IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Learning Communities Assessment Workbook

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A note about using this workbook:

Some people cringe when they hear the word assessment. It may conjure up visions of analyzing piles of data, scurrying to finish an end-of-year report, or scratching your head to figure out why you are collecting data in the first place. We start this workbook with the ISU Learning Community Vision and Goals for a distinct reason. It is clear that one goal of learning communities is to enhance students' learning experiences at ISU. Assessment is an integral part in developing and improving programs that are designed to achieve this goal.

Inside this workbook you will find some useful tools and strategies to help you think about ways to build in assessment practices that will support your efforts to improve students learning experiences. It may be helpful to view this resource more as a cookbook than an operating manual. If you read the workbook from cover to cover, looking for a step-by-step outline, you may find yourself feeling overwhelmed with the possibilities. Think about flipping through the workbook to find some recipes that you may want to try.

We also encourage you to check out the "Resources" section of the workbook. It offers some examples of best practices along with additional information about support resources that are available to learning communities.

Best wishes for an exciting year!

Learning Communities Assessment Committee

Guidelines for Best Practice in Learning Community Assessment

(see: http://www.lc.iastate.edu/guidelines.html for more details)

1. Identify the intended learning outcomes of the learning community experience (cognitive, affective, social)
2. Clarify how the intended outcomes of the learning community experience will help students reach the intended outcomes of the academic program
3. Design learning community experiences to help students achieve intended outcomes.
4. Identify a control group, if possible.
5. Decide what types of measures will assess the intended outcomes (e.g., examination of student work, surveys, student reflections, etc.) Develop a realistic plan for collecting data from both learning community students and control students.
6. Collect background data on students (e.g., demographic information, learning styles) to find out who participates and how they respond. Gather feedback about the effectiveness of the intervention itself.
7. Monitor the long-term effectiveness of the learning community by collecting retention and GPA data for both learning community students and controls.
8. Use the results. Hold a team meeting involving everyone on the learning community teaching/delivery team to look at the results and consider improvements that can be (a) incorporated in the future or (b) conveyed to future faculty, staff, and peer mentors who teach in the learning community.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Competence	Skills Demonstrated	Descriptors	
Knowledge	Observation & recall of information Knowledge of dates, events, places Knowledge of main ideas Master of subject matter	collect describe identify list show tell tabulate define examine label name	retell state quote enumerate match read record reproduce copy select
Comprehension	Understanding information Grasp meaning Translate knowledge into new context Interpret facts, compare, contrast order, group, infer causes predict consequences	associate compare distinguish extend interpret predict differentiate contrast describe discuss	estimate group summarize order cite convert explain paraphrase restate trace
Application	Use information Use methods, concepts, theories in new situations Solve problems using required skills or knowledge	apply classify change illustrate solve demonstrate calculate complete solve modify show experiment relate discover act	administer articulate chart collect compute construct determine develop establish prepare produce report teach transfer use
Analysis	Seeing patterns Organization of parts Recognition of hidden meanings Identification of components	analyze arrange connect divide infer separate classify compare contrast explain select order	breakdown correlate diagram discriminate focus illustrate infer outline prioritize subdivide points out

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Competence	Skills Demonstrated	Descriptors	
Synthesis	Use old ideas to create new ones Generalize form given facts Relate knowledge from several areas Predict, draw conclusions	combine compose generalize modify invent plan substitute create formulate integrate rearrange design speculate rewrite	adapt anticipate collaborate compile devise express facilitate reinforce structure substitute intervene negotiate reorganize validate
Evaluation	Compare & discriminate between ideas Assess value of theories, presentations Make choices based on reasoned argument Verify value of evidence Recognize subjectivity	assess compare decide discriminate measure rank test convince conclude explain	grade judge summarize support appraise criticize defend persuade justify reframe

Critical and Creative Thinking – Bloom's Taxonomy. (n.d.). Retrieved September 27, 2006 from http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic69.thm

Learning Skills Program: Bloom's Taxonomy. (n.d.). Retrieved September 27, 2006 from http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/bloom.html

Assessment Strategies:

Surveys
Interviews
Focus Groups
Reflective Journals
On-minute Papers
Formal Observations
Performance Evaluations
Pre-test/Post-test
Portfolios
Rubrics
Internal/External Review
Peer Review/Evaluation
Benchmarking
Case Studies
Standardized National Licensure Exams
National Surveys

Phrases for writing learning outcomes…

Students will develop….
Students will learn….
Students will be able to demonstrate…
Students will be able to identify….
Students will gain an understanding of….
Students will connect….

