Aristophanes
18. What are the four basic forces in the
b. Socrates
universe?
c. Crito
d. Aristotle
a. Gravity, electromagnetism, strong
34. Renoir and Monet belong to which
nuclear force, weak nuclear force
school of art?
b. Gravity, electromagnetism, chemical
force, atomic force
a. Surrealism
c. Gravity, centrifugal force, centripetal
b. Identify Snoop Doggy Dogg.
force, Coriolis force
c. Impressionism
d. Gravity, electromagnetism,
d. Realism
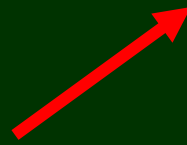thermodynamic force, quantum force
b. Cartoon by Charles Schulz
c. A mystery series
d. A jazz pianist

40-item, multiple-choice test...

"...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)

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

Responding to evaluation: 'Just do it' mindset

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RateMy Professors

reviewum.com

ATE A PROF
GIVING PROFESSORS
WHAT THEY DESERVE...

RateMyTeachers.com
Teacher Ratings By Students and Parents

Quality Rating Categories

☺ How easy?

☺ How fair?

☺ How good?

HOW HOT???

Responding to evaluation: 'Just do it' mindset

Rate My Professor & Professors Strike Back

James Rhem, Executive Editor

Given that student evaluations of faculty remain one of the most written about and contentious areas of research in higher education, perhaps it's important to state at the outset that this article won't shed any new, scientifically valid light on the subject. This article looks at the popular website **www.ratemyprofessor.com** and its sister site "Professors Strike Back," a feature of **www.mtvu.com**.

After viewing the videos on "Professors Strike Back," we wondered what those teachers actually thought about "Rate My Professor" and the experience of "striking back." In deference to busy schedules

the Viacom Corporation. MTVu soon set up the "Professors Strike Back" feature where faculty can answer criticism, and at the same time contacted some faculty offering them the chance to be filmed responding to student comments on their teaching and to the idea of "RateMyProfessor" in general.

Frank Popper

In the highly edited videos that appear online, most faculty come across as quite emphatic and, at times, shockingly frank even when cloaked in an exaggerated persona. Frank Popper, who teaching land use planning at Rutgers and Princeton, clearly enjoyed making his over-the-top rebuttal to students. In response to a student comment that his course is a "rewarding experience if you have some

RATE MY PROFESSORS

PROFESSOR POPPER

background in this field; if not you might get lost and

can't read. Certainly can't read at the college level."

To the comment that he "loves to hear himself talk," Popper replies:

"Well, what I'm doing there is anti-filibustering you students who don't know what you're talking about, and take too long to say it and get all the details wrong or upside down anyway. Of course I anti-filibuster you. Who would want to listen to you? You're like the worst senator in the world times ten and you're paying for this (you think). I have to listen to you? Not in my class."

Popper, who drove over to MTV's studios in Greenwich Village to tape his reply, can't quite sustain his persona. What come across as a bit more seriousness begins to leak out in his comment on student ratings on the site in general:

"In general I think you are very young students who have problems—oh what would a psychiatrist say?—of impulse control. You may love me; you may hate me, but you tend to be inaccurate, illiterate, and inappropriate in your expres-

Responding to evaluation: 'Just do it' mindset

Large public institution

Accreditation pressures to assess learning

We have to assess our "liberal studies" core, ASAP!

How about an <u>electronic portfolio</u>?

Huge expenditure, $$$, time, effort

Thousands of student portfolios created

BUT…

Responding to evaluation: 'Just do it' mindset

Electronic Portfolio ➡️ NEVER GOT *USED*

...faculty didn't understand it

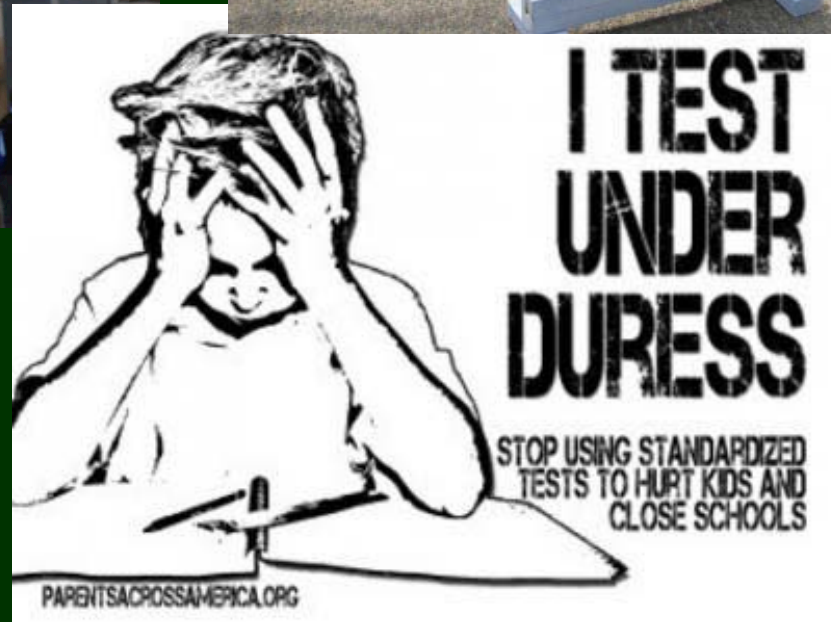...students thought:

    1. *!%#$!@*

    2. waste of time

...administrators wanted to do something with it but weren't sure exactly what

Encountering evaluation: Reactions

Summarizing the received view

- Evaluation portrayed & perceived as a bureaucratic mechanism

- Associated with technocratic, external measurement tools

- Realized in perfunctory, compliance-oriented ways

- Often punitive rather than formative or transformative

→Misplaced, unscholarly reactions to evaluation

→Non-participation, no buy-in by FL & humanities educators

→Missed opportunities for follow-through on evaluation

So, what's the <u>use</u>?

And, what are the alternatives?

What are the alternatives?

- LSU: ~~German, Russian programs (and faculty)~~
- George Washington: ~~FL requirement~~
- SUNY Albany: ~~French, Italian, Russian programs (and faculty)~~
- University of Iowa: ~~MA and PHD in German and Linguistics~~
- Brandeis University: ~~BA in Hebrew and Yiddish~~
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania: ~~BA in French and German~~
- Etc.

"…no clear value to the institution…"

What are the alternat...

How do we transcend these debilitating attitudes? How can we transform evaluation into a useful process that leads to the <u>improvement</u> of FL education?

The Chronicle of Higher Education

A U...

Russ...

By A...

