

# **WHERE POLICIES AND PRACTICE MEET: ASSESSMENT AND THE WAY WE WORK**

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# THE PLAN

- A brief tour from NILOA surveys of the current assessment scene on campuses
- What that tells us about the prospects for the work featured here today
- Larger trends and developments
- Examples from current projects
- Anything else that comes to mind as helpful
- Discussion along the way

# **...WITH YOUR QUESTIONS IN MIND**

- “How to get more folks on our campus into the idea of ongoing assessment”
- Buy in, time, support, development, rewards
- Disciplinary and other differences
- The role of part-time faculty
- Assessing complex outcomes (internships, etc)
- Making the use of evidence a norm
- Linking assessment and faculty development



**NILOA's mission is to discover and disseminate effective use of assessment data to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.**



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# 3 NILOA Surveys

## 2014: *Knowing What Students Know and Can Do*

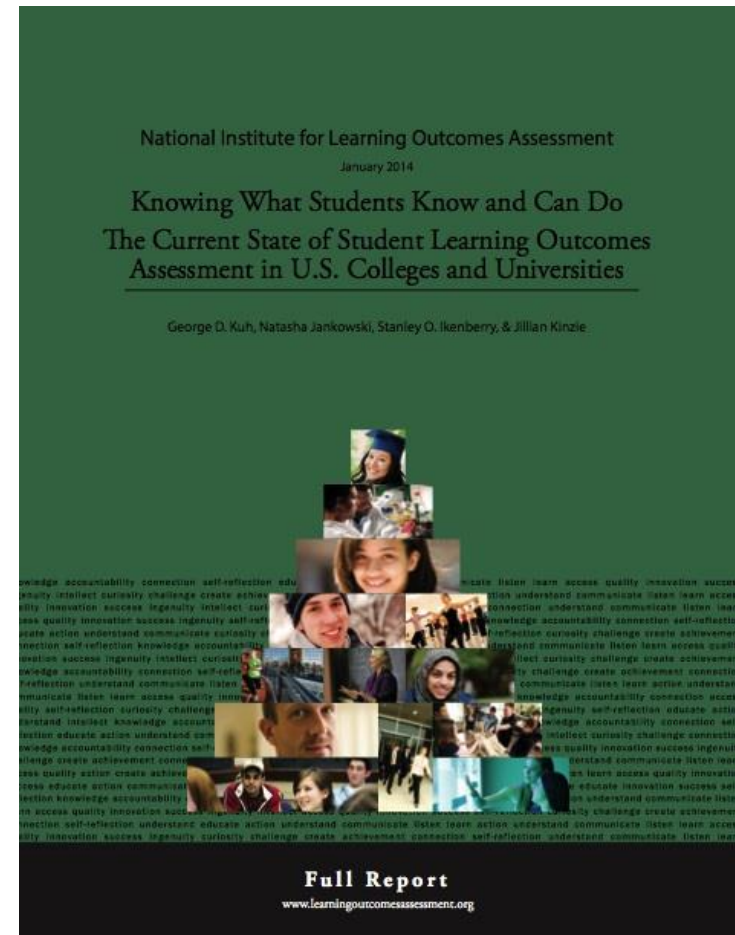
(Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry, & Kinzie)

--Provost or designates

--All accredited,  
undergrad-degree-granting,  
two- and four-year institutions,  
public, private, for-profit

--43% response rate (1,202)

--generally reflecting national  
profile of institutions



## **2009: *More than You Think, Less than We Need***

(Kuh & Ikenberry)

Ditto.

