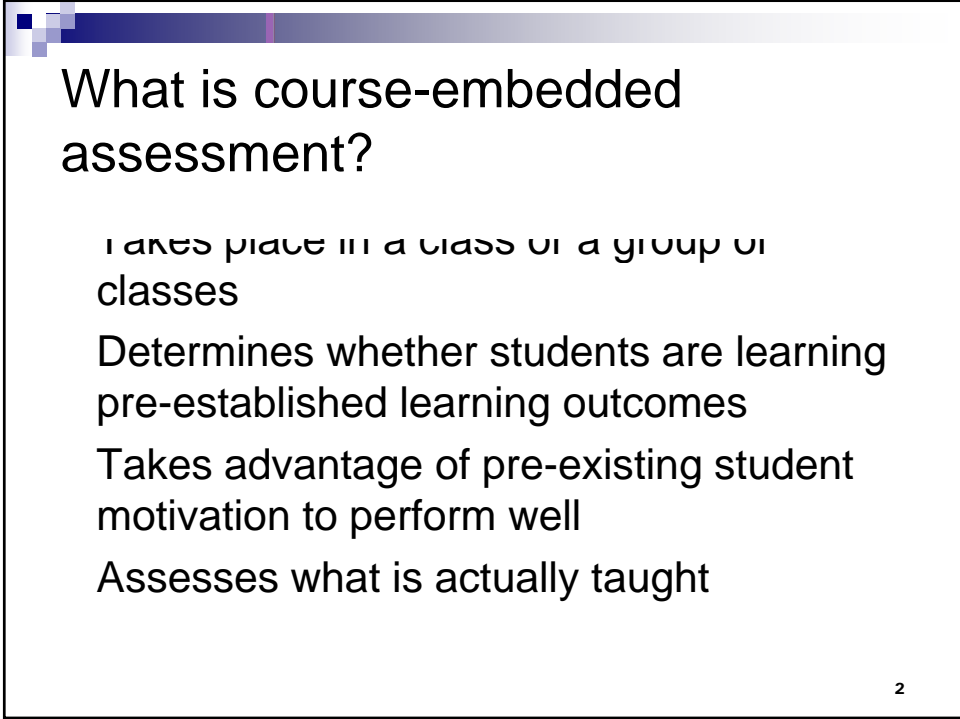




# Course-Embedded Assessment

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
*December 3, 2005*  
*Karen Gentemann*  
*George Mason University*



## What is course-embedded assessment?

Takes place in a class or a group of  
classes

Determines whether students are learning  
pre-established learning outcomes

Takes advantage of pre-existing student  
motivation to perform well

Assesses what is actually taught

## Why use these techniques?

### Individual instructor

To improve learning in a course

To assess learning in a course with multiple sections

### Assessment Director with Instructors

To assess learning that crosses discipline boundaries, e.g. general education outcomes

To assess learning in a discipline

To assess various learning competencies

3

## Techniques of Course-Embedded Assessment: some examples

### Individual Instructor

Specific assignments that provide feedback to the instructor about desired outcomes, e.g. *Classroom Assessment Techniques (Angelo and Cross)*

*Muddiest Point*

*Background Knowledge Probe*

*Teacher-Designed Feedback Forms*

*Pros and Cons to all CATs*

4



## Advantages of Course-Embedded Assessment (Individual & Director)

Student motivation is high because the assessment activity is part of a course activity

Costs are reduced because incentives are unnecessary

It usually does not require additional student time as it is part of the curriculum

It is faculty-driven and thus, more likely, to be used for improvement

Because it's linked to the curriculum, it's more likely to identify specific curricular needs/deficiencies

Feedback to faculty is relatively quick

7

## Disadvantages of Course-Embedded Assessment (Director)


Faculty commitment is absolutely essential, but can be hard to get

Faculty resistance to the process may be substantial

- U Achieving agreement among faculty on learning outcomes and an assessment approach across courses

8





## Example of the Process: *Written Communication*

Representatives from all colleges and some departments make up a committee

In workshops led by WAC director, each unit brainstorms criteria for good writing, and creates a rubric and a writing prompt

Academic unit selects writing-intensive course(s) to collect sample papers

Using the rubric, a trained faculty team rates papers

Unit prepares a report analyzing the results, creating standards and describing changes to be made

11



## Example of the Process: *Oral Communication*

Two existing required oral comm courses with specific learning goals

Faculty-designed rubric to assess specific speeches was modified

Instructors teaching these courses, trained in rubric, assessed student speeches (not their own classes)

Assessment Office will aggregate data and report back

12

## Task

Convene in small groups

Identify a course with multiple sections and multiple instructors, e.g. composition, basic math or science

Create one learning goal

Design one approach to assessing this goal

Identify the advantages and limitations of this approach

Take about 15 minutes

Designate a reporter

13

## Considerations

Political considerations if selecting samples, e.g. Why me or my class?

Incentives for faculty to be involved?

Incentives for students?

Course-embedded assessment can be labor intensive

It is more likely to produce real improvement in the classroom than non-embedded assessment.

14