# **Emerging Issues in Assessment Some Hopeful Reflections**

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Abstract: Drawing on the author's experiences working with and for the Association of Theological Schools, this essay reminds us that assessment is meaningful work. At its best, educational assessment should be grounded in and fundamental to teaching and learning. After noting some ways in which current assessment practices tend to fall short, this essay proposes a reframing of why we are engaging in assessment (our motivation), of what we can do with assessment (our aspirations), and of the shape of assessment itself (our techniques or practices). The essay also includes a bibliography of additional readings and other resources.

In March 2016, I had the privilege of offering one of the plenary addresses at the ADME Conference at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, PA. The title that was suggested to me was "Emerging Issues in Assessment." I'm not exactly sure what the organizers had in mind when they suggested that title, and I'd be curious to know what participants thought they were in for when they came to that session. Because of my role as one of the directors of accreditation and institutional evaluation at the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), I've had the opportunity to write and talk about assessment to a wide variety of audiences over the past few years. From these experiences, I've learned that audience members often show up: a) hopeful that I'll give them a magic bullet that will save them a lot of work, b) nervous that I'll scold them and introduce all sorts of additional bureaucratic work to their already full plates, or c) reluctant because they anticipate that I'll bore them to tears.

My own hope, not surprisingly, is to confound these expectations. One of my overarching commitments is that assessment is meaningful work – deeply meaningful, in fact, and fundamental not only to the work of teaching and learning but even to the possibilities of relating to each other in honest and vulnerable ways. I think that assessment is a natural human process, a pastoral skill, a scholarly endeavor, and an effort in humility. Good assessment, in my opinion, draws on and demands our best selves, and its best outcome is beauty and enhanced experiences of interdependence and community. In my own vocational journey, first as a faculty member and academic dean and later as an accreditor, I was slow to recognize this – I first encountered assessment as something that was bureaucratic and small-minded, the sort of activity that (appropriately) leads to defensiveness or protectiveness of one's time or one's classroom. I don't think this is an unusual experience; in some ways, I share the sorts of information now that I think would have been helpful to me then. And so, whenever I have the chance, I try to offer a different picture of the possibilities here, presenting assessment as something that can be creative, imaginative, and even fun.

I should also note that, because of my position, I've had the opportunity to review a good majority of the assessment reports that have been submitted to ATS in the past few years – those

of you at ATS schools can likely attest that there have been a lot of these! – and I've seen how our Board of Commissioners has responded to each of these reports. I've seen where schools struggle, and I've seen what seems to help them be more effective at their work. It's important to affirm that theological schools, in general, have been attentive to the assessment of individual students and of individual courses for quite a long time. Assessment is not a new phenomenon. It's perhaps easiest to see this in the more traditionally academic degree programs, such as the MA or PhD, where a student isn't allowed to graduate until they demonstrate that their academic work (often via comprehensive exams and/or a project such as a thesis or dissertation) is of sufficient quality. In fact, in some academic programs, one might even argue that our assessment of individual students is too rigid, taking the form of hazing or unnecessary gatekeeping. Assessment of individual students is also visible in our professional degree programs, both those that lead to ordination or licensure (such as the MDiv) and those focused on professional enhancement (such as the DMin), where we recognize that much is at stake in the effective assessment of the individual student – not only for the student, but also for the receiving communities and for the reputation of the school or program. Many of us are also well-practiced at assessing individual courses, whether through the dreaded course-evaluation process or as part of regular curriculum reviews (where we might have to argue for the significance and value of each course), or just as a result of our own perfectionism (as many of us tinker with our own courses endlessly, always looking for a "better" reading or activity).

However, until recently, graduate theological schools in the US and Canada were not as skilled, practiced, or committed to other sorts of assessment, including degree program assessment and institutional evaluation. While we may be good at asking whether a student is ready to graduate, many of us are less practiced at asking whether our degree program or our school overall had prepared that student well. We assumed it, but we couldn't demonstrate it, and sometimes we couldn't even articulate quite why. When our schools did engage in assessment of degree programs or of the curriculum more broadly, it often was done either irregularly or informally, often based on intuition or anecdote, and was rarely documented.