725 schools participated in both 2009 and 2013



## **2011: *Down and In: Assessment Practices at the Program Level*** (Ewell, Paulson, & Kinzie)

To follow up on 2009

Faculty program heads knowledgeable about assessment

In randomly selected departments/programs

— 3-5 per institution

30% response rate



**But first...**

**What's the most important development in the assessment of student learning on your campus in the last 2-3 years?**

**According to Provosts (2014), what is the driving force for assessment?**

**a. Institutional commitment to improvement**

**b. Accreditation**

**c. Faculty & staff Interest**

**d. Governing board mandate**

**e. Other**

**“high importance”**

**88% Regional**

**77% Specialized**



- Good news: Internal drivers becoming more important
- Provosts: Internal use by campuses is growing and considered “far more important than external use.”
- Program heads: “program improvement” is #1 driver for assessment
- Editorial Comment: If you want assessment to matter, framing matters. What is it for?
- Loyola Marymount: Principles of Assessment

# Guiding Principles...



The primary purpose of assessment is improvement of student learning.

By gathering meaningful evidence about student learning outcomes and processes we can make better decisions about pedagogy, the design of curricular and co-curricular programs and services, and how to allocate resources to enhance a student's university experience.

# HOW MUCH?

1. More approaches in play on any given campus
  - 3 in 2009
  - 5 today
2. Greater readiness, better foundation

## 2. Greater readiness:

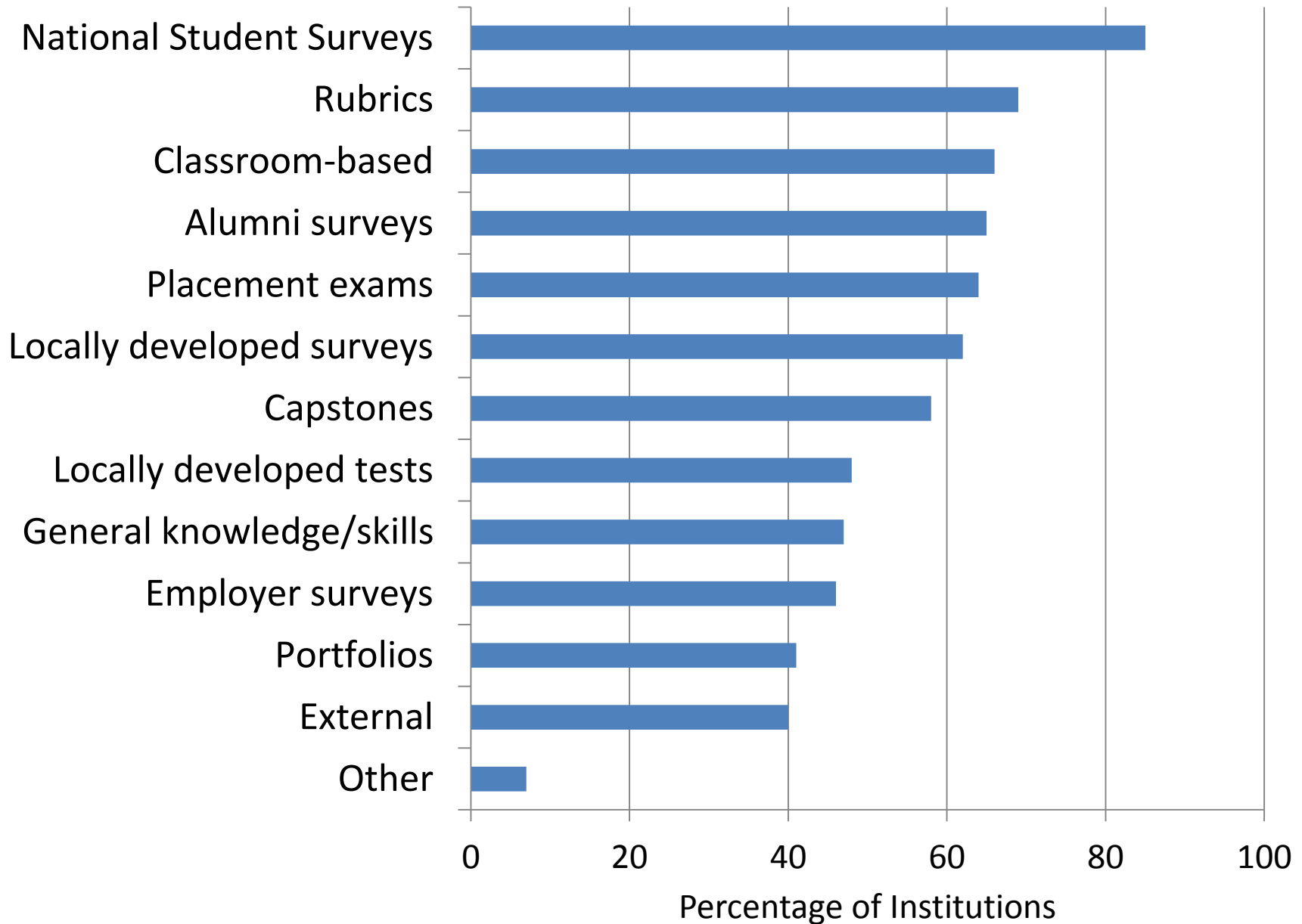
Has your institution adopted or developed an explicit set of student learning outcomes common to all undergraduates, across all majors?

