

Assessment news

STUDENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
IN THE DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

Healthy Hawk Challenge Health Iowa

In the Fall of 2010, we implemented an online health risk assessment (HRA), dubbed the Healthy Hawk Challenge (HHC) for the sophomore cohort. The HRA is a strategy to address overall health status and to reduce high-risk drinking behaviors. Students receive a feedback report immediately after completing the survey. Students who met specific alcohol criteria were then invited to complete an intervention – BASICS (Brief

Alcohol Screening Intervention for College Students).

A follow up for the survey was sent at 3 months and at 1 year post-HHC completion. A follow up for BASICS was sent at 3 months, 6 months and will be sent at 1 year and 2 years post completion.

What we have learned so far: We were pleased with the knowledge increase, positive overall behavior change, and the percent of students who sought out campus resources after

Outcomes	2010	2011	Change
Soph. completed HHC	1446	1489	+43
Student 1 year follow up	N/A	1108	
Knowledge Increase	86%	97%	+11%
Positive Behavior Change	84%	95%	+11%
Utilized a Campus Resource	54%	51%	-3%
# Invited to BASICS	998	1041	+43
# Participated in BASICS	31	152	+121

participating in the HHC. We also learned that one follow-up question asking about stage of change was unclear so we were able to change it for subsequent surveys. For the BASICS intervention, we determined that the

\$25/session incentive was not quite sufficient, so we increased the amount to \$50/session. With this change we saw a dramatic increase in BASICS participation this year. Finally, the 3-month follow up results have been positive so far: students reported drinking fewer drinks, and had significantly lower blood alcohol concentration on a typical night (.096 before to .063 after BASICS; $p=.018$). **Please contact Tanya Villhauer (tanya-villhauer@uiowa.edu) for more information.**

Welcome to *Assessment News*

Our new monthly newsletter, *Assessment News*, will feature assessment practices in the Division of Student Life and larger University of Iowa community that promote student success and contributing to student learning, growth and development. Assessment is an ongoing cycle and this newsletter will help highlight how staff in the Division are using assessment to improve programs and practices related to student success. Please email me (teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu) if you have any assessment projects you would like to feature in the newsletter.





Latino Beginnings

Center for Student Involvement and Leadership

Assessment Context: We wanted students to reflect on their own and others' experiences after watching the movie *Latino Beginnings* and discussing the topics of masculinity and religion in the Latino culture and their relationship to gay/lesbian/transgender individuals.

What we did: We used a one page worksheet, including 3 questions to guide reflection: 1) (Before the film) For the next minute please write down your thoughts about religion and masculinity in the Latino culture as it relates to gay/lesbian/transgender individuals, 2) (After) Please write briefly about at least one thing you reflected on about religion, masculinity, or gay/lesbian/transgender

individuals in the Latino culture while watching the movie or during the discussion, and 3) (After) Please write about the individuals you related to the most in the film.

What we learned: We analyzed 24 reflection papers using Chabon and Lee-Wilkersons' (2006) levels of reflection. Since this was a single program we expected students to show reflections at level 1, descriptive (learning new content), and level 2, empathic (demonstrating thoughts about or challenges to beliefs, values, and attitudes of self and others). The first question was to get students thinking about their current beliefs. Most students (18 of 20) answered question 2 at the descriptive level of reflection. For the final question we asked students to focus on a student in the movie they could relate to and this

resulted in more students moving from descriptive reflection to empathic (11 descriptive and 9 empathic). Asking students to reflect on the students in the movie helped them connect their experiences to those different from themselves and begin to question some of their own attitudes and beliefs. **Please contact Roy Salcedo (roy-salcedo@uiowa.edu) for more information.**



Resources: For more information on how to use reflection papers for assessment please view our reflection information sheet here: <http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assets/Using-Reflection-for-Assessmentment.pdf> and look for a reflection workshop later this spring!

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Higher Learning Commission
Conference
Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois
March 30th—April 3rd

2012 NASPA Assessment and
Persistence Conference
Tampa, Florida
June 7th—9th



Ideas? Comments?

Please email to:
teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu

Helpful Tips

What is Student Outcomes Assessment?

