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BOSTON COLLEGE
Division of Student Affairs

10. Make adjustments based on assessment data

9. Report/present assessment data and findings

8. Interpret assessment data

7. Identify most appropriate assessment techniques and conduct

6. Develop strategies to reach learning and operational outcomes

5. Identify and develop operational outcomes

4. Identify and develop learning outcomes

3. Describe how this goal statement links to the Divisional Learning Goals

2. Develop a goal statement based on issue/question

1. Describe the issue or question you want to explore

ASSESSMENT PLANNING CYCLE

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Keep in mind that your strategies should be rooted in a theoretical/conceptual framework. This will help bridge theory to practice and ensure that your strategies are successful.

- Consider your stakeholders when developing assessment. Who is affected by the program or would be interested in it? Identify these individuals/offices in advance and make them aware of your assessment plans.

Adapted from:
"Assessment Planning Cycle" by Gavin Henning, Dartmouth College, Office of Institutional Research, gavinhenning@dartmouth.edu
Step 1:
Describe the issue or question you want to explore and an initiative, activity, or program that is affected by this question

- To begin the assessment-planning cycle, it is first necessary to determine what to assess.
- You may want to assess the overall effectiveness of a particular program or address a certain question or issue that exists within a service/program. There are sometimes many issues wrapped up into one – For example: Your initial question may be, “what is leading to residence hall vandalism?” Potential issues might be a lack of respect for the residence hall, a lack of connection to the hall community, or behaviors resulting from high-risk alcohol use.
- Once you have identified the issues of concern, you will need to decide on which specific question you really want to focus your planning and assessment.
- Then, you should describe the initiative, activity, or program that addresses this problem or issue. A few-sentence summary including who is involved with the program (the target population) and a general overview of what the program entails will suffice.

Example:
The Leadership Institute is a series of programs, workshops, speakers and presentations throughout the year open to all club officers. The Institute hopes to address the issue of student leader behavior on campus. While the Office of Community Development has high expectations for student leaders to be campus leaders and role models for other students, the students sometimes perceive their roles as positional only and limited to the descriptions outlined in the club or organization’s constitution.
Step 2:
Develop your goal statement based on the issue/question

- Once you have identified the question or issue you want to focus on, you need to develop a broad goal statement for what you want to accomplish. For example, you may want to “increase the feeling of connection to the residence hall community” or “better understand whether X program meets its mission to....”

Example:
The goal of this program is to challenge students in the Jesuit tradition to become increasingly complex and increasingly principled in their understanding of appropriate behavior for student leaders at our institution.
Step 3:
Align goal statement with the Divisional Learning Goals

- It is assumed that individual department missions fit into the mission of the division and the strategic plan. Therefore, alignment with the mission of your department and divisional learning goals ensures that the division’s various programs and offices are all moving towards similar aims.
- Review your department’s mission statement and yearly goals.
- Review the Divisional Learning Goals (Appendix 1).
- If necessary, review the Divisional Mission and Vision Statement (Appendix 2).
- Finish the statement: “This goal supports the divisional learning goals by....” By finishing this statement, you will demonstrate the alignment. Feel free to write and expand upon how the program/service fits in with the mission as needed.
- It is always important to consider your stakeholders during this step. Think about who your stakeholders are and include these individuals/offices in your planning. Who is affected by the program and would have some interest in it? Ensure that as you align your goal statement with the departmental mission and learning goals, you are taking into consideration the interests and needs of your stakeholders.

Example:
The Mission Statement emphasizes the nurturance of “engaged learners.” Practice interviews offer a unique, hands-on learning experience that fully engages students in an intellectual and personal exercise, one that includes immediate feedback on the quality of their responses.

The Mission Statement emphasizes the need to “facilitate student learning and formation in their fullest sense (integrating intellectual, ethical, religious and spiritual, and emotional-social development).” Practice interviews offer students the opportunity to reflect on the totality of their experiences at Boston College and to learn to articulate these experiences in the service of their career goals.

Step 4: Identify and develop learning outcomes for a specific issue or question

In Step 4, you will develop learning outcomes for the specific issue or question identified in Steps 1-3. This is a critical step in the Assessment Planning Cycle, particularly as the Division of Student Affairs moves forward in its strategic planning and becomes increasingly focused on student learning.

The next section will provide some useful techniques that might guide your thinking as you consider learning outcomes for the specific issue or question you plan to assess. You may use Appendix 3 for more assistance.

**Brainstorm**: One of the easiest ways to begin writing learning outcomes is to think about your program, activity, or service and begin brainstorming a list of all the things that you hope the participants will learn from participating in your program or service. Brainstorm a list without worrying about the format or quality of your writing. People often find it more effective to brainstorm with a small group of colleagues.

**Organize/Categorize**: Once you have come up with a full list of potential learning-based outcomes for your program, activity, or service, review the list. Remove any duplicates and sort and organize the remaining learning outcomes in manageable groups. When organizing your list, it is likely that you will find multiple outcomes that deal with the same aspect of a program or are very similar in other ways. Grouping and sorting your ideas makes it easier when it comes to actually writing the outcomes.

**Select your Outcomes**: Whenever you begin a new assessment project, it is recommended that you have three to five learning outcomes. If your outcomes are more complex (e.g.: students will be able to demonstrate an increase in leadership abilities as measured by a rubric), you should have fewer. If your outcomes are simpler (e.g.: students will be able to list the names of three offices), you could have more than five learning outcomes. Review the organized lists you have brainstormed and determine which learning outcomes you would like to assess. You will most likely select the learning outcomes which are most central to your activity, program or service. However, based on your own needs and those of your stakeholders, other, less critical learning outcomes may be chosen.
The next steps only utilize the outcomes you have selected. You will not need the rest! Overtime, as you gather assessment data and become more comfortable with the assessment process, you can add additional outcomes as you see fit. However, at the beginning, start small.

