Innov High Educ (2011) 36:217–233
DOI 10.1007/s10755-010-9169-1

Managing Change—Engaging Faculty in Assessment Opportunities

Maureen Snow Andrade

Published online: 25 November 2010
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2010

Abstract Regional accrediting bodies require evidence that higher education institutions are meeting their stated goals. Institutions have answered this call for accountability by assessing student learning. Managing change in order to implement assessment practices is a challenge, however, particularly when autonomy, academic freedom, and shared governance are involved. Leadership theories offer practical strategies for administrators instituting assessment-related change. Using these theories as a guide, this article provides suggestions for leading assessment initiatives, garnering faculty support, and establishing a culture of assessment. The suggestions are organized around a four-frame model based on the premise that leaders must consider multiple perspectives to be successful.

Key words Assessment · Higher education · Leadership · Change · Faculty involvement

Academic administrators are sometimes critical of faculty members' reluctance to be involved in program level assessment. Indeed, the need for faculty engagement and cooperation in assessment was recently at the top of the list for provosts in a survey of U.S. higher education institutions (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009). Assessment is part of the accountability movement in U.S. institutions of higher education (e.g., see Walvoord 2004; Wehlburg 2010), and regional accrediting bodies now require evidence that institutions are meeting educational objectives based on their missions. Accrediting commissions aim to ensure that institutions have established "processes of review, including the collection and use of data, that assure delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate

Maureen Snow Andrade received an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership from the University of Southern California, a Master's degree in English from the University of Utah, and a Bachelor's degree in English from Brigham Young University. Dr. Andrade is currently Associate Dean of University College at Utah Valley University. Her research and academic interests include leadership and change, program and classroom assessment, and faculty development.

M. S. Andrade (✉)
University College, Utah Valley University,
800 W. University Parkway MS 177, Orem, UT 84058, USA
e-mail: maureen.andrade@uvu.edu

awarded" (WASC *Handbook*, 2001, p. 5). This type of assessment is often referred to as outcomes-based or program level assessment, and it involves determining what students know and are able to do upon completing their studies.

The need to create a "culture of evidence" (WASC *Handbook*, 2001, p. 19) that documents student learning is now an integral part of higher education and has the potential to impact teaching and learning positively. However, faculty members may be concerned that assessment identifying weaknesses in programs or teaching will have negative repercussions (Ewell 2002; Nichols and Nichols 2000). They fear budget cuts, loss of positions, or program discontinuation and may argue that the assessment process restricts academic freedom. Increased workload, decreased time for scholarship (Cummings et al. 2008), and a lack of incentive related to tenure and promotion can also discourage involvement in this process.

Despite negative attitudes, however, outcomes-based assessment is proving sustainable; and higher education institutions and organizations are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their conduct of assessment. As an example, the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) project (Kuh 2008) has identified high-impact educational practices that support the essential learning outcomes of a liberal education. Many institutions have adopted these outcomes, which were developed through conversations with faculty members, employers, and accreditors, and are measuring them with rubrics as an alternative to standardized exams (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2009; Maki 2009).

The Tuning Project in Europe is coordinating academic standards across subject areas and institutions for a seamless system of higher education (e.g., see González and Wagenaar 2008). Similar initiatives, such as Tuning USA, have been launched in other countries. The Transparency by Design project, involving a consortium of primarily online institutions, shares comparisons of student learning outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction on the organization's website (Lederman 2009). Outcomes-based assessment is not only *not* going away, it is gaining momentum within and across institutions to identify what students know and are able to do as the result of their higher education experience.

In spite of current innovations in assessment and the fact that the movement has been around for close to four decades (Smith 2009), the need for buy-in from faculty members—those responsible for doing assessment—is continual. To implement and sustain successful assessment programs, academic administrators need strategies for managing change and encouraging faculty involvement. Rather than viewing faculty concerns as a negative problem, in this article I reframe this issue as an opportunity to examine new possibilities. Based on literature on leadership and change, I outline key principles for working with the faculty that can result in positive results and adoption of solid assessment practices. These strategies can be adopted by leaders at departmental, college, and institutional levels.

Strategies for Managing Change

Leaders are generally considered responsible for setting institutional direction and ensuring institutional success. Shared leadership and co-creation of vision are desirable, particularly in higher education contexts. Developing or modifying a vision involves change, and higher education *is* changing. Technology is impacting instruction with online, hybrid, and distance learning options. Governments are less able to provide financial support, resulting in the need for greater efficiency and increased fundraising efforts. The democratization of higher education is widening participation (Department for Education and Skills 2003a, 2003b), and increased numbers of non-traditional and diverse students are pursuing degrees. Connecting with today's millennial students, who are optimistic and confident,

connected to technology, globally-oriented, and collaborative, requires new pedagogical approaches (Elmore 2008).

Institutions must respond to these changes with accountability, transparency, and innovation. Tierney (1999) commented, “We need some sense of how we are doing and how we might improve in order to maintain excellence” (p. 76) and suggested the need for a culture that encourages continual “reflective assessment” (p. 97). Effective assessment systems help institutions clarify purpose, evaluate goals, implement change, and regularly re-examine themselves. However, change disrupts patterns, creates uncertainty, and may result in confusion, anxiety, feelings of incompetence, and withdrawal (Bolman and Deal 1999; Wheatley 2005). Leaders must have strategies to manage change effectively and, in the case of assessment, to engage key stakeholders—the faculty members.

