

Validation of NSSE with Liberal Arts Outcomes: Findings from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education

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Wabash National Study

- 49 institutions
- More than 17,000 students to date
- Longitudinal
- Purpose – identify high impact practices that promote liberal education

What practices promote growth on multiple outcomes?





Data

- First year of the Wabash National Study
 - Longitudinal (pretest-posttest) design permitted control of array of potential confounding influences
 - 3,081 first-time, full-time students at 19 institutions
 - Data collected in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007

Liberal Arts Outcomes

- Effective reasoning and problem solving
 - CAAP Critical Thinking
- Psychological well-being
 - Scales of Psychological Well-Being
- Inclination to inquire and lifelong learning
 - Need for Cognition scale
 - Positive Attitude toward Literacy scale
- Intercultural effectiveness
 - Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity scale
 - Openness to Diversity/Challenge scale
- Leadership
 - Socially Responsible Leadership scale
- Moral character
 - Defining Issues Test (DIT2) N-2 score of moral reasoning

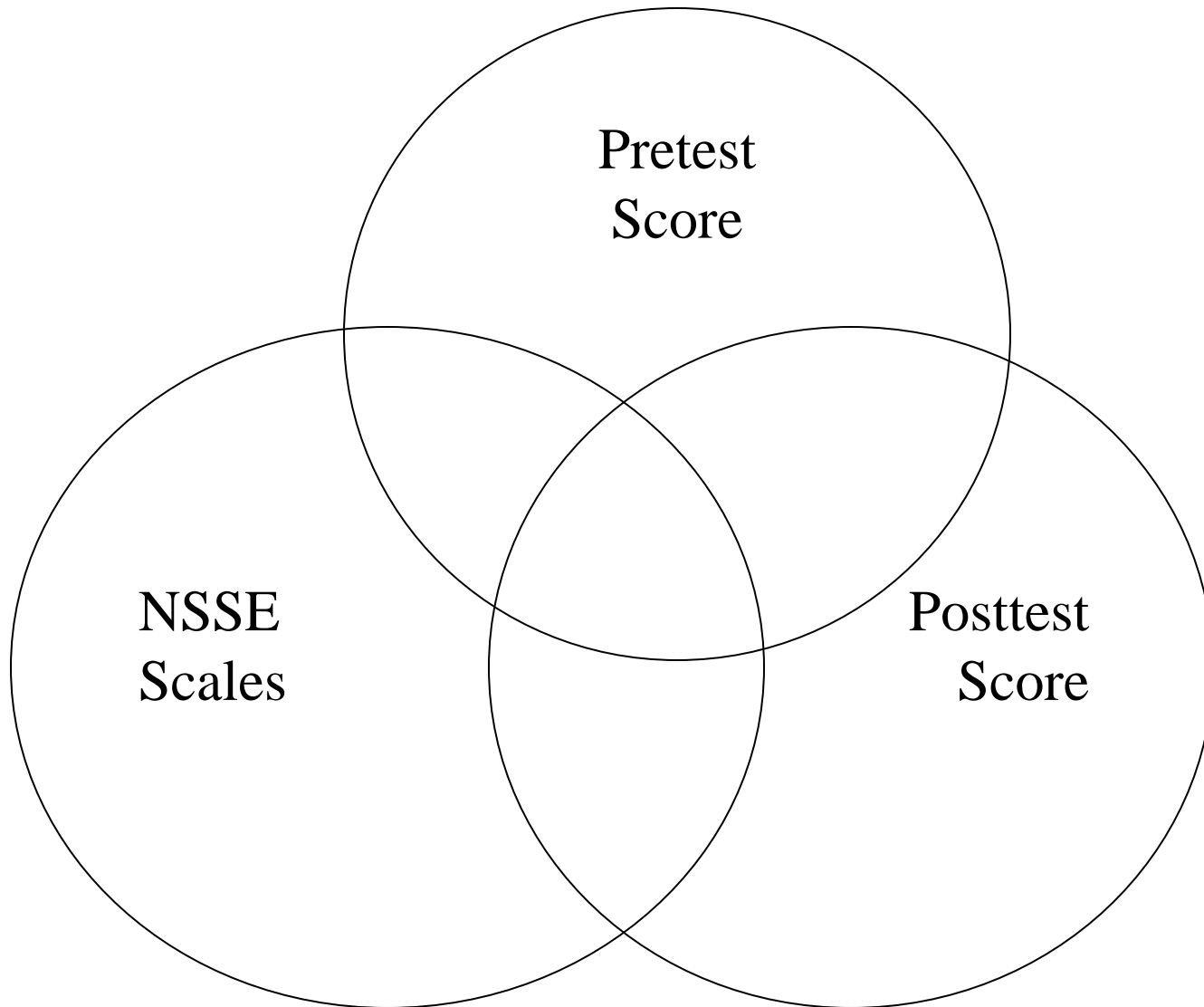
The NSSE Benchmarks

- Academic Challenge – emphasizes the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance
- Active & Collaborative Learning – applies learning in different settings and collaborates with others to solve problems
- Student-Faculty Interaction – interacts with faculty members inside and outside the classroom
- Supportive Campus Environment – institutional commitment to cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.
- Enriching Educational Experience – engages in learning opportunities to complement the classroom

The Deep Learning Scales

- Higher-order Learning – emphasizes analysis and synthesis to arrive at more complex interpretations
- Integrative Learning – integrates ideas from various, diverse perspectives and discuss these ideas outside of class
- Reflective Learning – examines strengths and weaknesses of personal views to arrive at changed understanding
- Total Deep Learning – 3 subscales summed together