Yet we, as a community, have affirmed the value of degree program assessment and institutional evaluation. The ATS Commission Standards of Accreditation – which are written by the membership on behalf of the membership – have articulated the importance of assessment for quite some time. One could even argue that accreditation itself is grounded in assessment, especially via the practices of self-study and peer review. When the current ATS Commission Standards were adopted in 2010 and 2012, educational assessment was highlighted in the first Institutional Standard (regarding purpose, planning, and evaluation), in the opening section of each Degree Program Standard, and in its own section in the Educational Standard. More generally, a priority on planning and evaluation is one of the recurring themes woven throughout all of the Standards. And so, even as the membership together affirmed assessment as it approved the current Standards of Accreditation, the Standards in turn required that ATS schools begin paying significantly more attention to educational assessment at the degree program and institutional levels.

My sense, from working with a wide range of theological schools across the US and Canada, is that everybody now knows that they have to do these broader sorts of assessment, and everybody has taken a stab at it. Most, even, are doing it in ways that meet the minimum expectations of the

Commission Standards, to the point that we are now seeing a decrease in the number of required reports on assessment. But it seems to me that, even as schools and programs are being more intentional and are investing more time and resources into assessment, we are only being successful at around a "B" level. I mean this in two ways. First is as a grade – and a B is, in and of itself, is not a bad grade. A "B" typically means that you "get it," that you're not completely wrong, that you're making a good effort, perhaps even that you're performing slightly above average (although, with grade inflation, this might be less true!). But it does mean that there's still room for improvement, and especially the sort of improvement that would then offer something "more" – more beautiful, or more elegant, or more meaningful. Which leads me to the second way in which I mean "B" level: as I "grade" our schools' current assessment strategies, mostly what I see are the "Bs" of *burnout*, *boredom*, and *bureaucracy*.

Burnout: At many of my schools, I see folks who have taken the work of assessment incredibly seriously. They've worked with consultants, they've devoted hours of faculty meeting time to planning, they've designed a system of collecting and reviewing artifacts that seems heroic, they've gathered data and crunched numbers in ways that would make a sports analyst proud. And, in many of these schools, the results have been helpful – they've named their strengths and distinctive features, they've noted ways in which the curriculum or degree program could be improved, and they've "closed the loop" and made changes based on what they've learned. But they are tired. The work they have undertaken simply cannot be sustained, and now faculty (and, sometimes, students or other stakeholders) are feeling resentful, grumpy at best, actively resistant at worse. Rather than showing up to see what they can learn, they are simply trying to get the work done so they can move on to "more important" things. In these cases, I like to remind schools that the ATS Commission Standards themselves are clear that assessment isn't supposed to be an all-encompassing task; the Educational Standard (section ES.6) states that "An effective plan of assessment should be as simple and sustainable as possible while adequate to answer fundamental questions about educational effectiveness." Yet "simple" and "sustainable" are two qualities that are missing from many of the assessment plans that I review. If your school's assessment process is making faculty, students, or staff feel burnout, you're only functioning at a B level.

Boredom: Again, I see plenty of schools that have done the work of creating assessment plans, collecting data, analyzing data, and having conversations as a faculty as to whether the results should lead to curricular or institutional change. But, as I ask schools what these assessment conversations are like, or what they are learning, their eyes glaze over. In my presentation to ADME, I used an image of folks in a meeting room who all had their heads down on their desks, but in the real world this is probably more accurately represented by folks on their laptops doing email (or Facebook), or mentally preparing their next class session, or coming up with excuses to skip the next assessment meeting all together. Or, they do show up and try, but it doesn't engage them – someone (often an assessment coordinator or a designated faculty representative) reads to them a report of things that they probably already knew about their graduates and alums, and the conversation predictably highlights a few things that the faculty have been grumbling about for years (perhaps the lack of writing skills or educational preparation) as well as a few things that could have come right off of the school's marketing materials...and then they check 'assessment' off the to-do list until next year. Or, a school might have more detailed versions of assessment processes but then set benchmarks that are far too low (or too high) to be meaningful; or a school

might have learning outcomes that have nothing to do with the passions and priorities for the school. In any case, the assessment work bores them. This, too, represents to me a "B" level of the work – yes, the school is doing assessment, but I would argue that it isn't "…adequate to answer fundamental questions" if the faculty isn't learning anything from the assessment process (i.e., if the questions aren't "fundamental" ones). Good assessment plans, I would argue, should stimulate your curiosity and creativity, and should have the possibility of surprising you from what you find. If your assessment process or results is boring to you, you're still only functioning at a B level.

