



Part I: Follow-up Assessment Report Template

Date of Follow-up Report Submission: 7/2/2021

Name of Department / Unit: Adult, Veteran and Commuter Student Affairs

Name of Contact Person: James Stewart

Name of Person(s) Completing Follow-up Report: James Stewart

I. Follow-Up on Last Year's Assessment Report Recommendations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department submitted an alternative reflection report. In this reflection there were no recommendations made and therefore there are no follow-up items related to that report.



Part II: Annual Assessment Report Template: Learning
Academic Year: 2020-2021

Date of Report Submission: 7/2/2021

Name of Department / Unit: Adult, Veteran and Commuter Student Affairs

Name of Contact Person: James Stewart/ Megan Giedraitis

Name of Person(s) completing report or contributing to the project: James Stewart/Megan Giedraitis

I. Abstract

The assessment project sought to measure students' reflective skills among those who attended 3 separate events within the Promoting Student Development program area. Reflective skills and strategies are found to benefit students' success. An internally-created, open-ended learning survey was sent to students who checked in on DeHub and their responses were analyzed using an analytic rubric. In spite of a very low response rate, 8 of 9 students accurately demonstrated learning in reflective strategies. Future recommendations include doing the assessment in-person to improve responses, shortening it, and changing the learning outcome to only require growth in one area. Indications that students do see growth in this learning outcome allow the department to consider other workshops and events to provide these learning opportunities on a larger scale, especially as the return to campus occurs.

II. Assessment Question

To what extent do students who attend activities that promote student development develop and apply reflective skills in their academic, personal, and professional life?

III. Introduction & Context

Project Overview

The assessment sought to gather information by surveying attendees that attended a Compass Groups, a Veteran Career event, and the Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Conference to assess if attendees after several days were able to articulate reflection strategies that they learned by attending these events.

The events are a portion of the Program Area of the department relating to "Promoting Student Development." The events in this area aim to impart reflection strategies in the context of student's personal, professional, and/or academic goals.

The 20-21 year was executed entirely remotely. These events shifted to be a virtual offering. Virtual attendance to different event offerings was highly varied, but these events generally had attendance close to previous in-person levels.

Other activities within this Program Area included Strengths Quest presentation and Take a Professor to Lunch. Both of these events were not held during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

Students who participate in activities and services that connect students to services and resources will be able to employ reflective strategies in the context of their personal, professional, and academic goals.

Context for This Year's Report

Adult, Veteran and Commuter Student Affairs (AVCSA) is continuing a transition towards an academic support and student success-focused department. The staff were leads in working on the university ACE (Academic Continuity and Engagement) retention initiative. This took significant staff time and priority during the unknowns related to retention during the pandemic.

As the department shifts and necessitates changes to the Program Area Map, this is an area of offerings expected to be maintained. Promoting Student Development is a retention tool and offerings related to topics in this area about student and academic development will continue. This area was strategically chosen for its ability to potentially result in data of continued use.

The Division and University continue to prioritize student retention. This is included in the university strategic plan under 2.1: Create an inclusive and engaging experience for all students. It also relates to the Divisional priorities of Core Function 1, Academic Success.

The assessment focuses on reflective strategies. Reflective strategies are defined by a way to engage students: “useful way to accentuate students’ awareness of their active role in the learning process” (Risque et al., 2007). Reflective strategies have been found to increase student retention and contribute to academic success (Everett, 2013; Risque et al., 2007; Watson et al., 2007).

As noted earlier, the pandemic caused these events to be offered virtually. In that regard, the assessments were sent as follow-up qualitative surveys. In the past, some paper in-person surveys were utilized while students were present.

The first issue is only those attendees who check-in on DeHub are included in the population. Especially with the Graduate Thesis and Dissertation conference with multiple concurrent virtual sessions, this proved to have some difficulty although an attempt was made to manually check room attendance and later check-ins to rectify low self-check in rate.