**Choose your Bloom verbs:** The key to success in designing learning outcomes is choosing verbs which reflect the level and nature of learning you anticipate will result from the program or service that is being assessed. Best practices in student affairs suggest the use of Bloom’s Taxonomy to select verbs for learning outcomes.

Bloom identified six levels of learning: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating and Creating. The levels build in increasing order of difficulty from basic memorization to higher levels of complex and critical thinking skills. As is evident in Fig. 2, moving up the pyramid reflects higher order thinking skills.

Useful learning outcome verbs are categorized by their level in Bloom’s Taxonomy. A list of categorized verbs is available in Appendices 4 and 5.

When choosing a verb for the learning outcome, it is important to consider what you intend to measure, as that will affect the Bloom’s Taxonomy level from which you select the verb. For example, if you would like to measure whether a student knows the offices on campus that can help them with their study habits, you would use a verb from the “Remembering” list. If, however, you wanted students to understand what each of those offices did, you would select a verb from the “Understanding” list. At the “Remembering” level, you are assessing whether students have memorized basic information, at the “Understanding” level, you are assessing whether the students understand the information that they memorized.

**Include indicator of success in outcomes:** In order for the results to be measurable, you need to determine what exactly indicates that an outcome was achieved or not. You do this by articulating exactly what defines success.

- A poor outcome would be “At the conclusion of X program, students will be able to identify campus resources that can support their academic achievement.” This is not a good outcome because there is no indication of what we mean by “identify campus resources.” If I identify one campus resource, did I meet the learning outcome?

- A better outcome might be “At the conclusion of X program, students will be able to
identify five campus resources that can support their academic achievement.” This outcome is more appropriate because it specifies exactly what indicates that the student has achieved the learning outcome (they will know five campus resources).

The indicator of success is called the degree. Degree can be expressed in many ways, depending on the nature of the learning outcome. Some common ways to express degree include using a specific number, using a percentage or specific portion of the total (50%, 7 out of 10), or using a qualifying word such as “sufficiently” or “accurately.” Two important things to note: First, multiple degrees can be used per outcome (see below) and secondly, the above list is not exhaustive—there are additional ways to indicate degree beyond those specified.

**Formatting**: Now that you have created all of the components of a learning outcome, you need to put together the pieces and actually write it! There are two common formats which are used to write learning outcomes: SWiBAT and ABCD.

- **SWiBAT**: One formula that is successful in developing learning outcomes is to begin your outcomes statement with “**Students Will Be Able To.**” Begin your outcome statement with this and then add an action verb and a condition. For example, students will be able to successfully facilitate a hall government meeting as a result of participating in the residence hall council training. Make sure you include your degree when using the SWiBAT formula!

- **ABCD**: Another technique that can be used to develop learning outcomes is the ABCD format. Using the ABCD format, the learning outcome must have a specific identified Audience, a particular Behavior which the audience will be able to know or do (this is the verb you selected), a Condition which will lead to the earning and a Degree, which indicates the level to which the particular behavior will need to be demonstrated in order to ensure learning took place. Although this technique is called the ABCD format, it is not necessary to have the learning outcome follow the ABCD format in exact order as long as the components are all there. One could, for example, write a learning outcome in BCDA or ADBC order. Figure 4, below, provides an example of how a learning outcome would look if formatted in CABD order.

![ABCD Structure of a Learning Outcome](image)

![ABCD Structure Applied](image)
Check yourself: Well-written outcomes have some defining characteristics. SMART is a mnemonic device that can serve as a checklist. SMART outcomes are:

- **Specific**
- **Measureable**
- **Aggressive, but attainable**
- **Results-oriented**
- **Time-bound**

After you have written your learning outcomes, verify that they are SMART. If you do, you will be more effective as you plan and your assessment will be easier to implement.

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**Learning Outcome Examples:**

Resident Assistants will be able to successfully demonstrate three techniques they can use to intervene in a discriminatory joke at the end of Respect Weekend.

After two meetings with the UHS Staff, students with latent TB will be able to accurately describe four pros and four cons of receiving the tuberculosis treatment.
Step 5: Identify and develop operational outcomes

- Unlike learning outcomes that measure what students are able to do, know, or value, operational outcomes are aggregate and document progress towards the outcome.
- Operational outcomes may include the total number of programs presented or number of students served. For example: 30 students will attend the program; 75% of students will complete something, etc.
- Operational outcomes tend to be related to satisfaction, quality, tracking, needs met, and usage.
- Include specific indicators of success while writing operational outcomes. (See step 4 for more information on indicators of success).

Examples:
The Career Center will run practice interviews for at least 50 students during the fall semester.

75% of the customers who purchase tickets at the Robsham Box Office will indicate that they are “satisfied” or better with the Box Office’s customer service
Step 6:
Develop strategies to reach learning and operational outcomes

- As previously mentioned, successful assessment is inextricably tied to good planning.
- Strategies are the specific steps that you will take or the things that you will do to foster each of the learning outcomes.
- Align strategies with outcomes and goals:
  - Once you have identified your goals and outcomes (both learning and operational), begin considering strategies that will foster those goals. For example, if your goal is for students to develop leadership skills and one outcome for that is the ability to facilitate a hall government meeting, what strategies would help students be able to facilitate a meeting? One possibility would be for them to observe other meetings and identify best practices for meeting facilitation.
- Things to consider when developing strategies
  - *Best Practices*: The strategies used should be rooted in theories, conceptual framework and best practices. Identifying theories, conceptual frameworks and best practices ensures that you are being intentional in your work, and that your work is grounded in research and evidence.
  - *Actual resources*: The strategies used should be realistic when considering the resources that are available to you, including time, finances, human resources, facilities, etc.
  - *Stakeholders*: The stakeholders of the activity you are assessing may have particular strategies which they prefer. Consider the interests and needs of your stakeholders while developing your strategies. Additionally, some of your strategies may involve additional stakeholders who should be taken into account. For example, if a particular training on self-image involves the director of the Women’s Resource Center, it is important to verify that the director is available and willing to participate.
  - *Number of strategies*: There will likely be multiple strategies for each goal.

