ASSESSING
INCOMING
STUDENT
READINESS FOR
ONLINE LEARNING

Mark L. Parker | Norwich University | mparker2@norwich.edu

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LEARNING OUTCOME

After participating...

...you will be able to better evaluate your incoming students' readiness to succeed and persist in online learning.

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AGENDA

- Overview
- Types & Examples of Assessments and Interventions
- Q & A

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💬 **CHAT**

What institution are you from?

AND

Do you currently do any intake assessment of online student success factors? If so, can you give us an example?

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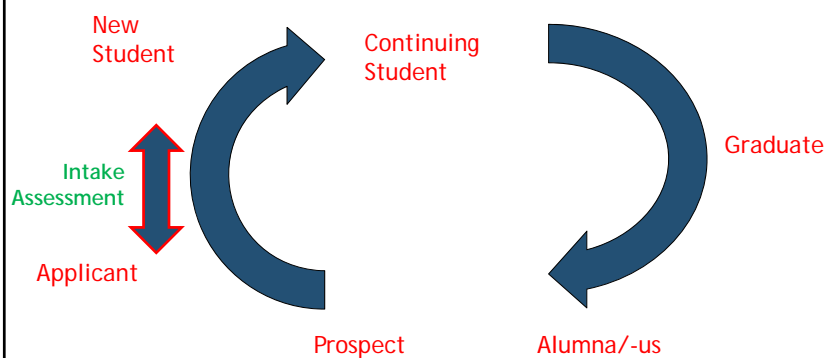## OVERVIEW & DEFINITIONS

OVERVIEW

WHO ARE YOUR STUDENTS?

If your institution is like most, your online students are:

❖ Older
❖ Working
❖ Part-time
❖ Possibly First-in-Family
❖ Possibly returning to Higher Ed after a hiatus

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OVERVIEW

- 'Traditional' Intake Assessment for Bachelor's Students = High School transcript (GPA), SAT/ACT scores
  - These are of limited value to most of us with fully online programs
  - Predictors of persistence & success for our online populations are much more complex and varied

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Student Life Cycle

New Student

Continuing Student

Intake Assessment

Graduate

Applicant

Prospect

Alumna/-us

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WHY INTAKE ASSESSMENT?

- Attrition is going to happen
- Goal of intake assessment: *have attrition take place as early in the lifecycle as possible*
    - Saves institutional time & resources, especially later on
    - More ethical; better for the student

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CONSIDERATIONS

1. How to determine what's needed?
    - Best practices in the academy
    - Results of student learning outcomes assessment
    - Anecdotal information (e.g. faculty)
2. Do it yourself or outsource?
    - Your budget?
    - Your staffing/resources?

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POLL

Are there persons or units at your institution that see, or might see, intake assessment as an obstacle or turn-off for potential students?

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TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

TYPES OF
ASSESSMENTS

1. Proficiency/Placement Tests
2. Student Self-Assessments
   – Self-Paced Interactive Training
   – New Student Orientations
3. Competency-Based Evaluations
   ("Prior Learning")

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PROFICIENCY/
PLACEMENT
TESTS

EXAMPLE #1:
ACCUPLACER

"ACCUPLACER results provide data that
identify specific areas of proficiency and
pinpoint knowledge and skills gaps, making it
easier for counselors and advisers to make
decisions about students' needs for
developmental or transitional courses prior
to enrollment in college-level classes."

https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/professionals/about-accuplacer/how-it-works

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PROFICIENCY/
PLACEMENT
TESTS

EXAMPLE #2:
NORWICH UNIVERSITY MATH
PLACEMENT TEST

http://scimath.norwich.edu/mathematics/math-placement-test/

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STUDENT SELF
ASSESSMENTS

EXAMPLE:
PENN STATE

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7QCNUPsyH9f012B

(or in your new student orientation or self-paced student tutorials)

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**COMPETENCY-
BASED
EVALUATIONS**

- Internal to the institution (more on this later)
- Third-party providers such as SmarterMeasure™

http://www.smartermeasure.com/

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? QUESTIONS

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Academic Impressions

ASSESSING FOR SUCCESS FACTORS

THE SUCCESS FACTORS

Let's start with The Big Three:

WRITING

CRITICAL THINKING

INFO LITERACY

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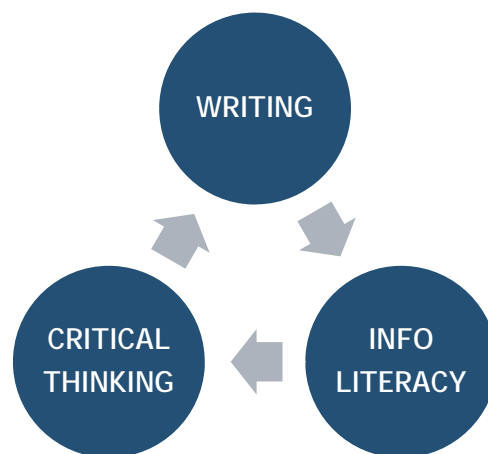
SUCCESS FACTOR #1:
WRITING
PROFICIENCY

– In online teaching/learning, **WRITING IS EVERYTHING**
– It is the principal, often the only, way for students to demonstrate that they've met the learning outcomes
– If you assess only one thing at the intake stage, let it be writing

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ASSESSING FOR
WRITING
PROFICIENCY

• One option is a commercial proficiency test such as Accuplacer's Writeplacer & Sentence Skills
  – Pros: convenient; instant results; normed; results range can be pegged to courses
  – Cons: cost (~$4/student); may not assess all your competencies
• Another option: evaluate writing sample against a rubric (think of scale, though)

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■ **BASED ON RESULTS:**

1. Provide (or send student to) a developmental writing course
   – Depending on results, before beginning program courses
2. Provide tutoring service (e.g. Tutor.com, Smartthinking) and/or online writing center
3. Deny admission

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■ **EXAMPLE INTERVENTION FOR WRITING PROFICIENCY**

Tutor.com:

http://www.tutor.com/subjects/essay-writing

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SUCCESS FACTOR #2:
CRITICAL THINKING

- Sometimes assessed along with writing proficiency, but . . .
- Like writing, a problem at all levels but devastating at the graduate level
- Not routinely taught (except for a few philosophy electives at the undergraduate level)

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ASSESSING FOR
CRITICAL THINKING

- There exist products (e.g. CCTST) that are standardized and normed
- Cost and coverage are factors
- Faculty may be assessing as a learning outcome, using something like the AACU Value Rubric:
  https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/CriticalThinking.pdf

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BASED ON RESULTS:

- A lower-division course
  - Required? Where in program?
- A self-paced tutorial (your own or someone else's; perhaps as part of orientation)
- Revisions to your basic writing course to include more emphasis on critical thinking

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EXAMPLE INTERVENTION FOR CRITICAL THINKING

e.g. California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)

http://www.insightassessment.com/Products/Products-Summary/Critical-Thinking-Skills-Tests/California-Critical-Thinking-Skills-Test-CCTST

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SUCCESS FACTOR #3: INFORMATION LITERACY

- A growing problem throughout the academy
- Uncritical selection and evaluation of resources
- Failure to understand copyright/IP (leading to plagiarism)

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ASSESSING FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

- Peripherally on some writing assessments
- A short stand-alone quiz or self-assessment is a better idea if you're having a problem in this area

  (Like Kent's Project Sails: https://www.projectsails.org/)

- Evaluation of a (academic) writing sample, if doable for your institution
  https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/InformationLiteracy.pdf

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BASED ON RESULTS:

- A self-paced tutorial
  - Work with your digital librarians
  - Example: http://library.utb.edu/tilt/nf/intro/internet.htm
- New student orientation
- A Library Skills Course (e.g. UMUC's LIBS 150
  - Example: http://www.umuc.edu/library/libresources/libs150.cfm
- Resources embedded in your virtual classroom
  - Example: http://guides.norwich.edu/basecamp

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OTHER SUCCESS FACTORS

4. Technology Fluency
5. Numeracy/math proficiency
6. General research skills

The assessment and remediation of these is similar to the Big Three. Remember, the goal is to assess early and determine if remediation is appropriate/cost effective for your institution.

