

**Office of Residence Life
Research Agenda
Report #1 on Strategic Change “Assessment and Information Sharing”
Originally presented to RL Professional Staff September 26, 2006**

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Since the first writing of this report, a number of changes have occurred within the department and a clearer sense of assessment parameters and priorities have emerged. This document is intended to assert A) the philosophy and objectives of assessment for the Office of Residence Life; B) outline assessment priorities, C) to delineate responsibilities for assessment throughout the department, and D) to detail assessment expectations for proposal, reporting, and for incorporation.

Office of Residence Life Assessment Philosophy and Objectives

As a *part* of the overall educational enterprise *within* the University of Delaware, it is important that we fall within the assessment scope of the institution. Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, The University of Delaware Office of Educational Assessment, and statements from the University of Delaware’s Provost serve as three readily available sources to inform our philosophy.

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSCHE) discusses (in part) the purpose of assessment through Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning:

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional goals and that students at graduation have achieved appropriate higher education goals.

MSCHE expects that accredited institutions will implement comprehensive institutional assessment plans that employ student outcomes assessment measures in general education and in all undergraduate and graduate majors. It outlines an accredited institution as one that is characterized by:

- Articulated expectations of student learning at various levels (institution, degree, program, course) that are consonant with the institution's mission and with the standards of higher education and of the relevant disciplines;
- A plan that describes student learning assessment activities being undertaken by the institution, including the specific methods to be used to validate articulated student learning goals/objectives;
- Evidence that student learning assessment information is used to improve teaching and learning; and

- Documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment.
<http://www.msche.org/>

University of Delaware Office of Educational Assessment identifies the purpose of assessment as:

The student outcomes assessment program has one central goal, which is to create a University of Delaware culture of continuous academic improvement which is based upon accountability and learning. However, there are several aligned goals that have been identified at other institutions and which are shared by the University of Delaware:

- Increase our confidence that we are putting our time and resources into activities that we value as an institution
- Increase our confidence that we are allocating resources to areas that are producing the outcomes we value
- Gather and use data that will enable us to make decisions that lead to improved instruction, stronger curriculums, and effective and efficient policies
- Strengthen our ability to say that our graduates are well-prepared to succeed in their future endeavors
- Have ready access to data that will satisfy the requirements of accrediting agencies and funding agencies, and will inform various accountability driven conversations
- Gather and use data that will strengthen arguments for increased funding and/or resource allocations to areas that are producing valued outcomes
- Increase the effectiveness of our communications about the value of the University of Delaware education.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Manual

<http://assessment.udel.edu/The%20Assessment%20Office/manual.html>

In a November 30, 2005 memo to Deans, Chairs, Program Directors, and Faculty, Provost Dan Rich states *“The ingredients of successful learning assessment are well-known to faculty: explicitly state expectations for students, evaluate if students are meeting expectations, and use evaluations to improve the quality of classes and academic programs.”* While it is taking some liberties to take a message to faculty and apply it to ourselves, I believe that statement to be a strong indicator of the view of the purpose of assessment at University of Delaware.

And finally, on a more general scale, Andrea Leskes and Barbara Wright’s publication, *“The Art and Science of Assessing General Education Outcomes,”* serves to offer three functions of assessment that may serve to direct our efforts.

- 1) Can inform students about their performance
- 2) Demonstrate that an institution is fulfilling its mission

- 3) And most importantly, provide information for continuous improvement of student learning and program effectiveness (Leskes & Wright, 2005, p. 5)

The commonality among the sources selected to inform our practices is that assessment is 1) improvement focused, 2) centered on student learning (on our breakdown of the RL educational priority) as the outcome of interest, and 3) is used to maintain focused energy on priorities through accountability. Assessment “bottom-lines” the issue of whether or not the students have learned what was intended to be taught. It is from the above three points that our philosophy and objectives of assessment are presented.

A related concept on centering assessment on student learning is the view that assessment is to be used to not only gather information about student learning, but to facilitate student learning as well. We need to be acutely aware of survey fatigue on the part of our students and staff. One of the most powerful educational strategies we have in our profession is that of externally stimulating reflection on specific topics with our students. Obviously this is done through introducing questions into their mental framework. Assessment is one such way of posing reflective questions. For future success in this area, all assessment projects need clearly articulated goals for measures of learning and for the facilitation of reflective learning. There also exists within a majority of lesson plans an untapped means of gathering assessment data which offers a rich source of information without the creation of an additional survey, focus group, or interview. A simple change in the mechanics or recording and reporting will serve many on-going assessment needs.