**Example:**
LO: RAs will be able to successfully demonstrate three techniques they can use to intervene in a discriminatory joke at the end of Respect Weekend.

Strategy 1: As part of the program, we will run a workshop that delineates the step-by-step process for intervening in discriminatory jokes.

(Conceptual framework: This step-by-step process follows the Bystander Intervention Program model)
Step 7:
Identify assessment technique and conduct assessment

- During this step, you will identify and develop the assessment techniques that you will use to measure the success of achieving the outcomes and goals for your program. The program you have chosen to assess should drive the assessment technique you select, not the other way around. During this step you will select the assessment technique which you will use to conduct your assessment, create the assessment tool, and conduct the assessment using the tools you have developed.

Part 1: Selecting the Assessment Technique

- When selecting an assessment technique, it is important to keep the following considerations in mind:
  - **Direct vs. Indirect Assessment:** Assessment can be direct, indirect, or both. When direct assessment is used, students will be asked to demonstrate expected outcomes. Direct assessment is evidence-oriented. When indirect assessment is used, students will be asked to report how they perceive mastery of particular concepts or outcomes. Indirect assessment is perception-oriented.
  - It is important to consider what type of assessment (direct or indirect) you want to conduct before you select your technique, as the technique may vary based on the type of assessment you choose. Please note that although indirect methods may

<table>
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<th>Example:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Assessment:</strong> Student visits health services and medical professional asks how the student is feeling. (Student is being asked to report on their perceptions of their health.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Assessment:</strong> Student visits health services and medical professional takes the student’s temperature, listens to the student’s lungs, etc. (The medical professional is observing the student’s health.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Assessment:</strong> At a preliminary interview, career counselor asks a student how skilled they are in interviewing. (Student is being asked to report their perceptions of a skill.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Assessment:</strong> Career counselor observes a student doing a practice interview and rates the student’s interviewing skills. (Counselor is observing the student’s skills.)</td>
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sometimes be useful and appropriate given the learning outcome you intend to measure, in general it is preferable to use direct assessment techniques.

- **Quantitative vs. Qualitative Data:** Before selecting an assessment technique, it is also important to consider what type of data you would like to gather. Quantitative data focuses on numbers, while qualitative data focuses on text, narrative and student stories. There are benefits and challenges to each. While quantitative data is easier to report and analyze, qualitative data can be much more in-depth and robust. It is also simpler to generalize quantitative data to a larger population and can be easier (in time, resources) to conduct. On the other hand, due to its robust nature, qualitative data may allow for a greater understanding of student learning and development.

- **How will you use the data?:** Prior to conducting an assessment, think about who will use the data and how. Your stakeholders (and the kind of data they like to see) and how you plan to use the data will influence your technique.

- **Available resources:** Evaluate available resources before selecting an assessment technique. Some assessment techniques require greater time, financial resources, etc.

- **Cultural sensitivity:** Certain techniques may be more invasive than others. Some students, for example, may feel uncomfortable talking about particular topics in a group setting (like a focus group). Keep this in mind when selecting and designing the assessment technique.

## Assessment Techniques

There are many different assessment techniques which can be used in any given situation. This section outlines several of the major techniques, but it should not be considered an exhaustive list. Appendix 6 also lists a number of assessment techniques which can provide a quick pulse on how a particular program or service is going.

### Tracking/Existing Data

- This technique is the simplest, but also may reveal less information than some of the other assessment techniques.
- Tracking includes graduation and retention rates, housing occupancy, income/expenditures, staffing, number of programs/workshops, enrollment data, SAT scores, participation in programs, attendance at events, usage of services, number of phone calls, etc.
- Most offices already track certain pieces of information—look at what your office is already doing and use that data as part of your assessment.
- Other offices may also be tracking certain information. Institutional Research, for example, has a wealth of information. Before beginning an assessment project, it is always useful to understand what information other offices have that can inform your own assessment.
- Tracking is one of the simplest techniques to use. Very little expertise in data collection or analysis is needed and minimal time is required.
Surveys

- There are two major types of surveys: national surveys (think NSSE and CIRP) and local surveys which are developed by you, your office, or the institution.
- Surveys are good for self-reports about perceptions (how satisfied were you?), behaviors (how many times did you do X?) and observations (do you think that campus is a welcoming place?). Surveys are also useful for tests or quizzes to measure what students learned and for pre/post tests.
- Although surveys can be useful for groups of any size, they are most appropriate for large groups. More information may be gleaned from smaller groups using other assessment techniques.
- One major problem in higher education is survey fatigue. Therefore, it is always a good idea to review other assessment techniques and determine if any of them are appropriate. Although it may be natural to send out a survey, there may be more useful techniques which can provide the same, or better, results.
- You must consider that when students are self-reporting information it should be taken with a grain of salt. Research shows that students are more likely to report doing socially acceptable behaviors (studying), and less likely doing socially inappropriate behaviors (taking illegal drugs).
- Upon request, StudentVoice will consult with you on surveys you have developed.