Outcome Classifications

Career & Professional	Knowledge & skills related to discipline	Academic skills & achievement	Global multicultural awareness & skills	Transition to ISU	Communication skills
Career awareness	Acclimation to academic discipline	Academic success	Exposure to diverse ideas & cultures	Interactions with students, faculty & staff	Writing
Develop professional memberships & contacts	Increase knowledge & skills related to discipline	Critical or reflective thinking & problem solving	Expand understanding on cultural/global issues	Foster sense of belonging within academic community	Communication
Identify a career path	Hands-on experience, participation or experiential learning	Team or group work skills	Demonstrate positive citizenship	Identification of university resources & policies	Speaking or presentation skills
Job search skills	Make connections across courses	Leadership	Desire to engage in lifelong learning & expect & embrace change	Transition skills	Cross-disciplinary communication
Values clarification & how values influence choice of career, major	Awareness of issues or ethics within discipline	Learning & study skills, time management			Technology/creative media
Preparation for the professional school admission process		Retention			

Note: This list was developed from the learning outcomes as provided on LC RFPs.

Program Outcomes vs. Learning Outcomes

Program outcomes examine what a program or process is to **do, achieve, or accomplish** for its own improvement and/or in support of institutional or divisional goals; generally numbers, needs, or satisfaction driven.

Example: The ISU/DMACC Learning Community will increase its participation numbers 20% by holding a recruitment event at each transfer student orientation day this fall.

Components of a program outcome:
Who: the name of the program
What: intended activity or change
How: method used to accomplish activity or change
How much: degree to which…

Statement: The Program will …
<do what>
<to this level of efficiency / effectiveness>
<using this method / these resources>

Learning outcomes examine cognitive skills that students develop through department interactions; measurable, transferable skill development. They are statements indicating what a participant (usually students) will **know, think, or be able to do** as a result of an event, activity, program, etc.

Example: Students will achieve awareness of university and departmental resources by participating in a resource scavenger hunt. Teams will compete to identify information that other students do not know about Iowa State University resources.

Components of a learning outcome:
Audience: who the outcome pertains to
Behavior: what the audience will know/be able to do
Condition: under what conditions or circumstances
Degree: how much, to what extent

Statement: Students will …
<learn what>
<under these circumstances / conditions>
<this level of efficiency / effectiveness>

Developing Your Learning Plan

Brainstorm…

1. Identify the objective or goal your outcome is going to support:

2. Identify the audience:

3. What do you want them to be able to know, think, or be able to do?

4. What circumstances or context will foster the learning?

5. To what degree will the learning occur? (Be specific!)

6. How will you measure the learning?

Fill in the blanks:

_____ will …

<learn what>_____

<under these circumstances / conditions>

_____

_____

<this level of efficiency / effectiveness>

_____

_____

Practice writing a learning outcome statement based on the information above:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(continued)

Check yourself:	**Yes**	**No**	**Not sure**
Is the outcome measurable?	___	___	___
Is the outcome meaningful?	___	___	___
Is the outcome manageable?	___	___	___
Would you feel comfortable/proud sharing this outcome with students, campus constituents, and external audiences?	___	___	___

Rewrite the learning outcome statement to address issues above:

_____

_____

_____

What questions do you have after going through this process?