The point here is twofold – first, no new assessment tools should be designed without consideration of their potential to stimulate student learning, and second, lesson plans should be designed with consideration for data gathering potential, minimizing the number of new assessment tools introduced to students.

The Role of Assessment in Improving Front-Line Strategies- Frame I

The goal of all assessment should be from the perspective of making improvement. However, the particular types of assessment referred specifically below as “improvement oriented” or as “action research” address assessment techniques that are not generally translated into publication-quality studies, primarily because controls are not in place to make results generalized across a population (those interested in using assessment results in articles need to discuss such plans in advance with the Director or Associate Director to make sure all human subject protocols have been followed). However, action research as improvement oriented assessment plays a major role in adjusting front-line strategies that facilitates an understanding of the environment or culture in which the strategies are being utilized.

Frame I contains direction primarily for the eight professional Complex Coordinators. As the lesson plan designers who are also responsible for training staff and ultimately the delivery of educational strategies, the frame described below is well suited for site-based strategies. Should Complex Coordinator staff wish to conduct summative, research style

studies, they are to be considered as additional to the required action research expectations, not as a replacement.

Improvement focused assessment begins in a commonsense way, that is, on what needs to be improved.

The qualifier “improvement focused” is important in conceptualizing front-line assessment strategies. By selecting this distinction, we are also selecting to NOT engage in other forms of assessment, such as developing predictive models or preparing techniques to be generalized across a population. I came upon an enjoyable quote related to this frame by Trudy Bers in an About Campus article on benchmarking by Joe Pica (Jan/Feb 2004, p. 5). She states that “you don’t fatten a pig by weighing it.” Our assessment efforts will be focused on measuring things that help us to “fatten” our educational offerings through continuous improvement, not simply weighing it.

At this stage of our growth cycle, we likely have more things that need improvement than proven strategies. This reality requires that we prioritize and assessment priorities will be addressed later in this report.

Another important qualifier is that at the complex-level, assessment is focused on philosophies of “action research.” Action research is generally distinguished by being practitioner based, focused on actual existing practices, and using data to improve existing practices. In other words, the research is on real world substance with a lens toward informed improvement. In an action research model, you identify specific strategies to examine, examine them while you are using them in practice, and then use your findings to develop a better strategy. Action research is also an appropriate model used to further knowledge of the environment in which you practice your educational strategies. Action research is different than other types of research in that it does not seek to prove or disprove a specific research hypothesis, nor does it take pains to eliminate potential research bias with such things as double-blind control groups. Since action research is focused on practitioner improvement and not on the assertion of causal relationships, it allows for changes in strategies to happen in concert with the “study” without invalidating the results. This approach is perfectly in concert with current lesson plan writing deadlines allowing for Spring plans to be educated by Fall assessment.

Leskes and Wright state “In the pursuit of perfection madness lies, but fortunately perfection is not required” (2005, p. 23). They also point out that in assessment, **“less is more if it leads to learning that lasts”** (p.24). Assessment can be extremely time consuming and takes both financial and energy expenditures. As noted earlier, we cannot survey or assess our students to the point of survey fatigue. In order to be both effective and efficient, our improvement focused assessment starts with a CLEAR articulation of the problem, or area we are seeking to improve. This requires that when engaging in our assessment efforts, it is not appropriate to assess for assessment’s sake or to gather data in an area simply because “it would be interesting to know.” For example, improvement oriented assessment could legitimately be based upon a sense that RAs lack the content knowledge on social identities necessary to properly facilitate student reflection. An

inappropriate study in this area would be based on determining if membership in a particular social identity leads to higher gains for students in understanding that identity. While the information may be interesting, it does not have the capacity to inform practice in a useful manner, we don't control the social identities of our population. The key here is that improvement focused assessment must be on topics that can be applied for a change in practice. Other examples of legitimate improvement oriented assessment include:

- Developing an understanding of the students' behavioral changes in reaction to RL educational strategies
- Examining specific delivery mechanisms of lesson plans
- Examining training practices toward lesson plan delivery (among other things)
- Examining selection practices toward personal connection to complex curricula

NOTE: The above are simply samples. They would each need to be re-stated as a clear assessment learning goal to be examined.