Focus Groups

- Focus groups are useful when your goal is to understand the perceptions, beliefs or opinions of a group of students (or other audience). They can be used as a direct or indirect method of assessment and can gather a lot of data in a short amount of time. However, because the results from a focus group can not be generalized to a larger population, they are less useful in creating statistical reports.
- Focus groups are not expensive, but do require a degree of skill in facilitation, particularly if the group dynamics of the participants are challenging. Even with strong facilitation, focus group discussions are unpredictable and may veer in unanticipated directions making these less controlled than other techniques.
- Focus groups can be conducted with 6-10 people. In order to validate findings, the same questions should be used with multiple focus groups and with different individuals involved in each. As a result, focus groups take more time and planning than other assessment techniques.
- Finally, since focus groups collect qualitative data, they require more time to analyze the results than for techniques which collect quantitative data.
Rubrics

- A rubric is a scoring tool used to evaluate student performance or work. It is a useful assessment technique, particularly at the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.
- Rubrics include descriptions of what something looks like at different levels of mastery, and thus provide consistency between different raters.
- Rubrics allow assessors to gather rich data, facilitate providing feedback to students on their performance, and allow for a direct measure of learning.
- Data can be collected, and analyzed by a rubric through observation (i.e., role play, training, group work) or through artifact analysis (i.e., journal, resume or reflection paper).
- There are many different kinds of rubrics. One of the benefits of rubrics is that they are highly flexible.
- StudentVoice will assist you with the development of your rubric, but it is always best practice to have multiple individuals review and test your rubric before you use it. Passing a rubric through several tests prior to use will confirm that your scales are appropriate, the dimensions will give you the information you need, and the descriptions within each dimension are clear.
- Ensure inter-rater reliability: Before you use a rubric, it is important to “train” the individuals who will be conducting the assessment with your rubric. You want to verify that they know how the rubric works and ensure that all the assessors understand the rubric in the same way. You may have the assessors do a practice run on one individual and verify that they rated the student similarly. Keep in mind that the assessors do not have to match up exactly with their ratings, but they should be in the same ballpark. If major discrepancies exist, it is critical that the rubric be adjusted to clear up any confusion.

Part 2: Developing the Assessment Tool

- A number of resources are available on BC’s assessment website to help develop various assessment tools. StudentVoice also has a number of webinars to help as you begin developing your assessment tool.
  - VPSA Assessment Website: http://www.bc.edu/offices/vpsa/Assessment.html
  - StudentVoice Website: www.studentvoice.com
- Make sure that the assessment technique you chose targets the outcomes you hope to achieve. It is easy to get bogged down with satisfaction assessment, so ensuring your questions are focused on what you really want to know is critical.
- Finally, consider what kind of information is critical to your stakeholders. Think about whether your stakeholders are more interested in quantitative data or qualitative data. If your supervisor needs to know about X, make sure you include that in the assessment! Be sure that your assessment technique will allow you to report based on these needs.
**Part 3: Conduct assessment/collect data**

- Using the technique you identified in this step, conduct your assessment. StudentVoice, will be an invaluable resource in helping you conduct your assessment and collect the data.

- Timing: When collecting data, consider how the academic calendar might affect response rates. Students tend to be much busier toward the end of each semester and as a result may not be as willing to complete voluntary assessments.

- Remember that students are much more willing to participate in assessments which they feel has some salience to them. Assessments which students perceive to be irrelevant will generally have a lower response rate. Therefore, highlighting the salience of an assessment and how the data will be used is important in order to increase response rates.
Step 8: Interpret Assessment Data

Make sense of the data
- In this step, you must interpret the data and make sense of it by answering questions such as:
  - Based on the data, did we reach our outcomes? If not, to what extent did we reach our outcomes?
  - Based on the data, are there adjustments we should consider for next time?
- It is often best to analyze your assessment with a small group of colleagues. Everyone should look at the data separately, and then come together to share findings. You never know what you might come up with this way!

Consider alternative hypotheses
- Make sure to consider alternative hypotheses when evaluating the data. Perhaps the issue you chose to focus on is alcohol use and you have just implemented a new program. You review your data and you find out that there is a decrease in usage across campus after the first year of implementation of the program. Can you attribute the decrease to your program? Maybe, maybe not. You may want to check to see if there were any policy or enforcement changes that may have also contributed to lower usage rate.

Ways to evaluate
- Look for patterns and gaps in your data, including differences between sub-groups (males vs. females, participants vs. non-participants, sophomores vs. juniors).

Use StudentVoice
- StudentVoice has great tools to help you analyze your assessment data. No need to remember statistics from years ago, just use StudentVoice to help you make sense of your data.
Step 9:
Report/present assessment data and findings

As the Division moves forward in its strategic plan, it is important that assessment results and findings are shared with colleagues and other stakeholders in the Division who might benefit from your findings.

- **Identify your audience**
  - Who needs to see the report? The answer depends upon what the report is about and the interested stakeholders. Think about whose questions you addressed and those whose questions you did not.
  - Think about who would be affected by the implications of the data, big picture and small picture, and send some version of the report to those individuals and offices.

- **Think about your content and format** as it relates to your audience
  - Different people may also want/need slightly different information, so it is important to tailor your report to each person. You will likely have multiple reports for any one assessment. When writing each report, consider what information the recipient will find most useful – do not overwhelm your stakeholders by sending all of your findings to everyone!
  - Examples of ways to present your content based on audience:
    o A one-page executive summary for busy administrators
    o A presentation for health services staff so that they can discuss the implications
    o A full report on the web to disseminate to the campus community
    o A press release to get the information to the public

- **Timing**: decide when the report will be disseminated
  - Your timing is just as important as how the information will be distributed. For example, it may be very ineffective to disseminate the information at the beginning or end of a semester or during a break. If applicable, also consider the budget cycle and how your report might impact resource allocation.

- **Consider what you can do to keep the report from being “shelved”**
  - It is important to consider how you can get people to read this report. This may relate back to your assessment technique and presentation format. For example, if the VP is a numbers person but your director likes to read about student stories, you may decide that you need both quantitative and qualitative results to effectively demonstrate the data.
  - You may also decide to get others involved in the beginning. Sometimes an assessment will be criticized on its method because one or more constituencies did not expect the results or they were not prepared for the implications. For example, if implications could be increased residence hall fees it might be helpful to talk with the student senate prior to the assessment. You would want them to be supportive of the assessment so that they are more likely to accept the results.
Step 10:  
Make adjustments based on assessment data

- Now that you have the data, you can review your findings and identify particular aspects of the program (or even the program as a whole) that may need to be adjusted. You may find that your outcomes are not possible to reach or that a particular strategy is not working. Making changes is not always necessary – sometimes you will find your program/service was not only highly effective in its intended outcomes, but students were learning even more than you thought! If this is the case, you may need to add some outcomes to your list.

