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ABSTRACT

Excerpts are taken from published works, college curricula and handbooks, and other sources to examine the aim of colleges in terms of student outcomes. Written in outline style, the document begins by setting a context. Subsequent sections have the following headings: (1) What Outcomes or Characteristics Do We Think Our Students Will Need To Be Successful? A Sampling of Responses; (2) What Can the Learner Do with What S/He Knows? Assessing Learning Competences; (3) A Sampling of Assessment Instrument Alternatives; (4) Local Design of Assessment Measures; (5) Specifying the Components of Critical Thinking: Two Examples; (6) Evaluating Assessment Measures; (7) Contrasting Qualitative and Quantitative Research; (8) Guiding Questions for the Use of Qualitative Methods in Outcomes Assessment Efforts; (9) Assessing Student Learning: A Phenomenological Approach; (10) Student Assessment Interview Formats: Some Examples; and (11) Assessment: Studying the Person in the Context of the Environment. Three worksheets are also included, for individuals to use in evaluating their reasons for wanting to teach, in envisioning goals and outcomes, and in designing an assessment project. (JDD)

BEYOND CONTENT:

RE-FRAMING QUESTIONS OF STUDENT LEARNING

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Material prepared for the

Student Outcomes Research Institute
Olympia, Washington
June 19-21, 1990

SETTING A CONTEXT

The major aim [of college] should be to win the student to the intellectual enterprise...to capture the student's imagination, to [provide] a sense of what it means to become deeply involved in a discipline or subject, to learn things that make a difference... Subject matter has a crucial role to play, but the outcomes we seek have little to do with 'how much is covered'...To ask a college freshman to sit still and absorb vast arrays of coldly impersonal knowledge on the off-chance it will be needed in the future seems a hopeless motivational task.

Nevitt Sanford
The American College, 1962

Knowledge of facts is an essential part of most disciplines, but it is crucial to recognize that firm knowledge of detail depends upon an active engagement in the learning process, which ultimately embeds those facts in a **matrix of meaning** .

Noel Entwistle & Ference Marton
Styles of Learning and Teaching, 1981

2 components to the **Intelligent Mind at Work(IMW)** :

There is **subject matter** , without which the mind has nothing to think about; and there is **functional capacity** , without which it can't think about anything at all.

Gary Woditsch, Mark Schlesinger & Richard Giardina
"The Skillful Baccalaureate", Change, Nov./Dec., 1987, p. 48-57

To Cow : To list data (or perform operations) without awareness of, or comment upon, the contexts, frames of reference, or points of observation which determine the origin, nature, and meaning of the data (or operations). To write on the assumption that "a fact is a fact." To present evidence of hard work as a substitute for understanding, without any intent to deceive.

To Bull : To discourse upon the contexts, frames of reference, and points of observation which would determine the origin, nature, and meaning of data *if one had any*. To present evidence of an understanding of form in the hope that the reader may be deceived into supposing a familiarity with content.

William G. Perry, Jr.
"Examsmanship," unpublished paper, Harvard University, 1963

Outcomes developed by colleges need to include more than the knowledge component of abilities. Abilities, which cross position levels and even careers, can be abstracted and built into general educatic urricula. Abilities that are profession-specific can become the cornerstone for further development in majors.

Marcia Mentkowski & Austin Doherty
"Abilities that last a lifetime", AAHE Bulletin, 36 (6),1984, p. 5-6, 11-14

"WHAT OUTCOMES OR CHARACTERISTICS DO WE THINK OUR STUDENTS WILL NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?" A SAMPLING OF RESPONSES

NCHEMS (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems)
(conceptual framework of potential educational outcomes)

	COGNITIVE	AFFECTIVE
PSYCHOLOGICAL	critical thinking knowledge	self-concept values attitudes
BEHAVIORAL	career development educational achievement	mental health personal habits interpersonal relations