Bureaucracy: This is perhaps the most frustrating one for me. Maybe this is personal – I was a tenured faculty member before I came to ATS, and it's personally important for me to be known as an educator rather than a bureaucrat. But, also from that lens, I know how much important work there is for educators to do, and it makes me frustrated when I see instructors and institutions doing assessment for assessment's sake, in ways that do then become a waste of time. I know I've hit one of these environments when I ask folks why they do assessment, and they look at me like it's an absurd question coming from me – they feel like they do it because I (and the membership organization I represent, and other organizations like ours) require it. This has been complicated in the United States by recent political moves that emphasize student outcomes such as graduation rates and placement rates as essential indicators. I would note that student outcomes like these are not irrelevant (it would concern me to learn that no one ever graduates from your DMin program!) but they do not necessarily measure student learning (e.g., a diploma mill might have a perfect graduation rate but never engage in instruction) and an institution might have good reason for a less-than-perfect outcome (e.g., sometimes we want students to drop out as they engage in vocational discernment or as "life happens"). As far as the ATS Commission Standards are concerned, a school should keep an eye on student outcomes (and be able to describe, monitor, and explain them), but our greater interest is in student learning. But yet even when programs focus on learning rather than simply on these outcomes, I worry that "bureaucratic" pressure might lead them to set benchmarks that are either unrealistic or that are so low that they're too easily met, and that organizational anxiety might cause them to forget that learning is sometimes also about failure and so a goal that's reached consistently is probably not a useful goal. I also believe, as I'll describe in a bit, that assessment is part of the vocation of educators – it doesn't take us away from our work because it is our work. If your assessment process feels like it's just part of the gears of bureaucracy, you're (sadly) only functioning at a B level.

As I mentioned earlier, a B grade is, in some ways, "good enough." It means we're doing what needs to be done. But B level projects, just like B level papers, are often not very fun – and, they could be better (more useful, more interesting, more meaningful). This takes me back to the title of this essay (given to me for my ADME presentation): "emerging trends in assessment." This title draws our gaze toward the future: where are we heading? what feels most promising? what might the "next big thing" be? Let me offer some brief proposals in three areas: 1) new articulations of why we are engaging in assessment, 2) new articulations of what we can do with assessment, and 3) new articulations of the shape of assessment itself.

# 1. Reframing why we engage in assessment

Assessment does not seem particularly useful when it is done only for defensive purposes (to "prove" that one's students are learning effectively, that an instructor should be retained/promoted, that a degree program should be continued, that an institution should be accredited). If all we wanted to do was prove one or more of those things, I think assessment could take far less time than most degree programs and institutions are giving it now. Perhaps like many other things in life, if we could not-care, we could step more lightly and move more quickly. And yet, whether we like to admit it or not, we do care. The difficulty, I think, is that many of us experience a chasm between our external motivation (e.g., institutional requirements) and our internal motivation (which might be rarely or only slightly articulated). Naming and drawing more explicitly on our internal motivation might help engage in this work in ways that are far more meaningful, for ourselves and for our communities. I see four possibilities here; you might have others as well.

First, as I mentioned earlier, I believe that assessment is a natural, scholarly act. I'd invite you to notice, perhaps for a day, all of the times that you engage in assessment. Is the coffee shop you found today worth another stop tomorrow? Did you leave for work with enough time to spare today, or do you need to leave earlier next time? Did your lecture go well, or might you change something around next time you do it? Were you clear in the conversation with your colleague, or should you track her down to follow up later? Beyond this, I also see scholarship as a consistent process of assessment. Is my article clear and strong enough or should I revise it? Is the manuscript that I'm reviewing meaningful enough to get my unqualified endorsement? Is this a student I can write a strong recommendation for? Is this book I just finished reading one that will be useful to my students or should I choose another? Is this course design as useful as it could be? As both humans and as scholar/educators, we are consistently engaging in assessment. Naming it as such helps us see this work as part of who we are, not a distraction from what we want to do.