That population from DeHub was then invited to complete the assessment. In spite of even offering a gift card drawing, the response rate across the events is 14% as articulated later. This is in spite of numerous reminder attempts and offering of

incentives. It is theorized that students maintained a fatigue of being online and overwhelmed during much of the pandemic and dealing with ongoing remote work making the completion of an online assessment seen as a chore. This theory is supported that Qualtrics data shows that 25 more students opened or started the survey but never finished it. Perhaps the reliance on articulating and reflecting with open-ended questions rather than simple evaluation or satisfaction data discouraged participation.

Sources:

Everett, M.C. (2013). Reflective journal writing and the first-year experience. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 25(2), 213-222.

Risquez, A., Moore, S., & Morley, M. (2007). Welcome to college? Developing a richer understanding of the transition process for adult first year students. *College Student Retention*, 9(2), 183-204.

Watson, G., Johnson, G.C., & Austin, H. (2007). Exploring relatedness to field of study as an indicator of student retention. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 23(1), 57-72.

IV. Data Collection & Methodology

Population and Sample

The total attendees who checked in on DeHub make up the population of attendees at these three events. This included 65 students this year. Not everyone who attended checked in on DeHub, but staff made attempts to check in on behalf of students using attendee lists. This was especially a challenge with the Graduate Thesis and Dissertation conference and graduate students. Each concurrent session was separate zoom links and students also didn't attend sessions each block. Attempts were made to snap snot attendee lists and find students, but names in zoom did not always match DeHub names. Nonetheless, DeHub attendees comprise the overall population.

A census sample of all 65 attendees were invited to participate in this project via email. All attendees were sent the learning survey via email to complete. Due to generally low response rates, all of these events also conducted follow-up reminders offering a gift card raffle for responses. This did not meaningfully increase response rates. The assessment had to be housed online due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and conducting remote work.

Data Collection

Data was collected using an interntally-created learning survey consisting of four open-ended questions sent to the attendees by email. These questions asked students to

identify and describe a reflective strategy they learned and to apply it to a scenario they might face in their academic, personal, and professional lives (see appendix for a copy of the learning survey). It was typically sent within one business day after the event. Invitations were sent the day following the Compass Group of Veteran Career Event. For the Saturday Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Conference, it was sent the following Monday.

The questions are included in an appendix. The open ended questions allowed students to give any length of a response to articulate a learned reflection strategy relative to the event they attended.

Data Analysis

The 19-20 Assessment Graduate Intern, Christina Rontell, and the department's Assistant Director, Megan Giedraitis, worked to create an analytic rubric to rate the articulation from each student of a reflection strategy (See appendix). This rubric consisted of five domains relative to students ability to a) recall a reflective strategy, b) understand the use of that strategy, c) apply that strategy to their academic life, d) apply that strategy to their personal life, and e) apply that strategy to their professional life. These domains were scored using a 5-point rating scale where a score of 4 or 5 reflected different degrees of exceeded expectations, a score of 3 reflected meeting expectations, scores of 1 or 2 reflected being below expectations, and a score of 0 indicated a lack of data provided.

After responses were collected, the Assistant Director used this rubric to analyze all responses at the end of the academic year.

Participant Consent

The email and introductory text ensured that participants knew that participation was optional and voluntary. Data was stored on Qualtrics servers in professional staff's accounts and on the protected university networked shared drive. Data was analyzed without identifying information attached.

V. Data & Findings

Response Rate and Demographics

In total 9 participants completed the assessment across the three events. This represents a 14% response rate. This represented 4 responses from the Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Conference, 3 from the Compass Group offered in Spring Quarter, and 2 from the Veteran Career Event.

As the responses were less than 15, full demographics are not presented. However, of note, the results include 5 graduate students, 4 undergraduate students.

Key Findings

For the recall area, students were scored with having 4 students scoring a 4, 4 students scoring a 3, and 1 student scoring a 1. An example high scoring response of 4 was “Defining "roles" that you must take in your life in order to reach certain goals is one reflective strategy from the program; for example, naming yourself as a "student" allows you to designate goals to being a better student and prioritizing those goals.” One articulated strategies but were not necessarily reflective. This is an example response scoring 1: “One editing strategy that I have started to use in my writing is the zotero app and other researching tools. I felt very overwhelmed by the amount of resources I had when i first started to collect information for my thesis but now it feels a lot less cluttered and it's been SOOO useful to quickly enter citations that I know are correct rather than doing them manually.” Some answers were unclear on a strategy, “I attended the "Getting Started" session with Dr. Gitomer and while he mostly focused on master's thesis, the info could be applied to a doctoral dissertation as well. I am in year 1 of my EdD so I'm just trying to formulate a plan for the steps in the dissertation process and this session was helpful in laying down some stepping stones.”

