

THE SCHOLARSHIP
OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
&
STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT:
BUILDING BRIDGES

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IN A NUTSHELL

- The scholarship of teaching and learning and student outcomes assessment share some core values and practices.
- But they have different histories, champions, methods, strengths and weaknesses, and the two conversations have not converged.
- Today's question: how can they “contribute to, draw on, and enrich” each other in ways that strengthen both, and support higher education's teaching and learning mission?

SACRIFICIAL DEFINITIONS

Assessment:

An ongoing, institutional process of clarifying goals for student learning, gathering evidence about whether those goals are being met, and using what is discovered to improve teaching, curriculum, and student support--and to provide accountability.

The Scholarship of

Teaching & Learning:

Faculty bringing their skills, habits, and values as scholars in their field to their teaching and their students' learning, and going public with results in ways that build knowledge and improve practice.

Assessment

SOTL

Admin driven

A focus on student learning

Driven by faculty questions

Measurement

The pursuit and exploration of evidence

Scholarly inquiry

Many stakeholders

Going public

Audience of peers and practitioners

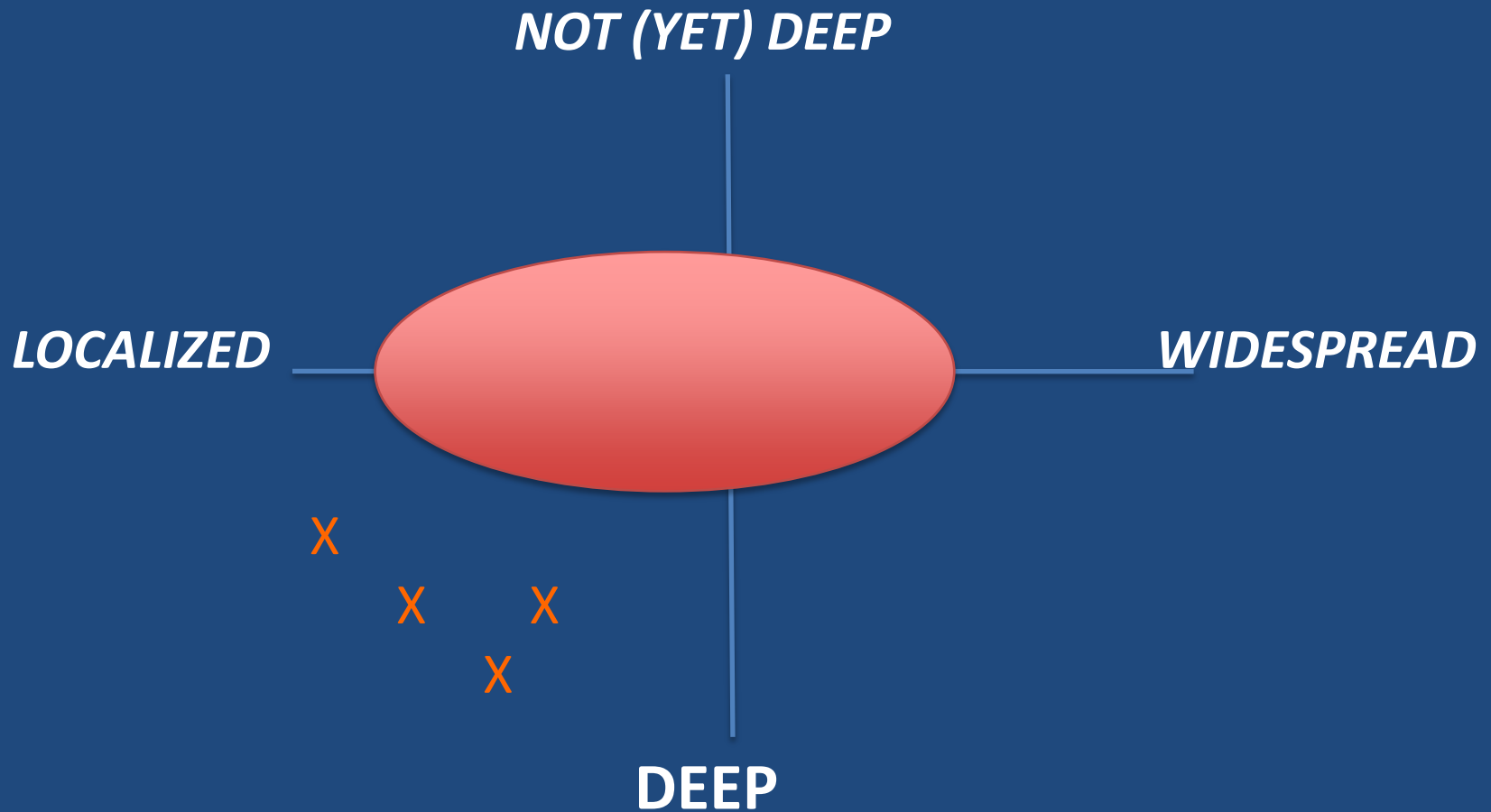
Institutionalized
But low impact

High impact
but fragile

BACKGROUND

- 2009 survey of 2006-2009 CASTL campuses
- 117 campuses, all Carnegie types (57%)
- Looking at SOTL's impact on the institution
 - Teaching practices
 - Student learning experience
 - Institutional culture
 - Other campus initiatives and agendas