According to Upcraft and Schuh (1996), assessment is "any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, divisional, or agency effectiveness" (p. 18). In other words, assessment enables us to determine the level of effectiveness of our programs and services. Ultimately, assessment information helps us make decisions based on data vs. instinct. The definition of "effectiveness" may vary by our goals. For instance, is the program or service intended to:

- Increase student knowledge?
- Improve a student's ability to execute a specific behavior?
- Change student attitudes?
- Facilitate a student's reflection on a topic?

Overall student outcomes assessment enables us to:

- *Articulate what we want students to learn or gain from our programs and services;*
- *Determine whether or not students learn or gain what we intended;*
- *Make informed decisions about how to modify programs and services to better support student learning, growth, or development; and*
- *Demonstrate our role in fulfilling the educational mission of the institution.*

For more information view the Assessment Handbook here:
<http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assets/Uploads/Full-Handbook.pdf>

Assessment *news*

STUDENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
IN THE DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

Strategic Programming Initiative Center for Student Involvement and Leadership

The aim of the UI's Alcohol Harm Reduction Plan is to reduce high-risk drinking among UI students. The plan contains 4 primary goals, two of which are to help students remain low-risk drinkers/abstainers at UI and to help more high-risk drinkers lower their drinking while at UI.

Late night activities are one of the many tactics we are using to meet these goals and support a healthy environment for students. In the past, late night activity attendance and costs were tracked, allowing us to monitor event popularity, along with a cost per student for late night activities. Last year, the Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL) began using a brief survey at events asking students what they might be doing if they weren't attending the late night activity. This measure allows CSIL to monitor which activities are more likely to attract students who might otherwise be en-

gaged in activities involving alcohol. With this information, a new measure - the *cost per likely drinker* was calculated.

Survey data revealed that the events that are more expensive (higher cost per student) draw more students who are likely to otherwise engage in activities involving alcohol. These top programs include CAB Comedy and CAB Roads. Plans for the coming year include gathering this type of data across more event categories and using the data to continue looking at the overall portfolio of late night offerings. You can view the complete SPI report on the Student Learning and Assessment page of the Division of Student Life website, <http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assessment/reports/strategic-programming-initiative-fall-2011-report/>. Please contact Molly Golemo (molly-golemo@uiowa.edu) and Nellie Hermanson (nellie-hermanson@uiowa.edu) if you have any questions.

Training and Support

Have questions about filling out a Hawk IRB (institutional research board) form? The IRB office has walk in hours on Wednesdays from 1:00 pm—3:00 pm at 101 Hardin Library and the UI Health Care Training Theater and on Thursdays from 10:00 am—12:00 pm at 101 Hardin Library.



National Survey of Student Engagement

Wayne Jacobson, Office of the Provost

In Spring 2011, UI seniors and first-year students were invited to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE allows us to examine the time and effort that students report putting into educationally purposeful activities. Because it is a national survey, NSSE also lets us compare UI student responses with those of students at other universities.

Among the many findings, one that stands out is the high level of overall student satisfaction with their experiences at UI, and higher levels of engagement in all respects compared to students who participated in UI's last participation in NSSE in 2008.

Compared to their peers at other public research universities, UI's first-year students reported higher levels of

engagement on 4 of NSSE's 5 scales – Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Supporting Campus Environment – and no significant difference from peers on NSSE's other scale, Enriching Educational Experiences. Senior responses indicated no significant differences from their peers on the same four scales, and significantly lower levels of engagement than their peers on the Enriching Experiences scale.

We continue to review these results, alongside other assessment data, to help us recognize successes in increasing opportunities for student engagement at UI, and also to help identify next steps for ways we can try to improve. For a more information about UI's NSSE responses for 2011, see <http://www.uiowa.edu/~outcomes/UIresources.htm>.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

2012 NASPA Assessment & Persistence Conference
Tampa, Florida
June 7th—9th

2012 Assessment Institute
Indianapolis, Indiana
October 28th—30th



Ideas? Comments?

Please email to:
teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu

Helpful Tips

The Process of Assessing Student Outcomes

Viewed broadly, student learning assessment is a four-step process:

Identifying learning outcomes (*determining what students should know, think, and be able to do as a result of a program or service*);

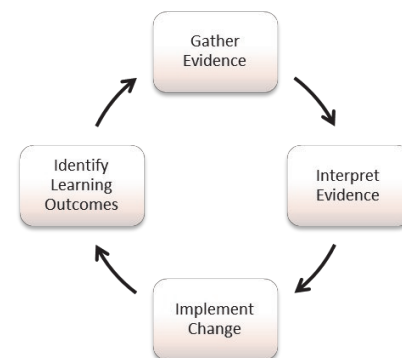
Gathering evidence (*creating opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learned*);

Interpreting evidence (*drawing conclusions based on students' performance*);

Implementing change (*using conclusions to modify the program or service*).

