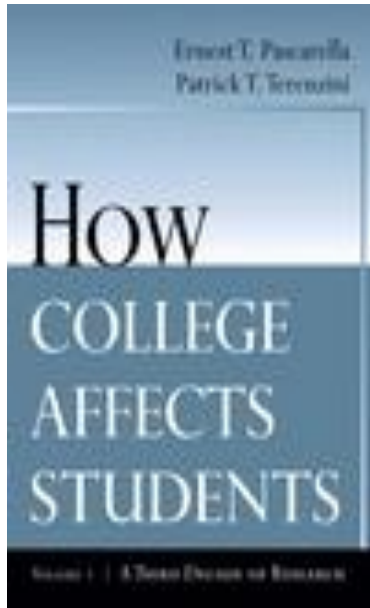


# Developing Learning Outcomes for Living-Learning Communities

*The University  
of Iowa*



# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement



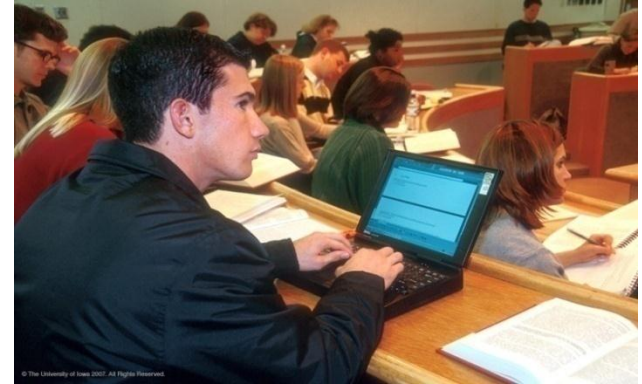
*The greatest impact appears to stem from students' **total level** of campus engagement:*

- *Academic*
- *Interpersonal*
- *Extracurricular*

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 647

# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

1. What **students** do -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
2. What **institutions** do -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things



# What Matters Most for Student Success: Student Engagement

- **Learning Communities**
  - First year seminars and experiences
  - Course in Common/General Education
  - Study Abroad
  - Writing Intensive Courses
  - Diversity/Global Learning
  - Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
  - Internships
  - Capstone Experiences
  - Research with a Faculty Member
  - Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- “High-Impact Practices”*

# How we can tell if LLC's at Iowa are "high impact"?



- **Assessment**
  - *Any effort to gather, analyze and interpret evidence that describes institutional, departmental, divisional or agency effectiveness.*
- **Student Learning Outcomes**
  - *Describe what a student should know or be able to do as a result of an experience (e.g., participation in living-learning communities)*
- *Provides more meaningful information than just counting participation numbers or measuring satisfaction*

# Student Learning Outcomes

## *Outcomes can be:*

- What you think you know about experiences (students who participate in learning communities are more likely to persist)
- What you'd like to find out about what students learned by participating in a learning experience. In a focus group of learning community participants you ask, "What did you learn by participating in a learning community?"

Courtesy: John Schuh

# Characteristics of Good Assessment Practices

- **Values Based**

- *Assess what is important – Time, money, and energy are limited*
- *Assessment makes a difference when it begins and ends with issues we really care about*

- **Focused on Improvement**

- *The goal is to get better*
- *Assessment can also help you make decisions about what to give up doing*

- **Cyclical**

# Characteristics of Good Assessment Practices

- **Connected to the overall environment**
  - *Look Up: institutional (departmental/program) mission, vision, values*
  - *Look Down: where are you (within the institution), who are you serving, what do they need?*
  - *Look around: How does your work 'fit'?*