David Maxwell has a message for prospective foreign-language students: If you want to study French, take a college course. If you want to learn to speak it, take a plane to Paris. But steer clear of American classrooms, Mr. Maxwell

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!

Re-envisioning evaluation:

A focus on utility and use

Learning to see useful evaluation: Vision correction

Accountability?

Accreditation?   Measurement?

Assessment?

Evaluation?

Innovation?

Improvement?
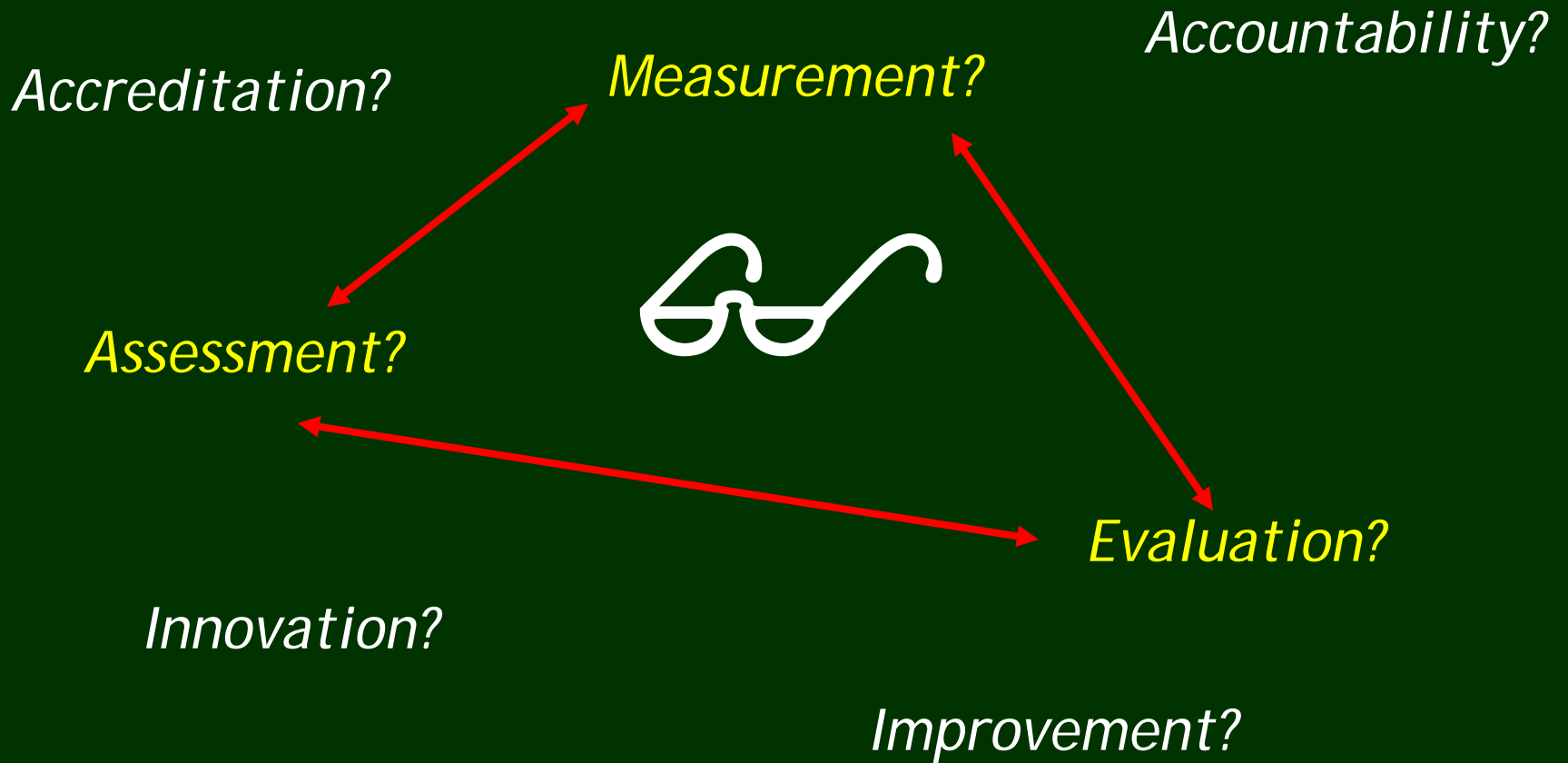
Resolving terminological confusion

Evaluation is the gathering of information about any of the variety of elements that constitute educational <u>programs</u>, for a variety of <u>purposes</u> that include primarily understanding, demonstrating, improving, and judging program value; evaluation brings evidence to bear on the <u>problems</u> of programs, but the nature of that evidence is not restricted to one particular methodology.

Norris (2006) *MLJ Perspectives*

Resolving terminological confusion

Outcomes assessment = the use of information about student learning for understanding and improving educational programs...

EVALUATION
of programs

ASSESSMENT
of learners

MEASUREMENT
of quantifiables

When the American Evaluation Association put together its *Standards for Program Evaluation*, the foremost criterion they addressed was…

UTILITY: The Utility Standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the practical information needs of intended users.

Joint Committee on Educational Evaluation (1994)

Focus on who and why

Learning from research on *useful* evaluation

But what are the characteristics of evaluations that meet this utility criterion? Considerable research has gone into answering this question (see Patton, 2008), and the following characteristics have been associated strongly with evaluations that produce useful and used results…

