

Debate for Civic Learning Institute

Assessment & Research Panel

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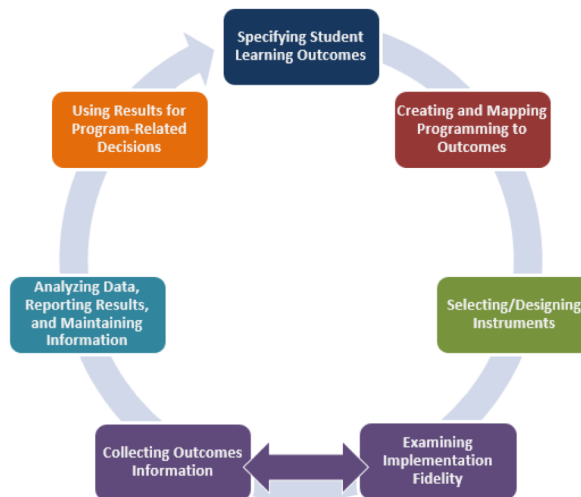
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The Center for Assessment and Research Studies



The Assessment Cycle



<https://www.jmu.edu/studentaffairs/staff-resources/saac/assessment-cycle.shtml>

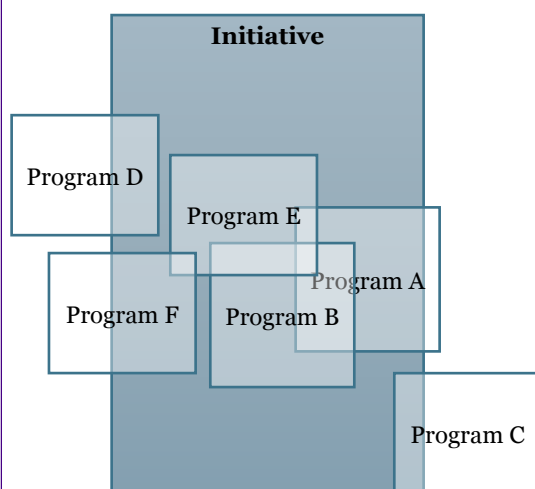
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Student Learning Outcomes

What should students know or be able to do as a result of completing the program?

- Example: JMU's learning outcomes for the civic engagement initiative
 - https://www.jmu.edu/civic/_files/civic-engagement-learning-outcomes.pdf

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Initiative-level vs. program-level goals:

- Existing programs have goals that align with initiative goals
 - Some programs might overlap in the goals they are addressing
- Existing programs may also have goals that are *not* aligned with the initiative
- No one program likely to address all goals of the broader initiative
- In fact, some initiative goals may not yet be addressed by existing programs

Student Learning Outcomes: Debate

- Ability to read, write, and speak effectively and persuasively in forums appropriate to civic life and public affairs
- Ability to listen to a variety of perspectives on political issues
- Ability to distinguish reliable and valid evidence and facts from unsubstantiated claims
- Ability to use critical inquiry, analysis, and reasoning to identify a contemporary problem, research solutions, analyze results, evaluate choices, and make decisions
- Increased confidence in ability to address public issues

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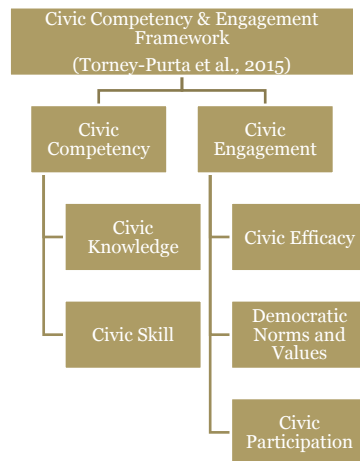
Student Learning Outcomes: Deliberative Dialogue Course

As a result of this course, the student will:

- have a better understanding of: public problems, commonly held views about public problems, the complexity of public problems and why there is conflict, and what factors influenced their own view of the public problem.
- be more willing to listen to persons who hold different views than their own on public problems and understand their reasoning.
- feel more confident in their ability to have conversations about public problems with others.
- be more interested in public problems, make more of an effort to stay informed, and feel more of a personal obligation to address public problems.
- feel more confident in their ability to learn about public problems
- seek resources that do and do not align with their views.
- understand the complexity of public problems and the need for compromise to arrive at workable solution for all persons.

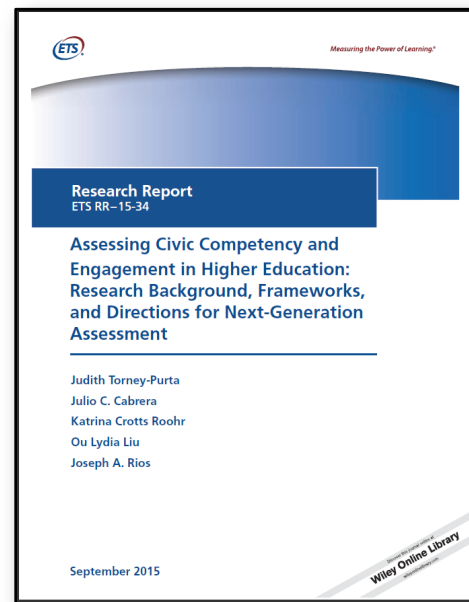
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Assessments



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https://www.ets.org/research/policy_research_reports/publications/report/2015/jvdz



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Political Engagement Project Survey

- Developed to assess the effectiveness of a wide range of programs at 2 colleges and universities

FREE!