Bolman and Deal (2008) advocated examining organizations from four frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Their research showed that leaders who viewed situations through only one or two such frames were often not successful. Bolman and Deal cited case after case of leaders who determinedly adhered to a single frame and, as a result, failed to lead their organizations to success. Considering situations from multiple perspectives allows leaders to identify new options and strategies.

The human resource frame focuses on involvement and participation as well as training and investing time and money in employees to help them develop needed skills. Bolman and Deal used the metaphor of an extended family to conceptualize this frame. The structural frame encompasses developing appropriate patterns and policies, establishing roles and responsibilities, and aligning new and old systems to create feelings of security. This frame views organizations as a machine or factory. Because change involves conflict, opportunities to resolve differences through negotiation and compromise must be provided as part of the political frame. The applicable metaphor is a jungle. The symbolic frame is related to institutional culture, values, rituals, myths, stories, and ceremonies. Change may involve feelings of loss; transition rituals offer a collective farewell and a way to embrace the future. The symbolic frame may be viewed as a carnival, temple, or theatre.

Although a wealth of theories on leadership and leading change exist (e.g., see Eckel et al. 1999; Kotter 2005; Wheatley 2005), most can be conceptualized within the four frames; yet such theories do not specifically advocate viewing organizations through multiple frames. This approach allows leaders to examine situations in ways that they may not have previously considered. Emphasizing different frames may be appropriate depending on the situation, but all should be analyzed before moving forward. For instance, when conflict, uncertainty, and ambiguity are low, the structural frame may work well; but, when resources are scarce or goals and values in conflict, leaders likely need to facilitate change using a political approach. The purpose of the frames is to examine organizations and situations from multiple angles so as to broaden one’s perspectives and increase effectiveness. “Multiframe thinking requires moving beyond narrow, mechanical approaches for understanding organizations” (Bolman and Deal 2008, p. 19). The frames can be used as tools for expanding understanding, balancing alternatives, and finding new options and strategies (Bolman and Deal 2008).

Transforming the Institutional Assessment Culture Using the Four-Frame Approach

Faculty members assess students regularly—both formally and informally. They have been referred to as “some of the most creative and authentic assessors on campus” (Wehlburg 2010, p. 170). However, formal assessment had traditionally been limited to assigning grades to individual students. Current accreditation standards require accountability and

transparency beyond the classroom and the institution. Rather than the solitary process of developing assignments and grading criteria, faculty members are now being asked to collaborate and identify learning outcomes and assessment measures across programs. This expectation potentially challenges faculty autonomy.

Outcomes-based assessment requires a change in institutional culture. Culture involves components such as environment, mission, socialization of new members, methods for disseminating information, decision-making strategies, and leadership style (Tierney 2008). Currently, outcomes-based assessment is a movement rather than an activity embedded in higher education culture (Ewell 2009). The four-frame approach provides insights into how to effect this cultural transformation. Institutional leaders must determine which of these approaches or combination of approaches best fits their contexts, but it is critical that they consider all four frames and related strategies.

Human Resource Frame

The human resource frame focuses on the fit between people and organizations—people need meaningful work, and organizations need their ideas and talents (Bolman and Deal 2008). When people are "interested in an issue, their creativity is engaged" (Wheatley 2005, p. 77); this creativity can be captured to an organization's advantage through involvement and participation. Faculty members are passionate about their work and generally committed to their institutions. When assessment activities are meaningful and when faculty members are involved, all benefit.

For cultural change to occur, however, stakeholders must understand why it is needed. Rationale can be external or internal (Eckel et al. 1999). External threats such as accreditation processes and requirements are often used to get faculty members to adopt desired behaviour. Internal concerns related to academic programs may also motivate them. Assessment initiatives such as the Delta Project (2009), for example, which measured the cost effectiveness of first year experience programs in relation to results (i.e., retention, graduation), is a proactive approach to the threat of possible program discontinuation. As such, it has the potential to improve practice. It is meaningful because it involves program, curricula, and outcomes in which faculty members believe. Under such circumstances, change, specifically the need for assessment, is likely to be embraced.

Generally, assessment activities motivated by compliance directives or fear will not be as effective as assessment for the purpose of learning. "Though accountability matters, *learning matters most*" (Angelo 1999, p. 60). Compliance may lead to selecting easily obtainable goals to demonstrate program effectiveness and to measuring the same learning outcomes repeatedly. Assessing for the purpose of learning leads to a spirit of inquiry and discovery and, ultimately, to improvement, which is certainly more meaningful and engaging than compliance.

Empowerment through participation strengthens the connection between individuals and organizations (Bolman and Deal 2008). Training and the investment of resources in people invite trust and discourage resistance. The following strategies will assist leaders in providing opportunities and support for faculty members in assessment endeavours. Table I provides an overview of the challenges and related strategies.

Create Vision Assessment activities are motivating and rewarding when they are linked to "institutional dreams, goals, and processes" (Walvoord 2004, p. 12). Realizing a dream or participating in a new initiative related to assessment is more compelling than completing an assessment report (Walvoord 2004). The "hindsight in advance" (Eckel et al., p. 17) approach focuses on envisioning the future and then working backwards to determine the

Table I Human resource strategies

Challenge	Strategy
Assessment focused on compliance rather than learning and improvement (e.g., setting goals that are easily met or continually meeting goals without exploring additional outcomes or means of assessment).	Involve others in creating vision; inspire creativity through the good to great approach; provide support and resources to accomplish the vision.
One person managing assessment in a program or department rather than wide stakeholder involvement.	Encourage broad involvement through sharing and discussion of information; use of committees; inclusion of outcomes on course syllabi.
Fear that assessment information will be used in negative ways (e.g., to discontinue programs or eliminate positions).	Hold open meetings for demonstrating the importance and use of assessment results, proposing improvements, and requesting needed funding to support accomplishment of goals.
Lack of expertise in writing outcomes, developing tests, collecting and analyzing data.	Provide professional development opportunities and rewards for involvement.

steps needed to accomplish it (Hamel and Prahalad 1994). For vision to be shared and accomplished, stakeholders must be involved in creating it. Administrators typically have an overall vision for their institutions while faculty members are more likely to have a vision for their own programs and work.