- 2009: 74% of institutions reported outcomes in place
- 2013: 84 %

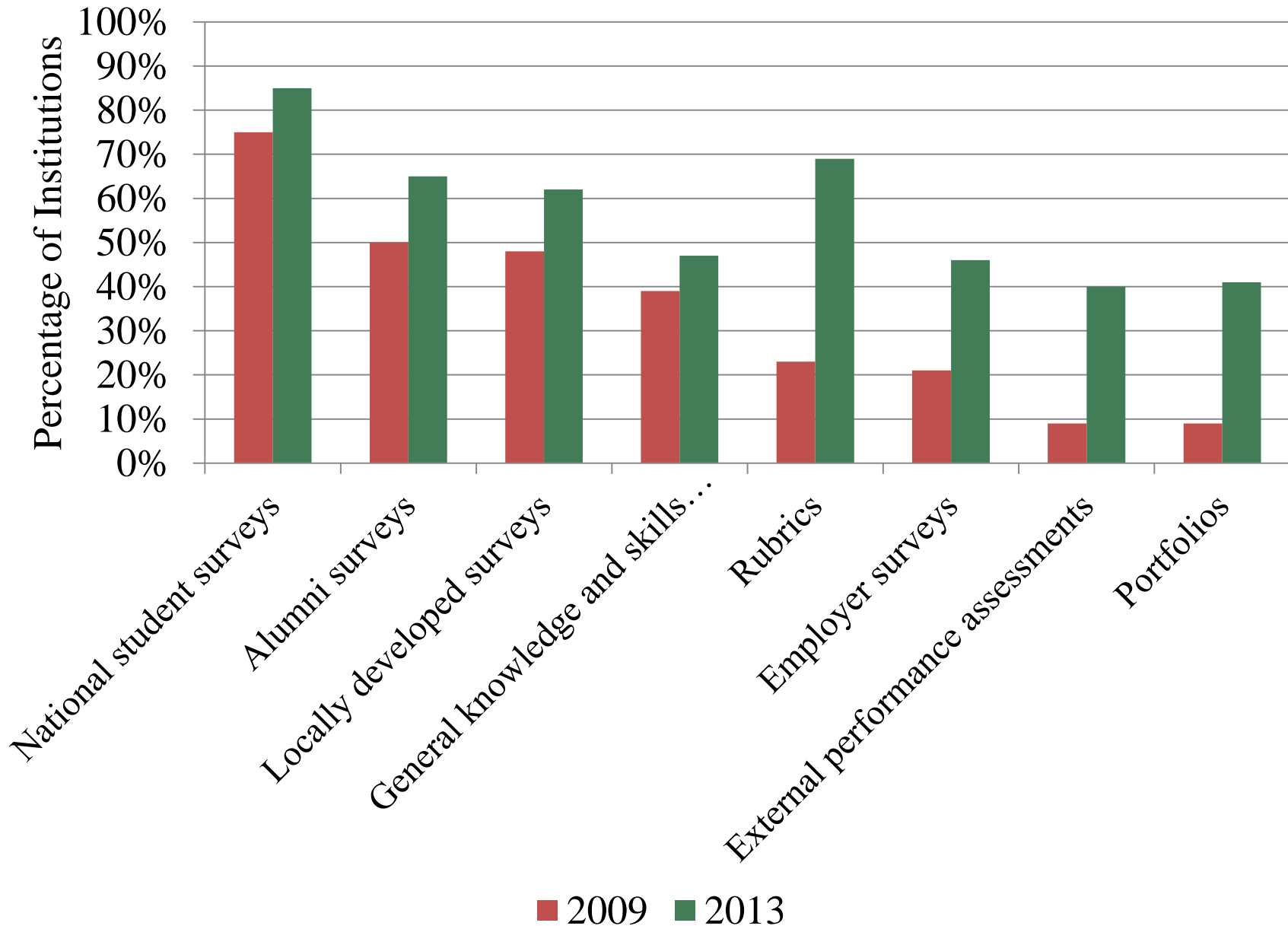
Alignment across levels: 4 in 10

This matters for optimum use of assignments.

# WHAT KINDS?



# Change Over Time



## WHAT KINDS?

- Movement toward the use of methods that are or can be situated in the regular work of teaching and learning.
- Provosts now consider “classroom-based performance assessments” to be of greatest institutional value.
- Some convergence: the institution is learning from the work of programs: that is, items with greatest increase are high on the list from program heads....

# Methods reported by program heads:

Capstones: 68%

Rubrics

Performance assessments

Final projects

Local tests

Local/alumni surveys

External exams

Portfolios

Comprehensive exams

