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CHRIE

A SURVEY OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN HOSPITALITY EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to determine the current usage of student outcome measures in hospitality education and the attitude of administrators toward their usefulness. The results of this study will be useful to those in higher education who are being pushed to provide assessment data from a variety of sources. A questionnaire was sent to 122 hospitality program chairs. Widespread usage was found among the 56 respondents who believed output measures were the most useful. Nearly all of the responding chairs (92.6%) believe that assessment will increase in the future with pressure coming primarily from accrediting bodies and university administrators. **Key Words:** assessment, student outcome, attitudes toward assessment.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the mid 1980s, program assessment has grown increasingly more visible in American higher education. This development is largely a response to external pressure initially exerted by government and then by accrediting agencies. State governments, following the lead of education governors such as John Aschroft in Missouri and Bill Clinton in Arkansas, viewed assessment as a means of holding universities accountable for their taxpayer support. Much of the legislation centered on standardized exit examination of students to determine outcomes or value added. In 1988, the Federal Department of Education which oversees university accreditation, mandated that recognized accrediting agencies require assessment programs at the institutions they examined. The accrediting bodies, responding to claims from academia that learning can not be assessed merely through exit examination, expanded the concept of assessment to include a more comprehensive and institution-specific approach.

A SURVEY OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN HOSPITALITY EDUCATION:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Program assessment is not new to education. Traditionally, quality was assumed if quantitative input measures were present. Accrediting agencies primarily and typically counted Ph.D.s, library books, and resource dollars in their reviews of institutions.

Current thinking has expanded the original concept of assessment based on inputs, and the governmental ideas of assessment, based on outcomes, to include the learning process. Astin (1990) suggested an assessment model that stresses decision making based on feedback obtained through input, environment and output measures. Measuring the environment involves the students' entire experience while on campus. The new model recognizes the role of assessment-based feedback followed by adjustments in pedagogy and administration.

Also rising in popularity during the 1980s in the American business environment was a school of thought adapted from Japanese practices known as Total Quality Management (TQM). Total Quality Management, which emphasizes the customer and continuous improvement of the process in order to assure an excellent final product has also gained acceptance in academia (Chaffee & Sherr, 1992). Several institutions have combined the expanded approaches to program assessment with Total Quality Management to satisfy accountability requirements and improve the educational process on their campuses (Marchese, 1991).

Assessment has invaded virtually every college and university. A recent study by the American Council on Education found that 97% of American higher education institutions claim some type of assessment activity. The extent of the commitment to assessment varies widely across universities. Selected institutions, such as Alverno College, University of Tennessee, and Kings College are at the cutting edge of assessment based education. On many campuses, assessment remains at the developmental stage.

Hospitality education is affected as deeply as any other area of study by the recent developments in educational assessment. The shift in the source of pressure from governmental to accrediting bodies has allowed universities to concentrate their assessment policies on programs rather than student exit examinations. Program assessment can involve analysis of numerous factors, including student ability and performance, faculty credentials and professional development, and physical resources. This study involved an investigation of student assessment practices used in hospitality education.

The purpose of this study was to provide assistance to those hospitality programs developing and improving student assessment measures. First, data were gathered concerning the current usage of specific student assessment practices. Next, attitudes towards the usefulness of these practices and the future direction of assessment were obtained to gain further insight into possible developments in student assessment.

Although no general survey of program assessment was located in the field of hospitality education, recent studies have been conducted in marketing education (Miller, Chamberlain, & Seay, 1991) and accounting education (Chamberlain, Seay,

& Julian, 1991). Both studies indicated widespread use of some assessment measures and an expected increase in assessment activity in the near future. Miller et al. (1991) did not find a significant correlation between perceived usefulness and the usage of specific assessment tools by marketing department chairs. This result is contrary to a basic assumption of attitude studies that a positive relationship exists between attitude and behavior.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Data on the attitudes and usage of student assessment measures were obtained by the distribution of a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) to hospitality management program administrators. The questionnaire used by Miller et al. (1991) to survey marketing chairs was modified to fit the aspects of hospitality education and sent to 122 department chairs and program directors during the spring of 1992. All of the administrators from American institutions listed in *A Guide to College Programs in Hospitality and Tourism 1991-1992* (CHRIE, 1991) were mailed questionnaires. Fifty-six useable responses were received, yielding a 46% response rate.

The questionnaire contained a brief description of 19 assessment measures, followed by a seven-point Likert usefulness scale and a yes-or-no question about current usage. The Likert scale ranged from very useful (7) to not useful (1). Also included were questions concerning the source of pressure to collect assessment data, whether or not the institution had a written policy on assessment and the department's future plans to increase student assessment. Several demographic questions were asked concerning size, degrees offered, and accreditation of the respondent's institution. The questionnaire was pre-tested on several individuals experienced in hospitality education, questionnaire research, and technical writing to assure content validity, understandability, and correctness.