_____

_____

_____

Time 2: Try writing another learning outcome:

_____

_____

_____

Check yourself:	**Yes**	**No**	**Not sure**
Is the outcome measurable?	___	___	___
Is the outcome meaningful?	___	___	___
Is the outcome manageable?	___	___	___
Would you feel comfortable/proud sharing this outcome with students, campus constituents, and external audiences?	___	___	___

Rewrite the program outcome statement to address issues above:

_____

_____

_____

Learning Community Survey

Introduction and Instructions

Here is a complete listing of the items available on the Learning Community Survey. We encourage you to use this instrument as a way to gather useful information about students' experiences in your learning community.

The survey, available through Qualtrics, is designed to allow coordinators to customize the instrument to match individual learning outcomes. Please select relevant items from the template in an effort to gather the most useful data. The "Common Core" questions (question 1 through 41) represent a set of items that we hope most coordinators will include in the survey. Please note, however, that you may elect to eliminate some of these questions (e.g., Peer Mentor items) if they are not relevant to your students' experiences. The "Outcome Modules" (questions 42 to 75) provide several sets of questions designed to measure specific outcomes. Please remove any questions that do not align with the learning outcomes or experiences in your individual learning community. Please contact the Learning Communities office (4-1948) if you need assistance in customizing the instrument.

After you've completed the administration of the survey, we encourage you to contact the Learning Communities Office (4-1948) for assistance in analyzing the data. Qualtrics has automated processes that will provide you with a summary of the data along with some graphical information.

Common Core [q1 to q42]

Satisfaction with Learning Community

*Please indicate your **satisfaction** with your **learning community experience***

(Very Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Strongly Satisfied)

1. Overall satisfaction with your learning community experience. [q1]

Satisfaction with the social activities in your learning community. [q2]

Please answer the following question using the scale below.

(Strongly Discourage, Somewhat Discourage, Somewhat Encourage, Strongly Encourage)

Would you recommend joining a Learning Community to a friend or prospective student? [q3]

Open-ended

Please explain why you would or would not recommend joining a learning community? [q4]

(continued)

University Experience

*My participation in a **learning community** has improved:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. my sense of belonging in the ISU community. [q5]
2. my opportunity to interact with ISU faculty and staff. [q6]
3. my sense of social support at ISU. [q7]
4. my interest in continuing my education at ISU. [q8]
5. my adjustment to academic challenges. [q9]
6. the quality of my overall experiences at Iowa State. [q10]
7. my connections to other clubs and university activities [q11]
8. my awareness of resources on-campus [q12]
9. my ability to get to know students who have similar interests [q13]
10. my opportunities to become more involved in community activities (volunteering, service learning, civic organizations) [q14]
11. my communication with professors [q15]
12. my participation in study groups [q16]
13. my ability to effectively and comfortably interact with people from other cultures or ethnic groups [q17]
14. my understanding of diverse cultures and values [q18]
15. my knowledge of issues and problems facing the world [q19]

Learning Experiences

*My involvement in a **learning community** has helped me to:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. see connections among my classes (e.g., learning in one class supported or expanded on what I learned in another class) [q21]
2. see connections between my personal experiences and class learning [q22]
3. better understand the nature of my anticipated major [q23]
4. apply what I learn in class to real world problems [q24]
5. practice the skills I am learning or have learned [q25]
6. find support for helping my learning [q26]
7. improve my study skills [q27]
8. become involved in service learning activities [q28]

Peer Mentor

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. Overall my peer mentor has been helpful. [q29]
2. My peer mentor provides me with useful information. [q30]
3. My peer mentor facilitates interactions among learning community participants. [q31]
4. I have regular interactions with my peer mentor. [q32]
5. My peer mentor encourages learning community participants to study together. [q33]
6. My peer mentor has kept me informed about upcoming learning community activities. [q34]
7. My peer mentor has helped me to learn about university resources [q35]
8. My peer mentor has helped me to succeed in my classes [q36]

(continued)

Open-ended

9. In what ways has having a peer mentor been beneficial to you? [q37]

How could your peer mentor have better assisted you? [q38]

General Open-ended

1. Why did you choose to join a learning community? [q39]
2. What was the most satisfying aspect of your learning community? [q40]
3. What was the most disappointing aspect of your learning community? [q41]
4. Do you have any comments and suggestions for your learning community? [q42]

