

Assessment for Continuous Improvement: Learner, Practice, and Profession
April 22-24, 2001
Lenox, MA

Assessment has become the focus of higher education today, and it's not just limited to obtaining reaccreditation: it is central to what we as educators do. Are we teaching effectively? Are students learning effectively? Do our institutions facilitate this process effectively? The Spring 2001 conference considered these questions.

Dr. Peggi Maki, Director of Assessment at the American Association for Higher Education in Washington, D.C., delivered the keynote address on Sunday, "Assessment - Not an Afterthought." She also presented a pre-conference workshop entitled "Student Outcomes Assessment: Articulating Expectations and Identifying Methods to Assess Those Expectations." In addition to her work for AAHE, Dr. Maki also served as Associate Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (the regional accrediting body in New England). Her efforts to develop assessment protocols to guide institutional efforts for assessment in and out of the classroom were supported by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trust. She has offered many workshops for higher education institutions throughout New England. Her enthusiasm for this process of assessment was infectious, and she made it clear that "assessment" is not a burden to be endured by institutions seeking reaccreditation, but a vital process central to effective teaching and learning.

Dr. Alan W. Wright, Executive Director of the Office of Instructional Development and Technology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, gave the keynote address on Monday, "Assessment in CE: Building Block or Blunt Bludgeon?" His work at Dalhousie involves a comprehensive program in support of teaching and learning in higher education as well as the development of distance education and the enlightened use of technology in education. Dr. Wright's discussion on learning outcomes assessment in higher education was followed by a workshop entitled "The Faculty Portfolio: An Educator's Self-Portrait." In both sessions, Dr. Wright emphasized the importance of ongoing self-assessment, as opposed to "episodic" self-assessment.

Workshops included:

Tales of Transformative Learning
Does Your Marketing Measure Up?
Is Your Website Measuring Up?
Today's Ethical Challenges
Identifying Student Service Needs
Evaluating Partnerships with Business
Town Meeting: Everyday Assessment in CE:
Providential Tips from Practitioners