Student learning assessment is cyclical. Unless we assess the modified program or service, we are unable to determine whether or not the changes we made actually *improved* student learning. Thus, the fourth step – implementing change – serves as a

jumping-off point for future assessment, thereby creating an ongoing cycle of improvement.



For more information view the Division of Student Life Assessment Handbook here:

<http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assets/Uploads/Full-Handbook.pdf>

Assessment *news*

STUDENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
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Q&A with Linda Varvel Residence Life

Linda Varvel is a Residence Life Programming Coordinator and oversees five different living learning communities (LLCs) on campus. She serves as one of the Assessment Coordinators for University Housing and Dining. She started her position at Iowa in July of 2011 and has jumped, feet first, into assessment.

Question: *What assessment are you currently doing?*

Linda: *I assess each of the LLCs that I oversee. I send out two surveys for each LLC every year, one in the fall and one in the spring. We ask a variety of questions in these surveys, for example, it is important to measure whether students' expectations of the LLCs were met. One great question we asked in the fall was what were the best times to do programming. With this information we were better able to determine when programming would be effective. We could also rule out, if a program did not do so well, if the timing had anything to do with it.*

Question: *What do you like the most about assessment?*

Linda: *I like assessment because it helps validate the work we are doing throughout the year. Not only that, but it also helps us make improvements so we know how to improve for next year.*

Question: *What do you find the most challenging about assessment?*

Linda: *When I work with surveys it is time consuming, but necessary, to ensure that the questions we are asking will provide us with the information we are looking for. It is a challenge to put in that extra time.*



Question: *Compared to some of the institutions where you have worked, how is assessment viewed differently at the University of Iowa?*

Linda: *At other institutions either assessment wasn't a focus or they told you to just "make it happen" without providing any support. At Iowa you can tell that assessment is valued. Not only do we have an entire office dedicated to assessment, but the office is also dedicated to providing assessment knowledge to the larger group. Here we don't say that this person and that person do assessment, but we can all do assessment. If you desire to do assessment here then you will have the support you need to do so.*

Question: *What is one thing you want to learn about assessment in the future?*

Linda: *I would like to learn how to dig a little deeper into our data when using Qualtrics and to learn more about data analysis. I am very confident when working with qualitative data, but I need to work on using more quantitative data and statistics.*

First-Year Student Study

University Counseling Service

University Counseling Services (UCS), the primary mental health agency for Iowa students, explored which psychological difficulties first-year students reported upon entering counseling, how symptoms changed at the end of a counseling experience, and a possible correlation between symptom status and retention.

They found that the first-year students who sought clinical services at UCS show significant improvement in their overall distress specifically in the areas of depression, generalized anxiety, and academic concerns. More positive changes occurred the more sessions students participated in. This study also elicited concrete recommendations for working with first-year students.

These recommendations include: first year students should be encouraged to seek counseling for their concerns as it has been shown that counseling is beneficial, students should be encouraged to fully engage and make use of counseling if offered ongoing counseling services, therapists should assess and work to improve all areas of a student's life (not focusing solely on the presenting issue), and drug and alcohol abuse should be closely monitored even if students are not concerned about use.

For the complete report, First-Year Students in Counseling at the University Counseling Service: An Outcome Evaluation Study, follow this link <http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assets/Report-First-Year-Student-Study-Fall-2011.pdf>. Please contact Eva Schoen (eva-schoen@uiowa.edu) for more information.



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Helpful Tips

Institution-Level and Program-Level Learning Outcomes

As we think about program-level goals, it may be helpful to first take a broader view – “What should a student know and be able to do upon graduation from The University of Iowa?” In March of 2010, the Council on Student Learning – a faculty-staff committee in the Office of the Provost – identified learning outcomes for undergraduate education at The University of Iowa. These learning outcomes include:

- Knowledge and understanding of human cultures and of the physical and natural worlds;
- Intellectual and practical skills;
- Personal, intellectual, and social responsibility; and
- The ability to apply knowledge and skills in new settings and situations.