- There are four possible actions that you can take in Step 10:
  - Keep current program as it is
  - Tweak program
  - Replace with a brand new program
  - Cut program

- Sometimes you will realize that you need to assess your program differently. Once any adjustments are made, the assessment cycle will begin again for another round but with a slightly different twist!

- Assessment should never stop so you must identify what to assess next. As students constantly change, our programs and services will need to be tweaked and adjusted to continue to be most effective. Think about your next cycle of assessment. You may realize a way to improve your assessment efforts or you may just want to re-assess with a different set of students and see if you get the same results.
  - For example, if you previously assessed residence hall council training:
    - Now you know that students increased their meeting facilitation skills, so you may want to understand how this happened. What was most useful?
    - Alternately, you may want to assess different types of leadership skills aside from meeting facilitation.
Appendix 1
Divisional Learning Goals

The five divisional learning domains are:

- Intellectual
- Religious and Spiritual
- Ethical
- Emotional-social
- Intercultural and Global (Inclusive Community)

Learning goal statements:

1. Students will develop greater cognitive complexity and maturity (*Intellectual*)
2. Students will understand, and more fully integrate, ethics and values into their lives (*Ethical*)
3. Students will engage more fully with their own faith or beliefs and develop a greater awareness of the religious and spiritual identities of others (*Religious and Spiritual*)
4. Students will develop greater emotional and social maturity (*Emotional-social*)
   Students will understand their own cultural tradition and develop greater cultural and global competency (*Intercultural and Global*)

Examples of outcomes for each goal statement

**INTELLECTUAL:** Students will develop greater cognitive complexity and maturity.
Examples of next level outcomes include, but are not limited to:

*Students who participate in learning experiences provided by the Division of Student Affairs will:*

- Demonstrate analytical, reflective, and creative thinking
- Construct new knowledge and integrate this knowledge into established ideas and experiences
- Think critically and proactively with regard to long term career goals
- Demonstrate the ability to listen to others and be open to new perspectives
- Integrate classroom learning with experiential and personal learning

**ETHICAL:** Students will understand, and more fully integrate, ethics and values into their lives.
Examples of next level outcomes include, but are not limited to:

*Students who participate in learning experiences provided by the Division of Student Affairs will:*

- Be able to clarify and articulate personal, work, and lifestyle values and beliefs
- Develop an increased understanding of social justice issues
- Demonstrate the ability to challenge unfair, uncivil, or unjust behavior of others
- Act in congruence with personal values and beliefs
SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS: Students will engage more fully with their own faith or beliefs and develop a greater awareness of the religious and spiritual identities of others. Examples of next level outcomes include, but are not limited to:

*Students who participate in learning experiences provided by the Division of Student Affairs will:*

- Articulate and explore issues of purpose, meaning, and faith
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Jesuit tradition and how it relates to religious and spiritual identity
- Compare and contrast various belief systems
- Seek out involvement with individuals and groups from different spiritual and religious traditions
- Question acts of incongruence with religious and spiritual beliefs

EMOTIONAL-SOCIAL: Students will develop greater emotional and social maturity. Examples of next level outcomes include, but are not limited to:

*Students who participate in learning experiences provided by the Division of Student Affairs will:*

- Demonstrate realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect
- Give evidence of understanding and affirming the importance of civic engagement and participation
- Describe their personal strengths in relation to career options
- Demonstrate the ability to take the perspective of others
- Seek out opportunities to participate in service/volunteer opportunities that are characterized by reciprocity
- Demonstrate an ability to manage their own behavioral and emotional health
- Take responsibility for their individual choices and actions

INTERCULTURAL AND GLOBAL: Students will understand their own cultural tradition and develop greater cultural and global competency. Examples of next level outcomes include, but are not limited to:

*Students who participate in learning experiences provided by the Division of Student Affairs will:*

- Critically reflect upon their own cultural traditions and values
- Demonstrate an understanding of different cultural traditions and values
- Seek out involvement with individuals and groups from different cultural traditions
- Give evidence of cultural competency
Appendix 2
Divisional Mission and Vision Statement

Mission Statement
The mission of the Division of Student Affairs is to facilitate student learning and formation in their fullest sense (integrating intellectual, ethical, religious and spiritual, and emotional-social development), promote an inclusive community of engaged learners, and advance the Jesuit, Catholic heritage and values of Boston College.

Vision Statement
The Division of Student Affairs will be a full partner in the process of learning and formation at Boston College. By providing a diversity of experiential learning opportunities, building communities of respect and support, encouraging and supporting lives of integrity, offering services that remove barriers to learning, promoting students’ readiness to learn, and collaborating with the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Mission and Ministry, Student Affairs will help students engage fully with the University’s educational opportunities and progress in their journey of personal formation.

Student Affairs enhances the Jesuit, Catholic mission of the university through its programs, interactions with students, and mentoring. The Division does this by promoting a life committed to service and social justice, sponsoring dialogue on important student issues, supporting religious and spiritual development, promoting moral development and behavior grounded in distinct principles, and supporting the integration of faith with justice. Ultimately, the Division desires the actualization of the university’s mission in the lives and habits of students.

Student Affairs strives for excellence in every aspect of its organization, operations, and program and service design and delivery; the Division is committed to evidence-based practice and the use of assessment data to strengthen programs and services. Through reflective, strategic planning, careful allocation of resources, and comprehensive staff development, the Division works to provide learning experiences, programs, and services that produce sound student outcomes.