WINTER, McCLELLAND & STEWART (New Case for the Liberal Arts, 1981)
(empirical research on effects of college, especially a liberal arts education)

* Critical thinking
* Sensitivity to causal links between events (understanding consequences of actions)
* Intellectual empathy (seeing all sides of an issue)
* Respect for and appreciation of diversity
* Maturity of emotional judgment and adaptation

KLEMP (McBer & Co., now with Charles River Consulting)
(empirical research on competencies associated with successful career performance)

Intellectual
* Conceptualization--generate new ideas
* Diagnosis--recognize/apply existing ideas
* Logical thinking--complex deductive inferences

Interpersonal
* Influence--persuading others
* Positive regard--faith in others' abilities

Entrepreneurial
* Initiative--taking action
* Achievement drive
* Results orientation--sets realistic goals and measures performance against goals

Maturational
* Self-presentation
* Stamina/adaptability
* Self-control

ALVERNO COLLEGE
(competency-based educational curriculum)

6 **competence** levels (4 general, 2 specialized) across 8 outcome areas:

* Effective communications ability
* Problem solving ability
* Effective social interaction
* Responsible involvement in the contemporary world
* Analytical capability
* Valuing in a decision making context
* Effectiveness in individual/environment relationships
* Aesthetic responsiveness

LONGWOOD COLLEGE
(public comprehensive college, Virginia)

Knowledge/Skills/Attitudes in each of the following outcome areas:

Intellectual/Academic
* Understanding and appreciating the sciences
* Understanding and appreciating the arts
* Sense of history
* Critical thinking

Career
* Career readiness
* Sense of direction
* Effective communication

Personal
* Resource management
* World consciousness
* Sense of awakening
* Sense of well-being

Interpersonal
* Interpersonal effectiveness
* Effective family relationships
* Responsible citizenship

SHORELINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
(public community college, Washington)

Knowledge
* Active awareness of the natural, social, and cultural environment
* Understanding of the methods and principles of scientific inquiry and its technological impact
* Understanding of human responses to historical issues, ideologies, and events as well as the philosophies of organized societies
* Understanding of the implications of growing global interdependence of diverse societies and cultures
* Awareness of the aesthetics of literature and the arts across time and cultures

Attitudes/Values
* Capacity for continued self-direction
* Tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict
* Awareness of personal values and cultural mores and their role in ethical decisions

Skills
* Communication
* Quantitative reasoning
* General intellectual skills (critical thinking)
* Social functioning

SEATTLE CENTRAL
(public community college, Washington)

CATEGORIES	DIMENSIONS		
Prepared for next phase of life (further education, a profession, personal or community life)	Fundamentals	Expertise	Organizational Abilities
Educated person and life-long learner	Multi-cultural literacy	Critical thinking	Life-long learning
Informed citizen of diverse, interdependent changing world	Knowledge of diversity and interdependence	Social responsibility	Social interaction
Personal empowerment and interpersonal facility	Responsible action	Self-esteem	Social interaction

SUOMI COLLEGE
(private junior college, Michigan)

* Oral communication
* Critical thinking
* Ethical decision-making
* Planning & decision making skills
* Written communication
* Problem analysis
* Understanding consequences of actions

DOUGLAS HEATH
(developmental theorist, based on extensive longitudinal studies of college men)

DOMAINS		DIMENSIONS	
* Cognition	* Self-concept	* Symbolization	* Allocentrism
* Self-concept	* Values	* Integration	* Stability
* Interpersonal relations		* Autonomy	

"WHAT CAN THE LEARNER DO WITH WHAT S/HE KNOWS?" ASSESSING LEARNING COMPETENCES

GETTING STARTED

*Consider beginning with the question, "What are the consequences?" rather than the more limiting, "What are the objectives/goals?"