Collectively, these learning outcomes “help students view their wide-ranging educational experiences at The University of Iowa as an integrated whole...and encompass undergraduate student learning inside and outside the classroom” (The Uni-

versity of Iowa, 2010). The learning outcomes of our Division programs and services should support our institutional goals.

Institution-level learning outcomes, because they are intended to capture the breadth of students' learning experiences during college, are often quite general. However, the more targeted a unit's mission, the more specific and descriptive its learning outcomes can – and should – be. Examples from programs and services in the Division of Student Life include the abilities to:

- Create a vision as a leader (LeaderShape Institute, Center for Student Involvement and Leadership);
- Request accommodations (advising, Student Disability Services);
- Recognize that stomach flu is not the same as seasonal flu (Student Health Service);
- Identify one campus resource pertinent to their concerns (The Path, University Housing and Dining).

Assessment *news*

STUDENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
IN THE DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

A New Year

Division of Student Life

Welcome back to a new semester! First, we just want to give a big thanks to all your hard work last year on assessment projects within the Division of Student Life. Every year with your help we come closer to creating a culture of assessment within the Division.

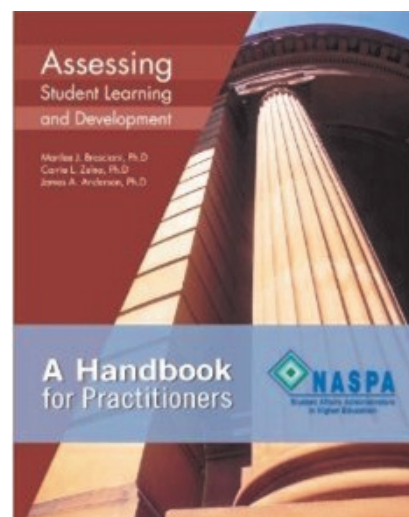
Sarah Hansen (sarah-hansen@uiowa.edu) and Teri Schnelle (teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu) in the Office of Assessment and Strategic Initiatives are always available to provide support and assistance with your assessment projects. We are available for individual consultations on general assessment topics or specific projects. Small group workshops can be arranged if a group of staff members in your department want to learn about specific assessment topics. Finally, don't forget that there are many assessment resources on the Student Learning & Assessment website <http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assessment/>.



Thanks again for all your hard work, and we look forward to another great year with assessment in the Division of Student Life.

Practical Assessment Information

Looking for a quick, easy to read book about assessment? *Assessing Student Learning and Development: A Handbook for Practitioners* by Bresciani, Zelna, and Anderson is a great choice! Designed with practitioners in mind, this hands on reference outlines the step-by-step process of assessing student learning and development. In 14 concise, straightforward chapters the authors cover the topics ranging from the difference between satisfaction and learning and writing student learning outcomes to choosing an assessment method.



Needs Assessment

Division of Student Life

This past spring the Division of Student Life completed a needs assessment. A needs assessment is the process of determining what needs exist within an organization and how these needs can best be addressed (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). For our needs assessment we wanted to determine what assessment training needs were desired across the Division.

This 14 question survey was completed by 82 staff members. With this information the Office of Assessment and Strategic Initiatives has created an assessment training plan for this semester that will also extend into spring 2013. Based on your feedback we will be hosting workshops on the topics of Creating an Assessment Plan (which includes information on writing learning outcomes and aligning outcomes, activities, and mission) and Analyzing Assessment Data (which will include Qualtrics and SPSS overviews). We will be creating one page



information sheets on the topics of Using Reflection for Assessment and Creating and Using Rubrics. Based on this needs assessment we will also be conducting individual consultations with staff to discuss specific assessment projects as well as assessment topics broadly. You will be receiving emails throughout the semester about upcoming workshops and available papers.

Thanks to everyone who completed the needs assessment. Your feedback was essential to expanding assessment knowledge and skills within the Division of Student Life!

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Emory University Student Affairs Assessment Conference
Atlanta, Georgia
October 15th—16th

2012 Assessment Institute
Indianapolis, Indiana
October 28th—30th

13th Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference
College Station, Texas
February 17th—19th



Ideas? Comments?

Please email to:
teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu

Helpful Tips

Writing Learning Outcome Statements

An easy format to use for writing learning outcomes is to follow the SWiBAT formula:

Students (who _____) will be able to _____.

