

Gauging Impact: Connecting Student Assessment-as- Learning with Program and Institutional Assessment

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Alverno College

- **Integrated professions and liberal arts college**
- **2,300 undergrads, 450 graduate students**
- **Women's college at undergraduate level; masters programs are co-ed**
- **Ability-based curriculum**
- **Organizational Structure: Matrix plus traditional discipline**

In 1970, Alverno's president asked each department to answer this question:

What are you teaching that is so important that students cannot afford to pass up courses in your discipline?

Which led to these questions:

- ❑ **How do you want your students to be able to think as a result of studying your discipline?**
- ❑ **What do you want your students to be able to do as a result of studying your discipline?**

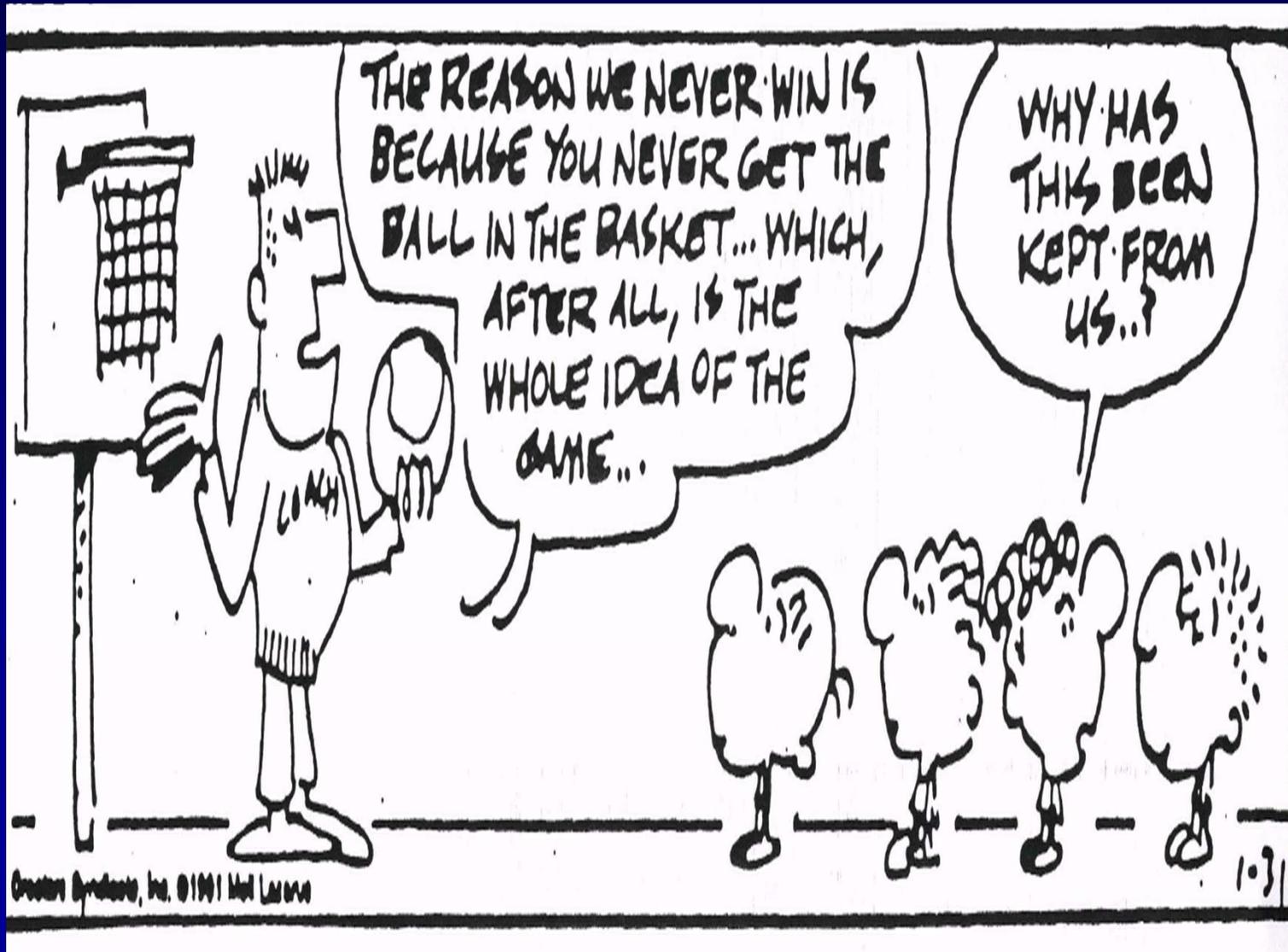
In 1973, New Curriculum Initiated Alverno's Eight Abilities/Outcomes