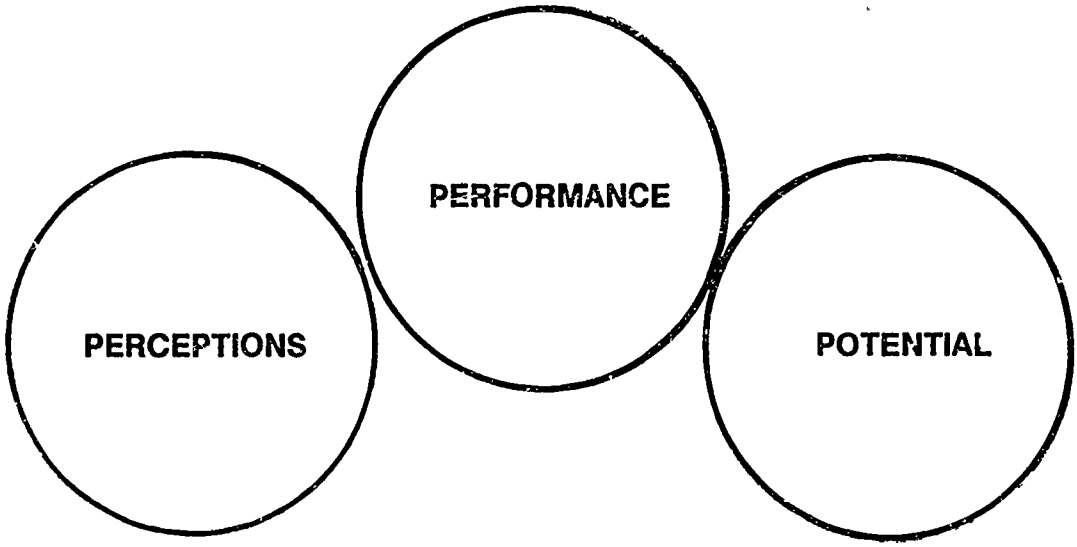
*Approach the inquiry with a style characterized more by **exploration** than by **control** and **focus**.

Michael Scriven, "Thoughts on Evaluation in Higher Education"

*Define assessment goals clearly first; don't let methods dictate what is and isn't assessed.

*Effective small-scale assessments are better than weak large-scale assessments.

MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS & MULTIPLE MEASURES: ALVERNO'S "TRIANGULATION"



Performance : faculty-designed
Perceptions : college-designed
Potential : developmental measures

ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

1. Existing instruments or locally-designed assessments?
2. General education or end-of-program assessment?
3. "Course-embedded" or external assessment?
4. Strictly outcome perspectives or process/environment issues as well?
5. Population or sampling?

A SAMPLING OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT ALTERNATIVES

General Topics (attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction, etc.)

ACT Student Opinion Surveys
ETS Student reactions to College
NCHEMS Student-Outcomes Information Services Surveys
ACE Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP) Surveys
College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (Betz & Menke)
Exit interviews

Cognition/Intellect Domain

Analysis of Argument (McBer & Co.)
Watson-Glaser Criticial Thinking Appraisal
Cornell Critical Thinking Tests
New Jersey COEP General Intellectual Skills Test
Reflective Judgment Interview (Kitchener & King)
Faith Interview (Fowler)

Perry Scheme of Intellectual Development:
Measure of Intellectual Development (Knefelkamp & Widick)
Measure of Epistemological Reflection (Baxter Magolda & Porterfield)
Learning Environment Preferences (Moore)
Ways of Knowing Interview (Belenky et al)
Other structured interview formats (e.g., Benack, Moore, Slepitza)

Moral Judgment
Moral Judgment Interview (Kohlberg)
Voice Interview (Gilligan)
Defining Issues Test (Rest)
Social Reflection Questionnaire (Gibbs)

Ego Development
Sentence Completion Test (Loevinger)
Evolving Self Interview (Kegan)

Career Domain

Career Decision Scale (Osipow)
Career Maturity Inventory (Crites)
Career Development Inventory (Super)
Adult Career Concerns Inventory (Super)
My Vocational Situation (Holland)