The "good-to-great framework" (Collins 2005, p. 8) is useful in helping stakeholders consider what might be realized at institutional, departmental, or program levels. Greatness consists of three "outputs" (Collins 2005, p. 8): 1) superior performance—being efficient and delivering results related to the organization's mission, 2) distinctive impact—making a unique contribution (if the organization disappears, it would leave a void), and 3) lasting endurance—delivering exceptional results over the long term. Faculty members can focus on how to make good programs great by identifying relevant "outputs of greatness" (Collins 2005, p. 8). Thus, they focus on assessment as a means of achieving excellence rather than for compliance.

For programs that have already implemented assessment processes and are continually achieving their established criteria, the good to great approach encourages the examination of a different aspect of student learning or use of an alternative form of assessment, thus making assessment even more meaningful. Instead of using results to demonstrate that goals have been met, faculty members can consider what it would take for students to demonstrate even greater mastery of knowledge and skills (superior performance), for the program to become well-known in the region and beyond (distinctive impact), and for the demonstration of sustained excellence over time (lasting endurance).

I have used this approach with programs for which I am responsible to help others conceptualize new possibilities for outcomes and ways to measure them. Subsequently, interest and excitement has increased. Most people have the desire to excel in their work. For work to be meaningful, autonomy, complexity, and a connection between effort and reward are required (Gladwell 2008). Autonomy can be supported by having faculty members identify the means to becoming great (i.e., vision) with administrators providing the necessary support and resources and ensuring that efforts are rewarded (e.g., merit pay, tenure, promotion).

Encourage Broad Involvement Regardless of the specific approach implemented for creating vision, the key principle is involvement. Too often one person—an assessment

coordinator or department chair—determines outcomes, gathers data, and completes required reports without wide participation. All persons with a stake in the outcomes should be involved; otherwise, results will be ignored (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions 2004). "People *only* support what they create" (Wheatley 2005, p. 89).

At my institution, our President identified three adjectives (engaged, inclusive, serious) to describe practices and initiatives with the potential to result in student success. The concepts represented by the adjectives are based on the mission statement and other guiding documents. Various groups throughout the University have discussed these adjectives and provided opinions and thoughts. As a result, the concepts are now more clearly defined and meaningful than before. Although few persons at the institution could recite the mission statement, nearly all can now name the adjectives, which are finding their way into strategic planning and assessment documents on their own accord. Gradually, stakeholders are becoming united around a common vision, which they helped to create and which has become more real through the open conversation occurring in multiple venues. This process has been gradual, but its impact is quite evident.

Mechanisms must be identified to ensure that assessment information is widely shared and discussed. Such mechanisms can include the use of committees rather than individuals and the inclusion of outcomes on syllabi to encourage involvement and awareness of faculty and student stakeholders. Insistence on and evidence of department-wide review and conversation is also critical.

Build Trust Trust involves making expectations clear, communicating openly, acting consistently with stated values, and honoring commitments (Shaw 1997). Feelings of distrust can be addressed through the assurance that assessment results will be used to improve student learning. Administrators must consistently communicate this message and may even seek to enact it as institutional policy. Trust is undermined if assessment remains simply an add-on and if results are not used for institutional planning and decision-making (Ewell 2009). Faculty members must also trust each other before change can occur, and it can develop if they have opportunities to share effective practices and use of results. (This will be discussed further as part of the symbolic frame.)

Leaders who want to show the value of assessment will demonstrate how it has improved student learning and highlight programs that have closed the assessment loop—that is, have taken meaningful action based on results. Similarly, assessment findings will not be used punitively, rather only as a means to learn and to transition from good to great. My institution gives stakeholders the opportunity to highlight their successes in an annual series of open meetings at which entities across the University present their achievements, which are linked to funding received in the past year's budget cycle. They make requests for additional funding to support continued or new goals related to unit missions and to support student success. In this way, planning, budgeting, and accountability are linked and real value is placed on assessment. For instance, if, through assessment, a tutoring program has found that students in high failure courses are not using its services, this finding could be shared with a request for funding. The process is open, transparent, and inclusive. It builds trust.

Provide Training, Resources, and Rewards Faculty members may not know how to write outcomes, develop tests, or collect and analyze data. They have been trained in their disciplines, not necessarily in pedagogy, test development, or statistics. Ideas abound for faculty support and development efforts, and institutions must determine what works for them. Table II categorizes best practices reflected in the literature (Angelo 1999; Eckel et al.

Table II Faculty support

Professional Development Opportunities	Conferences and workshops, formal training (rubric development, statistics, etc.), visits to other institutions, guest speakers (from within and outside the institution), faculty learning communities, scholarship of assessment (publications & presentations).
Professional Resources	Journals, books, webinars.
Institutional Infrastructure	Faculty development centers, institutional research, assessment office, handbooks, assessment plan models, websites, administrative help, technology help.
Rewards	Tenure and promotion; grants; reassigned time; stipends, retreats; interaction with other faculty; clarification of goals; improved teaching and learning; alignment of planning, budgeting, and accountability.

