

Assessing Intentional Learning: A Teagle Foundation Project

<http://www.moravian.edu/teagle>

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Project Goals

To work as a consortium to develop tools for:

- Assessing programs of intensive student faculty interaction (e.g. first-year seminar, senior seminar)
- Assessing the development of intentional learning in these programs

Intentional Learners . . .

- Are self-aware about reasons for study, the learning process itself and how education is used;
- Are Integrative thinkers;
- Adapt skills learned in one situation to another situation;
- Connect intellectual study to personal life, knowledge to social responsibility;
- Place themselves in a diverse world.

■ (AACU, *Greater Expectations*, p. 21)

Programs

- Drew: Established first-year seminar
- Moravian: First-year writing and writing-intensive courses in the major
- Muhlenberg: Capstone courses and student-faculty research
- Roanoke: Integrated freshman orientation and first-year seminar
- Susquehanna: First-year Core Perspectives and senior capstone experience

Assessment Techniques

- Direct assessment
 - Student essays
 - Other student work
- Indirect assessment
 - Local and national surveys (e.g. NSSE)
 - Focus groups
 - Interviews

Project Organization

- Teagle planning grant 2005-2006
- Teagle project period 2006-2009
- Institutions pursue programs independently
- All five institutions meet each fall, spring
- Assessment consultant is key player

Successes

- Sharing of ideas
 - Pooled resources
 - Developing common tools
 - Mutual support
- ... and
- Progress!

Challenges

- Developing common tools
- Applying tools on separate campuses
- Gathering useful data
- Defining success/creating change

Challenges:

Developing Common Tools

- ❑ Intentional learning rubric
 - ❑ Devised by group
 - ❑ 14 criteria
- ❑ Writing prompts
 - ❑ Various local
 - ❑ One common, revised at least once
- ❑ Local tools
 - ❑ Surveys
 - ❑ Focus groups

Challenges: Applying Tools

- Varying assessment cultures at the institutions
- Obtaining broad faculty buy-in
- Getting and maintaining administrative support
- Integrating our Teagle projects with other projects and initiatives on campus
- Integrating our tools into individual courses
- Negotiating different campus climates and cultures

Challenges: Gathering Useful Data

- Validity of Data
 - The way prompts are administered
 - In different courses and programs
 - By different instructors
 - As integral parts (or not) of courses
 - In differing campus climates
 - The way student products are assessed
 - By different individuals within campus teams
 - By teams at different institutions

Challenges: Gathering Useful Data

- Gathering national survey (e.g. NSSE) data
 - Partner institutions do not administer the same surveys
 - Partner institutions do not administer surveys on the same schedule
- Other extraneous variables

Gathering Useful Data: Take-Home Message

Ultimately, we have learned to accept that the data we gather and share is not going to be perfect. However, it does have to be useful, both for making change on our individual campuses and for advancing the common goals of the project.

Defining Success & Creating Change: Some Key Questions

- Do we have a shared definition of what success will look like?
- Is success for the consortial project the same as success for the individual campus projects?
- Given very different starting points for campus projects, how do we assess outcomes of campus projects relative to each other?

Does success mean . . .

- Developing common and exportable assessment tools?
- Implementing assessment processes on individual campuses using common tools?
- Creating change in specific programs on individual campuses as a result of assessment?

. or all of the above

Creating Sustained Change

- Will participation in this project be a catalyst for sustained change on each campus?
- Is the model exportable so that the work we've done can be used to create change on other campuses?
- Has the project created sustained connections and possibilities for collaboration between the campuses that will last beyond the project?
- Has the project involved enough of each campus community or has it only affected those individuals actively participating in the project?

Is It Worth It?

Yes!

Top 10 reasons why regional
assessment projects are
worthwhile...