Second, I believe that assessment nurtures mission. As I've worked with schools all across the United States and Canada, I never cease to be surprised how deeply people care about their work. Bluntly put, none of us are in this line of work for the money – we care deeply about our schools, or churches, or communities, or students, or field of study. We teach (or administer, or mentor, or design, or support) because we care, and because we want to make the world a better place, in tiny or large ways. I always hope that we find pleasure or purpose in the doing of the work itself, but it doesn't hurt to also know that what we are doing is leading to positive outcomes, again in tiny or large ways. If I spend a semester helping a student with their approach to preaching, I'd like to know whether it actually helped them in the long run or not. If I've gone to the effort of designing a research skills class to assist students with their DMin projects, I'd like to know whether the resulting projects were improved. If I care about my institution's mission or my community's needs, I'd like to be able to tell how my efforts are contributing (and, if they're not, I'd like to know that too). And, recognizing that education ought not be an isolated individualistic project, I'd like to engage these sorts of questions with the wisdom of my community and the understanding of our communal efforts and callings. Assessment gives us ways to talk about the intertwining of effort and outcome, of offering and effect. It gives us concrete ways to talk about mission, to celebrate what we've done and to desire more, to bring

our curiosities and our passion together in ways that are meaningful and fruitful. Naming it as such helps us see assessment as deeply meaningful, not as a distraction from those people and things that we care about.

Third, I believe that assessment supports diverse learners. Most of us teach the way that we were taught, or teach the way that we prefer to learn. This might be fine if our students are like us, but, for most of us, this isn't the case. Depending on your individual identity and current institutional context, this might be true for any number of reasons. Perhaps it's shifting demographics, or generational change, or the impact of new technologies. Perhaps you are a person of privilege and your students come from majority world or underrepresented communities. Perhaps you were a star student and your students represent a wider variety of skills and learning styles. Perhaps they juggle lives that are more complex than yours. Perhaps their theological perspectives or the communities they are serving are unlike anything you've imagined. As we seek to design learning spaces that affirm diverse students and varying journeys, we cannot assume that students will engage our teaching spaces (classroom, ministry setting, mentorship relationship, and so on) in the way we predict they will. Rather than thinking just of how we should teach, then, it can be especially helpful to focus on what we'd like students to learn. From there, we can work backwards (beginning with the end in mind), imagine strategies to get there, and then evaluate those strategies. Assessment, in this way, both gives a way to be attentive to our own privileges and to affirm the diversity of learners rather than relying on luck or wandering in the dark. Naming it as such helps us see assessment as immensely relevant, not as a distraction from work that matters.

Fourth, I believe that assessment can help us in our work. It can make our work easier – a claim that often surprises people, as they think of assessment as causing them more work. As an example, I think about course design, where I might have four different required activities for students to practice and demonstrate their learning. What if I can figure out which one of those is actually the most meaningful? Then I can skip three, emphasize the one, and put my resources (including my time and energy) – and, my students' resources – where it matters the most. Maybe instead of assigning a paper, a group project, an exam, and a research bibliography, I only require one of those four, making more space then for other learning and community experiences. Similarly, it helps my teaching efforts if I can figure out which readings matter the most, or whether a case study or role play is most impactful, or whether it makes sense to continue with the group project activity that I inherited from my predecessor. Good assessment not only helps us know what to do (and how well it's working) but also helps us know what to stop doing, or let go of, or spend less time on. Closely related to this, I believe assessment can be generative and fun. It can help faculty talk about teaching and learning, it can help us better understand our students, it can give us ways to play with ideas and practices that matter to us, it can enlive our work, it can inspire creativity, it can feed curiosity. It can be an occasion to laugh, and to celebrate, and to marvel, and to be thankful. Naming it as such helps us see assessment as a good and useful and enjoyable part of teaching, not as a distraction from teaching and learning itself.