A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE



*--ADAPTED FROM ACE PROJECT ON LEADERSHIP
AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION*

SURPRISE FINDING

- Assessment all over the place!
- #4 on list of 16 institutional agendas where SOTL has had important impact.
- Comments from campuses...

- “Engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning has contributed to faculty acceptance of institutional assessment.”
- New understanding that assessment “can be done ‘from the inside’ according to faculty curiosities and remaining within their control.”
- SOTL work helped “make the assessment of student learning an institutional priority.”

- “Discussions of assessment (at all levels) have become more sophisticated.”
- “It is impossible to separate the College’s initiative to map and assess newly adopted learning outcomes from the presence of the scholarship of teaching and learning initiative as they span the same timeframe and are both aimed to make the process of teaching and learning visible.”
- Looking for “ways to build bridges between the scholarship of teaching and learning and institutional assessment.”

Assessment



Collaborative Inquiry
around
Shared Goals



Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

1. INDIVIDUAL SCHOLARS

DISCOVERING COMMON GROUND

- CASTL Scholars
 - Individual classroom projects
 - Selected for connections and networks
 - Facilitated occasions for conversation
 - Documentation, going public, expanding the circle
 - Emerging connections: disciplines, educ for citizenship, “connected science,” student roles
- Campus Scholarship of T&L Grants/Fellowship Programs

2. COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY AROUND GENERAL EDUC GOALS

- Mt. Royal University
- Individual SOTL Scholars but also...
- 4 SOTL Scholars studying Critical Reading--a key outcome in new general education program
 - Common definition
 - Common evidence (assignments)
 - Common rubric for analysis
- Refining understandings and practice related to Critical Reading/General Education
- A protocol for collaborative SOTL

3. THE DISCIPLINE, INTERDISCIPLINE, OR DEPARTMENT AS A COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY

- University of Kansas
- Course portfolio as individual inquiry
- Program portfolio as collective inquiry
- Retail to wholesale
- “Fascinating to see how the work of an entire program has the same feature of scholarly inquiry that can be seen in an individual teacher’s work” (Bernstein, 2008).
- Inquiry that taps into disciplinary questions, goals, methods

4. NEW ROLES FOR STUDENTS AS BROKERS AND BRIDGE BUILDERS

- Wabash National Study: need to translate results into “actionable information”
- Campus teams to identify findings “that would be more fully understood and actionable with student input.”
- NC A&T State University Provost Scholars
- Research opportunity for students
- Helps to build bridges, expand audience, spur change.
- Leaders see this as “student role in SOTL at institutional level”

WHAT CAN THE SoTL BRING TO ASSESSMENT?

- More appealing language of “inquiry,” “research”
- Intense faculty interest in the learning of their own field--energizing dept/program-level assessment
- An expanded range of methods and evidence
- Examples, illustrations and voices to bring institutional data to life—to make people care about it and act on it
- Commitments to student involvement
- A broader model of impact and use

WHAT CAN ASSESSMENT BRING TO THE SoTL?

- More general institutional data/patterns that provide a larger context for classroom-level inquiry—a chance to see where my work fits.
- Findings for faculty to explore more deeply in their own classrooms and programs.
- A broader audience.
- Institutional buy-in, resources.
- Some risks.

BRIDGING PRINCIPLES

1. Maintain SOTL and assessment communities (THINK: integration not incorporation).
2. Begin with real questions that real people want to understand more fully.
3. Build on faculty's skills and values as researchers.
4. Invite student involvement.
5. Find and/or create occasions for conversation and negotiation across levels and communities.
6. Pay attention to language, translation, brokering.
7. Connect assessment and SoTL to other institutional initiatives and agendas (general education, curriculum design, retention, etc).

A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

- For assessment, building bridges to the SOTL may help solve the movement's most enduring challenge: making a difference in teaching and learning.
- For the scholarship of T&L, a closer connection with assessment may help embed the work more deeply in institutional life, raising the chances for long-term viability.

“There are, in human affairs, two types of problems: those which are amenable to a technical solution and those which are not.”

--Atul Gawande