

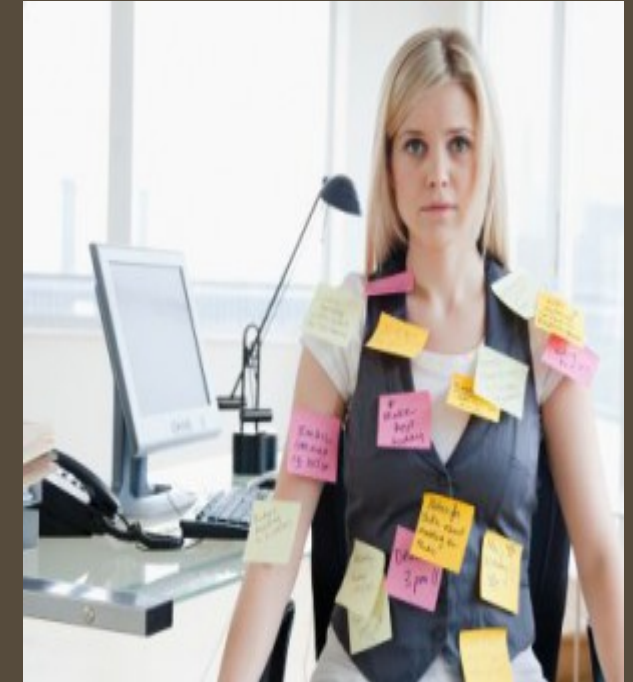


# FACULTY PERCEPTIONS ON CULTURES OF ASSESSMENT

Matthew B. Fuller, Ph.D.  
Sam Houston State University  
Assistant Professor, Higher  
Education Administration  
Assistant Dean of Assessment

# HOW MIGHT YOU WORK WITH THIS FACULTY MEMBER?

A faculty member enters your office a few minutes before your scheduled meeting. She says she feels a bit like Sisyphus when it comes to assessment. Every semester she has to complete a new report only to have that report forgotten and a new report submitted next semester. She is, as a result, very resistant to doing anything new with assessment as she prefers to “copy and paste,” her report to complete it.



## OR THIS ONE?

A faculty member enters your office a few minutes before your scheduled meeting. He says he is excited to begin the cycle of improvement but that he is still a little confused about how to do his "LiveTask20," which is your campus' chosen technology and data management solution for assessment data collection. He is, as a result, hesitant to begin the process of data submission because he is concerned he will "get it wrong." He indicates he will likely copy and paste what has been done in the past by the deadline.



## OR THIS ONE?

A faculty member enters your office a few minutes before your scheduled meeting. She says she refuses to participate in the institution's assessment effort because "it is a [explicative, explicative] fad that administrators foist off on faculty in order to justify their jobs and it sucks the soul out of the curriculum." She is, as a result, resistant to engage in assessment because she believes it may do damage to her curriculum.





# IMPLIED IN EACH CONVERSATION ARE...

Metaphors and hidden messages about past experiences

Indicators about what faculty value

Opportunities to refine approaches to assessment

Opportunities for precisely what these faculty desire from assessment

Opportunities to fulfill accountability pressures

The Balancing Act of Assessment

Thoughts about the Current Needs of the Assessment Profession



# OUR RESEARCH

Survey of Assessment Culture

Faculty Survey of Assessment Culture

Administrators Survey of Assessment Culture

Student Affairs Survey of Assessment Culture- Starting  
2016

Nation-wide, nested samples

[www.shsu.edu/assessmentculture](http://www.shsu.edu/assessmentculture)



# A FEW FINDINGS

Five factors that seem to influence an institution's culture of assessment

- Use of data
- Sharing of data
- Structures
- Messages
- Normative Factors

Leadership appears to be a higher order factor across all of these

Fuller, M. B., & Skidmore, S. T. (2014). An exploration of factors influencing institutional cultures of assessment. [International Journal of Educational Research](#), 65, 9-21. doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2014.01.001

Fuller, M. B., Skidmore, S. T., Bustamante, R. M., and Holzweiss, P. (in press). Empirically Exploring Cultures of Assessment in Higher Education.

# MORE ON OUR RESEARCH

**Administrators tend to...**

**Faculty tend to...**

***Focus on learning.***

***Focus on learning.***

***Focus on assessment processes.***

***Focus on teaching.***

***Concern themselves with aggregated data.***

***Concern themselves with individual (i.e. single student or “anecdotal”) evidence.***

***Love leading institutional assessment efforts.***

***Love leading course assessment efforts (and dislike “wrapping up” course based-efforts into institutional reviews).***

***Be more positive regarding assessment processes.***

***See assessment as a waste of time, detached from curricula, stifling discourse, or damaging learning on campus***



# LESS OF A CULTURAL CHASM THAN WE THOUGHT...

When asked to fill in the blank with the single most appropriate response to the question “\_\_\_\_\_ is the reason assessment is conducted at my institution.”

