Using a Learning Community Model to Increase Assessment Capacity in Co-Curricular Departments

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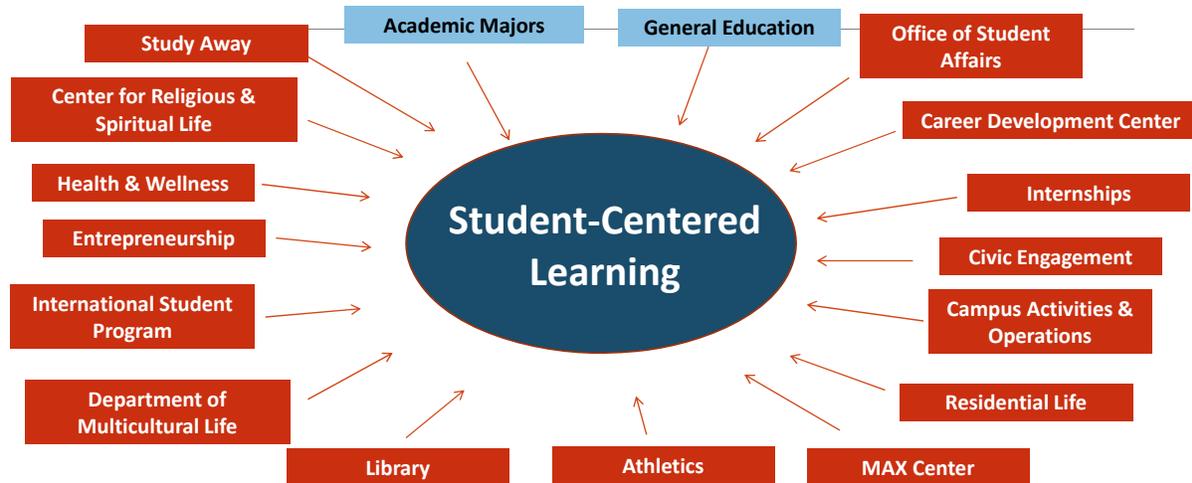
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Agenda

- Context for assessment at Mac

- Our decision to use a learning community model

- Guiding principles, learning goals & curriculum

- Outcomes & Feedback

- Next Steps

- Questions

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Assessment Context at Macalester

Study Away

Center for Religious & Spiritual Life

Health & Wellness

Entrepreneurship

International Student Program

Department of Multicultural Life

Academic Majors

General Education

Office of Student Affairs

Career Development Center

Internships

Civic Engagement

Campus Activities & Operations

Residential Life

MAX Center

Athletics

Library

Student-Centered Learning

Adapted from Maki

Genesis of the Learning Community

2012: Introductory workshops

2013: Assessment plans and first *formal* assessments

2014: First "Action Reports"

2015: Second round of Action Reports

Reflection

2016: Learning Community proposal and launch

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Learning Community Goals

- Better **integrate assessment into program design** and development
- **Improve overall confidence** in assessment strategies and techniques
- Produce **useful** assessment information
- Complete (or prepare for) an assessment project of **personal importance**

> *Provide a **positive learning environment** with valuable **opportunities to practice** assessment techniques & **network** with colleagues across campus.*

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Participating Co-Curricular Offices

STUDENT AFFAIRS
- Athletics
- Campus Activities & Student Orgs
- Career Development Center
- Center for Religious & Spiritual Life
- Health & Wellness Center
- International Student Programs
- Department of Multicultural Life
- Residential Life

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
- Civic Engagement Center
- Entrepreneurship Program
- Internship Office
- Library
- MAX Center (tutoring)
- Center for Study Away

> **Offices assessed a particular PROGRAM**
> Ex: Res Life's Community Learning Program
> Ex: Study Away's Returnee Lunch Series

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Session 1: Needs Assessment (June 2016)