Here are some examples of learning outcomes using the SWiBAT formula:

- Students will be able to successfully discuss accommodation needs with their instructors.
- Students who work as intramural officials will be able to demonstrate appropriate conflict resolution skills in an emotional environment.
- Students who participate in The Path will be able to identify at least two academic support resources on campus.

Below is general outline for writing outcomes in the SWiBAT format.

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Assessment *news*

Q&A with Tom Rocklin Vice President for Student Life

Tom Rocklin serves as Vice President for Student Life. He has been a faculty member and administrator at the University of Iowa for over 25 years. As Vice President, Tom oversees units that foster student success by creating and promoting educationally purposeful services and activities within and beyond the classroom.

Question: *Why is assessment a priority in the Division of Student Life?*

Tom: Assessment is a priority because it helps us make decisions and determine how to allocate resources in a way that makes sense to ourselves and others. As humans we struggle with cognitive efficiency versus accuracy. We often hear from one student how great a program is, and we think the program works. That isn't enough. Assessment helps us systematically draw conclusions that are both accurate and we can be confident in.

Question: *How has assessment helped you make decisions?*

Tom: I have three concrete examples of how assessment has helped me make decisions. The first is the Moped Helmet Campaign. We had every reason to believe that this campaign would work. At the end of the campaign we saw only a marginal increase in students wearing helmets. Assessment data helped us make the decision that it was okay to discontinue this program. The second example is the Roads programming within Late Night Programming. The purpose of Late Night Programming is to provide late night alternatives to students. When we assessed the cost per likely drinker of Roads we concluded that it was not drawing in students who were otherwise likely to be drinking, but it was very popular with other students. We concluded that the funding for Roads should come from a different source than Late Night Programming. The final example is the Strategic

Programming Initiative proposals. I'm convinced that these proposals are improved by the thought that people put into their assessment plans. The proposals are focused on goals and a logical plan to reach those goals.

Question: *What are some common misconceptions you have heard about assessment? How do you respond to these misconceptions?*

Tom: I hear two common misconceptions about assessment. The first is that assessment has to be technically difficult. It doesn't have to be. Simple is perfectly adequate. Assessment is really about asking three questions: How many people were impacted?, What did they think of the program?, and How did it change them? The second misconception is that assessment is something that we do for other people, especially for those making decisions. I would argue that it is a mark of a professional to want to know how a program is working.

Question: *Do you have anything to say to staff who are engaged in assessment?*

Tom: I have a few things to say. First of all, thank you. Second, do assessment for yourself. Finally, you have to be brave to ask those questions of whether a program is working or not. It is tremendously valuable to determine that a program is just not working. It takes courage to try something new and then to stop if it doesn't work.



UI Assessment Handbook

The Division for Student Life

Assessment Handbook

The Assessment Handbook is meant to be a condensed practical guide to support student affairs practitioners in thinking about and using assessment in their daily work.

The University of Iowa
Office of the Vice President
for Student Life

Looking for a practical guide to assessment? The UI Assessment Handbook is a condensed guide to support student affairs practitioners in thinking and using assessment their daily work. This handbook was created by the Vice President for Student Life staff members to guide you through the assessment process. The handbook covers topics throughout the process including: an introduction to student learning assessment, identifying learning outcomes, gathering evidence, interpreting evidence, implementing change, and completing the cycle. The handbook is available in a full version or by topic. To provide a quick example of the handbook's content, the Helpful Tips section of the newsletter is from the handbook. Please go to the website below to view the UI Assessment Handbook. <http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assessment/tools-for-assessment/available-publications/>

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

IRB: How to Complete a New Project Application
Harding Information Commons EAST
November 1st
9:30 am-12:00 pm

13th Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference
College Station, Texas
February 17th—19th

Helpful Tips

Writing Learning Outcome Statements

When writing learning outcome statements that describe cognitive growth, it may be helpful to refer to Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, or hierarchy, of learning in the cognitive domain. Student learning outcomes should reflect the level of learning you want students to demonstrate. In a one-hour training session it makes sense for your outcomes to focus on remembering or restating a key idea, while in a year-long program, outcomes would likely reflect higher level learning such as analyzing or evaluating. Figure 1 is the updated version of Bloom's taxonomy.

As we write learning outcomes, it is helpful to have a range of action words to describe the various levels of learning. Please view Figure 3 on page 12 of the full Assessment Handbook for a list of action words for Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain.