evaluation findings

key stakeholders

Manageable & Feasible:
Adapted to available time and resources

Democratic:
Negotiated decision making

Educational & Transformative:
Users learn by participating

Responsive:
Evaluation responds to primary intended users' purposes

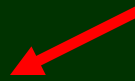**Clear & Understandable:**
Transparent processes and outcomes
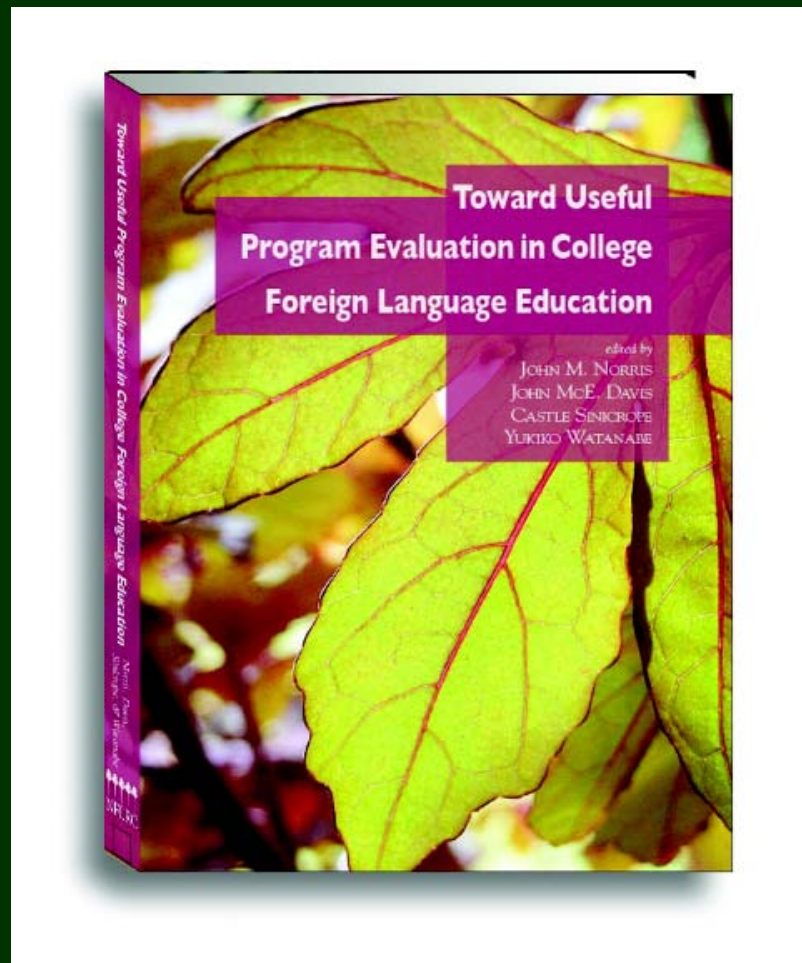
Learning from research on *FL* evaluation

Observations from case studies:

- **Leadership** = Modeling, enabling
- **Focus** = Prioritization for feasibility
- **Data** = Real, empirical, cyclical, local
- **Collaboration** = Participation by multiple faculty, staff, students crucial for programmatic use/reform to ensue

New questions:
- <u>Factors</u> that predict useful evaluation?
- Contextual <u>constraints</u>?
- What <u>learning/change</u> happens?
- Which <u>methods</u> contribute most?

Toward Useful
Program Evaluation in College
Foreign Language Education

edited by
John M. Norris
John McE. Davis
Castle Sinicrope
Yukiko Watanabe

Learning from research on *FL* evaluation

Davis (2012): What factors contribute most to SLOA being used in college FL programs? (Survey of US FL departments)

- Institutional support for assessment
- Program leadership
- Faculty collaboration
- Institutional assessment infrastructure
- Communication about assessment
- Program resources for assessment
- Program ethos to improve/innovate
- Institutional policies for assessment

→ Collecting, using assessment data

→ Making changes and learning from process

1 Not at all	2	3	4 A lot
37%	27%	22%	14%

Learning from research on *FL* evaluation

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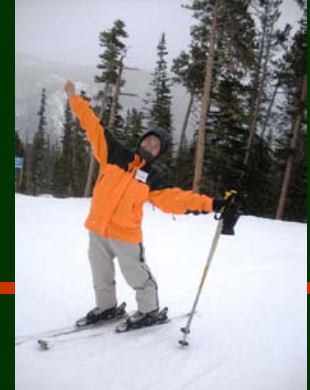- Making changes and learning from process
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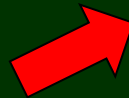| 1 Not at all	2	3	4 A lot
37%	27%	22%	14%

Learning from research on *FL* evaluation

Watanabe(2012): How/when/why do programs learn through SLOA? (2-year case studies of 8 college FL programs)

Engaged, participatory leaders

Clear sense of program identity and value(s)

Commitment to collaborative innovation

Capacity and structure to make decisions

"Proactive program ownership"
…the ability to take advantage of or suppress external accountability pressures and perceive the need for, self-interest in, and capacity to do outcomes assessment

Learning through evaluation, primarily…
➔**changes in pedagogy**
➔**changes in outcomes/assessment**
➔**changes in curricular design**
➔**changes in *understanding***
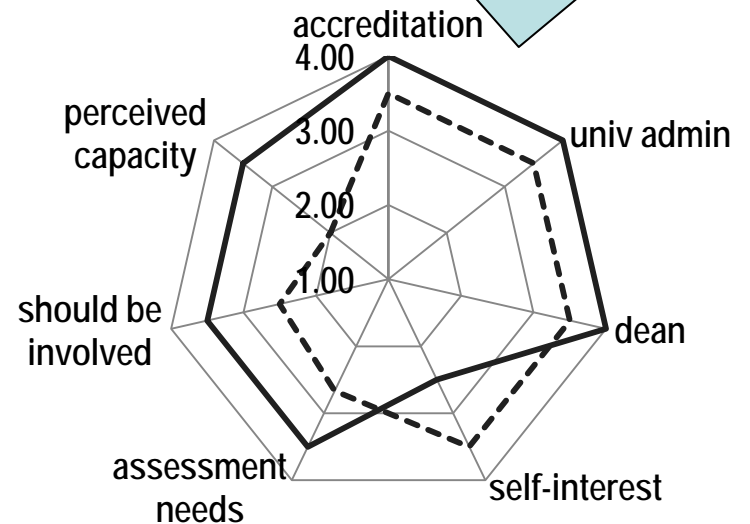
High assessment use for learning

Program B

Program E

- - - - - = presurvey
_____ = postsurvey

Primarily externally motivated
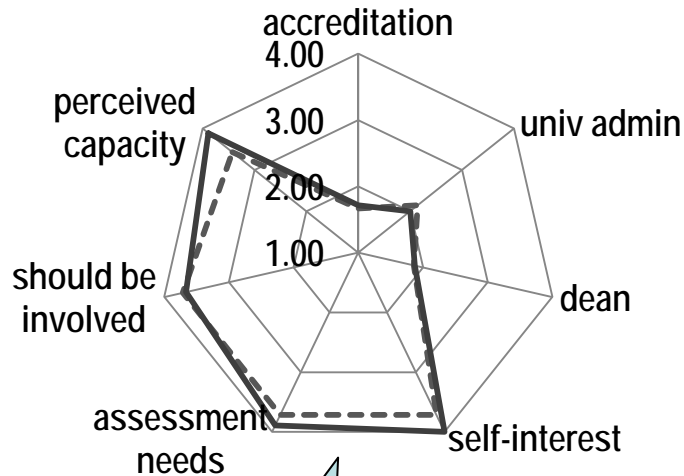
Internally motivated, not driven by program-external forces