Personal/Interpersonal Domains

Student Development Task and Lifestyle Inventory (Winston, Miller & Prince)
Iowa Student Development Inventories (Hood et al)
Omnibus Personality Inventory (Psychological Corp.)
Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory
Wellness Inventory (UW-Stevens Point)
Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values

Involvement/Environment Domain

College Student Experiences Questionnaire (Pace)
Student Development Transcripts (Brown, among others)
Involving College inventory (Kuh et al, in process)
Institutional Goals Inventory (Petersen)
College Characteristics Index (Stern & Pace)

Learning Styles/Typologies

Learning Styles Inventory/Adaptive Styles Inventory (Kolb)
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory

Major Test Publishers

Consulting Psychologists Press
Palo Alto, CA
415-857-1444

Psychological Assessment Resources
Odessa, FL
800-968-8378

Institute for Personality & Ability Testing
Champaign, IL
800-225-4728

For more information about these and other assessment measures, contact:

Clearinghouse for Environmental & Student Development Assessment
Dr. Pat M. King, Coordinator
Dept. of College Student Personnel
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0249
419-372-7382

LOCAL DESIGN OF ASSESSMENT MEASURES

* Need to move from structures of knowledge (traditional curricular approach) to a focus on a progression of **skills** and **ways of thinking**

* Not just what the student knows, but what s/he can **do** with what s/he knows, and how s/he **thinks** about the knowledge involved

* Performance tasks should connect to **real problems or issues** and **students' experiences**

RANGE OF ALTERNATIVE METHODS

* Orals--comprehensives
* Theses--projects
* Simulations--performance tasks
* Portfolios (exemplary papers, lab notes, videotapes, etc.)
* Interviews (structured questions, open-ended responses)
* Likert-scale reactive responses
* Self-evaluations
* Peer evaluations
* Faculty judgments
* External assessor ratings
* Unobtrusive measures (college database, transcript analysis)

HEURISTIC FOR DESIGNING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS
(Alverno College)

1. **Define the outcome/ability** as clearly and completely as possible.

2. Describe the outcome in terms of **specific, observable components** .

3. Construct a **performance task/assessment** designed to elicit the ability (provide a context for this task whenever possible).

4. Specify the **criteria for adequacy/achievement** with respect to the outcome.

5. Define appropriate **judgment processes** --faculty review, self-assessment, peer input, external assessors.

6. Administer assessment, record judgments, and arrange for some form of **feedback to the student.**

SPECIFYING THE COMPONENTS OF CRITICAL THINKING: TWO EXAMPLES

KING'S COLLEGE

From the list of criteria below, faculty can select items reflecting the particular degree of complexity of critical thinking appropriate for a given assessment.

In demonstrating competence in critical thinking, a student:

* Recalls and understands the pivotal concepts of inductive and deductive reasoning.
* Identifies an argument and distinguishes support from conclusions.
* Identifies crucial fallacies in arguments.
* Summarizes and reconstructs an argument contained in an extended passage.
* Draws appropriate inferences from given data/information.
* Distinguishes subarguments from the main argument in a prose passage.
* Separates a problem into discrete units and sets forth evidence in separate, meaningful categories.
* Uses the results of appropriate research (library, expert opinion, survey, experiment) in the analysis, construction, and evaluation of arguments.
* Recognizes and performs the basic functions of deductive and inductive reasoning.
* Chooses and defends an appropriate course of action from among a number of possible alternatives.
* Relates an argument to broader issues and concerns.
* Evaluates the acceptability of premises, their relevance to a conclusion, and the adequacy of their support of that conclusion.

TACOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

(excerpts from work-in-progress; drawn from April, 1990 draft)

Critical thinking competency criteria: Students should be abie to

I Understand claims

*Distinguish claims and other kinds of statements
*Recognize the importance of context in determining the vagueness of claims
*Make a distinction between needlessly and necessarily complex claims

II Evaluate claims

*Identify the criteria by which unsupported informative claims should be judged
*Assess the credibility of experts' claims
*Evaluate statistical claims
*Determine the likelihood of claims that conflict with personal observations

III Understand arguments

*Distinguish arguments from other forms of discourse
*Locate premises and conclusion
*Classify argument as either deductive or inductive
*Classify types of arguments (statistical, causal, analogical, hypothetical, etc.)

IV Evaluate arguments

*Distinguish between a valid and invalid deductive argument
*Determine whether a deductive argument is sound or unsound
*Evaluate the cogency of an inductive argument
*Detect a variety of formal fallacies in deductive arguments
*Detect common informal fallacies in inductive reasoning

V Creating arguments

*Shape a clear, focused proposition (conclusion)
*Use resources effectively to gather information on a topic
*Develop a thorough list of the issues to be covered
*Establish solid support for the claims (premises) made in favor of a proposition
*Anticipate and argue against another's weak claims while acknowledging their strong ones
*Arrange the argument's points in the most convincing order

VI Making decisions

*Identify issues
*Determine goals
*Use methods of diverse disciplines to analyze information and generate ideas
*Evaluate alternatives
*Evaluate the decision-making process

KLEMP & SCHAALMAN--CHARLES RIVER CONSULTING, INC.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Evaluative/Diagnostic thinking

*Comparing alternatives
*Identifying inconsistencies
*Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information

Systematic/Logical thinking

*Setting priorities
*Planning a step-by-step approach
*Identifying antecedents or causes

Conceptual/Synthetic thinking

*Seeing connection between seemingly unrelated events
*Identifying the main issues in complex situations
*Uniting different ideas in a coherent framework

Anticipatory/Forward thinking

*Anticipating the consequences or implications of events
*Anticipating the long term costs or benefits of short term choices or actions
*Planning for obstacles that might arise later

Creative/Divergent thinking

*Looking for innovative solutions
*Developing numerous unusual ideas
*Using resources in novel ways

EVALUATING ASSESSMENT MEASURES

1. Is it **face valid** --does it seem to measure what it purports to measure?

2. Is it **generic** --can it be adapted across a variety of specific domains or disciplines?

3. Is it based on **public criteria** --explicitly defined, known in advance, and on which expert observers can generally agree?

4. Is it **educationally valid** --does it show sensitivity to change as a result of educational interventions or programs?

5. Is it **demonstrably relevant** to performance in later life?

6. Is the **performance task** structured to elicit full range of student ability?

7. Is the **format** or **mode** of the instrument consistent with/appropriate for the nature of the outcome being assessed?

8. Does it elicit and measure complex abilities within a **defined context** ?

9. Does it require the use of **substantive content** parallel to the level of complexity for the ability?

10. Are there any inherent **biases** in the measure--writing or language skills required, item content, etc.?

11. Is it **reliable** and **valid** from a traditional psychometric perspective?

12. Is the **administration time** reasonable and feasible given existing constraints?

13. Is it readily **available** , and is the **cost** reasonable/affordable?

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	RELEVANCE TO LATER LIFE	
EVALUATION CRITERIA	Assumed/Based on faith or persuasion	Based on demonstrated evidence
Private/Intuitive	· Traditional grades · Many competency-based measures	· Recommendations · Clinical judgments
Public/Trainable	· SAT/GRE scores	· Competence measures **(potentially)**

(Winter, McClelland & Stewart)

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CONTRASTING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

POINT OF COMPARISON	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH
Focus of research	Quality (nature, essence)	Quantity (how much, how many)
Philosophical roots	Phenomenology, symbolic interaction	Positivism, logical empiricism
Associated phrases	Fieldwork, naturalistic, grounded, ethnographic	Experimental, empirical, statistical
Goal of inquiry	Understanding, discovery, hypothesis generating	Prediction, control, hypothesis testing
Design characteristics	Flexible, evolving, emergent	Predetermined, structured
Setting	Natural, familiar	Artificial, unfamiliar
Sample	Small, theoretical, often nonrandom	Large, representative, random
Data collection	Researcher as primary instrument (observations, interviews)	Inanimate instruments (tests, surveys, questionnaires)
Mode of analysis	Inductive (by researcher)	Deductive (by statistical methods)
Findings	Comprehensive, holistic, expansive	Precise, narrow, reductionistic