Within the academic year 07-08 curriculum designs, Complex Coordinators began including a full year assessment plan. These plans will be more fully developed during the July 07 "Residence Life Summer School" series. It is expected that a full year learning goal be developed, clearly stating what the designer seeks to learn as a result of the exploration. Multiple methods are to be used to achieve the assessment learning goal, but the learning goal must remain a constant through the design of each method. The full-year plan should address how each strategy will inform portions of the year-long learning goal.

The language of assessment "learning goals" is new for our department and requires a bit of explanation. The movement away from an assessment "research question" toward that of a learning goal has been suggested by the Office of Educational Assessment and brings us more in line with institutional strategies. The articulation of learning goals is also an area in which our professional staff are well-practiced. The conversion of this language is expected to add clarity to the goals of each assessment design.

A weakness in the action research frame stems from the inability to use results to examine student experiences between complexes. As site-based studies, it will not be productive to utilize results for system-wide changes. This is not a weakness that can be addressed in our immediate future and will be placed in the backdrop of priorities for the next two years.

The Role of Assessment in Measuring Competency-Based Learning- Frame II

While all assessment on student learning is and should be improvement focused assessment, this angle of assessment will be discussed as more summative in nature for the purpose of our assessment philosophy. While action-research can be effective in examining portions of learning, the competency-based measures of learning will need to have sufficient validity controls and question precision necessary to reach broader

conclusions. Members of the Residence Life Research Team will take on the primary responsibility for designing summative measures of student competency attainment.

Our educational priority of citizenship has held firm and shows the capacity to remain fairly stable over the long-haul. The competencies and complex-based learning objectives have been another matter altogether. As the competencies are updated, they will play a heavy role in directing assessment efforts. In fact, we have received a good deal of feedback that our existing list of 12 competencies is too large and unwieldy, minimizing effectiveness. It is expected that further clarification and reduction strategies will be fully underway in Fall 07. The focused goal of assessment will be to improve our ability to educate students on the competencies we have identified as crucial elements towards achieving the citizenship outcome. Quality assessment will not wait until we are completely confident in our competency chart. Quality assessment however will help us achieve improvements in our chart.

Our centering on student learning is expressed through the competencies. Our benchmarks and our conclusive assertions (did we accomplish what we set out to accomplish) are to be exclusively based on measures of individual competencies, with a “bottom line” examination of “*Learn the skills necessary to be a change agent,*” and “*Demonstrate civic engagement toward the development of sustainable society.*” In terms of keeping score, it’s all about the competencies and progress toward the final two competencies on the chart is what we are seeking. Student progress or lack of progress on the competencies *as we have defined them* determines whether or not we are successful as a department. This view categorizes assessment centered on competency-based student learning as summative and as something distinct from improvement oriented or action research.

Some significant challenges await us in our efforts to measure success based on student learning. Much of the literature rightly critiques the use of surrogate or self-reports on learning gains. Our expertise in more advanced assessment techniques such as use of pre-established rubrics for use in observation research, testing, narrative story writing, portfolios, contributions tracking, “sociograms,” problem solving angles and considerations test, performance, etc. will need to be developed. An unfortunate reality is that with our steep learning curve needs, we also have a few things to unlearn. Most of us have practical experience designing surveys, focus groups, and interviews. We must acknowledge that our experience in designing and implementing these tools was primarily focused on gathering student satisfaction indicators and essentially conducting opinion polls. Measuring student learning requires not only new levels of knowledge and sophistication, but a new platform as well.

In summary, we need two frames of assessment. The action research frame, to be housed primarily within the Complex Coordinator’s efforts, is well suited to examine lesson plans, moments of learning, staff and student culture and perspectives, and training/selection strategies. The summative frame, used to make generalizations and predictions, as well as to examine the validity of assertions is best suited for examining

the specific competencies and will be utilized heavily by the Residence Life Research Team.

The Role of Assessment in Maintaining Focused Energy on Priorities through Accountability

Assessment also has a specific role in our department's future in maintaining our focus. Historically, we have used assessment to prove our worth, justify expenses, and on occasion to alter strategy. The role of assessment is now being more specifically addressed from the lens of expectations and accountability.