Low assessment use for learning

# Useful evaluation in college FL programs: What have we learned?

Context & conditions:
→Localized program focus and identity, engaged leaders, collaborative faculty, commitment to innovation, structure for decision-making
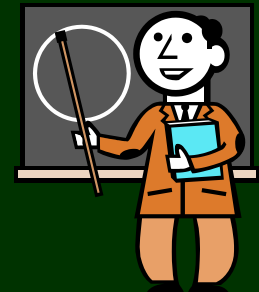
Process:
→Participatory; focus on intended uses; prioritize important, feasible activities; collect locally meaningful data; follow through with joint decisions, actions; repeat the cycle
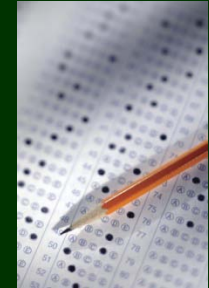
Methods:
→Aligned with program and scholarly values; focused on substantial issues; designed, selected for specific uses; emphasize information yield
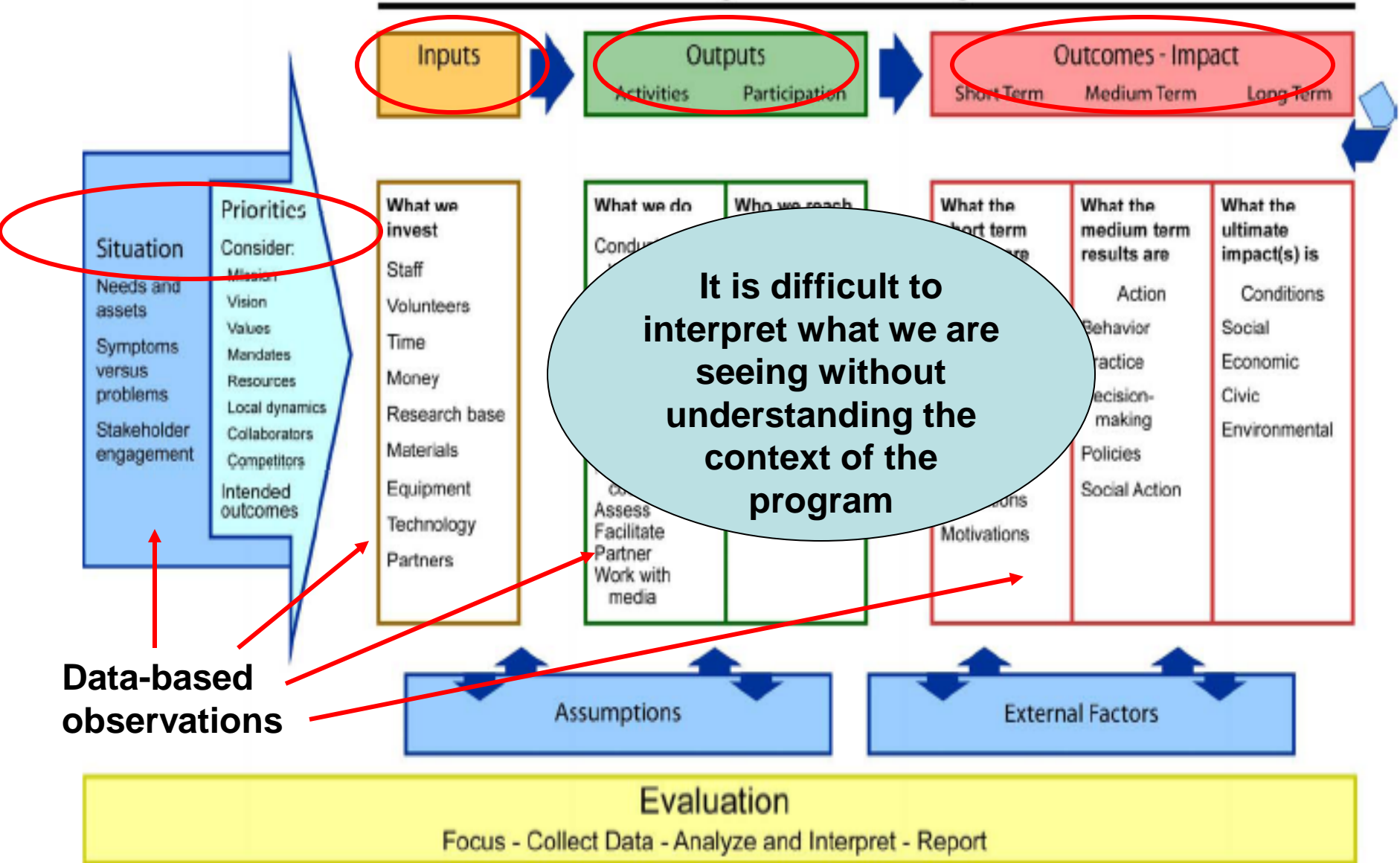
PROGRAMMATIC

PRAGMATIC

PARTICIPATORY

Program Action - Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes - Impact		
	Activities	Participation	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term

Situation

Priorities

Consider:					

Situation
- Needs and assets
- Symptoms versus problems
- Stakeholder engagement

Priorities

Consider:
- Mission
- Vision
- Values
- Mandates
- Resources
- Local dynamics
- Collaborators
- Competitors
- Intended outcomes

What we invest
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Time
- Money
- Research base
- Materials
- Equipment
- Technology
- Partners

What we do
Condu...
Assess
Facilitate
Partner
Work with media

Who we reach

What the short term ... are

Motivations

What the medium term results are
- Action
- Behavior
- Practice
- Decision-making
- Policies
- Social Action

What the ultimate impact(s) is
- Conditions
- Social
- Economic
- Civic
- Environmental

It is difficult to interpret what we are seeing without understanding the context of the program