For understanding area, 2 students scored a 4, 5 students scored a 3, and 2 students scored a 2. One example scoring a 3 was “Translating military terms/titles/jargon into a language that civilian hiring authorities can understand.”

For academic application of the strategy articulated 4 students scored a 4, 3 students scored a 3, and 2 students scored a 2. An example scoring 4 response: “Organizing all of my assignments, projects, papers, classes, etc. taking the time to sort out all of my tasks into sections/ categories to structure them.” An example scoring 3 response included, “Writing about military experiences in assignments in a way that a professor/classmate unfamiliar with the military can understand.”

For the personal application of the strategy, 1 student scored a 5, 1 student scored a 4, 4 students scored a 3, 2 students scored a 2, and 1 student scored a 1. The score of 1 respondent did not articulate a strategy for personal application resulting in a 1: “The "surviving the revision process" session was helpful in just recapping how an academic paper should be organized in general- I won't necessarily use this in my personal life but it is good information for my educational journey.” Others did articulate a personal life application scoring a 4: “I would use a daily planner to schedule my life and focus more on the more important parts of my life. For example, I will communicate with my family and schedule my routine better.”

For the professional or career application of the strategy, 2 students scored a 4, 2 students scored a 3, 2 students scored a 2, and 2 students scored a 1. A high score of 4, “I would talk with my advisor about my career goal and then prepare for the internship or job application step by step.” An example score of 3 was from the Veteran Career event: “Applying for jobs!” Finally, some did not articulate a related item scoring a 1 from the

Graduate Thesis and Dissertation conference: ‘Am currently not working so not applicable’

The different events break down differently related to scores. For the Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Conference, 4 of 4 attendees scored 3 or better in Recall, with 3 attendees scoring a 4. In understanding, 3 out of 4 scored 3 or better. This event had everyone score a 4 in academic application. It scored much lower in personal application with only 1 out of 4 attendees scoring satisfactory. Similarly, in the career application, 2 students scored 2 and students scored 1s.

For the Compass Groups with recall, 1 student scored 4, 1 student scored 3, and 1 student scored a 1. For understanding, 1 student scored a 4 and 2 students scored a 3. Compass group content is mostly personal, so this area of application had 1 student score a 5, 1 student score a 4, and 1 student score a 3. The academic application had 2 students score 3 and 1 student score 2. The career application had one student score 3, 1 student score 2, and 1 student score 1.

For the Veteran Career event with recall, both students scored 3s. For understanding, 1 student scored a 3 and 1 student scored a 2. The Veteran event was career focused, so both students scored 4 in application in career. Similarly, both students scored 3 in personal application. Academic application had 1 student score 2 and one student score 3.

Program Level Learning Outcome	Number of Students Assessed	Number of Students with Acceptable or Better Performance
Students who participate in activities and services that connect students to services and resources will be able to employ reflective strategies in the context of their personal, professional, and academic goals.	9	6

A student was considered cumulatively to have achieved acceptable or better performance if they scored a 3 above in both recall and understanding and at least 2 of the application areas (either academic, personal, or career).

VI. Discussion & Interpretation of Findings

The developed rubric was a powerful tool for analysis of reflective strategies. 6 of the 9 students were able to articulate a strategy and apply it to at least some areas (academic, professional, and personal). Even among the other 3, they all scored 3 or better in either recall or understanding. Recall had 2 of those 3 students score 3 or higher. The last student scored satisfactory (3 or better) in understanding but not recall. They used their recall response to provide mostly evaluation of program comments.

As to limitations and challenges, the response rate was disappointing. It was complicated by the virtual nature of events and requirement to send survey electronically. DeHub check-ins as a requirement for even being counted to be invited further added a barrier to the assessment. In-person events are much easier to garner accurate check-in and request assessment while attendees are still present.