# 2. Reframing what we can do with assessment

New articulations of why we are engaging in assessment can be helpful, I think, but motivation only takes us just so far. A second emerging trend, enabling us to move beyond heavy and bureaucratic approaches, is to more clearly articulate what we can know/be/do/feel if we engage in effective assessment. Once we've said why we're engaging in this practice, we can talk more fruitfully about what we hope to accomplish through our efforts. At the ADME conference, I suggested four likely good outcomes (cleverly spelling out D-M-I-N). I offer these as illustrative, not exhaustive, and note that they would depend on one's institutional context. It also seems to me that these need not be limited to higher education – in fact, assessment would likely be a valuable practice to teach within DMin programs themselves, as an essential skill (and, a skill that can always be improved) for congregational and community leadership, and these same good outcomes could be of benefit in a wide variety of settings. But, as a starting point, here are four things that assessment might better enable us to do:

Describe: Good assessment practices can help you be more concrete about your strengths. As I look at DMin program descriptions, or institutional mission statements more generally, they often sound alike – for example, "we offer a cohort based program that allows ministry professionals to enhance their skills and serve their communities more effectively." Well, this sounds fine... but it also sounds like everybody else's program. What does your institution mean by "more effectively"? Which "skills" are you enhancing? What does your particular cohort program look like, and what are its strengths, both tangible and intangible? Why would someone want to choose your program rather than any other program? Clear learning outcomes, as come from a good assessment process, not only allow you to engage in program evaluation but also serve as important points of communication to stakeholders, such as prospective students and donors. It helps people know who you are, what you're doing, and why they might find your program valuable.

Monitor: Sometimes we discover that schools have good and effective practices of assessment, but what they lack are practices of documentation. Unfortunately, without documentation (particularly in institutions that have personnel turnover or time pressures), overall course or program evaluation often happens on the basis of intuition or anecdote. This isn't wrong – in fact, I would argue that we ought to be making some changes based on what we feel or hear – but it also isn't sufficient, especially since our feelings don't always correlate with learning (e.g., sometimes students learn in spite of our best efforts, rather than because of them!) and since anecdote might tell us more about the outliers than the whole (e.g., you might hear only from the best and worst students and have little feedback from the majority). Good assessment can become your dashboard warning lights, letting you know where additional attention might be necessary. It also helps us see what to celebrate when things go well, which is something higher education (and ministry!) often forgets to do.

*Improve*. At this point in time, almost everyone at an ATS school has heard the phrase "close the loop," by which we mean completing the full circle of assessment: identify goals, gather data, analyze data, and implement change. Sadly, I still see too many well-meaning assessment programs that identify goals and gather data, and sometimes even analyze the data, but then all that good data just ends up in a filing cabinet. We remind schools that the goal of assessment is

not "to do assessment" but rather to ensure and improve student learning. Granted, if everything at a program or school is going perfectly, there might not be any change to implemented. But I haven't yet encountered the perfect program or school – and, especially so when we think not of linear progress (closer and closer to an aspirational goal) but of the full, complex, messy, and changing lives of our students and schools. The best way to improve might be to stop doing something, or to attend more closely to process and ethos, or to be more sustainable, or to be more humane and kind. Assessment helps when we let it help us, by showing us our growing edges and giving us feedback as to how well we are addressing those.

Nurture. As I mentioned earlier, we can't all be good at everything or meet every need or wish or request. One of the gifts that comes from a clear assessment process is an ability to name the things that make your program unique, important, strong, valuable, distinctive, or worthwhile – which, as a result, helps you know to focus your energy and invest in those areas, and let go of other things. It might help you see which public events to sponsor and which to turn down, or which prospective students to recruit and which to refer elsewhere, or which course proposals to approve and which to pass on. I would note here, too, that this sort of assessment doesn't have to focus exclusively on content-knowledge or "tangibles." It can be easier to measure whether someone has learned a theory or skill, but assessment shouldn't only be about the things that are easy to measure. For example, your assessment might name a particular experience that students can then build on in their professional contexts, or a particular characteristic that they would develop, or have an outcome that they might be able to demonstrate in a few years, or simply a way of being that would help sustain their professional and personal journeys. As we think of assessment as a way to nurture our students and our programs, it helps us remember that our educational work isn't solely about content knowledge or things that can be easily measured.

