

Building Faculty-Driven Assessment of First-Year Inquiry Courses:

A Toolkit for Sharing

Thomas Pistole, Joanne Curran-Celentano,
and Michele Holt-Shannon

Discovery Program

Michael Lee

Center for Teaching Excellence

University of New Hampshire, Durham NH



Inquiry 444: Fire and Ice.
Prof. Chris Bauer



The Toolkit: Its Origins

The Discovery Program

Inquiry Course

Inquiry-guided learning is a fundamental aspect of the University of New Hampshire's recently articulated general education curriculum, the Discovery Program. UNH has begun to use assessment not only to measure the extent of student engagement in the learning process, but also to increase that engagement.

An **Assessment Plan** was developed by a faculty group for the program's first-year inquiry courses with support from the Davis Educational Foundation.

The goal: To create a culture of assessment that will be transferable to the Discovery Program overall.

A key feature: A faculty-driven assessment toolkit—an assortment of instruments, models, and practices from which faculty can select as they seek to improve their courses and enhance student learning through formative assessment.

A model: For measuring learning outcomes associated with inquiry-guided learning in first-year seminars, readily adapted to a variety of educational settings.

Davis Assessment Fellows:

- Connect with colleagues across disciplines.
- Establish student learning outcomes for Inquiry courses.
- Embed assessment tools and strategies in Inquiry course development.
- Develop first-year Inquiry courses and establish model examples.
- Create a culture of assessment for Inquiry courses—and for the Discovery Program in general.



Inquiry 444: Risk and the Human Experience.
Prof. Brent Bell



Inquiry 444: Learning to Learn.
Profs. Mike Middleton and Ruth Wharton-McDonald

Assessment Toolkit

An assortment of instruments, models, and practices to measure and enhance student learning through formative assessment.

Examples:

- Service-learning journals
- Experiential research projects
- Mid-semester course surveys
- Evaluation of class participation
- Engaged learning projects
- Course paper rubrics

Growing Impact of a Culture of Assessment

- Development of a set of assessment tools.
- Selection of two of the three cohorts of Assessment Fellows, from six schools and colleges, plus the library.
- Continued development of first-year courses with articulated student-learning outcomes.
- Identification of common assignments and rubrics across courses.

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Contact information:

Dr. Thomas Pistole
Discovery Program
3 Hamilton Smith Hall
UNH, Durham NH 03824