Attempt to gauge participants' experience, skills, needs, and priorities

- Assessment is useful for programs when…
- Assessment is frustrating (not useful/difficult) for programs when…
- The learning community will be most useful to my department's programs if…
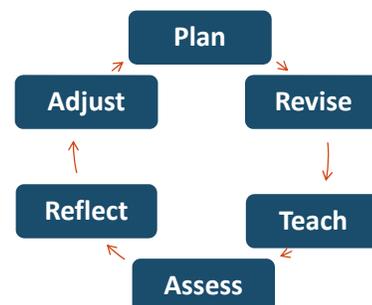- The way I personally learn best is…

| Self-rated assessment 'skills' | Voted on content priorities | Discussed timing & logistics |

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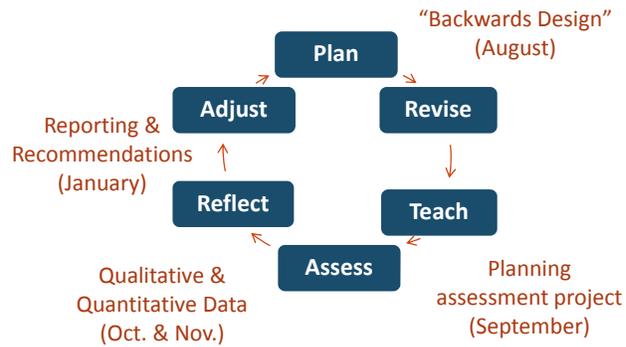# Structure of the Learning Community

1. **Identify assessment projects culminating in end-of-year report**
2. **Five 'class' sessions (1hr 30min each)**
3. **Moodle group to house resources in one place**
4. **Feedback throughout the year**
   - Individual feedback on drafts
   - In-person meetings
   - Detailed feedback

Plan → Revise → Teach → Assess → Reflect → Adjust → Plan

Understanding by Design

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Curriculum for 5 Class Sessions

"Backwards Design"
(August)

Plan

Adjust — Revise

Reporting &
Recommendations
(January)

Reflect — Teach

Qualitative &
Quantitative Data
(Oct. & Nov.)

Assess

Planning
assessment project
(September)

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TYPICAL SESSION STRUCTURE

- Brief overview of theory/principles
- Past examples/models at Mac
- Hands-on individual work
- Small-group workshopping
- Final discussion & take-aways
- Formative Assessment & Next Steps

'Homework' Along the Way

ASSESSMENT PROJECT TEMPLATE

Program Description	Including details such as target audience, purpose, number of meetings and length, when the meeting(s) will take place, etc.
Learning Goals & Outcomes	At least one goal and outcome
Purpose for Assessment	What questions about student learning are driving the assessment? How will you use results?
Assessment Stakeholders	Who will receive the assessment results? How will they use this information?
Description of Assessment Method	How did you gather evidence about student learning?
Summary of Results	What claims do you feel comfortable making, based on your evidence?
Recommendations for Practice	What have you learned about your program? What decisions have you made?

Outcomes & Feedback

Better integrate assessment into program design and development

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed
- "[It] *helped me to see how assessment can help me improve our programs and services.*"
- **Alignment** between description, learning goals and outcomes, curriculum <u>and</u> assessment

Improve overall confidence in assessment strategies and techniques

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed
- *"It really helped to demystify the assessment process for me…"*
- **Better quality** assessments, analysis and descriptions of limitations

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Outcomes & Feedback

Produce useful assessment information

- 80% strongly agreed or agreed
- *"The results of my assessment were very useful to our department."*
- **Thoughtful reflections** on the data and what it means for practice + **assessment as iterative**

Complete (or prepare for) an assessment project of personal importance

- 80% strongly agreed or agreed

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Outcomes & Feedback, cont'd

WHAT ELSE WORKED?	**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?**
Scaffolded approach	More workshopping
"I liked that we were able to go through the assessment process step by step. It gave me time to absorb the information and practice what I learned."	*"Working with others was good, but we could have more group work time."*
Personal connections	Idiosyncratic needs
"I appreciate the time for individual feedback [and] seeing the questions and projects of other offices."	*"having an in-depth class on Qualtrics [or] more time spent summarizing results"*

Next Steps: Learning Community 2.0 !

▪ **Early November:** Clarify expectations for the year

▪ **December**: Review session for creating learning goals and outcomes

▪ **January**: Learning Community assessment as a full case study

▪ **May**: Final review to address key issues identified by participants

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Questions

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