When analyzing the findings the reader should be aware of the common shortcomings of questionnaire research. Among the more serious problems is the potential for bias resulting from nonresponse. This problem, however, does not appear serious in the study because of the relatively strong response rate.

FINDINGS

Usage

Table 1 presents the percentage of the respondents currently using each of the 19 assessment tools in the order they appeared on the questionnaire. Table 2 presents the measures ranked by the frequency of collection by hospitality programs. All but one of the respondents collected internship evaluations and 49 out of 54 tracked job placement rates. Nine of the nineteen measures were used by more than half of the programs. Only 10 of 55 respondents used percentage of graduates entering graduate school and only 25% used graduate school admission tests as student assessment measures.

Table 1
Perceived Utility and Percentage of Programs Using
Assessment Tools (Unranked)

Variable Number	Measure	N	Usefulness Score	Percentage
1	General education test*	56	4.375	62.5%
2	Problem solving tests	54	5.407	45.5
3	Reading ability test*	52	4.961	42.6
4	Major field test*	52	4.481	33.3
5	College GPA*	55	5.036	87.5
6	Retention and graduation rate*	55	5.400	82.1
7	Time to complete degree*	54	3.463	38.2
8	Job placement rate*	55	5.855	89.1
9	Senior seminar results*	54	5.074	43.6
10	Graduate school admission test*	54	3.907	25.0
11	% grads entering grad schools*	55	3.364	17.9
12	Alumni satisfaction-formal survey	55	5.891	76.8
13	Alumni satisfaction-word of mouth*	56	5.107	82.1
14	Achievement of recent grads	56	5.929	83.9
15	% grads employed in set time*	54	5.315	58.2
16	% grads receiving job of choice*	55	5.055	42.9
17	Graduate starting salary*	54	4.481	47.3
18	Employer evaluation of interns*	55	5.964	98.2
19	Employer satisfaction with grads	53	5.472	36.4

Note. Significant positive correlation between usefulness score and % collected.
* $p < .05$

Attitude

The presence of a stated policy on assessment is an indication of an institution's commitment to assessment. Nearly half (43.6%) of the hospitality administrators indicated the presence of a stated policy at their schools. This is nearly twice the number of marketing programs (22.3%) surveyed with formal assessment policies in 1988 (Miller et al., 1991) and more than double the accounting program (19.7%) also surveyed in 1988 (Chamberlain et al., 1991).

A review of prevailing attitudes towards the usefulness of specific assessment tools will provide hospitality faculty and administrators a basis for analyzing their own assessment programs. Current attitudes may also provide insight into the future direction of student assessment. Table 3 indicates that only three measurements received mean usefulness scores below 4.0 (neutral). Two of the three lowest rated tools were related to graduate school.

T tests were run to determine if a correlation existed between usefulness scores and percentage of respondents collecting the specific assessment measurements. The analysis revealed positive correlations between all 19 usefulness

Table 2
Percentage of Programs Using
Assessment Tools (Ranked)

Variable Number	Measure	Percentage Collecting	Rank
18	Employer evaluation of interns	98.2%	1
8	Job placement time	89.1	2
5	College GPA	87.5	3
14	Achievement of recent graduates	83.9	4
13	Alumni satisfaction—word of mouth	82.1	5
6	Retention and graduation rate	82.1	6
12	Alumni satisfaction-formal survey	76.8	7
1	General education tests	62.5	8
15	% grads employed in set time	58.2	9
17	Graduate starting salary	47.3	10
2	Problem solving tests	45.5	11
9	Senior seminar results	43.6	12
16	% grads receiving job of choice	42.9	13
3	Reading ability test	42.6	14
7	Time to complete degree	38.2	15
19	Employer satisfaction with grads	36.4	16
4	Major field test	33.3	17
10	Graduate school admission test	25.0	18
11	% grads entering grad schools	17.9	19

measurements and their collection percentages (Table 1). Fifteen of the nineteen were significant at the .05 level. Contrary to the results of the marketing survey (Miller et al., 1991), this analysis seems to support the assumption that action and attitude are related. In this case, the more useful the administrator believed an assessment tool to be, the more likely that the program would collect that measure.

Input, environment and output

In order to compare current practice to the assessment techniques suggested by Astin and proponents of TQM, the outcomes were placed in three categories: input, process (environment), and output in Table 4. The output measures appear to be the most popular and most useful to administrators. Process measures, which are the more important tools in the TQM based models, are the least popular.