Data-based observations

Assumptions

External Factors

Evaluation
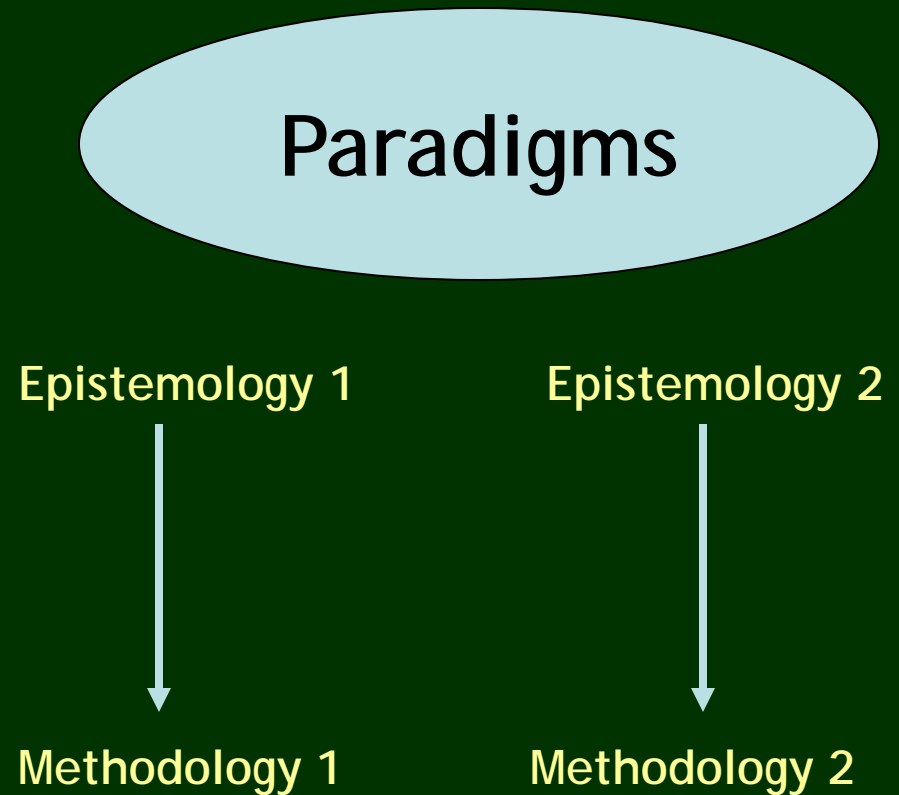
Focus - Collect Data - Analyze and Interpret - Report

How does evaluation work?

Cronbach et al. (1980)

"The evaluator will be wise not to declare allegiance to either a quantitative-scientific-summative methodology or a qualitative-naturalistic-descriptive methodology." (p. 7)
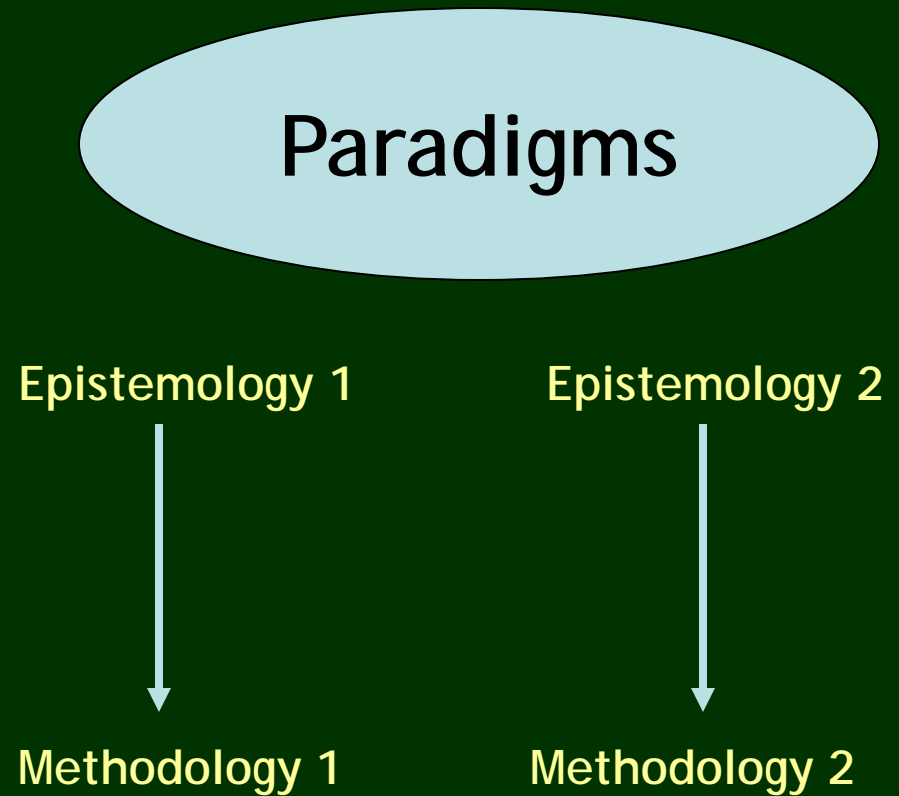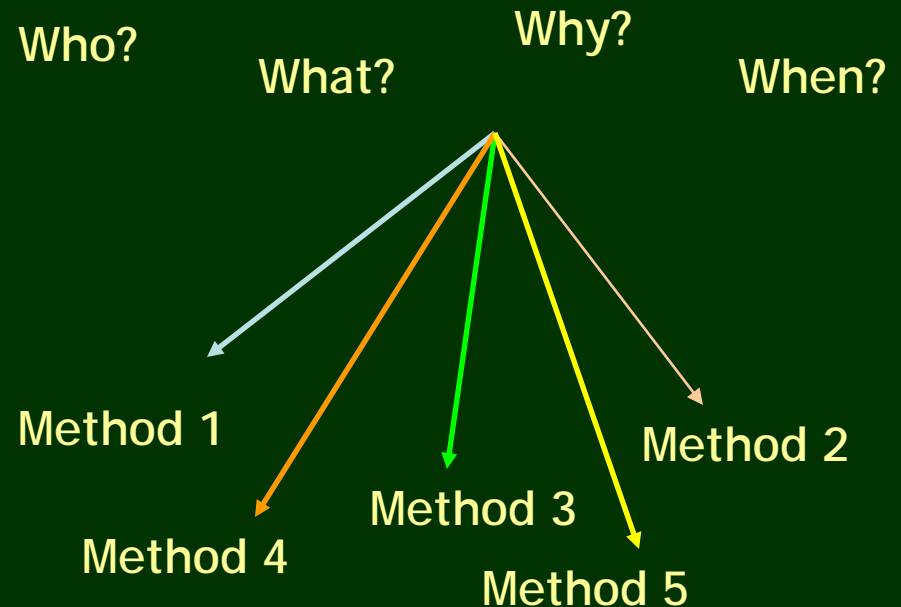
Paradigms

Epistemology 1   Epistemology 2

Methodology 1   Methodology 2

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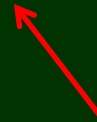
How does evaluation work?

Turkish

Arabic

Consensus: Making the most of evaluation in Middle Eastern Studies

Persian

Hebrew

How does evaluation work?

