

# **The Rise of Intrusive Assessment in Higher Education**

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# Outline

- Explain various demands of assessment by various agents/agencies
- Explain problem of time away from learning for assessment's sake
- Question value of assessment
- Idea of Perverse Incentive and Moral Hazard
- Withholding grades and unintended consequences
- Heisenberg Uncertainty Principal
- Question of course evaluations
- Requirement of course evaluations on teacher evaluations
- Survey responses.
- Student as “Customer.”
- Students as “Widgets.”
- Existing faculty Assessments: Pick-A-Prof. Ratemyprofessor.



# At what point does assessment become intrusive and therefore disruptive?

## Consider:

- Reduced hours to degree
- Cuts in funding
- Formula funding tied to completion of milestones
- Taking time away from class has bigger impact
- Class time more valuable than ever
- Putting thumb on the scale of the learning if student is treated as a consumer

# Competing Assessment Demands

- ❖ SACS Accreditation
- ❖ Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
- ❖ H.B. 2504
- ❖ Success Point Funding (32 states as of 2015)
- ❖ Federal Grants
- ❖ Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- ❖ Licensure requirements
- ❖ Program reviews
- ❖ NSSEE\CCESE\SENSE\CLA
- ❖ Culture of evidence
- ❖ Fill in the blank with your own examples

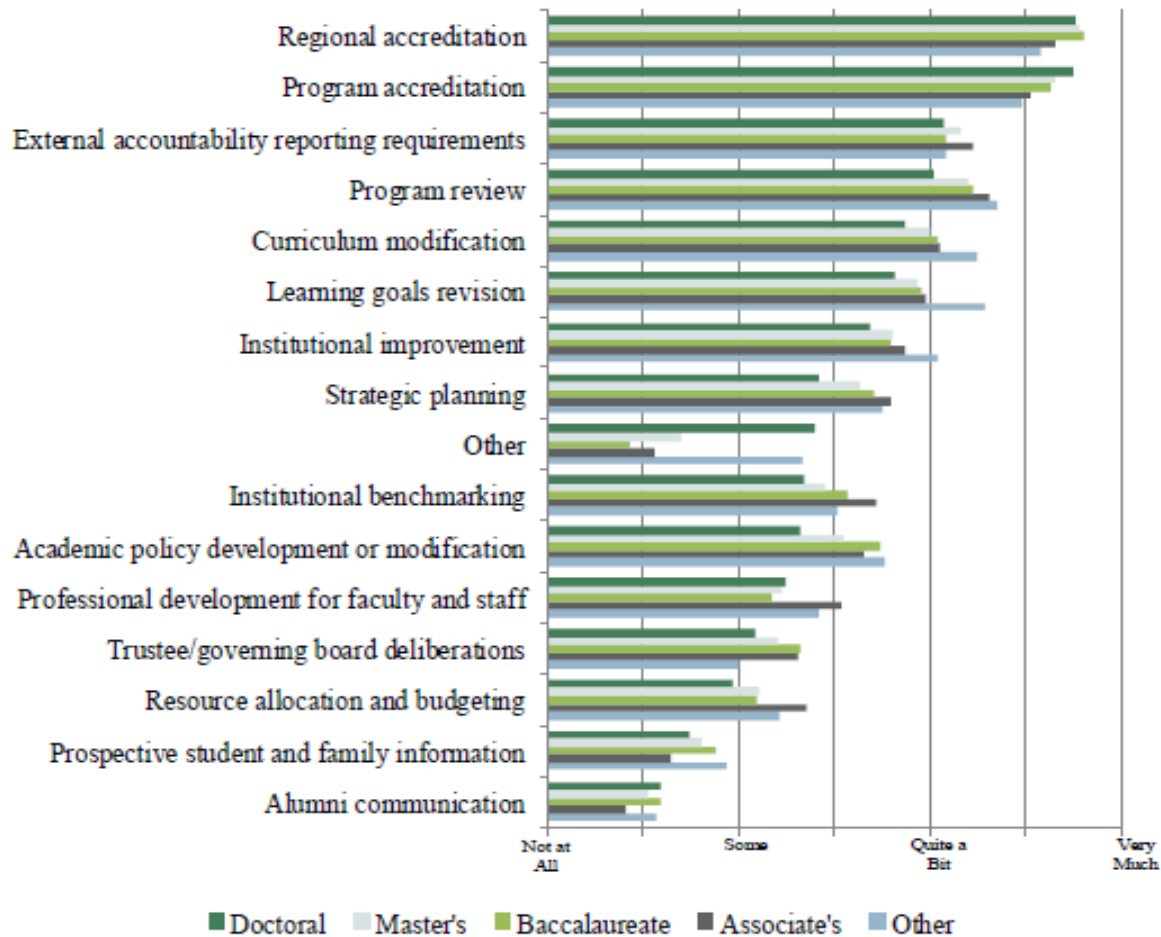


Figure 12. Use of assessment results by institutional type.

Source: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment January 2014

# Student Assessment of Faculty

**House Bill (H.B.) 2504 Public Access to Course Information Web Site, is a legislative mandate in the state of Texas that requires each publicly funded college or University to have information about each course. “Each institution of higher education, other than a medical and dental unit, is to make available certain course information to the public on the institution's Internet Web site.” As part of this reporting requirement the 2014 Compliance report states,” In addition to the evaluation measures already in place in departments and colleges,**

## **AN ACT**

**relating to requiring a public institution of higher education to establish uniform standards for publishing cost of attendance information, to conduct student course evaluations of faculty, and to make certain information available on the Internet**

# Existing-student driven

PikAProf.com

Ratemyprofessor.com

# Value of student evaluation of faculty and teachers (SET)

*“Comparing Incommensurables*

*We don’t measure teaching effectiveness. We measure what students say, and pretend it is the same thing.*

*SET cannot be an effective measure of teaching. Students can observe aspects of teaching: Clarity, pace, audibility, their own excitement or boredom.*

*Effective teacher is skillful at creating conditions conducive to learning.”  
(Stark 2014)*

Instructors must teach content, how to comprehend, and how to study.



