

Assessment Tips from 06-07 End-of-Year Reports

<i>Please share if you have an assessment best practice that would be valuable for other coordinators.</i>	<i>Name of Learning Community</i>	<i>Name(s) of Learning LC Coordinator(s):</i>
A best practice would be to have a solid set of assessment tools in play before the LC gets underway. Otherwise it is hard to assess what you need to in the long run.	ISU/DMACC	Barb Osborn
Plan ahead for how you can gather assessment data.	HDFS	Pat Walsh, Kate Shafer, Corly Brooke
Develop survey instruments that can be used for the purpose of a longitudinal study—Our idea is to target graduating students who were in Newspaper Physics during their first year to learn more about the long-term impact of learning community participation.	Newspaper Physics	John Hauptman and Jennifer Lowery
Our assessment and program goals for our service learning projects were initially pretty lofty, but we quickly pared them down to a more manageable level. The best practice tip that I would offer is to keep your goals clearly in mind as you structure your assessment plans. We knew from the beginning that we were more concerned with gathering information than we were with statistical reliability & validity. We were satisfied to sacrifice some statistical soundness in order to conduct an initial survey and conduct some pilot activities. We believe we have set the stage for other service learning projects in the future, however, that will be assessed more correctly and completely than ours was. For example, we changed some of our category titles for the post survey after many students wrote in similar topics clustered around coaching/sports activities and career preparation for their “other” choice. If we had been striving for statistical correctness, we would not have further delineated our categories, but would have waited for the next iteration of the pre-post test cycle. The logistics of organizing activities for 350 students were enormous, as were the lessons we learned.	HHP	Carol Cordell

<p>The use of WebCT in communicating with learning community students was very helpful in organizing activities. Students are using it for classes more each year, so they become familiar with checking the discussion board or calendar just like their email.</p>	<p>IDEAL (InDustrial Engineers Are Leaders)</p>	<p>Devna Popejoy-Sheriff</p>
<p>Utilizing WebCT for a mid-semester peer mentor survey was effective for gaining immediate feedback, and therefore enabling peer mentors to make adjustments to enhance the LC participants' experiences and interactions with the peer mentors.</p>	<p>FSHN</p>	<p>Anne Oldham</p>
<p>Creating a departmental faculty committee to meet periodically to discuss learning community program planning and assessment, as well as promote increased faculty involvement. Additionally, a faculty committee creates more sustainability of the program within the department.</p>	<p>FSHN</p>	<p>Anne Oldham</p>
<p>Having students reflect regularly seems to be one of the best practices- not too often or seldom is important.</p>	<p>Multicultural Learning Community</p>	<p>Lynn Lunde Evans</p>
<p>I think the best practice would be to have a solid set of assessment tools in play before the LC gets underway. It seemed like we were making them up as we went. This is hard to assess what you need to in the long run.</p>	<p>Design Exchange</p>	

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Collect information from students about their experiences using focus groups.	Transport	Darlene Fratzke
Industry Advisory Council interviews of a representative sample of LC students is very effective.	Construction Engineering Cornerstone	Rhonda Wiley Jones; Kelly Strong
Student self assessment of core competencies Student mid-term assessment using a PLUS/DELTA format to evaluate themselves, the seminar and seminar leader and the peer mentor and peer mentor meetings.	Technology (Fresh)	Dr. Thomas Brumm and Ms. LeQuetia Ancar
The CAAP exam has been a very useful tool (http://www.act.org/caap/index.html). Last year, testing services administered the exam for us (for a fee). In previous years, we administered the exam during finals week. Since they have decided not to continue offering the test, we will go back to administering it ourselves. We test the students in both Micro 110 (orientation) and Micro 450 (senior seminar). There are significant changes from the students first year and the semester they graduate. There are also significant differences between learning community and non-learning community students.	Microbiology	Nancy Boury
The mid-year focus group style of assessment by the Maple Hall director works well.	ACES	Ed Braun, Helen Olson
We are currently using an orientation survey (paper-based), an end-freshmen year online survey, and an exit survey in the senior year as assessment tools, as well as yearly student discussion panels with a mix of students to get feedback about the program.	Secret of Life	Jennifer Clair-Toy, Jack Girton
We believe that some of our best assessment data came in the form of journals from our students. Also, we had an ELPS graduate student conduct two focus groups and numerous observations with our students. It was very valuable to have an outside person	SSSP	Laura Franklin

conduct these evaluations.		
Develop survey instruments that can be used for the purpose of longitudinal study. Our idea is to target graduating students who were in Newspaper Physics during their first year to learn more about the long-term impact of learning community participation	Newspaper Physics	John Hauptman and Jennifer Lowery
The Plus Delta tool is what we most generally use for most of our immediate reflection. It is quick and provides us with an appropriate amount of information. Our students are comfortable with this form of evaluation and seem to take it more seriously than a survey. We typically ask students to complete the Plus Delta immediately after a learning activity and also summarize their thoughts with a large group reflection, thereby enhancing student learning.	Horticulture	Barb Osborn and Gail Nonnecke
We completed a small focus group in fall semester with students who were sophomores and had participated in the LC in their first year. The focus group allowed us to obtain assessment information on topics of importance to us (the linked courses of English 105 and Hort 221 and student perceptions and values of assignments).	Horticulture	Barb Osborn and Gail Nonnecke
I don't particularly have a personal best practice that would be valuable for other coordinators but I would strongly recommend that they explore using the university Learning Community survey which I have found to be quite extensive, covering a lot of intended outcomes. I would strongly encourage other LC coordinators to check out this instrument online or on WebCt if they have not already done so.	Agricultural Business	Ebby Luvaga
The semester evaluations seem to work well with students. Having open ended questions where they can write is also helpful, they will write comments.	ACES	Chris Fowler