Choices	% Administrators	% Faculty
<b>Accountability</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9.4</b>
<b>Accreditation</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>39.8</b>
<b>Compliance with Government Mandates</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>11.8</b>
<b>Improving student learning</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>33.4</b>
<b>Tradition</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Access to financial resources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>2.3</b>

But still some challenges.

# METAPHORS ARE POWERFUL

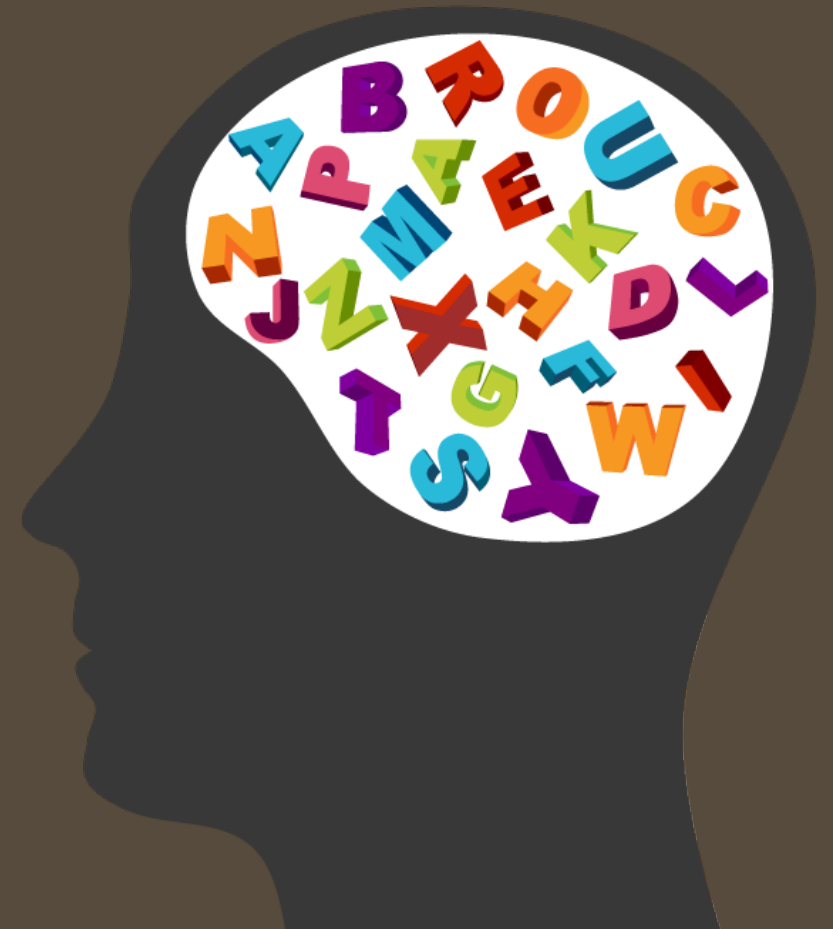
“The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5).

Concepts that structure your institution’s approach to assessment

Strong indicators of a culture of assessment

Different groups on campus have differing approaches to assessment

There are folks and disciplines that denounce or question metaphorical concepts. Metaphors are limited.



# FACULTY'S METAPHORS

Bureaucratic Metaphors

Meaning and Value Metaphors

Vehement Metaphors (a.k.a. curse words)

Burden Metaphors

Agriculture Metaphors

Technology Metaphors

Motion Metaphors

Tangible Item Metaphors

Manipulation Metaphors

See Data at <http://tinyurl.com/2015-Faculty-Metaphors-2015>

# PROMISING METAPHORS

How does one balance assessment and accreditation needs?

- Accreditation should support learning but does it? What do your faculty think?
- You may find it helpful to clarify that rhetoric because faculty may not be buying into the idea that regulation, even self-regulation, increases learning.

**HOW CAN METAPHORS BE USED AS AN INITIAL GUIDE  
INTO ANALYZING THE RHETORIC OF ASSESSMENT AND  
YOUR INSTITUTION'S CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT?**

# THREE KEY FACTORS

## Use of data

"I am not afraid to participate in assessment if I know it will do anything of value for my students...as of yet, our assessment system has done more harm than good."

## Messages

Is the central message of your assessment system doing the technology, "getting through accreditation," "getting someone off your backs," "avoiding dings," or are there messages focused on helping students.

This also extends to accreditation and accountability organizations. Is there a discourse of seeking penalties or highlighting strengths?

What is said, posted, printed, or done that reinforces your office's service orientation?

## Structures

Is it feasible to separate assessment support offices

WHAT DO FACULTY VALUE?

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT THOSE VALUES  
THROUGH ASSESSMENT?

# QUESTIONS? DIALOGUE

Matthew B. Fuller, Ph. D.

Assistant Dean of Assessment, College of  
Education

Assistant Professor, Higher Education  
Administration

Sam Houston State University

[mfuller@shsu.edu](mailto:mfuller@shsu.edu)

Phone: 936.294.3399