In all of its work, Student Affairs seeks to know and understand students, comprehend and address their needs, and represent and advocate for their needs; it intends to work with students to create a strong, healthy learning environment and an inclusive, participatory campus culture. One special focus of the Division’s work is on recognizing and addressing the needs of underrepresented students.

Student Affairs intends to create and sustain a caring community within the Division; to recognize the contributions and achievements of all staff and leadership; and to encourage an appropriate and sustainable approach to self-care for all members of the Division.
Appendix 3
Quick Guide to Discussing Learning Outcomes

After you have written your learning outcomes, look them over and ask yourself the following questions:

- Did you identify the program, service or activity that you plan to assess? Did you identify, if necessary, the specific aspect of the program, service or activity, that will lead to student learning? (This is called the “Condition”)
- Did you identify the group you want to assess? Perhaps this might be all students, or a specific group of them. (This is called the “Audience”)
- Did you identify what your audience should be able to know, do, or value after participating in the “condition”? When you wrote it in the learning outcome, did you include a Bloom verb? (This is called the “Behavior”)
- Did you identify how many, much, or to what degree you expect your “audience” to do the “behavior”? (This is called the “Degree”)

*Note: The audience, behavior, condition and degree can be written in the learning outcome in any order!

Check Yourself!

Is the learning outcome SMART?

Specific?
Measurable?
Aggressive but attainable?
Results-oriented?
Time-bound?

Does the learning outcome follow the 3 Ms?

Manageable?
Measurable?
Meaningful?

Answer key:
The responses to SMART, the 3Ms and Q1 and Q2 should be “yes”, all other responses should be “no”. Responses which deviate from these indicate that it is probably necessary to edit the learning outcome.

1. Do you have more than one learning outcome per statement? (Hint: if you have the word “and”, you might!)

2. Do you use verbs like “learn”, “appreciate”, “value” or “develop”?

3. Does it focus on outcomes, not processes?

4. Is the behavior – the learning – something they the audience was unable to do before exposure to a program?

5. Are your learning outcomes wordy and complex? (Hint: if you have to read the learning outcome more than once to understand it, it probably is!)
### Appendix 4

**SLO Verbs by Bloom’s Taxonomy Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Related Behaviors and Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remembering</strong></td>
<td>Recalling or remembering something without necessarily understanding, using or changing it</td>
<td>Arrange, cite, count, define, describe, draw, identify, label, list, match, memorize, name. outline, point (to), quote, recall, recite, recognize, record, relate, repeat reproduce, select, state, tabulate, tell, trace, underline write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td>Understanding something that has been communicated without necessarily relating it to anything else</td>
<td>Account for, annotate, calculate, change, classify, compute, convert, defend, distinguish, discuss, estimate, explain, group, generalize, give examples, infer, interpret, paraphrase, predict, reiterate, reword, rewrite, review, summarize, translate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applying</strong></td>
<td>Using a general concept to solve problems in a particular situation; using learned material in new and concrete situations</td>
<td>Add, apply, adopt, calculate, change, classify, collect, complete, compute, conduct, construct, demonstrate, discover, divide, examine, execute, extend, illustrate, implement, interview, graph, make use of, manipulate, modify, operate, perform, prepare, produce, react, relate, role-play, show, solve, translate, use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyzing</strong></td>
<td>breaking something down into its parts; may focus on identification of parts or analysis of relationships between parts, or recognition of organizational principles</td>
<td>analyze, arrange, break down, catalogue, classify, compare, contrast, diagram, experiment, differentiate, discriminate, dissect, distinguish, identify, illustrate, infer, measure, outline, point out, relate, select, separate, sort, subdivide, test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluating</strong></td>
<td>judging the value of material or methods as they might be applied in a particular situation; judging with the use of definite criteria</td>
<td>accept, appraise, assess, arbitrate, argue, award, choose, compare, conclude, contrast, criticize, defend, describe, discriminate, evaluate, explain, grade, interpret, judge, justify, order, present a case for, prioritize, rank, rate, recommend, referee, reject, review, select, support, test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating/Generating</strong></td>
<td>creating something new by putting parts of different ideas together to make a whole.</td>
<td>Assemble, blend, build, change, categorize, combine, compile, compose, conceive, create, design, develop, devise, drive, establish, formulate, generate, group, hypothesize, integrate, modify, order, organize, plan, predict, prescribe, produce, propose, rearrange, reconstruct, reorder, revise, specify, tell, transform, write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Knowledge
- Articulate
- Define
- List
- Label
- Locate
- Identify
- State
- Reproduce
- Arrange
- Order
- Recall
- Relate

Comprehension
- Describe
- Discuss
- Explain
- Locate
- Recognize
- Report
- Translate
- Classify
- Indicate
- Review

Application
- Demonstrate
- Employ
- Illustrate
- Schedule
- Sketch
- Use
- Apply
- Interpret

Analysis
- Appraise
- Calculate
- Debate
- Diagram
- Differentiate
- Relate
- Solve
- Test
- Classify
- Experiment
- Criticize
- Contrast

Synthesis
- Arrange
- Assemble
- Collect
- Compose
- Create
- Design
- Formulate
- Organize
- Plan
- Propose

Evaluation
- Appraise
- Assess
- Choose
- Compare
- Estimate
- Evaluate
- Measure
- Score
- Justify
- Select
- Predict
Quick assessments are a valid, useful tool for conducting assessments. This guide identifies several quick assessment techniques, which vary in length, amount of prep required, and the amount of information you can glean from the results. These techniques are designed to be modified to fit your program, activity, or service needs. As with any technique, you must first articulate your outcomes. Assessment techniques should be chosen based upon the specific content or learning which is to be measured. How will the information you receive be helpful to you? In general, do not ask for more information that you need or information you are not willing to use.