1999; Haviland et al. 2010; Jones 2009; Palomba and Banta 1999; Suskie 2009; Walvoord 2004).

Training, resources, and rewards should be carefully designed to build trust and empowerment. As faculty members engage in improving student learning, they can initiate requests for support. People generally feel more secure with change when they are provided with the additional expertise needed to implement it, particularly if change involves performing unfamiliar tasks. This may be the case with outcomes-based assessment. Leaders need to show that they are willing to provide the resources necessary to make assessment effective. This also demonstrates consistency in behavior—offering support and meeting requests for support to demonstrate commitment and recognize faculty contributions.

For example, at a former institution, over the period of several years, every faculty member on campus received funding to participate in at least one conference focused on assessment. The result was that all faculty members understood the rationale and expectations for outcomes-based assessment and had some level of expertise for how to approach it. This investment on the part of the administration also demonstrated their commitment to both assessment endeavors and to the faculty.

Structural Frame

While the human resource frame focuses on “changing people” (Bolman and Deal 2008, p. 45), the structural frame emphasizes relationships and roles. It is based on the assumptions that organizations are meant to achieve established objectives, efficiency and performance are increased through clarity of roles, controls and coordination ensure that efforts are aligned, rationality is preferable to personal desires and external pressures, structures must fit circumstances, and problems arising from structural problems can be remedied through review and restructuring.

A challenge to change in higher education organizations is that they are loosely coupled with departments and programs generally operating independently (Eckel et al. 1999). The faculty also operates independently. The roles of faculty and administrators are well-established by tradition and practice. Faculty members are responsible for curricula and methods of instruction while administrators focus on management, resources, and accountability. However, assessment is a *shared* responsibility; administrators provide the impetus and means, and the faculty determines how and what to assess.

Even in tightly structured systems, people invariably change instructions by interpreting or modifying them due to the need for creativity and freedom (Wheatley 2005). The

entrepreneurial and autonomous nature of the faculty role, meant to support such creativity and freedom, does not fit well in complying with administrative directives. For this reason, as explained in the discussion on the human resource frame, participation and the opportunity to create meaningful assessment mechanisms are keys to success. The loosely structured system of higher education naturally encourages innovation and discovery to create new knowledge. Leaders need to work within this system to create shared vision and practice.

Some key structural considerations can be identified to support effective assessment initiatives in higher education systems. Leaders should consider these suggestions along with the other frames to determine the most effective approach for their contexts. Table III provides an overview of possible challenges that can be addressed through the application of strategies related to the structural frame.

Align Assessment Efforts The implementation of outcomes-based assessment is an organic process for most institutions. One approach is to identify broad learning outcomes (such as those associated with the LEAP project). Academic programs can measure these as appropriate and develop others to represent learning in specific disciplines. Another possibility is to begin with program-level outcomes based on unit missions and then link these to broader institutional outcomes. As outcomes are identified, at both institutional and program levels, the points about involvement and creating shared vision discussed earlier are critical.

The key to alignment is to conceptualize assessment practices at the local level and beyond so that stakeholders are moving in the same direction and assessment does not become a burden. For instance, some student learning outcomes may be common in academic majors and the general education program. Examples include critical thinking, problem-solving, and written communication. Outcomes such as these cross disciplines but may be measured differently and use different content within the disciplines. Questions to

Table III Structural strategies

Challenge	Strategy
Assessment at various levels across the institution (e.g., program, general education, institutional) may involve unnecessary duplication and effort.	Align assessment efforts by linking assessment outcomes, considering the multiple purposes for which data is needed, and allowing for flexibility in reporting formats; consider software that allows for tracking of learning outcomes and use of standardized scoring rubrics.
No existing infrastructure for assessment work.	Consider roles and responsibilities to create layers of accountability and support at the program, college/school, and institutional levels, and provide opportunities for greater involvement.
No common reporting template, established deadlines, or system for data collection and review.	Design appropriate processes and procedures for planning, collecting and reviewing data, implementing needed changes, and reporting (e.g., design a common template, set deadlines, establish a system for regular review of information).
Lack of experience of general assessment principles related to identifying outcomes and means of assessment.	Provide guidelines and training to increase understanding regarding expectations in terms of number of outcomes, number and types of measures, use of course objectives, rotation of outcomes, use of self-report data, etc.

be addressed include who should be responsible for measuring these outcomes, at what point in a program should they be measured, how should they be measured, and how often. In most cases, assessment practices at an institution evolve. While this is a natural part of change, leaders need to consider the big picture in order to prevent unnecessary duplication and effort.

Data obtained for institutional assessment purposes can also be used for professional certifications and required program reviews (e.g., see Walvoord 2004). The various levels of assessment desired within an institution should be carefully reviewed as activities can meet multiple purposes. This involves flexibility in reporting formats. For instance, at my institution, the School of Business and the School of Education have professional accreditation processes. The resulting documentation fulfills institutional assessment requirements as well without the need to complete additional forms. Adopting an integrated database system is also helpful in tracking and reporting assessment information (Moskal et al. 2008). These systems enable institutions to identify courses assessing the same outcomes (e.g., across general education courses) and to compile information about the level of student achievement. Some learning management systems have the capacity to link assessment outcomes across courses and utilize related rubrics for scoring student work (e.g., see instructure.com). Students can select work from a variety of courses to create e-portfolios.

Consider Roles and Responsibilities Institutions commonly have an assessment or institutional effectiveness office to which individual departments report; departments may have assessment coordinators or committees. Their role might be to provide expertise and training, lead assessment activities, and encourage faculty involvement. These entities and individuals serve as change agents, but the faculty must still have ownership of the process (Wehlburg 2010).