Area	Subscale	Description
Political Skills	General skills of teamwork and collaboration	Reach a compromise, help diverse groups work together, deal with conflict, talk about social barriers (e.g., race)
	General leadership & communication skills	Articulate one's own idea and beliefs to others, make a statement at a public meeting, assume leadership of a group
	Skills of political analysis and judgment	Recognize competing political interests, write well about political topics, weigh pros/cons of different political positions
	Skills of political influence and action	Know whom to contact to get something done about a social or political problem, develop strategies for political action, organize people for political action
Action & Involvement	Expectation for future electoral action	Likelihood of engaging in electoral activities (e.g., voting, supporting political campaigns/causes) in the future
	Expectation for political voice	Likelihood of using one's political voice (e.g., contacting representatives, news outlets, protesting, marching, demonstrating, boycotting) in the future
Interest & Motivation	Motivated by Passion and Perceived Political Impact	Extent to which participation in political and social action is motivated by passion and perceived political impact
	Motivated by Personal Goals and Satisfaction	Extent to which participation in political and social action is motivated by personal goals and satisfaction

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Political Engagement Project Survey

Beaumont, E., Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., & Torney-Purta, J. (2006). Promoting political competence and engagement in college students: An empirical study. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 2(3), 249-270. doi: 10.1080/15512160600840467.

Colby, A., Beaumont, E., Ehrlich, T., & Corngold, J., (2007). *Educating for democracy: Preparing undergraduates for responsible political engagement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Section VII here:

http://archive.carnegiefoundation.org/educating_for_democracy/docs/index.html

Area	Subscale	Description
Interest & Motivation	Attention to government & public affairs	"Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How often would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?"
Knowledge & Understanding	Current Events Knowledge	Self-report of the level of one's knowledge about current local, state, national, and international issues, political leaders and their roles, and current economic issues.
	Foundational Knowledge	Self-report of the level of one's knowledge about organizations that work on political/social issues, political/democratic theories, and political institutions.
External Political Efficacy: Perception of Effective Political Strategies	Public & Institutional Attention	Perceptions of the effectiveness of political strategies used to bring public or institutional attention to issues
	Informing & Collaborating	Perceptions of the effectiveness of political strategies used to inform others or collaborate with other people
Internal Political Efficacy	Internal Efficacy	Confidence in ability to comprehend and influence politics. Example statements include: "I believe I have a role to play in the political process.", "I consider myself well qualified to participate in the political process", "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the political issues facing our country."

Create Your Own Items

Outcome 4: As a result of completing this course, the student will feel more confident in their ability to have conversations about public problems with others.

When discussing public problems, I feel confident in my ability to:

1. convey my understanding about the public problem.
2. articulate my own opinion about the issue.
3. support my own opinion about the issue.
4. listen to various viewpoints.
5. ask questions in order to increase my understanding of the issue.
6. ask questions in order to understand a different viewpoint on the issue.
7. navigate difficult moments in conversations.

Other Approaches to Assessment

- Open-ended items
 - What, if any, aspect of this debate or argumentation activity do you think will be relevant to your future work?
 - What did you like most about the debate or argumentation activity in this class?
 - What did you like least about the debate or argumentation activity in this class?
 - What you recommend using debate or argumentation as a teaching method in this course again?
- Focus groups
- Rubrics
- Direct assessments of knowledge/skills

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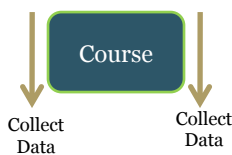
Design 1: Posttest Only



If we see a high average score, how do we know that the course *caused* the high score?

Perhaps students had high scores coming into the course .

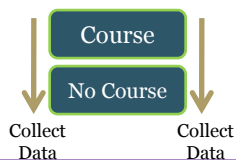
Design 2: Pretest and Posttest



If we add a pretest, then we can examine if average scores were high prior to the course. We are hoping that posttest scores will be higher than pretest scores. If we do see an increase, how do we know that the course *caused* the increase?

Perhaps the increase resulted from something else happening in the students' lives during the same time they were taking the course.

Design 3: Pretest and Posttest With a Control Group



If we add control group of students who have not completed the course to our design, then we can assess whether gains are being made for students receiving the treatment (our course) and those that are not (our control group). We are hoping to see an increase in scores for students who have taken the course and no increase in scores for students who have not taken the course.