

General Education Requirements Assessment Annual Assessment Plan Report

Academic Year: 2007-2008

General Education Component: General Education/Collegiate Center/Explorations course

Program Coordinators: Dwayne Collins, Joyce Hardin, Carole Herrick

Assessment Plan

- *Remember that your assessment plan and student learning goals should be available next year for the North Central evaluation team. You do not need to submit any of your assessment data, but it should be on file in your department/program for the North Central evaluation team to see should they ask.*
- *Has your general education component done an assessment audit of your course to determine how course goals match overall student learning goals? (This has not been required, but it is a recommended exercise that was explained at the most recent chairs' assessment workshop. If you have done this, please report the results or refer to a previous report where this was done.)*

The Explorations course goals and Intended Learning Outcome (ILO) statements developed by the Explorations Assessment Group and confirmed yearly by discussion/consensus of the Explorations Working Group (EWG) were created within the context of the Hendrix Statement of Purpose. The course goals and ILO statements are designed to be “initiations” to the broader learning goals of the Hendrix Statement of Purpose. **Course goals and ILOs are presented in the Explorations Assessment Plan, accessible from the “link” page to this annual report, and in Attachment A following this report.**

- *Are student learning goals available to students? Are student learning goals included in course syllabi in your general education component? Do you have copies of these syllabi for the North Central evaluation team should they ask to see them?*

The two goals of Explorations are prominently placed in the course syllabus.

For Fall, 2008, Explorations course materials will also contain a student handout of “Explorations Course Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)” for the course. The Explorations web page, projected to be “live” by August 1, 2008, will also present these course goals and ILOs.

The Explorations syllabus is available for review by the North Central evaluation team.

Student Assessments

- *Describe which direct assessments in your assessment plan have been collected for the year and which have not. [“Direct” refers to evaluated student work.]*

NOTE: By consensus of the full Explorations Working Group (EWG), and based on the recommendation of the Explorations Assessment Group, direct assessments in the course will be reviewed in depth in a multi-year rotational pattern. Though a general discussion of all direct and indirect assessments will take place in the yearly Explorations Working Group meetings (details below), those discussions will include a more formal and in-depth consideration for ONE pre-selected direct assessment yearly.

Direct Assessments Collected in Fall, 2007:

-This year (Fall, 2007) the direct assessment collected in Explorations was the **Major Reading/Writing assignment (*Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba P. Beals—reading and essay assignment)**. This assessment provided student-learning data relating to course Goal 2, ILO 2.1, and ILO 2.2 (see **APPENDIX B** below for details). By group consensus, this direct assessment emphasis will be repeated in the Fall, 2008, semester in order to evaluate the effectiveness of actions stemming from the Explorations faculty assessment/action meeting of 12/4/07. **A summary of this assessment/action meeting of 12/4/07 emphasizing this direct assessment is contained in APPENDIX B of this document, below.**

Direct Assessments Not Collected in Fall, 2007:

-Academic Integrity assessment (reflective writing)

-Engaged Learning assessment (project, reflective writing, and class presentation)

NOTE: Direct assessments in these two areas were collected during the Fall, 2006, semester.

-Collaborative learning activities and assignments

NOTE: Direct assessment of collaborative activities and assignments have are tentatively scheduled for review and action in the 2009-2010 academic year.

- *Describe which indirect assessments in your assessment plan have been collected for the year and which have not. “Indirect” refers to student surveys or opinions.*

Indirect assessments for Explorations are standardized and collected yearly. Summary and comparative data for the overall “Student Course Evaluation” completed by students at the close of the course have been compiled for Fall, 2004, and all subsequent years.

Beginning with the Fall, 2007 semester, a short pre-test (administered in the first class meeting) and post-test (administered at the final class meeting) relating specifically to course content and assignments, these in turn reflective of the course goals and ILOs, was introduced into the course.

Data summaries for these indirect measures are available for review by the North Central evaluation team.