As service to the institution is expected of the faculty, participation on assessment committees or teams is a means of empowering and encouraging involvement and innovation. These teams can be involved in creating, planning, implementing, and reviewing assessment work. At my institution, we have a central institutional effectiveness office, an associate dean in each college or school responsible for assessment, and an assessment coordinator or committee in each program or department. Although organizational structures may vary, multiple layers of responsibility and support help institutions address challenges related to achieving their assessment objectives and provide opportunities for involvement. Clear reporting lines and well-defined responsibilities allow for effective coordination.

Design Appropriate Processes and Procedures This includes designing templates for planning and reporting, setting deadlines, and determining a systematic plan for data collection and review. Some programs collect data each semester and discuss results in a department meeting—perhaps the first meeting each semester after the previous semester's data have been analyzed. Faculty involvement is strengthened when assessment plans and results are reviewed by all faculty members at least annually. Regular, consistent review will remind them of department goals for student learning and provide information regarding progress. It is also an opportunity to address possible curricular adjustments collectively.

At a former institution where I was a department chair, our academic vice president requested all departments to focus on assessment findings in their annual fall retreats. By identifying a specific time and structure for discussion, these assessment retreats gradually became a part of the institutional culture as did the oral reports given to the institution's assessment committee by the department chairs after the retreats. Having an entire

department engage in discussion about assessment findings, what they meant, and what to do next was much more effective in building community and improving teaching and learning practices than having a single person tracking and reporting results.

Agree on a Set of General Principles Those involved in assessment should be working from a common understanding of expectations, but they should also be given autonomy to design assessment plans appropriate to their areas and goals. Some disciplines may have their own accreditation requirements, and in other cases faculty members may have innovative ideas that do not fit a common mold. These ideas should be encouraged. When requirements do exist, they need to be clear. Possible guidelines, which are outlined in assessment literature and by accrediting bodies may be most helpful to those new to assessment. They provide structure and direction but do not dictate content or means of assessment, which must be determined by those with expertise in their fields.

Student learning outcomes are typically phrased in terms of what students know or can do as the result of a series of courses in a program of study. Student views about their experiences are also valuable. Outcomes focus on what is needed in the discipline in terms of knowledge, skills, application, and ethics. Information from surveys regarding employer expectations may prove helpful (e.g., see Association of American Colleges and Universities 2008).

Outcomes are not the same as course objectives, but represent a synthesis of learning (Nichols and Nichols 2000). Identifying 3–5 broad outcomes that span several courses and are directly linked to program mission is an effective means of conceptualizing an assessment plan. A greater number of outcomes can be identified and rotated; however, the more outcomes there are, the more demands there are on time and resources. Identifying a limited number of outcomes also increases familiarity and the likelihood that goals will be acted upon. The three adjectives identified by our President are an example of how this might work. The adjectives convey the purpose and direction of the institution, yet are easy to remember. As a result, all stakeholders have them in mind.

Initial planning involves determining what is expected of students (e.g., scores and what they represent), how expectations will be measured (e.g., rubrics, surveys), and by whom (e.g., class teacher, outside evaluator). Rubrics are helpful in establishing criteria and standards for measuring student work (Walvoord 2004) Two means of assessment (e.g., standardized exams, common final exams or exam questions across sections, portfolios, questionnaires) are recommended for each outcome in order to view learning from multiple perspectives. Self-reported data should be balanced with direct evidence of student learning. Criteria, such as the percentage of students who will achieve a particular score, should be determined, but can be adjusted as needed after data is collected.

Political Frame

The political frame assumes that organizations consist of coalitions of individuals with diverse beliefs, values, interests, and views of reality (Bolman and Deal 2008). Organizations also have scarce resources, which results in competition. Bargaining and negotiation are needed to manage conflict. However, amidst differing viewpoints, people often share a common center or dream, which helps them overlook bad feelings or past wrongs and move toward a meaningful commonality (Wheatley 2005). Identifying and building upon this common center is critical.

Higher education is a diverse enterprise. This is a strength, but also an argument for the status quo (Smith 2009) and against any movement toward standardization. Change is

impeded when individuals can "choose their own balance between conformity and innovation" (Welch 2008, p. 55). That change causes conflict is inevitable. The political frame is about addressing the interests and motivations of diverse groups. Change potentially results in advantages for some and disadvantages for others. Those in favour of the status quo are likely to resist. Protecting the status quo consumes energy that could be used to further institutional progress. To address these factors, leaders must encourage innovation by making change inclusive so that those involved feel ownership, in keeping with the human resource frame. They must remember that people support change only when they create it (Wheatley 2005) and view it as beneficial (Eckel et al. 1999).

Resources are a major factor in the political frame. Faculty members may be concerned that resources will be redirected toward assessment processes and rewarding programs with successful results. Indeed, resources are needed to manage assessment endeavours. Sixty-five percent of institutions surveyed had two or fewer assessment staff, and the majority expressed a need for more faculty engagement and expertise (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009). Failure to address resource needs and related conflicts will result in turf-protecting and a lack of progress. To combat individual agendas and self-interest, leaders must consider how to manoeuvre within the political frame and unite individuals around a shared goal. Table IV presents an overview of common challenges and how they can be addressed through the political frame.