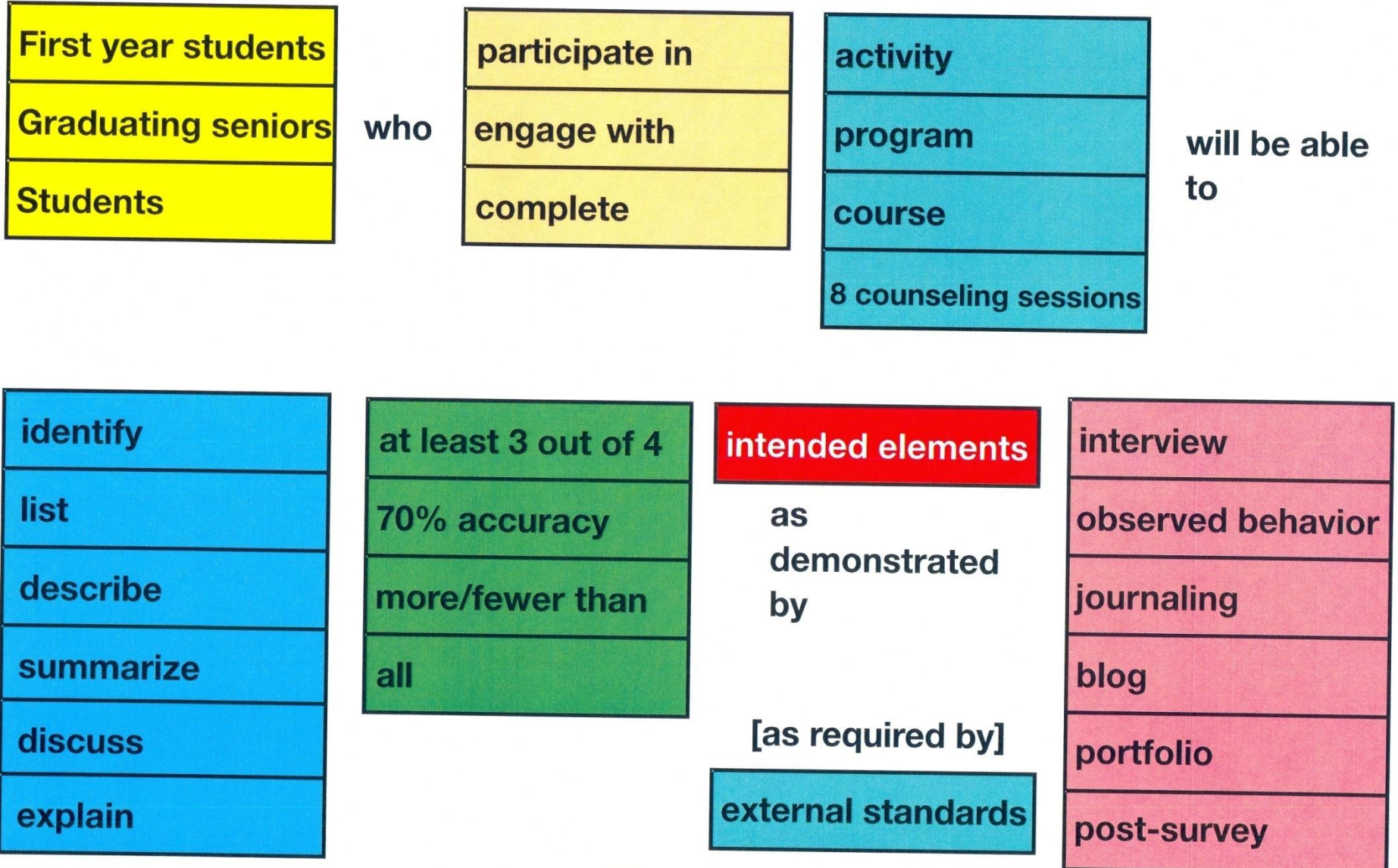
# Use your natural curiosity!