Please note that for the sake of efficiency and space, each of these instructions have been written using the term “program”. However, they also apply to workshops, lecture series, formative discussions, interventions, classes, etc. As always, be sure to make the appropriate modifications so each technique fits appropriately with your program and its goals.
## Quick Assessment Techniques
(by skill area assessed)

### Prior Knowledge, Recall and Understanding
- Background Probe
- Misconception-Preconception Check
- One-minute Paper
- Muddiest Point

### Synthesis and Creative Thinking
- One-Sentence Summary

### Problem Solving
- Problem/Issue Recognition
- What’s the Principle?
- Documented Problem Solutions

### Application and Performance
- Application Cards
- Directed Paraphrasing
- Student-Generated Test Questions

### Student Awareness of their Attitudes and Values
- Secret Polling
- Everyday Ethical Dilemmas

### Learner Reactions to Teaching
- Chain notes

### The Techniques
(in alphabetical order)

#### Application cards
**Purpose:** To verify that students understood the material and can apply it to a real-life situation.
**To do:** After teaching about an important theory, principle, or procedure, ask students to write down at least one real-world application for what they have just learned to determine how well they can transfer their learning. Quickly read through the applications and categorize them. Consider picking out a broad range of examples and present them to the group to encourage peer-to-peer learning.

#### Background Probe
**Purpose:** To collect specific and useful feedback on students' prior learning on a topic. Can also be used to get a better understanding of why students are participating in a particular program.
**To do:** In order to get a general idea of where students are coming from, have them list classes they have taken on a specific topic, trainings they have been to, and/or experiences they have had doing X, Y or Z. This is an effective way of quickly getting a pulse on where people are in their experiences so that you can tailor material appropriately.

#### Chain Notes
**Purpose:** To get on the spot feedback while program is in progress. Useful in large groups when you want to get a quick read on what people are thinking in the middle of the program.
**To do:** At some point after the program has started, pass around an envelope on which you (administrator/staff member) have written one question about the program. The students have all been given index cards beforehand. When the envelope reaches a student, he or she spends less than a minute writing a response to the question, then drops the card in the envelope and passes it on. This assessment technique results in a rich, composite record of each individual student’s reactions to the program in action.
Directed paraphrasing

**Purpose:** To ensure students understood a concept, process, idea, etc.

**To do:** Ask students to write a layman’s "translation" of something they have just learned -- geared to a specified individual or audience -- to assess their ability to comprehend and transfer concepts. Categorize student responses according to characteristics you feel are important. Analyze the responses both within and across categories, noting ways you could address student needs.

Documented Problem Solutions

**Purpose:** To understand what the student was thinking and what steps he or she took to solve a problem. This is also useful in helping students clarify their thinking and become more deliberate in their problem-solving.

**To do:** Develop clear-cut instructions for the class and recognize that the students will need more time for this task than was required by yourself or your colleagues. Prepare the students for this activity and assure them that this is not a graded exercise. Emphasize that you are as interested in how they approach a problem as in obtaining a correct answer and that this activity will help them (and you) analyze their problem-solving skills.

Misconception – Preconception Check

**Purpose:** To assess students misconceptions or preconceptions on a specific topic at the beginning of a program. It can also be used at the end of a program to see if misconceptions are clearing up or growing, whether preconceptions are being reshaped and to see if students are improving in their abilities to assess relevant information and filter out inaccuracies.

**To do:** Ask students a question (or a few questions) before and after a particular program. This can be done in popcorn style, a formal (ungraded) quiz, group work, etc.

Muddiest Point

**Purpose:** To understand what students found most confusing. This exercise asks students to reflect upon the program, to decide what was unclear, and to self-assess their learning.

**To do:** At end of program, ask students to identify and/or describe the muddiest point of a workshop (or segment of the workshop) you are interested in. Pass out slips of paper or index cards for students to write on. Collect the responses as or before students leave. Respond to the students' feedback during the next class meeting or as soon as possible afterward. You can specifically ask students "What point remains least clear to you?" or "What important question do you have that remains unanswered?"

One-minute paper

**Purpose:** To get information from students at the conclusion of a program. Depending on the question(s) you ask, this requires students to recall and understand the material, evaluate themselves on what they recall and self-assess their learning and understanding.

**To do:** Towards the end of a workshop/program/class, ask students to answer on a half-sheet of paper a quick question that will help you gauge how much and what the students learned. Examples include: "What is the most important point you learned today?", “What was most helpful in your learning about X?” or “What are you most and/or least satisfied with?”.
One-sentence summary

**Purpose:** To see the main ideas that students took from the program.

**To do:** Ask students to summarize the main ideas they’ve taken away from a lecture, discussion, or assigned reading. Students summarize knowledge of a topic by constructing a single sentence that answers the questions "Who does what to whom, when, where, how, and why?" The purpose is to require students to select only the defining features of an idea. Evaluate the quality of each summary quickly and holistically. Note whether students have identified the essential concepts of the class topic and their interrelationships. Share your observations with your students.

Pre-Post Test

**Purpose:** To assess student learning before and after a program in order to demonstrate progression.

**To do:** Have students complete a mini test or do a particular exercise before a program begins. Have students repeat the task at the end of the program. Analyze the pre-test and post-test to better understand the growth in learning the students experienced as a result of the program.

Problem/Issue Recognition

**Purpose:** To assess whether students are able to identify the problem in a situation.

**To do:** Present a common problem (or several examples of different problems) to students and ask them to identify the basic type of problem represented by each sample. They can do so by a show of hands, group work and choosing the best answer, writing them down, etc. This is particularly helpful when teaching about helping skills.

Secret Polling

**Purpose:** To poll students who seem hesitant to respond to questions publicly or when you want responses that are not swayed by the influence of other students.