Expectations can be a fairly powerful change agent and should serve to inspire both students and staff. A test of quality for our eight curricula is whether or not they can be translated into clear expectations for what students must do in order to meet the learning goals. The process of crafting and communicating clear expectations for students has a side benefit of increasing student expectations for their residence hall experience and the role of Residence Life staff. We often assert a general departmental belief that when students become intentional learners, education is enhanced. If we hope to actualize this belief, it is incumbent upon us to express the learning we seek to stimulate. The reason that the topic of clear learning expectations for students falls into the assessment frame is that these clearly communicated expectations are the things we are measuring. Student progress on the learning expectations is examined through assessment and is to be reported back to students throughout the year. Our expression of expectations for student learning also helps signal to students and staff members the type of role we seek to play in the educational experience.

We must also use assessment to hold ourselves accountable to both our assertions and our professional team. We make many claims both directly and indirectly through our curriculum designs. We assert that particular learning goals lead to particular competency attainment. We assert that attainment of competencies in a particular order lead to an ability to be a change agent and to demonstrate civic engagement toward the development of a sustainable society. Our assertions based on our professional experiences, our understanding of various theories and literature, and some trial/error has limited validity over time. The nature of our existing validity will need to be replaced with assessment construct based validity. Through assessment, we will at times meet, and at times fail the accountability test. We will however, be able to make highly informed decisions for our future.

Assessment will also be utilized for professional development and employment decisions within the professional team. Our sequence of learning and competency map requires that success is achieved on year-based competencies. We will have agreed upon definitions for each competency which in turn direct the design of educational strategies by individual complexes. The first-year strategies must act in concert with the second and third year strategies. Assessment will reveal strengths and weaknesses of various approaches and will steer the full-group discussion topics as we move toward a more interdependent unit.

Assessment Priorities Introduced

Priority #1: The development of eight Complex-based year long assessment plans, each based on a unique assessment learning goal. In concert will be the departmental articulation of assessment method quality parameters, and approval processes. Initial design is underway and plans will be detailed in July 07, with full scale trials beginning with Fall opening 07.

Priority #2: The design and implementation of the freshman baseline focused on views on social identity and views on oppression. Pilot target established for Fall opening 07.

Priority #3: Continue work on summative studies focused on “Learn the skills necessary to be a change agent,” and “Demonstrate civic engagement toward the development of sustainable society.” Continue item analysis, factor analysis, and exploratory language interviews on Spring 07 pilot studies. Conduct two new pilot studies in Fall 07 and Spring 08. Target date for first summative study baseline is Fall 2008.

Our “demonstrate civic engagement toward the development of a sustainable society” competency is considered to be our top attainment. As such, the study or studies designed to measure this will act as both a point of reference and an anchor to other assessment efforts. We designate it on our chart as a “senior year” competency, which is somewhat of a misnomer given our relatively few numbers of seniors living on campus. The designation is more a testing than treatment point. A (as yet untested) premise is that the foundational reflections we stimulate in the first two years will act in concert with academic and other out-of-class experiences to realize this competency. The design of the civic engagement competency study must also consider all relevant content goals, the development of which will be one of our upcoming significant challenges. When assessment is taken in totality, our other competencies, as well as their related learning goals and lesson plans must be considered building blocks to the eventual civic engagement competency. Thus the civic engagement analysis must be considered in all other designs, and this analysis will also inform our progress on the steps.

Staff Assessment Responsibilities

In our traditional model, assessment has been the responsibility of the Assistant Director for Administration and later of the Associate Director of Residence Life. Assessment has been approached from two major lenses, the EBI and the Student Learning Survey. The EBI has been somewhat of a default benchmark, but lacking in many areas of interest and utility. The Student Learning Survey was effective in the sense that it offered evidence of the ineffective nature of the programming model as the primary educational strategy. Through these efforts, we produced mountains of statistics and reports (I have an entire stack of shelves and two drawers of these results). Taking 6-8 hours of staff team to examine (and often dispute or invalidate) results has not really moved practice greatly. Whether the cause or our ineffective use of assessment be person or position, the bottom line is that our assessment efforts have not effectively led to data driven decision making.

The monumental task of assessing competency based learning requires a full re-alignment of assessment responsibilities throughout the department, with each position level playing a role. For our future success, assessment is *everyone's* responsibility.