Bloom, Krathwhol, and Masia (1964) also developed a taxonomy for learning in the affective domain, depicted in Figure 2. Please view Table 3 in the Appendix of the full Assessment Handbook for descriptions and action words for Bloom's taxonomy of the affective domain.

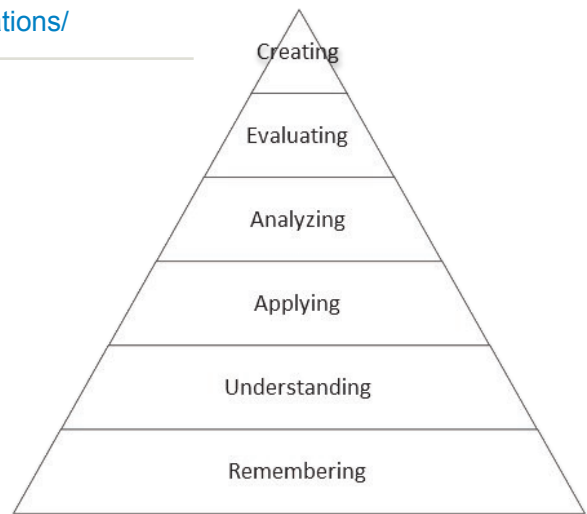


Figure 1

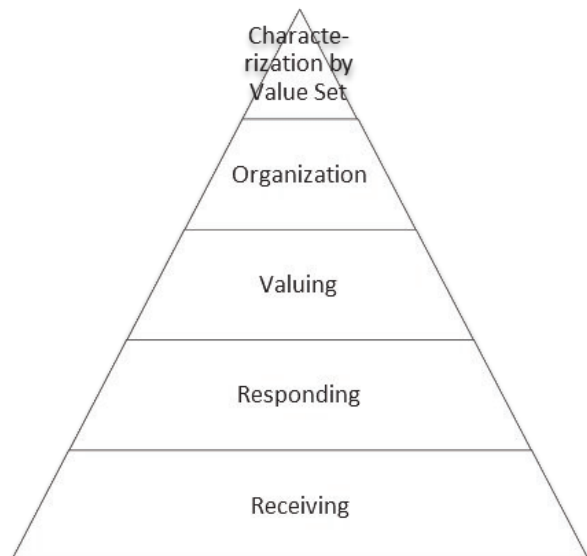


Figure 2



Ideas? Comments?

Please email to:
teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu

Assessment *news*

STUDENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
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Bridging Domestic and Global Diversity

Roy Salcedo and Teri Schnelle

This past spring the Bridging Domestic and Global Diversity Program (Bridge Program), now in its sixth year, celebrated its fifth group of undergraduate and graduate students completing the program. "The vision for the Bridging Domestic and Global Diversity Program: A Training Program for Student Leaders is to bridge the gaps and create paths between UI international students, domestic students of color, as well as students with privilege that are committed to, and invested in, this bridging process and in social justice." The Bridge Program is a series of eight workshops over the spring semester. During the initial years, the program conducted a pre- and post-training evaluation survey in order to evaluate the program.

To gain a more in depth understanding of how the Bridge Program was benefitting students, last year session level assessment was added to the already established evaluation of the program. With the assistance of each instructor, the learning outcomes were outlined for each session. Using these learning outcomes, a series of survey questions was created. The survey questions for each session were limited to six or fewer open-ended questions, and five to ten minutes were allotted at the end of each session for students to complete the survey. The information gathered was then compiled to determine if the learning outcomes for each session were met as well as to gain feedback about that respective session. This assessment format will be implemented again this year in the evaluation of the program in the spring. The overall goal is to gain long term data to do a longitudinal study of the program.

For more information about the Bridge Program please visit the program website at: <http://international.uiowa.edu/cultural-training/bridge>

Please contact Sarah Hansen (sarah-hansen@uiowa.edu) or Teri Schnelle (teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu) if you have any questions about implementing session level assessment.



Creating an Assessment Cycle

The Division of Student Life

An overarching goal is for assessment of student learning to be a part of our regular practice, rather than an add-on. Whenever possible, embedding assessment into program or service activities is recommended. Making sure that 'end of program' questionnaires include questions on student learning, in addition to questions on satisfaction or logistics is an easy way to capture assessment information 'just in time'.