Encourage Diversity of Opinion Create an environment in which faculty members can voice their views. Ultimately, diversity of opinion will produce better results than like-mindedness, provided faculty members recognize common goals and interests such as furthering discipline-based knowledge, supporting the institutional mission, or improving teaching and learning. Leaders need to provide opportunities for faculty members to negotiate, compromise, and collaborate in order to resolve differences and accomplish goals. Faculty members may disagree with administrators and also with each other. Critical review is a core value of scholarship and higher education. A critical review of assumptions about teaching and learning, expectations for student learning, and interpretation of assessment results is a positive step. Solutions to challenges or innovations related to new opportunities are more likely to be identified when groups are diverse due to the range of experience and expertise represented.

Leaders at institutional and departmental levels must help faculty members explore ways they can form links and work together in spite of individual agendas. Identifying commonly held beliefs, values, or goals is a starting place. I once worked on a curriculum project that was going nowhere until one of our group suggested we needed to identify

Table IV Political strategies

Challenge	Strategy
Conflict, protection of the status quo, individual agendas.	Encourage diversity of opinion through a supportive environment and opportunities to negotiate, resolve differences, and compromise; create diverse teams.
Concerns about increased work load related to assessment responsibilities.	Be willing to negotiate in terms of reassigned time, deadlines; hire needed personnel; encourage embedded assessment; provide models for unfamiliar tasks.
Lack of progress by committees; lack of decision-making and results.	Manage coalitions by forming teams to accomplish specific tasks; identify appropriate participants and reporting deadlines.

our assumptions—commonly held beliefs—about teaching and learning a second language (our discipline and the focus of our curriculum work). Although this took several meetings and multiple drafts of documents as we identified these assumptions, making compromises and reaching agreement helped us move forward and accomplish our task. It also increased our understanding of each other and why we might be advocating for a particular idea or approach. This example demonstrates the value of diversity on teams—one of our members saw that we needed to build a foundation and establish a common understanding before we could progress. We gained respect for other's viewpoints and found common ground.

Be Willing to Negotiate Building support for assessment and developing expertise within the faculty takes time. Leaders need to be flexible in terms of workloads and schedules. Some institutions have addressed workload concerns by hiring additional personnel (Moskal et al. 2008). If this is not possible, embedded assessment possibilities can be explored—assessment already in place in the classroom that can be used to measure program outcomes. For example, perhaps faculty members are assessing student learning with writing samples. Topics could be adjusted, shared across course sections, and grading procedures standardized.

Reassigned time may be needed as faculty members develop assessment plans and instruments. Deadlines should be set at times in the semester when work loads are not heavy, and not during summer breaks and holidays. Providing a structured format or a method for planning and reporting may be preferable to having faculty members create their own as some structure is needed when a task is unfamiliar. That is why students benefit from models and examples of assignments. This enables them to know what the professor expects and identify high quality work. Faculty members need to make assessment meaningful and explore questions of interest. This respects the autonomy and complexity necessary for meaningful work (e.g., see Gladwell 2008). However, the purpose for assessment (i.e., improvement and accountability) and expectations for progress are needed to encourage success. Thus, leaders should negotiate where possible, but also consider implementing structures (which could be created by the faculty) that will simplify the task.

Manage Coalitions The shared governance model typically utilizes committees; however, they are often ineffective as members may lack decision-making power, exhibit varying levels of commitment, and place a low priority on the committee's activities. Decision-making (often by consensus) is a long, drawn-out process; and little may be accomplished. Teams differ from committees in that they are comprised of individuals with particular expertise, operate on a short-term basis, and are accountable for accomplishing a specific task or monitoring a change process (Eckel et al. 1999). Leaders should anticipate coalitions and form teams composed of those who have the respect of their colleagues and represent various positions on the issues. A few key individuals can persuade others. Personal power is often more effective than position power. Coalitions can be managed by well-organized teams and carefully selected team leaders. At our institution, the President regularly forms teams to investigate current issues of importance and make recommendations. The charge is clear as are the reporting deadlines. Similarly, teams could address assessment issues.

Symbolic Frame

Symbols provide direction and predictability in times of confusion and uncertainty. The symbolic frame focuses on uniting people through a shared organizational culture,

consisting of rituals, ceremonies, stories, and symbols to create meaning and purpose (Bolman and Deal 2008). Institutions of higher education have common traditions and shared values, some of which have been mentioned, such as faculty autonomy, shared governance, academic freedom, tenure, and scholarship. These are potentially threatened by the assessment movement.

Additionally, institutions have unique features that characterize them and that constituents value. These include long-standing practices, unique programs, campus appearance, famous alumni, sporting and cultural events, and legends. Buildings, monuments, and other artifacts may also be part of the traditions. Although the assessment movement has been present for an extended period of time, few institutions have incorporated it into their cultures. In fact, some institutions have histories of discord and suspicion surrounding assessment (Suskie 2009).

Institutional culture plays a significant role in the success of assessment. Those at elite schools are the least likely to use assessment results as "they have little to gain and perhaps a lot to lose" (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009, p. 9). Those at less selective schools may feel pressured to demonstrate their value but feel threatened by the possibility of disappointing results (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009). As reasons for resistance and institutional cultures vary, leaders will need to identify an institution-specific approach when considering the symbolic frame. Creating new stories or narratives that are centered on student learning and encouraging faculty members to give voice to these stories, can transform institutions and embed assessment into the culture (e.g., see Shulman 2007; Wehlburg 2010).

Identifying strategies for aligning existing institutional culture with desired change is central to the success of assessment initiatives. Table V provides an overview of potential challenges and solutions related to the symbolic frame.