Before outlining assessment roles and responsibilities, it must be noted that while we are all working on assessment, our design efforts do not happen in a vacuum. For example, our Civic Engagement competency is considered a final test of success. The design of this study obviously influences the design of studies on other competencies and assessment at the complex level. In order to achieve assessment coherence, the regular professional staff meetings will be utilized for team review and decision making on the larger scale studies. The Research Team will also be utilized to help connect the assessment efforts to each other.

Assessment responsibilities are proposed as follows:

Assistant Director for Residential Education - Works in conjunction with individual Complex Coordinators to engage in action research on all major lesson plans. Design and implement strategies to communicate information from competency assessments to students. Develops, designs, interprets, and reports baseline studies on the diversity education elements of the competency chart, currently expressed as:

1. Understand how your social identities affect how you view others.
 - a. Each student will understand their social identities which are salient in their day-to-day life.
 - b. Each student will be able to express an understanding of how their social identities influence their views of others.
2. Understand how differences in equity impact our society.
 - a. Each student will learn about the forms of oppression that are linked with social identity groups.
 - b. Each student will recognize that systemic oppression exists in our society
 - c. Each student will recognize the benefits of dismantling systems of oppression
3. Understand your congruence with citizenship values:
 - a. -Human suffering matters.

Complex Coordinators – CC assistance will be required for all competency assessment initiatives. As a part of our Tuesday staff meetings, the entire professional staff will act as an assessment council critiquing assessment proposals, investigative techniques, and reports. Individually, at a minimum, CCs are required to propose, develop, design, interpret, and report on a year-long assessment learning goal based on their particular curriculum. In addition, CCs are expected to engage in the following:

1. Lesson plan assessment on one primary lesson plan (or plan series) per year with an emphasis on the question: how close does the learning outcome approximate the learning goal of the lesson plan? Special attention will need to be taken here to

focus in on the impact of the actual lesson plan, or treatment as the area of study rather than other factors in the living environment.

2. One “environmental” study on a topic to be proposed by the CC to the Assessment Team. Environmental studies are designed to develop a better understanding of students, staff perceptions related to curriculum, etc. When considering an environmental study, CC’s should review Renn, K. A., & Arnold, K. D., (2003). Reconceptualizing research on college student peer culture. The Journal of Higher Education, 74 no. 3, 261-291. This study can occur in concert with the departmental expectation that each Complex Coordinator and each Hall Director conduct two individual interviews per month with randomly selected students living within the complex (please note, the random selection is important, I also expect that CCC members be excluded from the sampling). Recognition that it is natural in residence life to possess a skewed view of students is important in this area. Our traditional roles place us in constant contact with RAs, hall leaders, and with students with behavioral issues. These three groups constitute numerically small and trait-unique samples.
3. CC’s will also assume responsibility in conjunction with the Assistant Director for Residential Education for developing mechanisms for providing students with information about assessment results from in-complex studies.

Assistant Director of Staff Development and Selection – The AD of Staff Development and Selection is responsible for the competency studies below, but is also responsible for developing assessment models to inform our recruitment, training, and development strategies for staff. The competency studies assigned to this AD are our “end-points.” As such, they make up a comprehensive report on our staff effectiveness. As more definitive curriculum content areas are developed, the AD of Staff Development and Selection will concurrently be assessing the affect of the content on the above competencies and the staff skill level on delivering content.

Competency summative studies:

- Demonstrate the skills necessary to be a change agent
- Demonstrate civic engagement toward the development of a sustainable society

Director of Residence Life – Responsible for overseeing the design and creation of a data warehouse and archive for assessment efforts, gathering and disseminating residence-hall information from Institutional Research, Office of Educational Assessment, Office of Admissions, and other potential sources of information within UD.

Assistant Director for Student Conduct and Departmental Operations - Develops annual analytical reports on the following:

- Residence Hall Damage
- Judicial referrals

- Develop an identification and tracking mechanism for student action toward residence hall community improvement

Associate Director - Maintains oversight of the department-wide assessment efforts and budgeting. Specific responsibilities include chairing the Research Team and coordinating Research Team activities. Associate Director functional focus will be primarily on:

- Overseeing approval of assessment proposals
- Determining funding allocations for assessment
- Advancing the development of the summative civic engagement and change agent skills competencies
- Assess staff development needs in areas of assessment and design training in conjunction with Assistant Director of Staff Development and Selection.