Sharan B. Merriam, Case Study Research in Education, 1988, Jossey-Bass

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE USE OF QUALITATIVE METHODS IN OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT EFFORTS

1. Is the focus on **individualized outcomes** ?

2. Are the results designed in part to identify internal **processes, strengths** , and **weaknesses** ?

3. Is there interest in focusing on the **diversity** of the population as well as commonalities?

4. Would **detailed, in-depth** information about certain kinds of students--high-risk, transfer, part-time, etc.--be particularly useful in addressing assessment goals?

5. Are decision makers interested in detailed, descriptive information for the purposes of **institutional/program improvement** ? (formative evaluation)

6. Is there a need for information about the nuances of **institutional/program quality** ?

7. Is the **obtrusiveness** of the assessment efforts a concern?

8. Is there a need or desire to **personalize** the assessment process--to use methods that feel more natural, informal, and understandable to people involved?

9. Are the overall goals sufficiently vague, general, or nonspecific that a **goal-free evaluative** approach would be useful--gathering information on effects and consequences rather than measuring goal attainment?

10. Is there a dearth of **proven quantitative instruments** available for significant institutional outcome areas?

11. Are the assessment efforts essentially **exploratory** in nature?

12. Is there a need to add **depth** , **detail** , or **meaning** to statistical findings or generalizations?

13. Has the collection of quantitative assessment/evaluation data become so routine that there is a need to **break the old routine** and use new methods to gain insights about the institution?

Adapted from Michael Quinn Patton, How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation , 1987, Sage Publications

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

· In learning, what is it that the learner experiences?
  * The **content** of learning
  * The **context** of learning
  * The **perceptions** of the process of learning

· To understand student learning, we need to understand all three areas "from the inside" as well as "from the outside"--to describe not just how the learner appears to the researcher/assessor, but how the world appears to the learner.

· We need additional emphasis on a phenomenological approach to understanding student learning to complement the traditional approach. We need to pursue the dialectic in each of these dimensions, just as we need to study both **consistency** and **variability** .

DIMENSION	PHENOMENOLOGICAL	TRADITIONAL
Perspective adopted	Experiential	Observational
Kind of data descriptions	Qualitative	Quantitative
Conceptualization of data	Contextual	Generalized
Relations between identified categories	Internal	External
Orientation of assessment results/findings	Understanding	Explanation
Applications of assessment results	Emancipatory[1]	Technical[2]

(from Marton & Svensson, Higher Education, 8, 1979, p. 471-486)

[1]Used to raise the level of awareness of audience (e.g., faculty, policy makers)
[2]Used to derive appropriate course of action in various concrete situations

Ference Marton's Phenomenography

* **1st order perspective** --aim to describe various aspects of the world
  - Why do some students succeed better than others in college?

* **2nd order perspective** --aim to describe people's experience/perceptions of various aspects of the world
  - What do students/faculty/policymakers/people in general think about why some students succeed better than others in college?

* Another example:
  - Significant questions related to students' learning of content do not necessarily concern the **correct meaning** of particular concepts as much as the **meanings** students have of the concepts involved
  - Understanding the latter may illuminate students' difficulties in arriving at the former!

* The different ways in which people experience, interpret, understand, or conceptualize aspects of reality are worthy of study in their own right.