Caveat: disciplinary differences matter.

Education and health sciences more likely to give standardized tests.

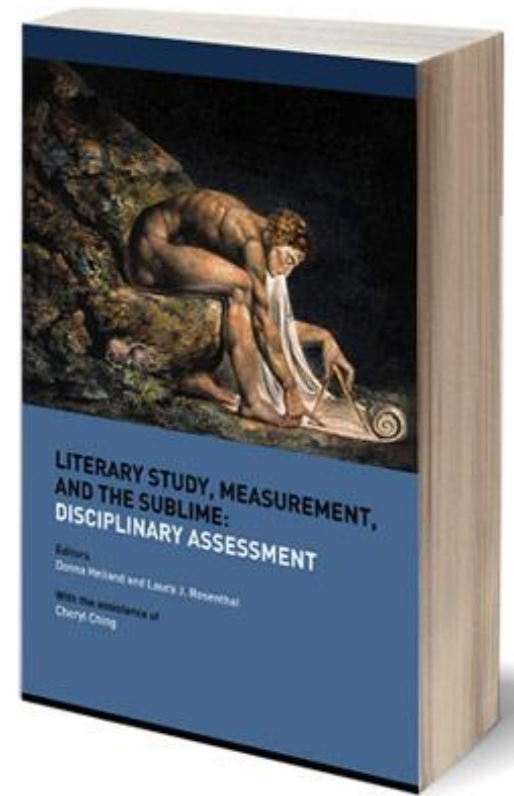


Heiland and Rosenthal. (2011).  
*Literary Study, Measurement,  
and the Sublime:*

*Disciplinary Assessment*

One of the reasons faculty have  
been less than fully engaged...

“the best known assessment efforts have  
targeted overall institutional performance and  
general educational outcomes rather than the  
concerns and outcomes of of specific disciplines.”



“Each discipline has its own intellectual history, agreements, and disputes about subject matter and methods that influence what is taught, to whom, when, where, how and why.”

--Mary Taylor Huber and Sherwyn Morreale,  
*Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (2002).

Ergo: assignments!