The first element of an assessment cycle is to determine a timeline and be realistic about what you can assess when. An organizing framework may be useful. For

instance, you may want to connect your assessment cycle to Division goals, institutional learning outcomes, or emphasis areas in your department. For example, you might choose to assess programs that most relate to leadership one year, those with a focus on multiculturalism during year two, etc. Or alternate between your group programs and individual consultations every other year. Below is a way to organize your assessment cycle.

For more information on creating an assessment cycle please view our creating an assessment cycle one-page information sheet here: <http://studentlife.uiowa.edu/assets/Creating-an-Assessment-Cycle.pdf>

Department Learning Outcome	Year(s) when outcome is assessed				
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Every year

Helpful Tips

Evaluating Learning Outcomes

So, how do you tell if the learning outcomes are capturing what you want? How do you know if they will lend themselves to good measures? Take a look at a learning outcome you've developed and run through these questions as a check:

Evaluating Learning Outcomes
Does the outcome support the program objectives?
Does the outcome describe what the program intends for students to know, think, or be able to do?
Is the outcome important/worthwhile? Will assessing it give you valuable information?
Is the outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Detailed and specific?Measurable/identifiable?A result of learning?
Can you create an activity to enable students to learn the desired outcome?
Can the outcome be used to make decisions on how to improve the program?

Learning outcomes should be specific and measurable. If they aren't, they will be difficult to assess. Here are some examples of difficult to assess outcomes (Scagliola, 2007):

Too general and very hard to measure:

...will appreciate the benefits of exercise.
...will develop problem-solving skills and conflict resolution.

Still general and hard to measure:

...will value exercise as a stress reduction tool.
...will demonstrate ability to resolve personal conflicts and assist others in resolving conflicts.

Specific and relatively easy to measure:

...will be able to explain how exercise affects stress.
...will be able to assist roommates in resolving conflicts by helping them negotiate agreements.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

13th Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference
College Station, Texas
February 17th—19th

Association for Institutional Research (AIR) 2013
Long Beach, California
May 18th—22nd



Ideas? Comments?

Please email to:
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Assessment

news

STUDENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
IN THE DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

Iowa N.E.W. Leadership

Women's Resource and Action Center

Background: Iowa N.E.W. Leadership (INL) is an intensive 5-day residential institute designed to empower women across the political spectrum and increase the participation of underrepresented groups in all sectors of public leadership. The Institute experience is built around a challenging curriculum that develops knowledge and skills in key areas, including: strategic communication, policy analysis, philanthropy, negotiation, community development, professional sustainability, relationship-building, conflict and collaboration, and productive engagement with difference. Developed by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University in 1991, the NEW Leadership™ network currently includes 21 colleges and universities serving women in 25 states. The University of Iowa will hold its sixth Summer Institute **May 20 – 24, 2013**.

Assessment: Iowa N.E.W. Leadership is assessed through daily evaluations, final staff evaluations, and a national participant evaluation. Daily evaluation of the program includes a form completed by all participants to determine what participants learned from the various sessions and what could be changed to improve that particular day. Informally there is also time for participants to process the information from the day with a group facilitator. This facilitator brings aggregated information to the staff meetings (which occur at the beginning of everyday) to determine if there are any changes that need to be made immediately and what could change for the next institute. At the conclusion of the institute the group facilitator and faculty members who act as mentors throughout the institute provide feedback. Since Iowa N.E.W. Leadership is part of a national network the final participant evaluation is based on a national evaluation.

What We Learned: The assessment provided information to make both structural and content changes. Structurally breaks were added and lunch was changed from a "formal working lunch" to a more informal event. Participants' feedback also suggested more formal opportunities for self-care. An optional yoga session was added as well as more structured time to visit the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center. Information about the content of the institute was helpful in determining if any sessions should be eliminated, in providing constructive feedback to the session presenters, and in determining the most effective presenters.

Alumnae Survey: Every year a survey is also sent to the alumnae of Iowa N.E.W. Leadership. While many alumnae are finishing up their undergraduate career or are currently attending graduate school, a number of alumnae are currently involved in politics. Alicia Oken (INL 2011), accepted an internship this summer at Representative Cheri Bustos' office in Washington, D.C., and Sarah Mitchell (INL 2012) will be attending The Washington Center's Political Leadership program this summer. INL 2010 alumna Brooke Blaaid was elected as a City Commissioner for Yankton, South Dakota. Katherine Valde (INL 2011) has been elected as President of the University of Iowa Student Government for the 2013-14 year, and Katherine's campaign was managed by Margaret Murphy (INL 2011). Kyra Seay (INL 2012), Samantha Fleps (INL 2012), and Carter Bell (INL 2013) have been elected as UISG Senators for the 2013-2014 school year.

