



***Assessing Learning Outcomes in the U.S.:
Recent Events and Critical Choices***

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A Review of Learning Assessment in the U.S.

- Emerged as a Policy Theme in the mid-1980s

- Contradictory Origins and Motives: Improving Teaching and Learning vs. Accountability and Demonstrating Return on Investment

- State Mandates as Initial Stimulus with Accreditation Gradually Replacing States

- Little Federal Role or Interest Until Recently...But Then with a Vengeance





The Context for Assessment Today

- Growing Concerns About U.S. Competitiveness in Tertiary Degree Attainment and Learning Outcomes

 - The "Spellings Commission" and its Aftermath (The "VSA" and its Cousins)

 - Significant Progress in Assessment "Technology" Over Two Decades
- A Resulting Dilemma About How Institutions Should Proceed in this Environment