- **Communication**
- **Analysis**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Valuing in Decision-Making**
- **Social Interaction**
- **Developing a Global Perspective**
- **Effective Citizenship**
- **Aesthetic Engagement**

PRINCIPLE

Educators are **RESPONSIBLE** for making learning more available by **ARTICULATING OUTCOMES** and making them **PUBLIC**

MISS PEACH *Mel Lazarus*



PRINCIPLE

Education **GOES BEYOND**
knowing to being able to
DO WHAT ONE KNOWS



"Then, as you can see, we give them some multiple choice tests."

PRINCIPLE

Abilities need to be defined in a way that our teaching of them can be **DEVELOPMENTAL**

ANALYSIS ABILITY

- **Level 1 – Make accurate observations**
- **Level 2 – Draw reasonable inferences**
- **Level 3 – Perceive & make relationships; use disciplinary concepts**
- **Level 4 – Analyze structure and organization; use disciplinary concepts and frameworks**
- **Level 5 – Purposefully select and use disciplinary frameworks**
- **Level 6 – Independently employ frameworks to analyze increasingly complex phenomena**

Conceptual Relationships Among Outcomes

- **Institutional Outcomes**
- **Major Outcomes**
- **Course Outcomes**
- **Assessment, including
criteria/rubric related to selected
course outcome(s)**

Student Assessment-as-Learning

A process in operation at Alverno College, integral to learning, that involves observation and judgment of each student's performance on the basis of explicit criteria, with self assessment and resulting feedback to the student.

Confirms student achievement and provides feedback to student for improvement of learning and to instructor for improvement of teaching.

Institutional and Program Assessment

Processes that yield patterns of student and alumna learning, development, and performance on a range of educational outcomes.

These Questions Frame Institutional and Program Assessment

- **What is our college's contribution to student learning? How do we know it?**
- **Do our graduates know and can they do what our degrees imply? How do we assure that?**

(Hutchings & Marchese, 1990)

These Questions Frame Institutional and Program Assessment

- **What do we intend that our students learn? At what level are they learning what we are teaching? Is that the level we intend?**
- **What combination of institutional and student effort would it take to get to a next level of student learning?**

(Hutchings & Marchese, 1990)

Examples of Sources of Evidence of Student Learning Used at Alverno

Program Assessment

- *Capstone experiences (research projects, presentations, juried recitals)*
- *Portfolios*
- *Scores and pass rates of licensure/certificate exams*
- *Substantial course assignments*
- *Group projects that require demonstration of learning*

Indirect Evidence of Student Learning

- **Attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction, and experiences of the learning environment**
 - **Student, alumni, employer surveys**
 - **Exit interviews/surveys/focus groups**
 - **Course evaluations**

College-Wide Sources of Evidence of Student Learning Used at Alverno

- **Mid-Program General Education Assessment**
- **Wabash National Study of the Liberal Arts**
- **Partnerships with other institutions & studies (e.g., Consortium for Innovative Environments for Learning; DEEP Study)**
- **NSSE; Noel-Levitz Survey**
- **Alumni surveys**
- **10-Year Longitudinal Study documented in *Learning That Lasts***

What we have learned

- Focus on most meaningful questions
- Use what you got (Peter Ewell)
- Build on the department's assessment plan
- **Collectively** review patterns of student performance as they occur in the curriculum

What we have learned

- **Stay involved in the debate**
- **Communicate that we are willing and able to compare learning outcomes to public standards**
- **Build program and institutional assessment on our educational principles and mission: Connect it to student assessment**

*What We Have Learned:
Key Ingredients for Creating a
Community of Inquiry on Student Learning*



- **Develop commitment to focus on student learning**
- **Structurally, create time, space, and processes for sustained conversations about student learning**
- **Develop roles and skill in collaborative inquiry**

The Alverno Impact (DVD)

- **As you watch the clips of student performance, how have students changed?**
- **Students are being assessed for communication ability. What other abilities are also demonstrated?**