Overall, it is helpful to see 8 of 9 students could recall a reflective strategy. The thoroughness of responses highly differed, but this goal was certainly achieved.

One complicating element is the learning outcomes articulation that the student articulate the usefulness of the reflective strategy across all areas: academic, professional, and personal. The learning outcome explicitly states AND thus the rubric and questions were built in that manner. Each of the events likely provided different areas of focus making each have an area where participants were more easily able to apply that strategy. For example, the Veteran Career event's very topic made articulation of a professional strategy easier. The professional strategy area scored very low for the Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Conference because application of the learning that day did not focus on professional or career outcomes. It should be considered if the learning outcome should be redone to articulate OR allowing flexibility between programs to focus more on either professional, personal, or academic outcomes rather than trying to achieve applicability in all.

This data is useful to the department. It shows important differences in event outcomes between activities, and allows building on the strategies utilized working for potential execution with other events and interactions.

VII. Recommendations and Plans for Action

Recommendations

Based on this assessment:

- As the department changes and potentially revisits the Program Area Map, consider changing the learning outcome to articulate a learning in one of the areas instead of all three areas (professional, personal, and academic).
- Add other programs and workshops in the Student Development area to further impact student learning and success.
- Consider other audiences for these events and programs, especially at-risk students. One of these accessed events targeted graduate students and another student veterans, therefore limiting events in this area open to all undergraduates.

- Analyze ways to shorten the assessment as response thoroughness and length got shorter with each question.

Action Plan

Fall 2021: Share results in Assessment Symposium, Student Affairs website, with the department professional and student staff, and in a public way to share with students (such as a display board).

Fall 2021: In department changes, consider changing of learning outcome to require strategy for one area instead of all three.

Fall 2021-Spring 2021: Increase offerings in this area, especially targeted at at-risk students.

Fall 2021-Spring 2021: Continue this assessment in-person and with return of in-person events. Compare results to those provided this year as a comparison pool.

Appendix 1 – Questions

The questions included:

- Name at least one reflective strategy you learned as a result of attending/participating in [event name], and give a description of the strategy in your own words.
- Describe a scenario in your academic life where a reflective strategy would be useful, and how you would put it into practice in that scenario.
- Similarly, how would you put into practice a reflective strategy in a scenario from your personal life?
- Finally, how would you put into practice a reflective strategy in a scenario from your professional life?

Appendix 2 – Rubric

	Exceeds Learning Expectations		Meets Learning Expectations	Below Learning Expectations		Null
	5	4	3	2	1	0
Recall	Able to identify and name more than one relevant reflective strategy, all with accurate terminology	Able to identify and name more than one relevant reflective strategy	Identifies and names one relevant reflective strategy	Identifies a strategy, but it is not relevant to the program they attended	Unable to identify a reflective strategy	No answer
Understand	Description of at least one reflective strategy addresses how the strategy works	Description of at least one reflective strategy addresses why it is used and an example	Demonstrates understanding of a reflective strategy; focus on why it is used	Demonstrates an incomplete understanding of reflective strategies; focus on example of use	Does not demonstrate understanding of reflective strategies	No answer
Apply - Academic	Application of strategy is explicit AND scenario is personal	Application of strategy is explicit but scenario is generic OR Scenario is personal, but application of strategy is unclear	Scenario is generic and application is unclear, but both are relevant	Identifies relevant scenario, but not application, OR applies strategy, but not a scenario	Unable to describe a relevant scenario or application of strategy	No answer
Apply - Professional	Application of strategy is explicit AND scenario is personal	Application of strategy is explicit but scenario is generic OR Scenario is personal, but application of strategy is unclear	Scenario is generic and application is unclear, but both are relevant	Identifies relevant scenario, but not application, OR applies strategy, but not a scenario	Unable to describe a relevant scenario or application of strategy	No answer
Apply - Personal	Application of strategy is explicit AND scenario is personal	Application of strategy is explicit but scenario is generic OR Scenario is personal, but application of strategy is unclear	Scenario is generic and application is unclear, but both are relevant	Identifies relevant scenario, but not application, OR applies strategy, but not a scenario	Unable to describe a relevant scenario or application of strategy	No answer