# What For?

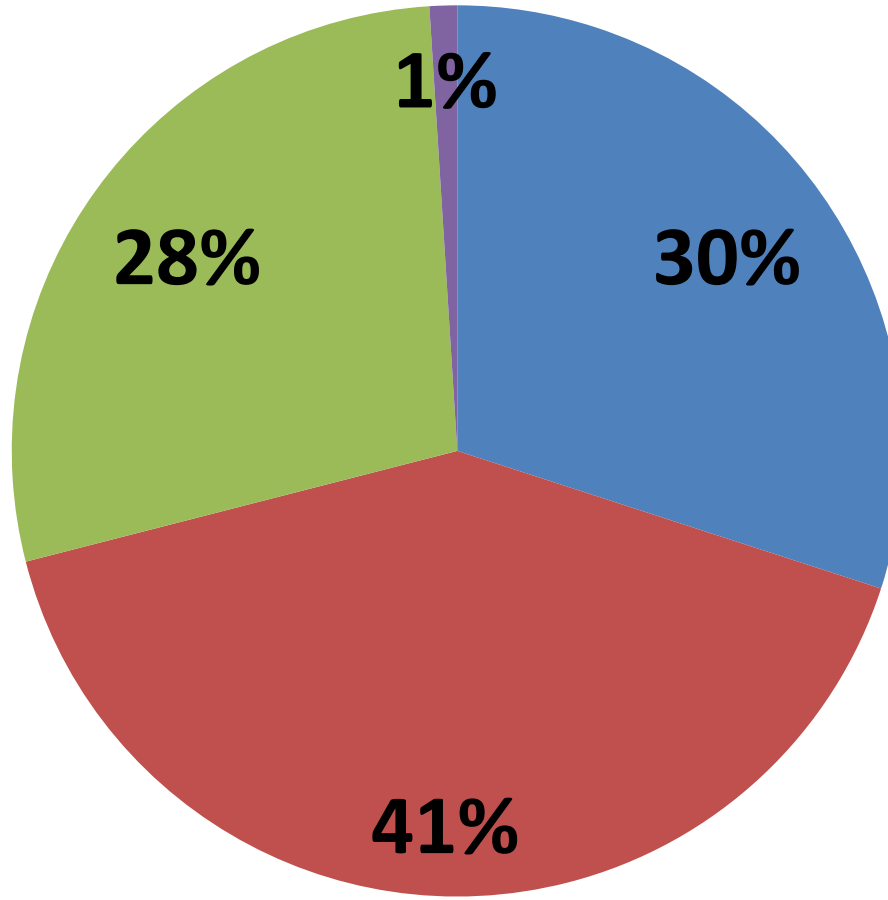
- More internal uses than external
- More uses in specific courses or curriculum than at institutional level
- Both program heads and provosts say high use in program review
- And accreditation
- In general, uses up!

# SO....

- Some things in place:
- More aligned outcomes
- More activity
- More “authentic” approaches
- More value placed on classroom approaches
- More place for a focus on assignments as key to assessment
- More interest in internal use, improvement

How about support, conditions for moving ahead?

# How well does your current institutional organization and governance structure(s) support assessment of student learning?



■ Very much   ■ Quite a bit   ■ Some   ■ Not at all

# What would be most helpful as you assess undergraduate student learning?

- More prof. developmt faculty/staff
- More faculty using the results
- More Resources financial/staff
- Greater assessmt staff capacity
- Technologies
- More faculty involved in assessmt
- More valid and reliable measures
- Greater sharing cross units
- Info. on best practice
- External funding
- More student particip. in assessmt
- Stronger admin support
- More SA using results
- More SA involved in assessmt
- More opp to collaborate other...
- Other

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70

# What Faculty Would Find Most Helpful

- Release time to engage in assessment (66%)
- Stipends to support faculty involvement (55%)
- Faculty expertise in designing and applying assessment measures (55%)
- Information about what other programs are doing (45%)
- **Not so much:**
  - More professional assessment staff
  - External consultants

No more self-fulfilling prophecies about faculty resistance

“The developments in the NILOA survey results suggest that American higher education may be on the verge of **an inflection point** where what follows is a more purposeful use of evidence student learning outcomes...”

--p. 36.

- Faculty as central actors
- Not just as members of committees and objects of assessment training
- Assignments will be key—well-designed, scaffolded, aligned
- Means a serious investment in professional development
- With policies of support and reward for assessment as intellectual work, the scholarship of teaching and learning
- And opportunities to work together, within and across disciplines and campuses