# SET, HB 2504, Survey Response Rates and Moral Hazard

- Student response rate to end-of-course surveys is small or non-existent: 0 of 24 and 1 in 24 responses not uncommon
- Deans using EOS survey in faculty reviews
- Response is low for use in faculty review so institutes use other tactics
- These tactics are not often to the benefit of the student

**MORAL HAZARD occurs when the party with more information about its actions or intentions has a tendency or incentive to behave inappropriately if the interests of the agent (institute) and the principal (student) do not align. (Principal-Agent Problem)**

# Tactics

1. Extra credit for course as an assignment
  2. Conducting secondary or tertiary end-of-semester survey for courses of faculty due for review
  3. Returning to paper-pencil during class time
  4. Grade Blocking
- **Institute is working under a Perverse Incentive.**
  - **Unintended consequences for the student.**
  - **In grade blocking scenario it is possible students will fail to re-enroll the following semester because they do not get their final grade timely.**
  - **Grade cannot be blocked forever.**
  - **Surveys are voluntary, should never affect course grade outcome, and is not and cannot be any part of a students' academic requirements for graduation or course completion.**
  - **Coercive.**
  - **Ethical and legal implications.**

# Factory Assembly Line Education

- Coordinating Board rules, Section 9.184, “Criteria for New Academic Associate Degree Programs and Steps for Implementation.” set hours for a baccalaureate degree to 120 hours and an associate’s degree to 60 hours.
- “Some TCC students have had to drop classes due to a newly enforced regulation that sets how much financial aid students may receive based on their degrees. Over the past summer, TCC enacted stricter guidelines that determined financial aid eligibility and amounts for students. For students to remain eligible for financial aid, their courses must fall under their degree plans.” (Collegian September 2015).
- As of September 2015 thirty-two (32) states use formula funding for part of all of the state contribution to the institutions budget.

# Assessing Student Performance:

Authentic Assessment, Classroom Observations, etc.

## Class Time used for Assessment Not Learning

“Students rent time from an institutions knowledge.” (source not cited).

“I do not pay tuition to do surveys.” (student quote source not cited).

Every new scheme when asked how it will be implemented, “We will have the instructors do it in their class” taking up two or more full class periods in a semester not related to a subject.

Authentic learning measures such as rubrics and other classroom-based assessments are being used more often to represent institution-level learning.

One concern raised by an instructor of developmental math; who wishes to remain anonymous; stated the issue as,

***“You give me 16 weeks to teach these students what they need to know to be college ready. We have to cover a lot of material in one class period and move on to the next concept or subject expecting these students to be prepared in that time period. If they are not I am chastised and penalized for low completion rates. So you want to take away one or more of my class periods to some survey that is not even related to math.”***

# Assessing Student Performance:

Authentic Assessment, Classroom Observations, etc.

## Class Time used for Assessment Not Learning

Those students most in need of as much class instruction as possible have the most time taken from them:

- Adult Basic Education
- Developmental Courses
- Student Success Courses
- “Gateway “ or “Capstone” course

### Who demands classroom time?

- **National Survey: Sense, NSSE, CLA, CCTST, etc.**
- **Grant Partners: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Achieving the Dream, MDRC, etc.**
- **Reaccreditation**
- **The concept of “Culture of Evidence” and “Data-Driven Decisions.”**
- **Institutional Review Board (IRB) requests and Dissertation projects, etc.**

*Not Scientific in design. Convenience samples. Intimidating.*



# Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle



Werner Heisenberg, a German physicist, determined that our observations have an effect on the behavior of quanta. (How Quantum Suicide Works 2015)

Effect of observation materially impact the observed.



# Consider

- External mandates that stretch already limited resources and dominate institutional conversations (reinforcing a compliance as contrasted with an improvement agenda)
- Under sourced assessment work and overloaded staff
- The questionable adequacy of assessment tools to measure outcomes the institution deems important
- Worry among some faculty that assessment results will be used in performance reviews, and insufficient use of assessment data to guide curricular reform and to enhance teaching and learning.



# Consider

Is a student a consumer, in the broadest sense?

If a consumer, aren't we putting the imaginary thumb on the imaginary scale of the educational product we sell to the student

If a student is an adult and "purchased" their educational experience disciplining a student for not attending a course would be the equivalent of a season ticket holder at a theatre or a ball game being denied access to the next play or game because they missed the last play.



# Intrusive Assessment

This is the concept or action where the assessment takes on a life of its own sometimes for the sake of the assessment itself.

When assessment takes time from, or interferes with, the job of educating a student in a particular subject, denies them the right to an educational path of their own choosing, denies the student access to their own educational records, or fails to consider the impact of the assessment on the student. (Lorick, R.A. 2016)

## PJC reduces hours needed for associate degrees

Updated: Fri 2:50 PM, Oct 24, 2014

By: KXII-TV Email

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PARIS, Texas -- Paris Junior College has reduced the number of hours required for some associate's degrees.

Meeting requirements through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, PJC has lowered the required hours from 72 to 60 for an associates in science, arts and applied science degrees.

PJC says the reduced hours does not mean there will be a reduction in learning content.

The degree plans will go into effect next fall.



Source: KXII-TV Email 2014

# Questions?

# Contacts

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