Assessment Planning

- *How is information about student learning shared and used for decision making? (Each general education component is expected to have discussions of at least two hours each academic year to discuss assessment. If you have met, briefly summarize the meeting. If you have not met, when do you plan to meet?)*

Since the inception of the course (Fall, 2003), teaching faculty and Explorations Working Group discussions of available information related to student learning, primarily as reflected in direct and indirect assessments, has been the primary agent of informed decision-making in Explorations. This ongoing process is structured around three formal meetings per year of Explorations faculty and Working Group members (all Working Group members are Explorations teachers, but all do not teach every year). These meetings include both data-driven and observation-based discussions of student learning, followed by collective data-informed decisions as to appropriate action(s) based on available information.

Generally speaking, the Explorations Working Group meets at the close of the semester in which the course was taught, then again in May and August workshops in the summer prior to teaching the course again in the fall semester. In each of these meetings information about student learning (direct assessments, indirect assessments, and informal feedback and perceptions) is reviewed, shared, and discussed by the full group. Direct and indirect assessment measures for the course factor into these discussions at all levels, serving to enhance and underscore the “trustability” of information the Working Group uses to inform its development of appropriate action(s) to enhance student learning in the course. Total time spent on discussing assessment-related topics in these three yearly meetings is in the range of 6-8 hours.

-More specifically, in the assessment and action meeting occurring after the conclusion of the Explorations class each fall (12/4/07 for 2007), instructors for the course, plus others in the Explorations Working Group who wish to attend, discuss at length strengths and weaknesses of student learning as evidenced in the direct assessment(s) selected for focus in the semester just past. The group also reviews indirect assessment data for trends in student perceptions. Appropriate action(s) in light of assessment data are discussed, using assessment data to inform appropriate modifications for the following year.

-In the May and August workshops prior to teaching the course in the upcoming fall (May 12-13, 2008 and August 7-8, 2008), discussions occur (May) and presentations are made (August) directed to confirmation and appropriate implementation of the action(s) identified in the December meeting (often the May meeting as well). These presentations and related discussions run a minimum of two hours in May and two hours in August, often longer.

Additionally, the Explorations Peer Assistants (EPAs) for Explorations (an EPA is a student assistant for Explorations; each section of Explorations has an EPA, chosen by the teacher of the section) have a debriefing meeting after the course that provides course feedback from these peer assistants. Their thoughts are presented by the Explorations Coordinators to the Explorations Working Group and factor into assessment discussions in that Group.

MEETING SUMMARIES for 2007-2008:

-December 4, 2007—Course Debriefing and Assessment Meeting

The December 4, 2007 Explorations meeting (full summary is in **APPENDIX B** below) included a general review of the course and its effectiveness. The main business of the meeting involved oral presentations by each section teacher in attendance of strengths and weaknesses in student learning in his or her section, as evidenced in the selected direct assessment (from the rotational system) for the semester just past. That direct assessment was the Major Reading/Writing assignment for the course—*Warriors Don't Cry* (reading and essay). Questions and discussion followed each presentation until all had been heard. The group then codified and adopted by consensus a number of potential actions to address weaknesses and concerns revealed by this direct assessment. Those actions will be discussed more thoroughly in the May and August, 2008, workshops and final decisions made for actions to be implemented in the Fall, 2008, Explorations course. The potential actions developed in this meeting, **copied directly from APPENDIX B below**, were the following:

•Decision-making, based on the preceding discussion, on appropriate action(s) directed to enhancing student learning based on perceived weaknesses and concerns identified by the direct assessment (Major Reading/Writing Assignment--Warriors Don't Cry for 2007).

ACTIONS—for consideration and final decisions in May and August workshops, followed by implementation in Fall, 2008.

INCREASE emphasis on effective writing in Explorations next year in the following ways:

- Identify and cultivate the higher order thinking we're looking for in student writing—reflective thoughtful engagement with higher order issues—and develop through sample writings, mini-assignments, “rewrite” features, “peer review” exercises, etc.
- Add a course component on effective writing next year prior to this assignment—with samples of “good/better”—fine discriminations. Educate better writing through example.
- Group and individual class “work” on clarity of thesis and support from the assigned reading, on how to use the reading to strengthen your thesis/arguments, etc.
- Class emphasis on MLA citations and conventional correctness—provide more helpful handout/on-line resource materials for students.

-Improve clarity and specificity of requirements that are contained in the writing assignment.

-Include the specifics of the writing assignment requirements in the grading rubric developed for the assignment.