Hall Directors – The Hall Director role in assessment is still emerging and job description changes have not been put in place with formal assessment design expectations, though they may be called upon to assist the CC in the design stage. In fact, several of our HD’s are highly skilled and versed in the area of research and assessment and have played a critical role in complex-level assessment design, implementation, and final report writing. At a minimum, HD’s are expected to facilitate various data collection strategies, primarily in the areas of surveys, formal interviews, focus group facilitation, and summarizing data collected by RA staff. Those HD’s with high interest and high talent are certainly asked to play a major role.

Resident Assistants – RA staff play a key role in recruiting participants. The RA staff should also play a primary role in observation research methodology and reporting. Portions of lesson plans are being allocated to assessment and RAs are asked to provide information summaries on these areas.

The Research Team – Chaired by the Associate Director and consisting of select professional and HD staff, the Research Team is responsible for establishing assessment direction, standards, and tools for the department’s assessment efforts (see Strategic Change Section F for details). The Research Team will also assume responsibility for initiating assessment training and development activities for staff and for supporting the design of summative (competency) studies.

Skill development responsibilities

Designing quality assessment methods is an area that Residence Life professionals often lack education or experience. Developing these skills requires both departmentally created professional development series as well as professional staff self-directed learning strategies. We will also be engaging in reaching out to offices and professionals within the University of Delaware community for assistance. The AD for Staff Development and Selection and the Associate Director partner to develop the professional development approaches. Individual professional staff members need to inventory current skill and comfort levels and work with their direct supervisor to create a

unique growth plan. While this may seem to be an odd reminder, it is important to recognize that we work in a high quality institution of higher education. Major professional development and skill building opportunities exist every single semester through good old fashioned class enrollment.

Rules regarding human subjects

Our assessment efforts must fall within the boundaries of University of Delaware human subjects' policies maintained by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research. Normally, the types of assessment processes used by Residence Life would qualify for an exception to the full board review. For details about exemptions, please see the following site:

<http://www.ovpr.udel.edu/OVPR/do/index?pageId=61#exempt>

When recording verbal responses, it is required the students sign an informed consent form. A framework for the form can be obtained from Jim Tweedy.

Any of our tools that are designed to be primarily educational in nature are fully exempt and do not need approval. Our tools designed to examine educational techniques will require advance approval. Professional staff members are expected to complete the request for exception, but correspondence with OVPR will happen via the Associate Director. As we become more effective in our pre-planning of assessment, we will be able to establish "series approval" allowing us a more efficient means of navigating the process. We will be engaging in further training on human subject regulations.

Financing of assessment

Assessment is not free. Expenses come in the form of printing costs, participant incentives, computer programs, and scoring fees. Thus far, the Office of Residence Life has not established a specific allocation per study or per person. The department allocates \$8,000.00 toward assessment annually. EBI has typically been the biggest expense with the remaining funds used for additional surveys and participant incentives. It is likely that EBI will be discontinued by our department. The full assessment budget will be considered under the purview of the Research Team. Other professional staff can access the fund through a request process (to be detailed in the near future).

So now what?!

Basically, at this point, we all need to advance our education on assessment. But our assessment needs will not wait for full team comfort level and confidence through training in this area. We must all commit to learning by doing. Complex Coordinators have done well in 06-07 by developing initial studies, designing pilots to inform the eventual final versions, and have started assessing. The Research Team will be diligent in advancing its own knowledge level so that it can play a major coaching and oversight role for the betterment of the department. Steps are being taken to develop professional development experiences related to assessment design and will be introduced as they are solidified. Our primary learning targets beginning in July 07 will be developing staff

competency in establishing clear assessment learning strategies (or grounding research questions), developing proper interview and focus group protocols for question development and reporting, and formulating survey questions suitable for basic statistical analysis (frequency, basic item analysis, and basic factor analysis). As noted earlier, we have much learning and unlearning to do. We will capitalize on a shared belief within our departmental culture that educators are also learners. We are on the right path, but realizing the path is a long one, with many milestones and curves is an important place to start.