A RESEARCH EXAMPLE

(Van Rossum et al (the University of Tilburg, the Netherlands). "Students' learning conceptions and their interpretations of significant educational concepts", Higher Education, 14, 1985, p. 617-641)

* Asked sample of students a series of questions:
  - What do you mean by
    1) **learning** ?
    2) **good teaching** ?
    3) **understanding** a text?
    4) having **insight** into a given subject matter?
    5) the distinction between **active** and **passive** learning?
    6) How is your **study behavior** influenced by the types of questions you expect?

* Found 6 distinct conceptions of learning, broadly characterized as either **reproductive** or **constructive** :

	Learning as
(Reproductive)	* Acquisition of knowledge
	* Memorizing of knowledge
	* "Algorithmic" applications of knowledge
(Constructive)	* The abstraction of personal meaning
	* Process aimed at interpreting & understanding reality
	* Self-actualization

STUDENT ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW FORMATS: SOME EXAMPLES

LONGWOOD COLLEGE FIRST-YEAR STUDENT GOALS INTERVIEW

1. Why did you decide to go to college?
2. Why Longwood? Who or what influenced your decision?
3. What do you expect college to be like?
4. How has your experience so far at Longwood met/failed to meet these expectations?
5. What do you want to get from your college experience? What goals do you have for yourself as you begin college?
6. How do you see Longwood College contributing to the goals you have for yourself? How do you think your experiences in college will help you achieve those goals?
7. What connections, if any, do you see between your experiences and achievements in college and what you do after you finish your education?

ALVERNO COLLEGE "STUDENT PERSPECTIVES INTERVIEW"

(part of longitudinal study--not all questions asked at all assessments)

1. How would you describe Alverno College?
2. Why did you attend college? Why Alverno?
3. What kinds of satisfactions do you expect to obtain from your college experience?
4. How do you see your role as a student? What is the role of the faculty?
5. How would you describe your own preferred learning process?
6. How would you characterize competence-based learning?
7. What do you see as the rationale for the Alverno Learning Process?
8. What kinds of experiences have been influential on your personal development?
9. How would you describe the relationship between your education and your personal life?
10. What are your goals and expectations for after college?
11. What questions and concerns do you have for the future?

J.SARGEANT REYNOLDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBERAL ARTS INTERVIEWS

(conducted with graduating students)

1. What do you read other than your text books and assigned readings?
2. What do you think were the most important issues in the last national political campaign? (Alternate: To you what are some of the most important problems facing our country, and why?)
3. Think of a memorable classroom or course-related activity or experience you value. What have you gained from that experience? [Prompts if necessary: service projects, field trips, group activities, class discussions, etc.]
4. Describe a situation where you were among a group of people who were different from you. What made them different? How did you feel? How did you respond?

5. What community or student activities have you participated in since you enrolled at JSRCC? Why did you select them? What did you learn from them?
6. What is the most significant change that has taken place in your attitudes toward other people since you enrolled at JSRCC?
7. How well, and in what ways, do you feel your experience here at JSRCC has prepared you for succeeding...[at either a four-year institution or on the job, depending on the student's immediate plans]?
8. A friend is going to a foreign country (France, Spain, Mexico). What would you tell her about the country to prepare her for the differences to be encountered there? [Possible prompts: food, educational system, transportation, sports or leisure, economic or political system, privacy]
9. What do you want to tell us? (based on discovery that most students come to the interview bearing a message of some kind)

Interviews analyzed for the following outcome areas:

*Desires learning for intrinsic value as well as economic benefits
*Adapts language level to suit purpose and audience
*Organizes ideas and applies appropriate evidence in discussion
*Shows sensitivity to the perceptions and feelings of others
*Speaks knowledgeably about economic, political, scientific, technological, and cultural dimensions of the contemporary world
*Open to discussion
*Values wide reading as a means of personal development
*Demonstrates knowledge of historical and cultural events
*Be a responsible, caring member of the community
*Accept cultural differences, seeking common ground to foster communications
*Demonstrates a knowledge of at least one other culture

ASSESSMENT: STUDYING THE PERSON IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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A college is primarily a habitat, society, community, ecosystem, **not** primarily a business, a factory, a bureacracy--and it should be judged by 1) the quality of life that it fosters, 2) the opportunities for experience and exploration it provides, and 3) the concern for growth, enrichment, and culture it exemplifies. The question is **not** just, 'What does your machine produce?', but 'How does your garden grow?'