Focus on Mission The mission statement provides cohesion and direction for the institution and should guide the assessment process. When program missions and related assessments are aligned with the institutional mission, all are focused on achieving a common goal, yet are responsible for their areas of expertise. Leaders need to create a big picture perspective and provide the opportunity for others to advance it. This vision involves capturing the image of the institution and its values. Consider what the institution is known for, build on

Table V Symbolic strategies

Challenge	Strategy
Need to unite around a common vision and set of values.	Focus on institutional mission by making it central to assessment work and encouraging individual programs to demonstrate their contributions toward it.
A focus on assessment rather than learning and improvement.	Cultivate a culture of learning by uniting constituents around key aspects of the institution's mission that directly affect them.
Belief that assessment is not valued by the institution and that information from assessment activities is not used.	Communicate success through the inclusion of assessment outcomes and highlights in documents such as course syllabi, newsletters, marketing materials, and websites, and at special events.
Assessment efforts are not part of institutional culture.	Celebrate success with award ceremonies, transition rituals, showcase events; develop related grant programs, tenure/promotion criteria; support presentations and publications on assessment topics

its past, and send a consistent and constant message that assessment is important to maintain and build on tradition.

At an institution where I formerly worked, the mission was clearly articulated and evident in admissions and assessment practices. The institution was committed to diversity and intercultural learning; and, as such, nearly half of the student body consisted of international students. Two of the institution's core themes for accreditation purposes were 1) strengthening international students' English language skills throughout their time at the university and 2) assisting them with career placement in their own countries. These areas were assessed and on-going data collected. Faculty members had a strong stake in the first goal as English language skills affected instruction and the academic rigor of their courses. A committee was formed, information collected from students and faculty members through surveys and focus groups, students' English skills were assessed at various points, and possible courses of actions broadly discussed. This exemplifies how one institution focused on its mission, collected data related to the fulfillment of that mission, and involved the faculty in sharing its views and experiences and creating new strategies for accomplishing the mission.

At my current institution, which has evolved from a vocational school to community college to state college to university, we are still grappling in some respects with our identity. Expectations for faculty involvement in scholarship are increasing, for example, which concerns faculty members who are accustomed to a teaching focus and lack expertise in scholarship. The challenge we face is to honor and respect our roots yet grow into our university status. The new status requires change, which causes some to feel threatened. The mission statement needs to clearly define the institution and account for its range of programs and constituents. Assessment plans need to focus on elements of the mission appropriate to various academic programs and demonstrate that these programs are evolving along with the institution.

Cultivate a Culture of Learning Rather than a Culture of Assessment (Suskie 2009; Wehlburg 2010) My current institution's mission focuses on engaged learning. Stakeholders have spent much time discussing the meaning of engaged learning, how various areas are responsible for it, and how to measure it. Colleges and schools throughout the institution have been given opportunities to define the concept for their own disciplines and suggest ways it can be measured and supported. Although coming to agreement on this issue is not easy, even within disciplines, involving constituents in the process of defining and measuring learning in terms of the mission creates unity. The focus is on engaged learning, rather than on assessment.

In my earlier example about my former institution, the faculty was focused on the mission in terms of supporting student success in English language learning. Accomplishing this outcome had the potential to improve teaching and learning and benefit all. The institution was involved in learning about itself and its students, identifying views toward English language learning, and building support structures. Even though this process was the result of accreditation requirements (or compliance), the faculty selected the core themes for accreditation and carried out the work of accomplishing them.

Communicate Success Highlighting assessment information on websites and in promotional materials demonstrates that the institution values and uses findings. Focusing on what was learned from assessment rather than on achieving high test scores supports the purpose of assessment—improvement. Including information about outcomes and means of assessment in course syllabi enables student involvement and shared responsibility. Telling stories about assessment activities and the people involved in newsletters and at events

builds the value of assessment into the culture. Examples of successes from the past can be used as a foundation for future successes and to support the change process. For example, at my institution, numerous examples of engaged learning existed before the university officially adopted this theme. Examples involve service learning, capstone experiences, real-world application of classroom material, undergraduate research projects, travel and field trips, internships, and peer mentoring. The institution is embracing and building on its past in its quest to move from good to great. Information about engaged learning—specifically the activities of faculty members and students—is highly visible on the website and in university publications. These successes are evident through assessment. However, additional emphasis could be placed on what has been learned and adjusted as the result of assessment processes.

Celebrate Success Celebrations within the institution that involve sharing success stories can begin to instill assessment into the culture. Celebrations involve highlighting short-term progress and diligent effort; initiating institutional awards; and holding poster sessions, mini-conferences, luncheons, and fairs. An additional strategy is to have a transition ritual to say farewell to a former practice while embracing recent successes.

I have been involved with assessment best practices luncheons, poster session events, and awards at two different institutions. Faculty members came together at these events, shared their work and what they had learned through their program assessment initiatives, and were recognized for their contributions. In some cases, the offer of awards for various aspects of assessment resulted in healthy competition and increased efforts. At our institution, faculty members can apply for engaged learning grants to fund classroom research and projects involving students—the outcomes of these projects are published and distributed within the institution and may lead to professional presentations and publications. In this way, the institution is providing incentive and rewards for faculty involvement in support of one of its core themes while allowing faculty autonomy in determining if and how they will be involved. Thus, the institution is addressing the three characteristics of meaningful work—autonomy, complexity (i.e., related to scholarly work), and connection between effort and reward (e.g., see Gladwell 2008). Faculty members are carrying out the mission of the institution and assessing what students have learned in the process.