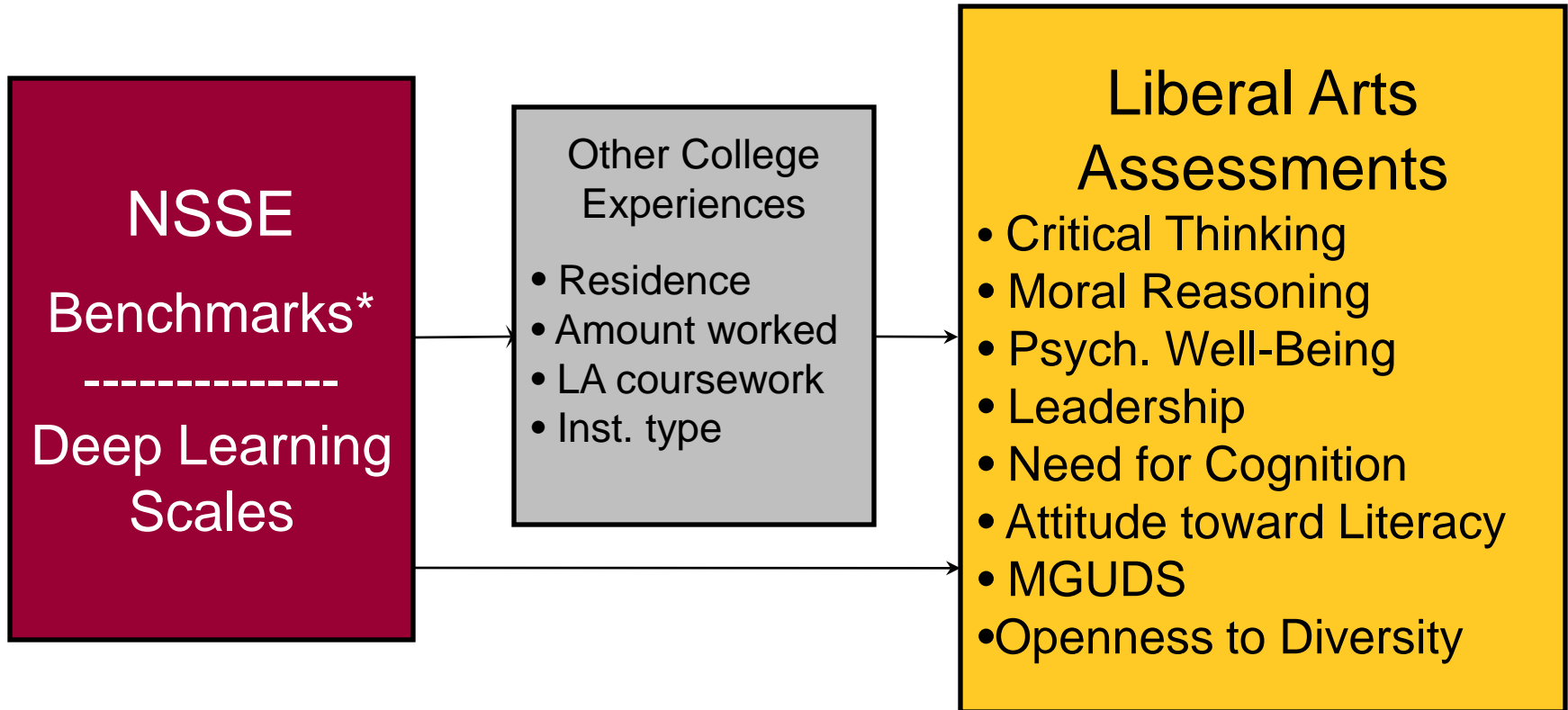
Institutional-level Analysis



Institutional-level Results

	AC	ACL	SFI	SCE	EEE
CAAP Critical Thinking	+				+
DIT-2 Moral Reasoning					+
Need For Cognition					
Positive Attitude Toward Literacy	+				
MGUDS Universality-Diversity				+	+
Openness to Diversity/Challenge		+		+	+
Scales of Psychological Well-Being				*	

Individual-level Analysis



*Controlling for Background and Pre-college characteristics:
Gender, race/ethnicity, parental education, high school involvement, academic motivation,
tested academic preparation, pretest

Effects of Benchmarks on LAOs*

- Academic Challenge
 - Scales of Psychological Well-Being
 - Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity scale
 - Openness to Diversity/Challenge scale
 - Socially Responsible Leadership scale
- Active and Collaborative Learning
 - CAAP Critical Thinking
 - Scales of Psychological Well-Being
 - Need for Cognition scale
 - Openness to Diversity/Challenge scale
 - Socially Responsible Leadership scale
 - Defining Issues Test of moral reasoning

Effects of Benchmarks on LAOs*

- Student-Faculty Interaction
 - (neg) CAAP Critical Thinking
- Supportive Campus Environment
 - Scales of Psychological Well-Being
 - Positive Attitude Toward Literacy scale
 - Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity scale
 - Openness to Diversity/Challenge scale
 - Socially Responsible Leadership scale

Effects of Deep Learning Scales

- Higher-order Learning
 - Scales of Psychological Well-Being
 - Openness to Diversity/Challenge scale
 - Socially Responsible Leadership scale
- Integrative Learning
 - Need for Cognition scale
 - Positive Attitude toward Literacy Scale
 - Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity scale
 - Openness to Diversity/Challenge scale
 - Socially Responsible Leadership scale
 - Defining Issues Test of moral reasoning
- Reflective Learning – all LAOs
- Total Deep Learning – all LAOs but CAAP

Conclusions

- NSSE scales measure practices and experiences that positively influence cognitive and personal growth
- This influence appears to be discernable as early as the first year of college
- Validating NSSE against important college outcomes may be a cost effective means of assessing institutional effectiveness
- Suggest areas where institutions can affect change and improve the quality of undergraduate education

For more information on the Wabash National Study:
<http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/study-overview/>