

# CIE UPDATE

The Center for Institutional Effectiveness

Fall 2013 • Issue 4

## Moments in Assessment History: The 1980s and the Issue of Quality

This year (2013) marks the 30th anniversary of the report *A Nation at Risk*. Released in 1983, *A Nation at Risk* marked, according to many higher education scholars, a major shift in the national debate on higher education. While the 1960s and 1970s were all about access, it was during the 1980s that the dialogue shifted from access to quality.

This began in 1981 when Terrel Bell, Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, established a National Commission on Excellence in Education. This commission was under the leadership of David Gardner, the president of the University of California. The commission's 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, attracted worldwide attention. Here, for the first time, higher education is characterized as "a rising tide of mediocrity" that threatens America's future.

Bell then established another group, this one led by Professor Kenneth Mortimer of Penn State. This group issued a report in 1984 entitled *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education*. *Involvement in Learning* emphasized student involvement in the teaching/learning process. Quality in higher education was determined to require, among other things, "first-rate assessment of learning procedures" with regular feedback.

In 1985 the American Association of State Colleges and Universities appointed a commission to study the role and future of public colleges and universities. This report, released in 1986 and titled *To Secure the Blessings of Liberty*, articulated the need for institutional student outcomes and determinants for institutional effectiveness.

The latter part of the 1980s furthers the national dialogue on student outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Stay tuned for future installments of "Moments in Assessment History".

## CIE UPDATE

During the summer and fall, CIE has worked to make the assessment process easier and more useful to faculty and staff. The following are some of the results of these efforts:

- **Additional Assessment Fellows:** There are seven Fellows (five Academic and two Administrative and Educational Support) to assist faculty and staff with the assessment process.
- **Revised Assessment Report Form and Cycle:** The report form was revised to include opportunities for feedback from deans, vice-presidents and assessment fellows each semester of the process. This will help keep the process timely and will provide greater awareness of the assessment work that we are doing. All departments are now on a four semester cycle.
- **Meta-Analysis Report:** The Fellows and Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness analyzed assessment reports from the 2011 - 2013 assessment cycle. To ensure more consistent reports, CIE created a formative rubric that the deans, vice-presidents and fellows can use to help assessment liaisons throughout the assessment process. In addition, at the end of each assessment cycle, the fellows will evaluate the assessment plans using a summative rubric.
- **C7IE Fall Workshop Series:** Presentations included *Creating Curriculum Maps*, *Getting Started with Assessment*, and *a Meta-Analysis of Assessment Plans*.
- **TK20:** Assessment liaisons working on the 2013 - 2015 cycle had the opportunity to become familiar with TK20 and begin to enter their Semester One activities into the software.

## ASSESSMENT TIPS

Faculty may feel hesitant when beginning the assessment process. The following suggestions should ease some of their uncertainty.

### TIP 1:

Set realistic and achievable desired outcomes (benchmarks) for success. In a circumstance when the accrediting agency sets the desired outcome, collaboratively formulate a benchmark that expresses your philosophy of success. Start at the foundation for success, and then little by little raise the benchmark as needed.

### TIP 2:

Close the loop. After collecting the data, and analyzing it accordingly, educators need to develop an action plan to improve future learning performance. The plan does not need to be intricate; just doable! Brainstorm with your department and colleagues in other disciplines for their ideas. Once a departmental plan is formulated, put it to the test. Measure to see if the plan is working effectively. Then, reassess to determine whether or not the action plan worked.

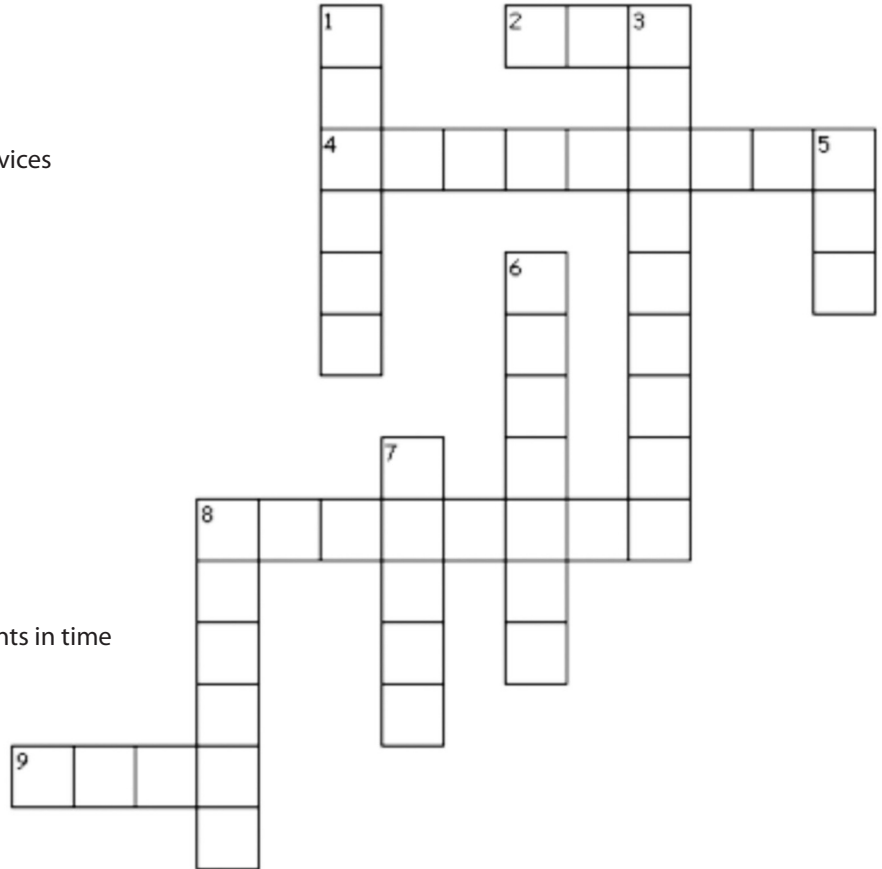
## CIE Crossword Puzzle

### Across

- 2. Organization that offers testing and assessment services
- 4. Expected level of skills for an educational outcome
- 8. Culminating student-learning experiences
- 9. # of semesters to complete program assessment

### Down

- 1. Scoring guide used in subjective assessments
- 3. A culminating assessment
- 5. Oversees assessment at BCC
- 6. Provide one-on-one support to assessment liaisons
- 7. Evaluates BCC's monitoring report
- 8. A group whose progress is followed at different points in time



Answer Key: 1. Rubric 2. ETS 3. Summative 4. Benchmark 5. Kim 6. Fellows 7. MSCHE 8. Capstone 8. Cohort 9. Four

## MIDDLE STATES UPDATE

On November 21, 2013, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), acted to accept Bergen Community College's monitoring report, noting that its next visit for purposes of accreditation evaluation will be scheduled in 2015-2016 (Decennial Self-Study).

As part of the preparation for our Self-Study, we will need to present a self-study model to our liaison with MSCHE, Dr. Ellie Fogarty, during her campus visit on March 4, 2104. In addition, a steering committee is being formed to coordinate the overall effort.

In the coming months, CIE will be sharing information about the Self-Study. This two-year undertaking is of critical importance to the college and everyone is encouraged to participate.

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