

Assessing the Co-curricular: Moving Beyond the Core

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...with much, much credit to Robert Mundhenk
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- Ask Institutional Research about graduation, retention, GPAs, and the like
- Ask faculty about their teaching and the learning it produces—but not necessarily whether they know they're producing learning (**assessment**)
- Ask faculty how they know they're producing learning (**accountability**)

Traditional Approaches to Assessment of Learning

- Traditional wisdom: Learning outcomes need to be aligned at course, program, and institutional levels
- But where are many general education goals, like “tolerance” and “teamwork” and “the ability to function in an increasingly diverse world” taught and assessed
- Or is “taught” the right word???

The Institutional Mismatch

- What happens if we substitute the word “learned” for the word “taught”?
- What are the implications of “Where are learning outcomes *learned* and assessed”?
 - Emphasis on student demonstration of knowledge and skills, not the topics covered
 - Ability to do or apply supersedes knowing
 - Responsibility for learning is shared
 - Site of learning becomes less specific, and boundaries become more fungible

Shifting Perspectives

- “Learning” is not exclusively classroom-based
- Many valued outcomes are not taught in the classroom
- Many valued outcomes are the result of processes outside the classroom
- “Learning” is a process based on three interdependent student experiences:
 - Understanding academic content and processes
 - Student development
 - Identity formation
- Meaning is constructed from inquiry, interaction, conversation, and life experience

After Learning Reconsidered

- Responsibility for “learning” exists outside the classroom
- Responsibility for “learning” doesn’t always take the same form; some entities on campus produce it, some facilitate it, some support it
- Responsibility for assessing learning exists outside the classroom as well

After Learning Reconsidered

Assessment

Strategies, Methods, and Approaches for

UNDERSTANDING

CONFIRMING

IMPROVING

Student Learning

- **Civic Responsibility**

- AA: Service learning connected to a particular course or course credit
- SA: Student government, voter registration, student judicial boards

- **Respect for Other Cultures**

- AA: Language courses, Anthropology, Sociology
- SA: International experiences, culture days, lecture series, residence halls

Some Post-*LR* Examples of Learning

- Critical Thinking
- Working with Others
- Global Competence
- Civic Engagement
- Ethical Behavior
- Communication
 - Adaptability

Some Core Areas Where Learning Can Occur in Non-classroom Settings

Exercise Directions

- 1) Pick one outcome per table
- 2) **Individually**, Brainstorm **WHERE** and **HOW** and the outcome is *learned* and *assessed* and **WHO** is responsible
- 3) **As a Group**, Discuss your Responses and complete the grid
- 4) Report Out to room on one idea

PLANNING THE LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

- Need to be intentional
- Need to be planned
- Need to be part of the structure of a student's experience
- Need to be assessed
- **Example: Missouri State University**
 - Living Learning Communities on designated floors of Residence Halls (Students contracts)
 - Planned and intentional interactions with faculty
- **Example: Columbia College Chicago**
 - Departmental Mini Grants through Office of New Student Programs and Orientation (reviewed w/ rubric)
 - Evaluation and Assessment Section
 - Connection to previous grant cycle

Co-curricular Outcomes

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