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QUESTIONS

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ASSESSING FOR PERSISTENCE FACTORS

**PERSISTENCE FACTOR #1:
ACCULTURATION TO
HIGHER ED**

- *First-in-Family* or *Returning-after-Hiatus* students may not be familiar with HE concepts, jargon, processes
- Can be made more acute by online vs. F2F interaction
- Can result in delays of registration, payment, FA, etc.

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**ASSESSING FOR
ACCULTURATION
TO HIGHER ED**

- Anecdotally (advisors/counselors)
- Self-Assessments
  ("Do you know how to _____?")

http://www.collegeplanninghelp.net/uploads/1/2/1/8
/12188542/whsp-_college_readiness_survey1.pdf

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BASED ON RESULTS:

- New student orientation
- A mentoring program (if feasible for your institution)
- Intensive advising for first two terms
- Intervention by Registrar, FA, other staff
- A "How to be a college student" course

Example: CCM's "College Student Success Course"
http://www.ccm.edu/academics/divdep/liberalarts/languages/success.aspx

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PERSISTENCE FACTOR #2: STABILITY

- Often looked at as financial stability but includes other characteristics
  - Employment (esp. for active-duty military)
  - Family/personal (children, caregiver to elderly parent, etc.)
  - Goals for higher ed (motivation)

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ASSESSING FOR STABILITY

- Advising/counseling (careful not to cross any lines)
- Questionnaire ("What type of help might you need as a student here?")
- Careful review of application materials (rubric to note code words)

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BASED ON RESULTS:

- New student orientation
  - Policies
  - FA, Bursar
- Easy-to-find-and-use list(s) of resources
- **Have a plan** in place for military students (deployments), stop-outs (job, family obligations), etc.
- Training for Student Services staff and for instructional faculty
(what to do when _____)

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CHECK UP...

1. Has your institution identified its key success and persistence factors as they related to its student body and online programming?
2. If not, is there an effort underway to do so?
3. Who has responsibility for intake assessment (Admissions, Student Affairs, Departments/Programs, etc.)?

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? QUESTIONS

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COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT

COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT

- Otherwise known as CBA
- You're probably already doing it, but it's worth a closer look

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COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT

1. Start with *outcomes* (e.g. writing proficiency)
2. For each outcome, derive list of specific competencies (e.g. "correctly uses punctuation to create compound/complex sentences")
3. Create a mechanism for assessing a student's demonstrated ability relative to the competencies

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COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT

- In current prior learning programs, often in the form of a *portfolio* created by the student in the context of a formal course or extended mentoring situation
- Portfolio is evaluated by faculty to determine:
  – Possible prior learning credit or advanced standing in a program
  – Possible adjustments to program requirements (course substitutions, etc.)

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■ CBA
EXAMPLE

Portfolio Template: Lewis & Clark College

http://www.lcsc.edu/prior-learning-
assessment/portfolio-template/

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■ COMPETENCY-
BASED
ASSESSMENT

**APPLICABLE TO INTAKE ASSESSMENT OF
READINESS?**

Yes, but with some modifications:
• Parse out the competencies that inform
  your readiness factors (as opposed to
  those that may lead to transfer
  credit/advanced standing)
• Speed up the assessment of those
  competencies (e.g. don't wait for
  complete portfolio, if that's your model)

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COMPETENCY-
BASED
ASSESSMENT

APPLICABLE TO INTAKE ASSESSMENT OF READINESS?

- Move CBA as far back in the student lifecycle as possible (remember, your goal should be to have attrition occur early; it's also helpful to know early which students will require remediation, and what kind)
- Continually evaluate the accuracy and efficacy of your CBA program

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RESOURCE

About the document you received. . .

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QUESTIONS

Thank you for your participation!
mparker2@norwich.edu

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EVALUATION

Thank you!

Please remember to complete the event evaluation.
Your comments will help us continually improve the
quality of our programs.

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