Conclusion

Accountability is an expectation for institutions of higher education. Requirements related to accreditation are designed to create a culture of assessment within colleges and universities. The faculty is central to that process. Bologna Tuning projects and similar movements place a bottom-up approach, specifically faculty expertise, at the center of identifying outcomes and competencies for their own disciplines (Adelman 2008). Academic administrators guiding assessment initiatives at their institutions should do likewise. The goal is to involve, support, design, negotiate, and celebrate, not to prescribe or direct.

Leaders who examine the four frames—human resource, structural, political, and symbolic—in considering assessment in their institutions will be successful in effecting cultural change. Leaders who act on assessment results at institutional and program levels to improve teaching and learning will effect on-going change and improvement. Organizations are fluid and change is incremental, suggesting a need for continued assessment, reflection on findings, and identification of appropriate adjustments.

References

Adelman, C. (2008). *The Bologna club: What US higher education can learn from a decade of European reconstruction*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/TheBolognaClub.pdf

Angelo, T. A. (1999). Doing assessment as if it matters most. *AAHE Bulletin, 51*(9), 3–6.

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2008). *College learning for the new global century. Executive Summary.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from https://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/GlobalCentury_ExecSum_3.pdf

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009). Assessing learning outcomes: Lessons from AAC&U's VALUE project. Special issue. *Peer Review, 11*(1), 4–7.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (1999). 4 steps to keeping change efforts heading in the right direction. *The Journal for Quality & Participation, 22*(3), 6–11.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Collins, J. (2005). *From good to great and the social sectors. Why business thinking is not the answer*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions. (2004). *Regional accreditation and student learning: Improving institutional practice*. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/handbooks/ImprovingPractice.pdf

Cummings, R., Maddux, C. D., & Richmond, A. (2008). Curriculum-embedded performance assessment in higher education: Maximum efficiency and minimum disruption. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 33*(6), 599–605.

Delta Project. (2009). *Investing in student success initiative*. Washington, DC: Delta Project. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.deltacostproject.org/initiatives/index.asp

Department for Education and Skills. (2003a). *The future of higher education*. Norwich, United Kingdom: Department for Education and Skills, Government of the United Kingdom. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100210151716/dcsf.gov.uk/hegateway/uploads/white%20pape.pdf

Department for Education and Skills. (2003b). *Widening participation in higher education*. Norwich, United Kingdom: Department for Education and Skills, Government of the United Kingdom. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.dius.gov.uk/higher_education/~/media/publications/E/EWParticipation

Eckel, P, Green, M., Hill, B., & Mallon, W. (1999). *On change III. Taking charge of change: A primer for colleges and universities*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/on-change/on-changeIII.pdf

Elmore, T. (2008). *From "X" to "Y": Understanding and connecting with the millennial generation*. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.growingleaders.com/index.php/articles.html

Ewell, P. T. (2002). An emerging scholarship: A brief history of assessment. In T. Banta (Ed.), *Building a scholarship of assessment* (pp. 3–25). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Ewell, P. T. (2009). Perpetual movement: Assessment after twenty years. In *Proceedings of the 2009 Assessment Institute*, (pp. 80–100). Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers*. New York, NY: Little, Brown, and Company.

González, J., & Wagenaar, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Universities' contribution to the Bologna Process: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Bilbao, Spain: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Deusto. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/

Hamel, G., & Prahalad, C. K. (1994). *Competing for the future*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Haviland, D., Shin, S., & Turley, S. (2010). The impact of a professional development initiative on faculty concerns with program assessment. *Innovative Higher Education, 35*(4), 261–275.

Jones, E. A. (2009). Expanding professional development opportunities to enhance the assessment process. *Assessment Update, 21*(3), 3–4.

Kotter, J. (2005). *Our iceberg is melting: Changing and succeeding under any conditions*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Kuh, G. (2008). *High impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter.* Washington, DC: American Council on Colleges and Universities.

Kuh, G., & Ikenberry, S. (2009). *More than you think, less than we need: Learning outcomes assessment in American higher education*. Champaign, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

Lederman, D. (2009, August 4). The challenge of comparability. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/08/04/transparency

Maki, P. L. (2009). Moving beyond a national habit in the call for accountability. *Peer Review, 11*(1), 13–17.

Moskal, P., Ellis, T., & Keon, T. (2008). Summary of assessment in higher education and the management of student-learning data. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 7*(2), 269–278.
Nichols, J. O., & Nichols, K. W. (2000). *The departmental guide and record book for student outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness* (3rd ed.). Flemington, NJ: Agathon.
Palomba, C. A., & Banta, T. W. (1999). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
Shaw, R. B. (1997). *Trust in the balance: Building successful organizations on results, integrity, and concern*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Shulman, L. S. (2007). Counting and recounting: Assessment and the quest for accountability. *Change, 39* (1), 20–25.
Smith, D. N. (2009). Challenges to the credible assessment of learning. *Assessment Update, 21*(5), 6–8.
Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Tierney, W. B. (1999). *Building the responsive campus: Creating high performance colleges and universities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Tierney, W. B. (2008). *The impact of culture on organizational decision making*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
Walvoord, B. E. (2004). *Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
WASC 2001 *Handbook of Accreditation*. (2001). Retrieved October 25, 2010, from http://www.wascsenior.org/wasc/Doc_Lib/2001%20Handbook.pdf#page=44
Wehlburg, C. M. (2010). Assessment practices related to student learning: Transformative assessment. In K. Gillespie & D. Robertson (Eds.), *Guide to faculty development* (2nd ed., pp. 169–184). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Welch, E. H. (2008). The road to excellence passes through assessment. *University Business, 11*(6), 55.
Wheatley, M. J. (2005). *Finding our way: Leadership for an uncertain time*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.