# 3. Reframing the shape of assessment itself

Once we've done a better job of articulating why we are engaging in assessment (motivation) and what we can do with assessment (aspiration), we can look again at the shape of our assessment activities themselves. If my motivation is to be able to attend carefully to the needs and desires of diverse learners in my degree program, and my aspiration is to be able to monitor our efforts and nurture our distinctive strengths, I can begin to design assessment strategies that let me do these things well. Again, this means letting go of a tendency for measuring the things that are easy to measure, and instead working backwards, asking what we might like to know and then looking for ways that we might know it. For example, many DMin programs use some sort of evaluation of the thesis/project/dissertation as the primary or only way to evaluate the outcomes of the degree program. Rubrics might ask about things like quality of writing, demonstration of research skills, presence of a strong thesis, development of the thesis, and overall relevance. Yet most of our students will write a project/dissertation like this exactly once in their lives, and few of us (students, instructors, or mentors) would cite their ability to write an extended essay like this as the most critical element of their vocational futures. To be sure, the thesis/project/dissertation is important – both as a process and as an artifact – and I don't mean to dismiss that here. But I would suggest that, if a school is wishing to evaluate the DMin program as a whole (and, particularly in light of some of the motivations and aspirations I have mentioned here), a rubric-based evaluation of the written project might not be sufficient.

It is here that I would invite schools and practitioners to be creative in their work, drawing on curiosity and playfulness as well as a willingness to fail. What do you want to know, and how might you know it? The answer will be different in different contexts – and perhaps different in the same context at different times. Schools are sometimes frustrated when they ask me for sample assessment plans, and instead I remind them assessment plans are to be developed in light of the school's own mission and context (Educational Standard, section ES.6.2) and, as a result, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy. To be sure, there is a wealth of resources available in the area of educational assessment, from a variety of perspectives – theological education, higher education more broadly, congregational ministry, nonprofit work, and more. There are books, websites, conferences, and consultants. These can be useful, especially in terms of stimulating creativity or offering fresh ideas. But I often say that the community itself (instructors, administrators, mentors, students, and others) is perhaps the best source of wisdom for these questions and their possible answers. What do we want to know? How might we know it? Who already knows some of this, and how might we invite them to the conversation? Where might these outcomes be demonstrated, and how could we bring these into the sight of the school or program? What do we know in part already, and how could we know it more fully? What would be interesting to us? What would be meaningful to us? While accreditors and other stakeholders have an expectation that assessment needs to happen, and have some criteria for how this needs to happen, it's up to the people who know the program best to say how the program might best be known. Gather as groups of folks who care deeply, engage conversation about why you care and what you hope for, and imagine strategies that embody your ideas. Put another way, as the opening to the ATS Commission Standards states, "Theological schools are communities of faith and learning guided by a theological vision." Assessment, at its best, might be understood as the articulation of that vision and the thoughtful reflection on our relationship to it, noting our giftedness as well as our limits, our strengths and our areas for growth. In this light, assessment is a calling, a deeply meaningful activity that should be central to our work, for the sake of our students and our schools. Perhaps a reframing like this can animate us, to engage the work seriously and passionately and playfully, for the good of our students and the communities they (and we) serve.

#### Additional resources:

ATS (<u>www.ats.edu</u>) has a wide variety of resources on educational assessment, and each ATS member school is supported by a liaison who is glad to be of assistance to schools working on educational assessment. Other resources on the ATS website include:

- Standards of Accreditation, including sections on assessment of student learning (Standard 1, section 1.2; Educational Standard, section ES.6; Degree Program Standards, section x.1).
- "A Reflective Guide to Effective Assessment of Student Learning," chapter seven of the Commission's *Self-Study Handbook*, including the Checklist for Effective Assessment.
- A variety of resources for self-study and assessment, <a href="http://www.ats.edu/accrediting/self-study-and-assessment">http://www.ats.edu/accrediting/self-study-and-assessment</a>
- A listserv and other resources for assessment coordinators, http://www.ats.edu/resources/administrators/assessment-coordinators

The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning (<a href="http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu">http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu</a>) supports teachers of religion and theology in higher education through meetings and workshops, grants, consultants, a journal and other resources on scholarship of teaching and learning.

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (<a href="http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/">http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/</a>) highlights ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen education and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.

The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis (<a href="http://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/">http://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/</a>) offers the nation's oldest and largest event focused exclusively on outcomes assessment in higher education; a number of ATS members have found this conference to be helpful.

Assessment programming is also offered by colleges/universities, accrediting bodies, and other agencies, some of which might be useful in your context.

# Further reading:

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