- **What you think you know about your LLC**
  - Students who participate in X are more likely to Y.
- **What you'd like to find out about your LLC**
  - I wonder if.....
- **What do you think is the highest impact part of the LLC experience for your students?**





# Format for writing a student learning outcome



# Measuring Learning Outcomes

- **Measures may be indirect**
  - Pre/Post surveys
  - Reflection papers or journals
  - Student self-perceptions of growth
- **Or Direct**
  - Portfolios
  - Student projects
  - Performances
  - Research
  - Observations of student behavior (needs to be used with agreed upon standards for assessment)

# Well-Formulated Outcomes

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Connected with mission, vision, values**
- **Focused on something important and useful**
- **Demonstrate learning has occurred**

# Learning Communities Program

## Learning Outcomes

- **Know – As a result of living in a LLC, students will be able to:**
  - **Discuss University resources available to them**
  - **Demonstrate college level study strategies and skills**
  - **Explain how college expectations are different from high school expectations**
  - **Form effective study groups**
  - **Articulate the University’s “Message”**

# Learning Communities Program

## Learning Outcomes

### ■ Do – As a result of living in a LLC, students will be able to:

- Collaborate with other students in the LLC to master material by working together outside of class on course assignments and by attending peer-led study groups.
- Discuss ideas from readings or classes with other LLC students.
- Establish social connections with other students in the LLC by participating in LLC social activities and events.
- Apply college-level study strategies and skills (e.g. time management, note taking) to their academic coursework.
- Interact with LLC faculty in formal (e.g. office hours) and/or informal venues.
- Interact in positive ways with diverse students.
- Use campus resources as appropriate
- Demonstrate the University's "message" through their daily actions.

# Selecting Measures for Learning Outcomes

*The University  
of Iowa*





# The Golden Rules of Measurement

- **Measure what you value, value what you measure**
- **Make your outcomes and your measurement:**
  - **Useful (practical)**
  - **Valuable (important)**
- **Focus on “small wins” first**

# Assessment Strategies to Consider

Source: Suskie, *Assessing student learning*, 2009; Courtesy John Schuh

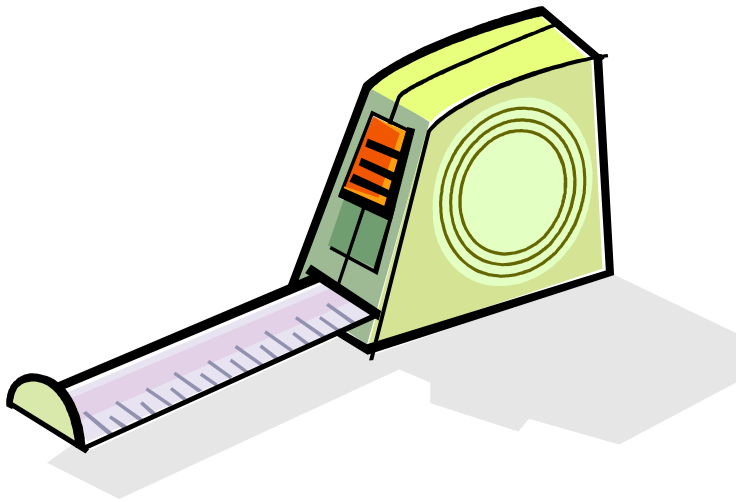
| If You Want To...  | Consider Using...  |
|--|--|
| Assess thinking and performance skills   | Assignments or prompts planned and evaluated using scoring guides or rubrics |
| Assess knowledge, conceptual understanding, or skill in application and analysis | Multiple choice tests  |
| Assess attitudes, values, dispositions, or habits of mind                        | Reflective writing, surveys, focus groups, or interviews                     |
| Draw an overall picture of student learning                                      | Portfolios   |
| Compare your students against peers elsewhere                                    | Published tests or surveys   |

# Direct vs. Indirect Measures

| Direct Measures: Measure activity of the learner       | Indirect Measures: Measure perceptions/opinions of the learner (including self-ratings of competence) |
|--|---|
| Posters  | Surveys   |
| <a href="#">Portfolios</a>                             | Retention Rates/Achievement Rates   |
| Papers   | Focus groups  |
| Presentations  | Reflections/Journals  |
| Performance/Observation (artistic/theatrical or skill) | Exit Interviews   |

# Tools for Direct Measurement

- Pre and Post Comparisons
- Experimental Designs
- RUBRICS



# Rubrics

- A detailed set of criteria for defining the standards for evaluating a performance
- Are criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced (i.e., collaborative learning, not competitive learning)
- Can vary in complexity from simple checklists to detailed components with detailed scales
- May use developed rubrics, or develop a rubric based on discipline or best practice standards (ex. CAS)