Assessment Proposal & Report Outline

1. Purpose

- A. Clearly defined learning goal
 - *The researcher at this time does not know the answer – he/she honestly wonders about likely explanations.*
 - *The statement should clearly express what the researcher is seeking to learn through the assessment process*

- B. Hypothesis or research question (what you believe exists; claims you want to test; what you suspect or what you *believe*...)
 - *Research hypotheses/research questions offer tentative answers to the main problem.*
 - *Research hypotheses/questions rarely answer the question once and for all. Usually, hypotheses/research questions are partial explanations.*
 - *Research hypotheses/questions must have initial credibility.*

- C. Definitions for all conceptual terms referenced in problem statement
 - *Definitions/explanations for all terms used that may have varying interpretations by different audiences*

- D. Rationale for the study (the need, issue, or concern central to furthering our ability to provide citizenship education that warrants serious attention and should be resolved).

- E. Connection between this study and our Citizenship educational priority/Competencies/the Civic Engagement toward Sustainability study

- F. Any additional rationale you would like to offer

2. Guiding Framework & Design

- A. Theoretical framework - sources informing the project. This area can be *supplemented* with your experiential frame.

- B. A brief description of strategies
 - *A researcher must document that the treatment/intervention was faithfully applied (ex: specific lesson plans were delivered to every student, etc.)*

- C. Explanation of the method of analysis and rationale for the questions to be used. Please provide:
 - a. All protocols, instrument, or tools

- b. Target audience; population & sampling
- c. Method (quantitative/qualitative; direct/indirect measures) and rationale
- d. Participant recruitment plan
- e. Data collection plan
- f. Method to be utilized to summarize and translate data
- g. Electronic format in which the Research Team will receive the data

D. Assumptions

- *Assumptions bridge the gap between evidence and conclusions.*

E. Limitations

F. Financial needs

3. Intended use for results

A. Explanation of how results will be utilized to improve strategy

B. Explanation of how results will be represented back to students

C. Potential learning for students

D. Potential application for training and staff development

4. Findings & analysis

A. Summary of data (please include graphs, charts, numeric summaries, etc. when appropriate)

B. Interpretation of data

5. Conclusions

Please briefly state whether your hypotheses or research questions are supported by the data.

6. Recommendations

Please discuss implications of your findings.

7. References

Please provide any sources you utilized to formulate and/or adopt specific questions as well as any literature that guided your framework.

***** Please submit sections 1, 2, and 3 to the Research Team for review prior to your study. Please complete all sections for the final report.**

Residence Life Educational Priority:

Citizenship- Become an engaged and active citizen by understanding how your thoughts, values, beliefs, and actions affect the people with whom you live and recognize your responsibility to contribute to a sustainable society at a local, national, and global level.

2007-2008 Learning Outcomes –Final Draft, 2/20/07

Competency	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1. Understand how your social identities affect how you view others. A. Each student will understand their social identities which are salient in their day-to-day life. B. Each student will be able to express an understanding of how their social identities influence their views of others.	X X			
2. Understand how differences in equity impact our society. A. Each student will learn about the forms of oppression that are linked with social identity groups. B. Each student will recognize that systemic oppression exists in our society C. Each student will recognize the benefits of dismantling systems of oppression.	X	 X X		
3. Understand your congruence with citizenship values: -Human suffering matters. -My actions have a global impact. -What I do and don't do civically and politically matters. -Social problems are everyone's responsibility.	X	 X X	 X	
4. Understand how others influence you.	X			
5. Understand the impact of your decisions.	X			
6. Understand the power of an individual in a community. A. Each student will know how to critically examine their individual contributions to groups to which they claim membership. B. Each student will learn how to contribute to the creation and actualization of community expectations.	X X			
7. Understand the knowledge necessary for the development of a sustainable society. A. Each student will be able to define sustainability. B. Each student will be able to explain how sustainability relates to their lives and their values, and how their actions impact issues of sustainability. C. Each student will be able to explain how systems are interrelated.	X	 X X		
8. Learn how to connect personal passions to vocational options in order to be able to contribute to a sustainable society. A. Each student will know the resources and the skills needed to pursue their vocational interests.		 X		
9. Learn how to develop and sustain interdependent relationships. A. Each student will learn how to develop a peer group that is supportive of their personal and academic success. B. Each student will recognize the benefits of relationships with people of other social identities.		 X X		
10. Learn to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a sustainable community. A. Each student will be able to utilize their knowledge of sustainability to change their daily habits and consumer mentality.			 X	
11. Learn the skills necessary to be a change agent.			X	
12. Demonstrate civic engagement toward the development of a sustainable society.				X