1. Participation – stakeholders, representatives, primary intended users

2. Prioritization – challenges, questions in immediate need of answers

3. Instrumentation – what data will answer the questions?

4. Collection – how can we get data in available time/resources?

5. Interpretation – what do findings mean in context?

6. Utilization – what decisions & actions are taken?

Participation by language and humanities educators is essential throughout evaluation if contextual relevance and program improvements are sought.

Language and humanities educators are ultimately responsible for what happens in language and humanities education.

Corrected vision…

What is the starting point for developing useful evaluations?

Who is asking for that information? Why?

Evaluative vision: Begin by asking….
Traditional vision: Begin by asking….

→ What is the outcome utilized for by the program?
→ What are the outcomes targeted by the program - the betterment of learners, the program, the discipline?
→ How can they be measured?
→ What questions do they have about learners, teachers, courses, curriculum, etc.? What challenges do they face?
→ Are they being met?

...open on the basis of...

Who is doing the measuring and interpreting? Why?

Who is held responsible? Who can actually make changes in the program?

Useful evaluation

Evaluation in use for understanding and improving language and humanities education

1. Understanding humanities learning outcomes

How do we assess the 'ineffable' constructs associated with humanities education?

<u>Knowledge/Ability Outcomes</u>: Historical literacy, critical thinking, research and writing skills, such as:

→Understands how to locate and critically evaluate relevant scholarly books and articles

→Understands how to search various library databases

→Can synthesize and communicate findings to a scholarly audience…etc.

Assessment???

1. Understanding humanities learning outcomes
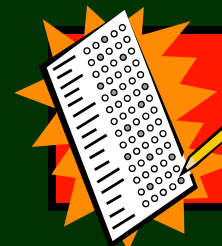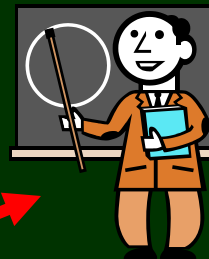
2-semester existing course,
"Major seminar"

What happened as a result?
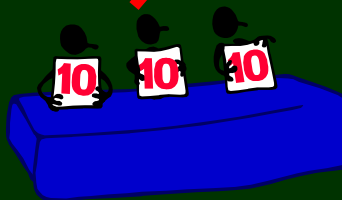
Students design, research,
write a senior thesis
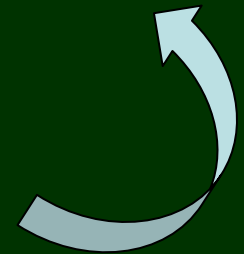
REPORT

End-of-year conference:
"History Day"

Each student gives
conference presentation

10 10 10

Students self-assess and
provide feedback on
outcomes and program

Faculty & graduate students
rate and comment

1. Understanding humanities learning outcomes

"What the exercise did accomplish was to focus our collective attention much more intensively on the work of our undergraduates. We began to <u>learn much more about both their achievements and failings</u> and, as a consequence, to <u>learn much more about the strengths and weaknesses of our program</u>. In turn, this set in motion a <u>whole series of changes</u>, large and small, in the way we go about our work as teachers."

"I will note that since initiating these changes, the number of undergraduate history majors at American University has more than tripled..."

Robert Griffith, American University, History

2. Transforming a multi-language prog

UNIVERSITY OF EVANSVILLE

Department of Foreign Languages

Contextual Challenges:

• Multi-language department

• Uncertain relation between languages

• Uncertain program value

• Questionable contribution to the institution

• Perceived minimal value by other programs

• Future of the department?

Vision

The Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Evansville will be recognized as one of the top language programs among universities in its category. The department embraces and enhances the University's global vision by

- emphasis on interdisciplinary programming
- internship/study abroad opportunities
- innovative language instruction
- experiential and service learning projects
- a wide range of language offerings
- outstanding faculty members interacting with a culturally diverse student body.

Mission

Foreign languages are an essential component of the great tradition of teaching and learning in the liberal arts. By teaching students to communicate in other languages, allowing them to gain knowledge and an understanding of other cultures, helping them to make connections with other disciplines, providing them with insight into the nature of language and culture and requiring them to participate in multilingual communities both at home and abroad, the programs in the Department of Foreign Languages play a critical role in preparing students for the personal and professional challenges of a multicultural society and a global marketplace.

Intended Uses→ Understanding and enhancing program's contribution to student learning, enhancing institutional profile, survival

2. Transforming a multi-lang

Step 1: Who are we and what do

Realization that learning expectations were uneven across languages → came to consensus

Actions:

- Full faculty discussion of learning <u>outcomes</u>

- Assessment committee convened, drafted SLOs

- Student focus groups vetted and suggested revisions

- Revised SLOs approved for majors across all FLs

<u>Student Learning Outcom</u>

1. Students <u>express themse</u> ety of oral and written registers, k communicative context and c entions of the particular culture.

2. Students <u>read and comprehend texts</u> in the target languages tailored to a variety of communicative needs.

3. Students <u>write documents</u> in the target languages tailored to a variety of communicative needs, keeping in mind the conventions of the particular cultures.

4. Students <u>understand native speech</u>.

5. Students demonstrate a <u>familiarity with the current events</u>, the pop culture, and the social structures of the countries/cultures in which the target languages are spoken.

6. Students demonstrate <u>understanding of language variation</u> (social, dialectal, and contextual.)

ETC...

2. Transforming a multi-lang...

Step 2: Where does learning occu...

Realization that opportunity to learn was uneven across different FLs → added courses, modules

Actions:

- Reviewed course offerings, syllabi X outcomes
- Identified likely gaps
- Proposed revisions to courses, sequences
- Articulated core offerings across languages

I = Introduce
R = Reinforced, practiced
M = Mastery at target level
A = Assessment collected

Courses, activities, and requirements	BA Major learning outcome 1	...outcome...	...me 3
Lower-level language courses	I		
Upper-level language courses	R	I	
Electives	R	R	I, R
Seminars	M	M	M
Capstone course	M,A	M, A	A
Senior thesis	A	A	A

2. Transforming a multi-lang

**Step 3: What have students learn**

Actions:

- Specified uses: program improvement + public demonstration of value

- Identified major constructs: FL proficiency, content knowledge, program impact

- Developed data-collection methods: performance and reflection, objective and subjective
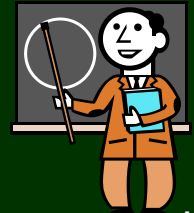
- Pilot-tested, revised, implemented plan

Realization that some outcomes not sufficient → added/adjusted course emphases, raised awareness