Discussion and action(s) stemming from indirect assessments were also part of this assessment meeting. **See Appendix B below for a full summary of that 12/4/07 meeting.**

-May 12-13—Explorations workshop:

The May 12-13, 2008 Explorations workshop included a discussion session led by a newly formed writing mini-working group, that group formed in response to perceived concerns and needs expressed in the December 4, 2007 meeting. The need for more cogent materials and course emphasis on writing and “thinking on paper” were again discussed, including the need to cultivate more positive student perspectives relative to effective writing and to focus on “instrumental” skills and processes of good thinking and writing. Actions selected for further discussion at the August workshop, including implementation details as appropriate, included the following:

- class discussion of sample writings,
- provision of more thorough materials on conventional correctness and appropriate citation skills,
- optimizing of assignment and grading rubrics,
- emphasis and exercises on thesis and argument development, etc.
- consideration of a peer review/student collaborative system for writing assignments.

Final action decisions for the Fall, 2008, Explorations course will be made at the August 7-8 workshop, based upon presentations from the writing and reading mini-working groups and full Working Group discussions.

- *Describe any curricular or other programmatic changes that have been made that were based (at least in part) on the availability of your assessment data.*

-Based on direct and indirect assessment data from Explorations, 2007, significant changes in the role of and emphasis on effective writing in Explorations and at Hendrix will be incorporated in Explorations for the Fall, 2008 semester. Details of those action items under consideration are contained in the section of this report just above (MEETING SUMMARIES for 2007-2008). Final decisions and details relating to actions to be implemented in the Fall, 2008, Explorations course will be made during the August, 2008, Explorations workshop.

-Based on poor student response on direct and indirect assessments from Explorations, 2007, coupled with a continuing decline of on site program effectiveness, the Heifer “Global Awareness” options for the Engaged Learning component of the course have been dropped.

-Modifications to the Engaged Learning component of the course, implemented in the Fall, 2007, Explorations course (see annual assessment report for Explorations, 2006-2007) were perceived by students (indirect assessment instruments) and faculty to be effective. Based on May, 2008, Working Group discussions of direct “Engaged Learning” assessments for Fall, 2007, slight modifications in materials and focus for this unit will be put in place for Fall, 2008.

- *Describe any changes in the Assessment Plan or student learning goals that have been made during this academic year. (If changes have been made, please submit an electronic copy of the revised plan to Amanda Hurd.)*

Though some minimal wording changes have been made in the document, no substantive changes in the Explorations Assessment Plan or student learning goals were made in the 2007-2008 academic year.

The latest version of that “Assessment Plan” and “Explorations Course Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes” are presented in the initial Explorations link on this Assessment page. “Explorations Course Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes” are also listed in APPENDIX A below.

- *Define at least one action item for your group that will be a goal of your assessment discussions next year (2008-09):*

Assuming that we are successful in enhancing the position and effectiveness of writing and “thinking on paper” in the Explorations course next year (including perhaps the addition of a peer review facet, and certainly including upgrading of class materials, pedagogy, and assignment and grading rubrics for these direct assessments) the next likely target for our “action” attention would be ILO 2-3 relating to collaborative learning (see APPENDIX A below). This ILO has yet to be the focus of direct, in-depth assessment and subsequent development of action(s) to improve student learning relative to this ILO. We will need to either bring ILO 2-3 on line or drop it from the course learning outcomes.

Additionally, next year the Explorations Assessment Group expects to solidify the sequence and general format of the rotational system we have begun to use for direct assessments linked to course goals and ILOs. This schedule will be presented to the Explorations Working Group for discussion and approval.

Too, we will add next year a more formal “input” feature to the post-course assessment meeting each year. For this Working Group review/assessment meeting, feedback sheets requesting summary information of perceived strengths and weaknesses evidenced in the year’s “featured” direct assessment will be distributed for completion by Working Group members prior to the meeting. These completed feedback sheets will serve as resources during the meeting, and also make provision for the voices of individuals not in attendance to be heard. These feedback forms will be collected, summarized, and archived following the meeting, providing an additional layer of information and accuracy in the assessment process.

An appropriate feedback sheet will also be added to final closure meeting with the EPAs each semester.