# Online Help for Creating Rubrics

Online Resources:

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>)

<http://openedpractices.org/resources?page=2>

[http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/  
howstep4.htm](http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/howstep4.htm)

<http://rubrics.kon.org/>

# One Rubric Design

Students will be able to \_\_\_\_\_

|             | Does not meet                   | Meets                           | Exceeds                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Component A | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> |
| Component B | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> |
| Component C | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> | <i>Descriptive<br/>Criteria</i> |

# Rubric Example

Students will be able to *articulate aspects of creating a healthy, balanced lifestyle.*

|                   | Does not meet   | Meets   | Exceeds  |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Physical Activity | <i>Thinks being "active" is sending text messages</i> | <i>Can state basic physical activity guidelines</i>   | <i>Can outline an effective physical activity plan based on personal needs</i> |
| Nutrition         | <i>Thinks Red Bull is a food group</i>                | <i>Can describe the basic components of MyPyramid</i> | <i>Can identify better and best ways to meet nutrition guidelines</i>          |
| Component C       | <i>Descriptive Criteria</i>                           | <i>Descriptive Criteria</i>                           | <i>Descriptive Criteria</i>  |



# Pre/Post Survey Example

| Survey Item  | Pre-test Mean | Post-test Mean | Change | Supervisor Rating |
|--|---------------|----------------|--------|-------------------|
| <b>Intellectual Growth</b>   |               |                |        |                   |
| I maintain the essential knowledge for the given sport I am responsible for.             | 4.23          | 4.46           | +.23   | 4.5               |
| An official's role is to control and administer a contest with little or no recognition. | 3.92          | 4.15           | +.23   | 4.29              |
| As an official, I can make a call without causing interruption.                          | 3.92          | 4.23           | +.23   | 4.31              |
| <b>Effective Communication</b>   |               |                |        |                   |
| I am skillful at effectively handling conflict.  | 4.0           | 4.23           | +.23   | 4.21              |
| I am approachable and easy to communicate with.  | 4.15          | 4.54           | +.39   | 4.5               |
| I can resolve conflict in a calm matter  | 3.62          | 4.15           | +.53   | 4.15              |

# Tools for Indirect Measurement



Institutional Data

Survey Data (Internal and External)

Focus Groups



# Internal Surveys

## Advantages:

- Personalized and Specific

- Relatively low cost

- Relatively quick to produce

## Disadvantages:

- Not statistically robust (validity and reliability)

- Response rates and biased samples

- Open-ended questions can be difficult to analyze

# Free/Cheap Survey Software

Websurveyor (UI-sponsored):

<http://cs.its.uiowa.edu/sda/survey/>

SurveyMonkey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

Zoomerang:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/>

# External Surveys (e.g., NSSE)

## Advantages:

- Statistically robust
- Benchmark data available
- Quick Analysis

## Disadvantages:

- Expensive
- Limited “personalized” questions

# Survey Considerations

- Incentives  
Pre-paid, one per participant result in highest return
- Length (<~15 minutes)
- Salience/Personalization  
“Emails from Sally Mason will be deleted”

# Focus Groups



## Advantages:

- Allows for in-depth questioning
- Flexibility in questioning
- Can select the participants

## Disadvantages:

- Need a trained facilitator for most accurate results
- Strong/weak personalities can skew results
- Can get expensive if using incentives
- Should do multiples to evoke true “themes”

# Focus Groups

Ask questions related to outcomes (vs. satisfaction):

- What did you learn as a result of \_\_\_\_\_?
- What have you done as a result of \_\_\_\_\_?
- Give me an example of how you have applied your learning from this experience to \_\_\_\_\_.



# Selecting Your Measures and Tools

- Consider using both a direct and an indirect measurement to create a holistic picture of student learning
- Ask what will best fit your needs and answer the questions you want to answer