Outcome Modules [q43 to q76]

Residential Living Experiences (for LCs with residential component)

*My learning community **living experience** helped me to:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. get to know students who have similar interests [q43]
2. adjust to the university environment [q44]
3. become more active in learning community activities [q45]
4. participate in study groups [q46]
5. form close friendships [q47]

Oral Communication

*My **learning community** experience improved my:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. ability to make formal class presentations [q48]
2. ability to argue a point of view assertively [q49]
3. confidence in participating in class discussions [q50]
4. comfort with asking questions in classes [q51]

Written Communication

*My **learning community** experience improved my:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. ability to produce well-written papers that would receive a grade of "B" or better [q52]
2. ability to write the types of technical, critical, review, or creative papers typical for my discipline with a grad of "B" or better [q53]
1. ability to organize my written communication [q54]

Critical Thinking

*My **learning community** experience improved my:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. ability to analyze and critically evaluate ideas [q55]
2. ability to apply academic knowledge and reason to current problems [q56]
3. ability to think of different ways to solve problems [q57]

(continued)

Teamwork

*My **learning community** experience improved my:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. ability to work cooperatively and productively with others [q59]
2. ability to effectively listen to others, enabling me to clearly understand what is being said and reflect that understanding back to the speaker [q60]
3. ability to interact with others and contribute to group discussions [q61]
4. ability to put team goals above my own personal goals [q62]

Leadership <u>(seems positional focus)</u>

*My **learning community** experience improved my:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. ability to persuade others to follow my lead [q63]
2. ability to inspire others through my leadership [q64]
3. ability to bring people with different viewpoints together to cooperate on a project [q65]
4. ability to facilitate group interactions [q66]
5. connection with other leadership opportunities on campus [q67]

Time Management

*My **learning community** experience improved my:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. ability to manage my time effectively [q68]
2. ability to prioritize tasks to be performed for a project [q69]
3. ability to coordinate multiple tasks or projects [q70]

Career

*My **learning community** experience:*

(Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree)

1. helped me develop connections with professionals from my career area of interest [q71]
2. helped me improve skills that are needed for my future career [q72]
3. enhanced my knowledge of career choices and options in my anticipated discipline or field of study [q73]

Self –understanding

1. ability to identify my personal strengths [q74]
2. awareness of my learning style [q75]
3. have had experiences this semester that “fit together” in helping me meet my goals as a student [q76]

Peer Mentor Survey

Introduction and Instructions

Here is a complete listing of the items on the Peer Mentor Survey. We encourage you to use this instrument as a way to gather useful information about students' experiences in your learning community. It is a short instrument designed to gather information near the beginning of the semester. We encourage coordinators to administer the instrument and share the results with mentors around the sixth week of classes.

The survey is available through Qualtrics.

Please contact the Learning Communities office (4-1948) if you need assistance in customizing the instrument.

After you've completed the administration of the survey, we encourage you to contact the Learning Communities office (4-1948) for assistance in analyzing the data. Qualtrics has a number of automated processes that will provide you with a summary of the data along with some graphical information. This may be helpful for turning around the data quickly to share with Peer Mentors.

Peer Mentor Survey

SECTION A Listed below are questions about your peer mentor. Using the check boxes, please indicate your level of agreement for each question.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My peer mentor responds in a reasonable time when I express a concern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor provides me with useful information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor facilitates interactions among learning community participants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have regular interactions with my peer mentor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor has made an effort to get to know me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have sought out my peer mentor for assistance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have made an effort to get to know my peer mentor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor encourages learning community participants to study together	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor demonstrates concern about my academic success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor is knowledgeable about university resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor is skilled at facilitating 1discussions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor is knowledgeable about the issues discussed in my learning community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My peer mentor has kept me informed about up-coming learning community activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall my peer mentor has been helpful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION B Listed below are general questions regarding your peer mentor. Please provide comments in the spaces provided.

In what ways has having a peer mentor been beneficial to you?

How could your peer mentor have better assisted you?

Use the remaining space to share any comments you have about your peer mentor.

Thank You

[Please return before you leave]