Demographics

Correlation analysis between institutional demographics and administrative attitude revealed no significant relationships. Apparently, administrative attitudes

Table 3
Perceived Utility of Assessment Tools
(Ranked)

Variable Number	Measure	Mean Response Scores	Rank
18	Employer evaluation of interns	5.964	1
14	Achievement of recent graduates	5.929	2
12	Alumni satisfaction—formal survey	5.891	3
8	Job Placement Rate	5.855	4
19	Employer satisfaction with grads	5.472	5
2	Problem solving tests	5.407	6
6	Retention and graduation rate	5.400	7
15	% grads employed in set time	5.315	8
13	Alumni satisfaction—word of mouth	5.107	9
9	Senior seminar results	5.074	10
16	% grads receiving job of choice	5.055	11
5	College GPA	5.036	12
3	Reading ability test	4.961	13
4	Major field test	4.481	14
17	Graduate Starting Salary	4.481	15
1	General education tests	4.375	16
10	Graduate school admission test	3.907	17
7	Time to complete degree	3.463	18
11	% grads entering grad schools	3.364	19

are the same in hospitality programs regardless of program or institution size, types of degrees, or accreditation status.

Source of pressure

The most common source of pressure seems to be evenly split between accreditation bodies and school administration (Table 5). The lack of perceived pressure from state agencies seems to reflect the shift in external pressure from state mandates to accrediting body requirements.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Hospitality educators clearly are affected by the recent trend toward assessment. Every respondent indicated that they were collecting some type of student assessment measure. An overwhelming majority (92.6%) of the administrators believed student assessment efforts will be enhanced in the future, indicating that assessment will remain a high priority, providing feedback and potential direction for academic programming.

Table 4
Usefulness Scores and Frequency of Usage by
Measurement Category

Variable Number		Mean Usefulness Score	Rank	Percentage Collected	Rank
<u>Input Measures</u>					
2	Problem solving tests	5.407	6	45.5%	11
3	Reading ability test	4.961	13	42.6	14
1	General Education test*	4.375	16	62.5	8.0
	Average	4.914	11.7	50.2	11.0
<u>Process Measures</u>					
6	Retention and graduation rate	5.400	7	82.1	6
9	Senior seminar results	5.074	10	43.6	12
5	College GPA	5.036	12	87.5	3
4	Major field test	4.481	14	33.3	17
7	Time to complete degree	3.463	18	38.2	15
	Average	4.691	12.2	56.9	10.6
<u>Output Measures</u>					
18	Employer evaluation of interns	5.964	1	98.2	1
14	Achievement of recent graduates	5.929	2	83.9	4
12	Alumni satisfaction-formal survey	5.891	3	76.8	7
8	Job placement rate	5.855	4	89.1	2
19	Employer satisfaction with grads	5.472	5	36.4	16
15	% grads employed in set time	5.315	8	58.2	9
13	Alumni satisfaction-word of mouth	5.107	9	82.1	5
16	% grads receiving job of choice	5.055	11	42.9	13
17	Graduate starting salary	4.481	15	47.3	10
10	Graduate school admission test	3.907	17	25.0	18
11	% grads entering grad schools	3.364	19	17.9	19
	Average	5.122	8.5	59.8	9.5

Student assessment in hospitality education is currently dominated by career-oriented success measures. Administrators find assessment tools concerning post-graduation job experience more useful and tend to use them in the evaluation of their programs. Measures of student admissions to graduate schools, on the other hand, are of less concern to administrators. These results reflect the close ties between hospitality education and the industry. Also illustrated is the importance of internships, employer involvement in the education process, and job placement to most hospitality programs. Continued enrollment in graduate education programs is of less importance to hospitality programs in part because their graduates often find themselves in an excellent job market and well prepared to begin their careers after completing the

Table 5
Primary Sources of Pressure to Implement Change

Sources of Pressure to Implement Change	Percentage of Sample
Accreditation bodies	34.0%
School administration	34.0
State agencies	10.6
Employers	8.5
Other miscellaneous	8.5
No pressure	4.3

n = 47

undergraduate curriculum. Hospitality administrators perceived the shift of pressure from state agencies to accrediting bodies, but have yet to accept the value of an input, environment, and outcomes or TQM based assessment models. Their attitudes and usage patterns indicate a preference for outcome-based assessment. The principles of Total Quality Management emphasize the customer (student). Assessment tools such as retention rates, major field tests, and time needed to complete the degree are important to Total Quality Management based assessment. Although retention rates were used in 82.1% of the programs, only one third of the responding programs were doing major field testing. Similarly, few administrators believe that the length of time a student takes to complete a degree is useful or worthy of collection.

A comprehensive assessment system has been shown to be very effective in the business environment. In order for the concept to gain acceptance in education it must be cost effective. To be cost effective, assessment must become a device for accountability and a basis for improvement. Assessing for accountability tends to be more quantitative and objective—relying on either outcome or input measures. Assessing for improvement requires subjectivity and measurement during the learning process. Currently, hospitality educators are more comfortable with assessing for accountability. If assessment is to make a significant contribution to higher education, meaningful assessment tools for the learning process need to be developed and adopted.