...earch
...nior essay, reflective narrative
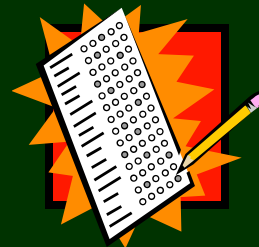
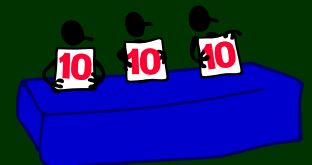Anonymous survey of students' perceptions about learning

Capstone course

Portfolio presentation in FL to faculty committee

Online reading assessment, CEFR level rating (external indicator)

Committee Q&A, ratings on rubric

2. Transforming a multi-language program

Step 4: What happened? Follow through and consequences

Actions:

- Posted SLOs, assessment plans to the website

- Developed program brochure based on SLOs (used with students and parents)

- Revised curriculum and courses based on findings

- Submitted unsolicited assessment report to dean, faculty senate

- Published assessment work

Positive changes:

- Enrollments increased

- Request for new faculty lines approved

- Chair named to newly formed university assessment committee

- Students' perceptions increasingly positive

- Faculty collegiality improved

See Grau-Sempere, Mohn, & Pieroni (2009)

Cultural Dispositions Learning Outcome:

Students will develop a deep appreciation for Italian cuisine and wine…

3. Evaluation: collaborative reflection and innovation
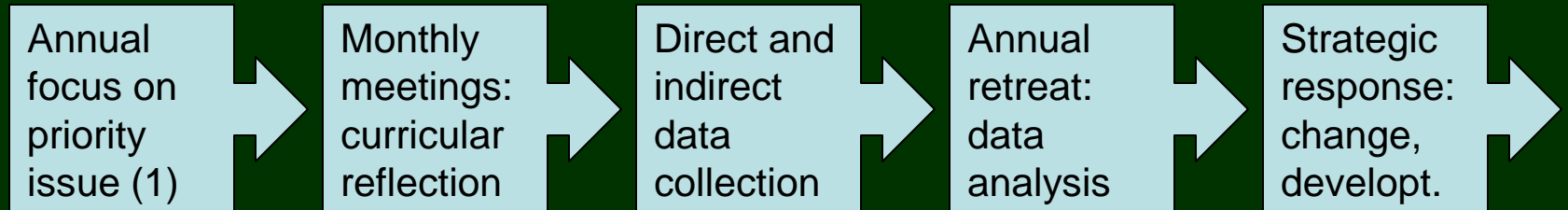
Oral proficiency assessment

Writing assessment

Graduating majors survey

Hybrid program outcomes

Student Learning Goals: Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions
Majors – Upper Division Courses – Lower Division Courses

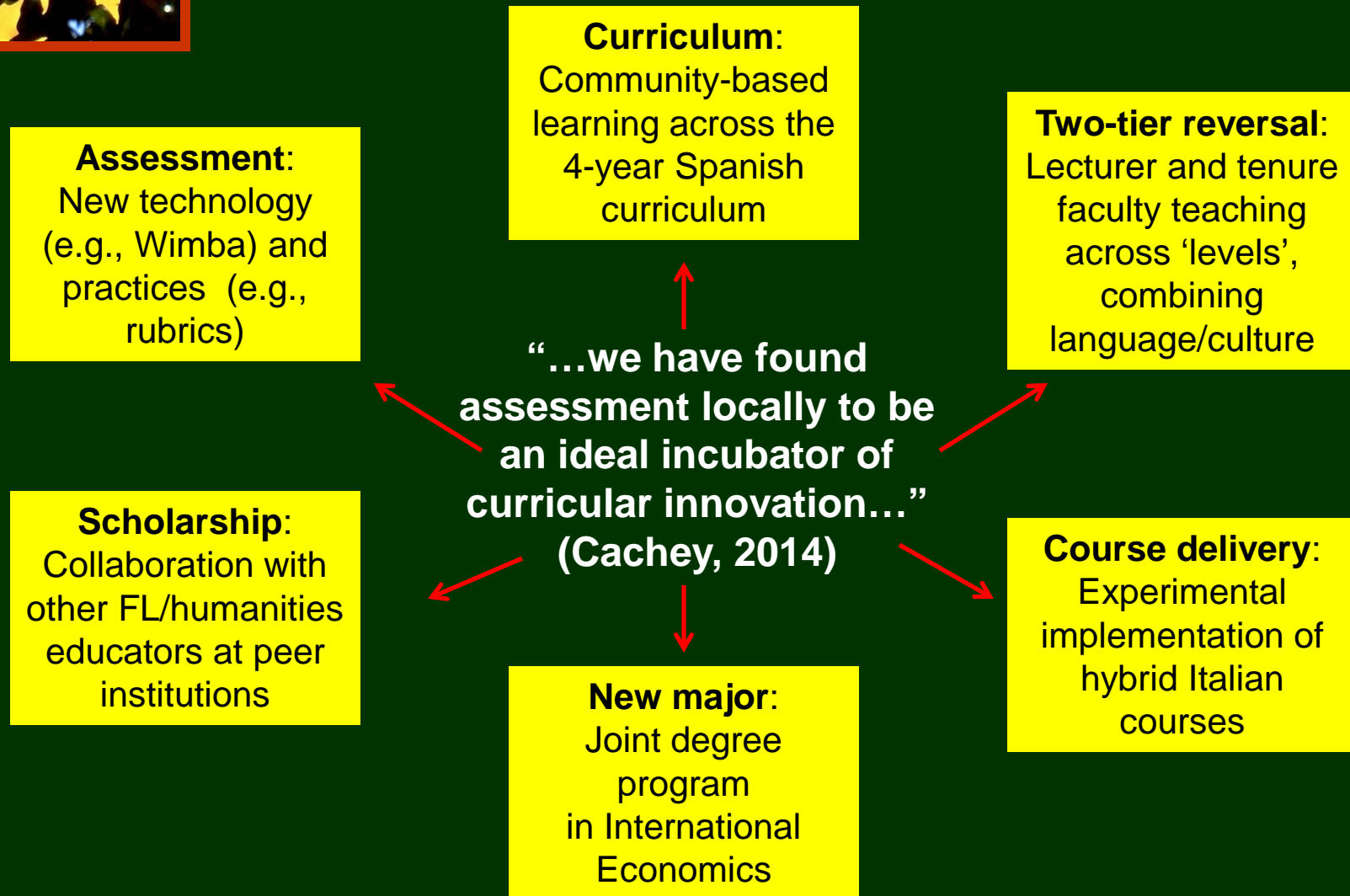| Annual focus on priority issue (1) | → | Monthly meetings: curricular reflection | → | Direct and indirect data collection | → | Annual retreat: data analysis | → | Strategic response: change, developt. | → |