College can be conceptualized as an environment for exploration--of self, of knowledge and skills, of ideas and values, of society, conscience, community, and commitment. The quality of the exploration and the character of the environment are inseparable. College has a tremendous impact on many people who experience it; if our more formal measures don't show it, then perhaps we've just not looked for the right indicators.

Michael Scriven, "Thoughts on Evaluation in Higher Education"
ACT Publications, February, 1972

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NCHEMS INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT DIMENSIONS

- **Instructional (academic) environment*
  - Intellectual climate
  - Faculty characteristics
  - Curriculum
  - "Social organization of classroom life"
- **Social environment*
  - Informal interactions
  - Community values and attitudes
  - Cocurricular activities
- **Organizational environment*
  - Policies and procedures
  - Bureaucratic structures
- **Physical environment*
- **Economic environment*

"INVOLVING COLLEGE" PROJECT (in process)
(George Kuh et al)

In-depth study of fourteen distinctive colleges nationwide; focus areas include:

- ***Mission** and philosophy
- *Campus **environment** (size, spaces, setting, physical plant, etc.)
- *Campus **culture** (roots, stories, symbols, rituals, etc.)
- ***Policies** and **practices**
- *Role of **institutional agents** (faculty, administrators, students, alumni, trustees, ??)

WORKSHEET A: WHY TEACH?

* Why are you in education? What does your work as an educator mean to you? Why is it important to you?

* What are the rewards of working with students? What are the frustrations? How would you want your students to be different, if at all?

* What do you like most about the overall environment/climate/culture of your institution (especially as it relates to the area of teaching/learning? What do you like least about it? How would you change that environment, if at all?

WORKSHEET B: ENVISIONING GOALS & OUTCOMES

*Think of one of two contexts: either of your college as a whole or your particular department/program/discipline. What is being taught in that context that is so important, students cannot afford to miss out on it or pass it up? What outcomes or characteristics will they gain through exposure to that context that they will find essential as they move on through life? How will the outcomes you've noted be useful, and how do you know?

*Specify one or two examples of outcomes from your list above. What are the specific courses/opportunities/potential experiences [in the context you've chosen] that you think contribute to student progress toward these outcomes?

*When, and in what context, would you expect the student to achieve or display these outcomes?

*How would you measure/assess these outcomes?

WORKSHEET C:
DESIGNING YOUR OWN ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Review your list of outcomes from Worksheet B, and in consultation with your work team, select **one** outcome or competence area that you might like to develop as an assessment project for your institution.

OUTCOME AREA:

1. SPECIFYING THE OUTCOME: What are some of the specific components of this outcome or competence in terms of the relative emphasis on **knowledge** , **skills** , or **attitudes/ways of thinking** ?

2. CLARIFY YOUR PURPOSE: Why is this area of particular interest to you? Who else on your campus is concerned with this area, and why are they concerned? What could the institution gain from a better understanding of student learning in this area? What would you gain?

3. GATHERING BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
a. Who on your campus [particular people or offices] feels they have information on or perspectives about this area of student learning, perspectives that could help you assess the area fully?

b. What information currently exists on your campus addressing some aspect of this outcome area?

3. COLLECTING OUTCOME DATA: What method or methods would you consider most useful in gathering relevant information about this outcome area? [personal interview, locally-designed survey, student records, standardized instruments, performance tasks or simulations, in-class tests or writing samples, etc.]

4. MATERIALS/RESOURCES NEEDED: What type of institutional support would you need for the data collection method/syou've suggested? [faculty or staff time, external assessors, materials, instruments, survey design consultation, access to computer time and programming, etc.]