Please contact Megan Schwalm (megan-schwalm@uiowa.edu) for more information.



Photo courtesy of WRAC website (originally posted in [Leave a Comment](#))



Ideas? Comments?
Please email to:
teri-schnelle@uiowa.edu

Outreach Evaluation

University Counseling Service

One of the core functions of the UCS is outreach to the campus community. Each semester, UCS staff members present a variety of psychoeducational programs to student audiences on topics such as stress management, test anxiety, managing depression, relationship concerns, and UCS information. The purpose of this outreach evaluation project was to assess the effectiveness of UCS outreach presentations to a student audience on campus. The following learning outcomes were identified as overarching goals for UCS outreach efforts. As a result of UCS outreach programs:

- Students will increase their knowledge about the psychological topic being presented.
- Students will increase their skills in the topic area of the presentation.
- Students will increase their knowledge of the range of services available at the UCS.
- Students will increase their willingness to seek counseling if needed.

A survey was administered before and after outreach presentations. There were 230 surveys returned for UCS staff member presentations, and 264 surveys returned for programs facilitated by practicum students (supervised by UCS staff) for the SWAT series on campus (a series of programs put on by the Office of Retention to help students who are struggling with academic and life skills).

There were four pre-post assessment questions rated by each participant (increased knowledge about the topic, increased skills in topic area, increased awareness of UCS services). Results from paired sample t-tests (n=240) were statistically significant at

the 0.01 level for all four questions and showed an increase between pre- and post-test measurement. For the SWAT programs, the same four pre-post assessment questions were rated by a total of 264 participants. Results from paired sample t-tests (n=264) were statistically significant at the 0.01.

It appears that UCS outreach presentations are helping students improve their knowledge and skills in the topic areas discussed and increase students' willingness to seek help. This is true for both the SWAT presentations facilitated by practicum students and for UCS staff member facilitated presentations. It is positive that 69% of students are aware of UCS services and that as a result of attending a UCS presentation there was a significant increase in the awareness of the range of services we provide. Ideally, 100% of students should know about UCS services, so an aspirational goal would be to increase this percentage from 69% to 75% or higher as a first step.

Recommendations:

Continued work on campus should focus on:

- expanding the types of topics presented
- broadening the student groups reached with UCS outreach presentations
- expanding the number of staff members presenting to student audiences

Continued evaluation work should focus on:

- continued pre-post assessment of our services
- expanding the number of programs that get assessed
- paying particular attention to outcome evaluations for outreach programs for diverse student populations

Helpful Tips

Learning Outcomes– Common Mistakes

Writing outcomes takes practice. Here are some common mistakes and easy ways to identify whether your outcomes will help or hinder your assessment efforts:

The learning outcome does not support program, department, division, or institution goals.

- Outcomes should measure what's important in your program or service. If it's incidental to what you are trying to accomplish, don't waste your time assessing it. Focus on your goal(s) and anchor everything you do to them and your efforts will be richer and more helpful to you.

The learning outcome describes behavior using words that are difficult to measure (e.g., *understand*, *be aware*, *appreciate*)

- How do we know if someone understands? Generally, they have to demonstrate that understanding in some way, and *that's* what we assess. For example, they may explain, state, list, or identify. These are clearer ways to determine understanding. Awareness or appreciation are also difficult to assess so think about what a student would be able to do to demonstrate that they are aware or that they appreciate.

The learning outcome describes more than one behavior.

- If goals are complex (create a vision and act on it), then outcomes should be written for each major component, rather than embedded in one statement. Goals should also reflect the highest level of learning expected i.e. the final product. The learning that occurs at the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are building blocks to higher levels of learning. For example, instead of 'Students will be able to explain and analyze this model' use 'Student will be able to analyze this model'. If students are analyzing the model then they should already be able to explain the model.

The learning outcomes describe every possible thing a student could learn from the program or service.

- Focus on the goal, forget the "extras" or "nice to know" stuff.

The learning outcome does not actually describe learning.

- Satisfaction can keep students using your program and taking your course. Certainly, we want students to have a positive experience with us. But learning and satisfaction are, indeed, different and learning outcomes should address the former vs. the latter.