**To do:** Ask a multiple-choice question and assign a number (1 – 5) to each response. Have students hold up the number of fingers that correlates with their response to their chest so that only the presenter can see their response. Sample questions include “If X happened, what would office procedures require that you do? Put one finger up if you think Y, 2 fingers if you think Z.” Or more serious topics like “how many of you have experienced gender discrimination within the past year? 1 if you have, 2 if you have not”.

Self-Confidence Worksheet

**Purpose:** To gauge a student’s comfort level on a particular topic.

**To do:** This can be administered either at the beginning of a particular session or throughout the session(s) to measure progress. In advance, design a survey where students can rate how comfortable they feel in any particular areas (for example, public speaking skills, challenging a friend on his/her inappropriate use of alcohol, booking a room through EBMS, etc). Students can then rate their confidence on a scale of “none,
You can then review the self-evaluations and tailor strategies accordingly.

**Student-Generated Handbook**

*Purpose:* To see if students understood a concept well enough to teach it to others.

*To do:* Have students write a handbook or manual, of any length – 3 steps to 30 pages – regarding a certain task that is geared towards other students who would be learning the material. This may be particularly helpful when training student workers and having them write down the instructions for “welcoming individuals who enter the office” or “responding to front desk inquiries”. Review the handbooks/guides for concepts that the students grasped or may have missed. Give group feedback to students and review any topics or areas which proved to be particularly challenging.

**Student-Generated Test Questions**

*Purpose:* To see if students understood material enough to be able to work with it, apply it, etc.

*To do:* Allow students to write test questions and model answers for specified topics, in a format consistent with a typical course’s exams. This will give students the opportunity to evaluate the workshop, activity, or program topics, reflect on what they understand, and what are good test items. Make a rough tally of the questions your students propose and the topics that they cover. Evaluate the questions and use the good ones as prompts for discussion.

**What’s the Principle?**

*Purpose:* To assess whether students can identify the principle(s) one would use to solve a problem.

*To do:* This technique follows the Problem Recognition technique in that once a type of problem is correctly identified, students must identify what principles, techniques, or standards in the class must be applied to solve or resolve the problem.
Appendix 6
Pre-Assessment Conversation Guide

This conversation guide can be a starting point for assessing programs and services in your department. It may be helpful to talk through these questions in a staff meeting, with your supervisor, or with colleague or two as you begin to plan for assessing your program.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is the program or service you want to assess?
- What is it that you want to know about this program? What is the specific issue or potential problem?
- How is this program aligned with your department’s goals?
- What do you want students to learn, know, or be able to do after participating in this program or initiative? These will become the basis for your learning outcomes, for which you will make learning outcome statements.
- Do you have any operational outcomes in mind, like attendance expectations, reduction in X, etc.?
- Who needs to be involved, or know about, this assessment? How might you include them in the planning?
- What techniques will you use to conduct your assessment? Do you need further training or information in order to do this? Consult the workshop schedule or online webinar schedule on StudentVoice (www.studentvoice.com)
- When do you want to conduct your assessment? Check with your director to see what else might be going on in the department or across the division which might influence your timing.
Name of activity or service you want to assess

What aspect of the activity or service are you planning to assess?

3. What is the purpose of your assessment?
What are the specific outcomes that you are measuring?

Have you considered existing data? (e.g., data from institutional research, student services, other student affairs departments, etc.)?

Who is your target population? (e.g., all program participants, doctoral students, first-year students in A&S, alumni, etc.)

What assessment method(s) are you considering? Please check all that apply. (Assessment methods can be reviewed in the VPSA Assessment Handbook at http://www.bc.edu/offices/vpsa/Assessment.html

- Survey*
- Focus group
- Rubric*
- Interview
- Mobile data collection*
- Quick assessments
- Other (please specify)

8. Why have you determined that this is the best method? Please consult with Katie O’Dair if you want to discuss which method best matches the information you are hoping to gather.
When do you want to conduct the assessment?

With whom and how do you plan to share the collected data?

Project Coordinator:
Today’s Date:
*If you have determined that a **survey, rubric, or mobile device** is the best method for data collection, below are instructions for uploading your project to StudentVoice.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING AND UPLOADING ASSESSMENT PROJECT PLAN FOR A SURVEY, RUBRIC, OR MOBILE DEVICE**

If an online survey or rubric is your selected method for collecting data, you must fill out the Assessment Project Plan and initiate a project request through StudentVoice (SV). This form will be used in your initial consultation with the StudentVoice consultant and will be reviewed and approved by Katie O’Dair. If you do not have StudentVoice login credentials, please contact Katie O’Dair at **odair@bc.edu**.

1. Fill out all items on the form and save it to your desktop or to the server. You may consult with your assessment committee liaison or Katie O’Dair at any time for assistance.
2. Log in to StudentVoice: [www.studentvoice.com](http://www.studentvoice.com)
3. Go to the “myStudentVoice” tab
4. On the left side, click “Request a Project”
5. Fill out all relevant project information. For a new project, click “new project”
6. If you are using the iTouch devices check “all”. This will tell StudentVoice to sync the project to the iTouch.
7. Under email information click “Not Sure” if you would like to talk about administering the assessment with the SV consultant.
8. Under additional assistance, click “Yes” if you want help from a consultant on the design, phrasing, and administration of the assessment.
9. Click “Next”
10. Under “Project Notes” write in anything you would like your SV consultant or Katie to know about specific to this project. Click “Submit”.
11. You will be taken to your project dashboard. Under “Project files” upload your Assessment Project Plan by browsing your files and uploading it. If you have a draft survey or questions to submit, make sure you upload those as well. Make sure you press “Upload” after you browse! You will know it was successful when you see your uploaded documents appear.
12. Once completed, Katie O’Dair and Jessica Greene will review and approve each request and your StudentVoice consultant will contact you. This will be done within one week of uploading your form.
13. Please note, some projects may require the additional step of preparing documents for the Institutional Review Board process. Katie and Jessica will assist with this step if required. The StudentVoice consultant will then work with you to complete your assessment.