Tenure-line Research Faculty

Lecturer Faculty

Committee for the Study of Romance Languages and Cultures

3. Evaluation: collaborative reflection and innovation

Curriculum: Community-based learning across the 4-year Spanish curriculum

Assessment: New technology (e.g., Wimba) and practices (e.g., rubrics)

Two-tier reversal: Lecturer and tenure faculty teaching across 'levels', combining language/culture

"…we have found assessment locally to be an ideal incubator of curricular innovation…" (Cachey, 2014)

Scholarship: Collaboration with other FL/humanities educators at peer institutions

New major: Joint degree program in International Economics

Course delivery: Experimental implementation of hybrid Italian courses

"The project has contributed to building mutual respect and collegiality across the lecturer and research faculty frontier; has proven to be an incubator of curricular innovation; and has helped faculty members, both individually and collectively, to become more effective advocates for the importance of the languages and literatures other than English within the Humanities. Engaging in assessment requires engaging with the messy world of higher education as it is and not as we wish it might be."

Ted Cachey, Notre Dame University Romance Languages

Toward useful evaluation in language and humanities education

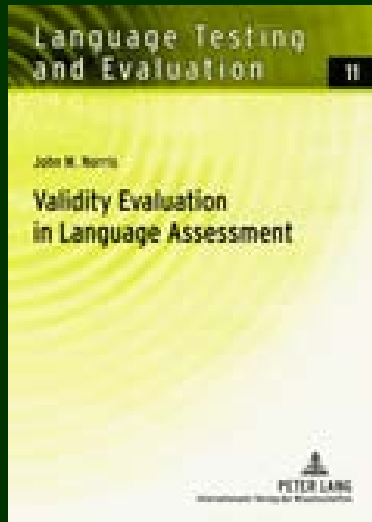# Useful evaluation: What have we learned?

Received View

- Generic, one-size-fits all

- Accountability-driven

- Measurement-based

- One-shot judgments

- Problem-identifying

- Imposed, external

Useful Evaluations

→Contextualized: specific to actual programs

→Intentional: multiple purposes and uses

→Diversified: methods articulated to uses

→Iterative: reform/change takes time

→Problem-solving: improve via understanding

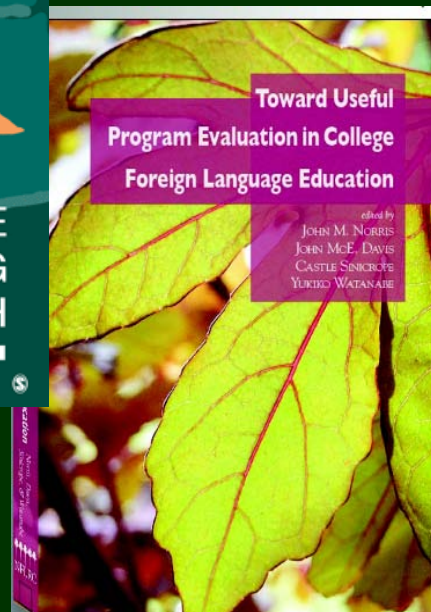→Participatory, internal: stakeholders (especially educators) own, take interest in, and act upon evaluation
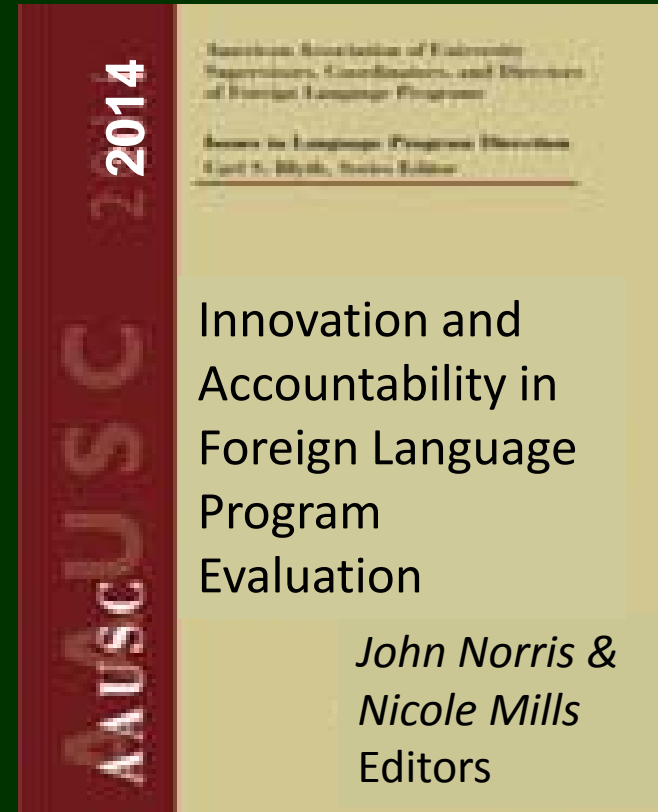
Useful evaluation: Examples in FL practice

Norris (2008)

Norris (2009)

Norris et al. (2009)

Innovation and
Accountability in
Foreign Language
Program
Evaluation

*John Norris &
Nicole Mills*
Editors

Norris & Mills (2014)

Coming soon…
  Georgetown University &
  Center for Applied Linguistics
    aelrc.georgetown.edu

AELRC

Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center

Activities:

→**Research and development (needs, tools, procedures)**
→**Dissemination (useful assessment and evaluation practices)**
→**Outreach:**
        Consultation with FL programs
        Courses/training on assessment and evaluation
        Fostering communities of practice
        Summer institutes and workshops
        Webinars

Consortium on Useful Assessment in Language and Humanities Education

…an invitation to participate…

Home

The Consortium is an umbrella organization for individual foreign language departments and other academic units to foster a culture of responsible and useful assessment of student learning outcomes in the humanities. As a collaborative effort, it enhances assessment practices developed by individual departments, helps to disseminate exemplary practices within the Consortium and beyond, and supports research into student learning.

The Consortium is open to new members of any institutional environment willing to contribute their insights into assessment as a useful tool in academic development of faculty, students, programs, and institutions.

University of Hawaii, National Foreign Language Resource Center

Summer Institute 2007

What is the value of evaluation in language education?

Provides a framework for discussion

Sheds light on how programs function

Increases awareness, communication

Makes student learning more efficient

Facilitates solving of problems

Encourages heightened commitment

Democratizes, unifies, engages...

"enables the field to articulate and demonstrate—internally and externally—the unique contributions of language studies in a pluralist and globalized world."

Thank you!

norrisj@georgetown.edu