**APPENDIX A:
Explorations Course Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)**

EXPLORATIONS

Course Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Most recent review and confirmation:
Explorations Workshop of May 12-13, 2008

In structure and intent, the Goals and ILOs listed below aim to express Explorations student learning goals and outcomes in such a way that:

- 1) each can be clearly and easily assessed through both direct and indirect means,
- 2) appropriate rubrics can be developed for each student assignment to be evaluated, and
- 3) the broader (subjective) College goals of becoming a "whole person" are contained in them in a meaningful and measurable way.

Goal 1: Through its content and context, Explorations seeks to make each student aware of the importance of many of the academic, personal, and social contexts that are needed for a successful transition to Hendrix, and seeks to facilitate each student's transition.

ILO 1-1: The student exhibits an understanding of the perspectives, processes, habits of mind, and personal choices conducive to a successful transition as well as a progressive understanding of the importance of these attributes.

Course Topics:

Course Introduction and Hendrix Statement of Purpose
Transition and Choices
Resources and Expectations
Integrity and Ethics
Diversity
Liberal Arts Education

ILO 1-2: The student exhibits an understanding of the traditional and experiential components of the academic program of the College as well as the available student resources, mentoring and support systems in place to facilitate a successful experience at Hendrix.

Course Topics:

Course Introduction and Hendrix Statement of Purpose
Transition and Choices
Resources and Expectations
Integrity and Ethics
Engaged Learning (Odyssey)

Goal 2: Through its content and context, Explorations seeks to make each student aware of the importance of developing and refining intellectual skills that are needed for a successful transition to Hendrix, and seeks to facilitate each student's initial improvement/maintenance of these skills.

ILO 2-1: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to communicate both orally and in written form as well as gather and process information and knowledge at a level of sophistication necessary for a successful Hendrix experience.

Course Topics:

Each unit/topic that contains a formal written/oral component

ILO 2-2: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to reason in an informed and ethical way, think critically, and make decisions in dealing with important issues and topics that are without definitive answers (world hunger, diversity and tolerance, service and leadership, etc.) as well as evidence of developing such abilities through the analysis of one or more such issues addressed in the course.

Course Topics:

Integrity and Ethics
Diversity
Major reading

ILO 2-3: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to work effectively and sensitively in a collaborative context and the continued development of the interpersonal skills and perspectives necessary for such successful collaboration.

Course Topics:

Any topic/unit that requires collaborative effort and/or peer response
(Engaged Learning, one major or minor group assignment)

[NOTE: So long as the course contains at least one component that requires some non-trivial degree of “engaged learning” (extended Odyssey unit or major reflection paper) the following Intended Learning Outcome is adopted for the course.]

ILO 2-4: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of increasing her/his level of sophistication in thoughtful, cogent reflection on both written and oral materials as well as experiences in engaged learning. The student will exhibit evidence of developing such abilities through the analysis of one or more major issues addressed in the course.

APPENDIX B:

EXPLORATIONS

**Working Group Post-Course Assessment Meeting
December 4, 2007/Murphy House 3:30-5:30pm**

Each December, following the completion of the Exploration course, the Explorations Working Group meets to discuss course assessments of student learning and to take appropriate action in light of those assessments. The goal of this annual meeting is to improve the quality and effectiveness of Explorations based on ongoing review of indirect and direct measurements tied to the goals and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the course, coupled with appropriate course action(s) and modification(s).

The questions posed to focus informed decision-making in assessment were as follows:

- What are our desired outcomes for student learning?
- What direct and indirect assessments were directed to those outcomes?
- What do these direct and indirect assessments indicate?
- What actions are appropriate, based on these direct and indirect assessment measures?

The Explorations Working Group focuses each year on one direct assessment(s) linked to a subset of the course goals and ILOs; that direct assessment rotates over multiple years. A complete listing of course Goals and related ILOs is attached. The Fall, 2007 Explorations course emphasized a direct assessment linked to Goal 2, ILO 2-1, and ILO 2-2, as follows:

Goal 2: Through its content and context, Explorations seeks to make each student aware of the importance of developing and refining intellectual skills that are needed for a successful transition to Hendrix, and seeks to facilitate each student's initial improvement/maintenance of these skills.

ILO 2-1: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to communicate both orally and in written form as well as gather and process information and knowledge at a level of sophistication necessary for a successful Hendrix experience.

