Suspension of disbelief: Assessment in higher education

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Suspension of disbelief

A temporary acceptance of incredible events or characters as believable
Why assessment is important

Student learning assessment is our best way to explain and defend our educational programs to ourselves, our students, and interested others.
Important external forces

- State Funding
- Research Funding
- Industrial Funding
- Family Funding
Assessment is a reflective exercise
Assessment questions and accurate reflections

- Systems
- Institutions
- Units
- Programs
- Courses
- Individuals

Diagram:

- Environments
- Inputs
- Outcomes
A question of scope
A question of grain size
A little sorting does wonders
“I’ve looked everywhere, but I can’t find any assessment going on here”

- Faculty aren’t really interested in improving teaching & learning
- The culture here will never support it
Given other choices, faculty won’t/can’t focus on student learning
Faculty: Time spent reflecting on ways to improve my own teaching

Source: Faculty teaching undergraduate courses; 2008 National Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University
The institutional culture works against faculty involvement.
The institutional culture is changing: Walking dinners and poster fairs

Faculty from:
Education
Engineering
Medicine
CRLT

3rd Annual Research and Scholarship in Engineering Education Poster Session

October 14

1. Action Research: Using Data to Improve Instruction and Student Learning
   Chad Hershock and Chris O’Neal

2. American Idol Comes to the Classroom: Using a Multi-tiered Class Clown to Increase Student Collaboration and Comprehension
   Jeff Miano

3. The Art and Science of Story-Telling in the Engineering Classroom
   Diane Yachniak
Remember...

Disbelief can go both ways; so does the opportunity to suspend it.

Universities and their faculties are sometimes astounded that ‘outsiders’ want to meddle in their central affairs.

The public has long trusted higher education, but is astounded by the lack of openness when it comes to student learning outcomes.
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