Future research should investigate the usage of assessment in learning. Less reliance on student outcomes or inspection of the final product will prove more beneficial to the students while enrolled in programs and to the employers who seek qualified graduates. A quality process that continuously improves is the key to satisfying both internal interests and the customers of hospitality education. ■

Appendix
**Questionnaire Used to Obtain Data for "A Survey of Student
 Assessment in Hospitality Education: Implication for the Future"**

Below is a list of potential assessment tools. Please circle the number closest to the statement that best describes your opinion as to the usefulness of each tool for program assessment of student experiences. Then circle Y if you are using the tool, N if you are not.

	Not Useful	Very Useful	Currently Using
1. Student scores on test of general education (ACT, Comp, locally developed).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
2. Student scores on test that indicate their ability to apply general or specialized knowledge to a problem and to implement a solution.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
3. Students scores on tests that indicate their ability to read, write, or listen.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
4. Students scores on test in the major field standardized or locally developed exams.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
5. College grade point average of students.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
6. Student retention and graduation rate.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
7. Average amount of time it takes for a student to earn a degree.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
8. Job placement.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
9. Results of senior seminar or similar offering in which students nearing graduation are evaluated for marketing skills and knowledge.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
10. Results of graduate and professional school admission exams.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
11. Percentage of graduates enrolling in graduate school.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
12. Alumni satisfaction with the program obtained with a formal survey.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N

Appendix (continued)
**Questionnaire Used to Obtain Data for "A Survey of Student
Assessment in Hospitality Education: Implication for the Future"**

	Not Useful	Very Useful	Currently Using
13. Alumni satisfaction with the program, obtained through informal channels (i.e.: word of mouth)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Y or N
14. Achievement of recent graduates.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		Y or N
15. Percentage of graduates employed within a certain period of time after graduation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		Y or N
16. Percentage of graduates receiving job of their choice.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		Y or N
17. Average starting salary of graduates.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		Y or N
18. Employer evaluations of student interns.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		Y or N
19. Employer's satisfaction with the performance of graduates per survey, interview, etc.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		Y or N
20. From what source do you feel the strongest pressure to implement or improve your assessment process? (check one)			
<input type="checkbox"/> State Agencies		<input type="checkbox"/> Employers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Administration at your institution		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation bodies		<input type="checkbox"/> No pressure	
21. Does your institution have a stated policy requiring the collection of student outcome data? Yes or No			
22. In your opinion, will your department enhance its effort to assess students' outcome in the future? Yes or No			

Please check the appropriate boxes below that best describe your institution.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>23. Enrollment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Under 1000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1001-2000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2001-4000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4001-6000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6001-10,000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10,001-15,000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15,001-20,000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Over 20,000</p> | <p>24. Degrees Offered</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Associate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Baccalaureate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Master's</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate</p> | <p>25. Regional Accreditation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> North Central</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> New England</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Middle State</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Southern</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Western</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Northwestern</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Appendix (continued)
**Questionnaire Used to Obtain Data for "A Survey of Student
Assessment in Hospitality Education: Implication for the Future"**

26. Business Accreditation:

- AACSB
- ACBSP
- ACPHA
- None

27. Number of graduates in the hospitality field per academic year:

- 0-50
- 50-100
- 100-150
- Over 150

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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

1. Manuscripts submitted to the *Hospitality Research Journal* should be original contributions and not be under consideration for any other publication at the same time. If an article is under consideration by another publication, authors should clearly indicate this at the time of submission.
2. Manuscripts should normally not exceed 7,000 words and must be written in English. Articles for Viewpoints and Commentary, Publications in Review, and Research Notes should not exceed 3,000 words.
3. Each manuscript should be submitted on computer disk, and authors should include one hard copy along with their disk. Disks should be labeled clearly and include the name and version of the word processing program used by the author (e.g., WordPerfect 5.0, MicrosoftWord 4.0, etc.). Pages (including those containing only diagrams and tables) should be numbered consecutively. Tables and diagrams should appear on separate pages. Authors should indicate in the text where they should appear (i.e., Table 1 here). Each table must be assigned an Arabic numeral and referred to in the text. The table number should be followed by a heading.
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5. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* is used as a reference for all spellings and hyphenations.
6. All articles should be accompanied by a short abstract of 100–150 words and a list of no more than six key words which define the subject matter.
7. Articles should be prepared using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (3rd ed.) as a reference guide. All general editorial formats, abbreviations, use of statistics in text, citations, and references should conform to APA style.
8. Footnotes are not permissible. Material of importance should be incorporated within the text; material having weak relevance should be deleted. Contributors should consult the *Publication Manual* of the APA when preparing citations within the text of the paper.
9. References should, again, be prepared using the format guide contained in the *Publication Manual* of the APA (see examples below).

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