Course Topics:

Each unit/topic that contains a formal written/oral component

ILO 2-2: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to reason in an informed and ethical way, think critically, and make decisions in dealing with important issues and topics that are without definitive answers (world hunger, diversity and tolerance, service and leadership, etc.) as well as evidence of developing such abilities through the analysis of one or more such issues addressed in the course.

Course Topics:

*Integrity and Ethics
Diversity
Major reading*

The aims of the December, 2007 post-course Explorations Working Group assessment meeting were the following:

- to review as a group the indirect measurements of student learning for the Fall, 2007 Explorations course, and to determine appropriate action(s) based on these data.
- to discuss collectively student strengths and weaknesses and common concerns as identified by one direct measurement of student learning (*Warriors Don't Cry*—reading and essay for 2007) as this direct measurement relates to selected goals and ILOs of the course (see above).
- based on this discussion, to determine appropriate action(s) to be implemented next fall, these action(s) to be directed towards enhancing student learning based on perceived weaknesses and concerns identified by the direct measure (Major Reading/Writing Assignment: *Warriors Don't Cry* for 2007) above.
- to improve the quality of informed decision making through improving the quality of the direct and indirect assessment data collected in Explorations.

•Review of the indirect measurements of student learning for Explorations— Fall, 2007:

Summary data for the Explorations Course Evaluation, 2007 and Exploration Pre- and Post-tests, 2007, reflect increasing student perceptions of satisfaction and competency with course content. The addition this year (Fall, 2007) of a pre- and post- test emphasizing specific Explorations content further refined indirect data collection for the course and corroborated student self-perception of course-related learning. Engaged learning activities continue to lead the student satisfaction scores for the course. Student concerns with paper writing in general continue.

ACTION: The Group will develop course strategies to facilitate productive student perceptions in areas relating to writing. Group consensus was to discuss at our summer workshops ways in which we might productively add more emphasis in Explorations on the importance and rationale for effective writing at Hendrix and beyond. (NOTE: In April, 2008, a mini-working group on this topic was formed to present ideas and lead discussions on writing at the 2008 summer workshops for Explorations).

•Identification of student strengths and weaknesses and common concerns reflected in a direct measurement of student writing (Major Reading/Writing Assignment-- *Warriors Don't Cry* for 2007) as this direct measurement relates to the selected goals and ILOs of the course (see above).

Major Reading/Writing Assignment (*Warriors Don't Cry* for 2007):

Faculty oral reports of student strengths and weaknesses—summary observations:

-Both in the writing assignment and in the grading rubric accompanying it, we must “prompt” the sorts of reflective thinking and wrestling with higher order issues we want to cultivate in Explorations students. Individual students whose writing did reflect such thinking were numerous, but the course does not yet optimally identify for students and cultivate in them progressively “higher order” competencies relating to thinking on paper. Such assistance and information needs greater emphasis in the course.

-Student writing is uneven. Examples of strong writing occurred in all sections, but not all students are strong; many are quite weak.

-Student writing is not optimally “enhanced” by Explorations. We need a greater emphasis on the assisting students in becoming better writers through course experiences. We must more intentionally cultivate better writing in Explorations. We need to find effective ways to cultivate effective, direct, non-ambiguous writing. Many Explorations students did not reflect this level of writing quality in the WDC direct assessment.

-Though the students did not like the session when it was a part of Explorations in past years, a class period spent on topics relating to “How to write a quality paper” warrants ongoing consideration. Incorporating this material into the course prior to the writing assignments/assessments, may be expected to have a positive impact on the quality of student work.

-Students seemed to benefit in sections that incorporated a formal “rewrite” component in this assignment (not mandated).

-A peer review system for paper review has not been tried in any section, but has good promise as well.

-Student citations were very weak; left to their own devices, they ignore this area. Much more direction/prompting is needed. As instructors, we must improve OUR information and coverage of this area.

-Conventional correctness needs more emphasis in the course (MLA style)

-The grading rubric was not optimal for this assignment. It should include all “requirements” (format, citations, etc.) contained in the rubric in addition to general standards of good writing.

-Consider incorporating samples of quality writing, with peer (group/partner) processing.

-Consider small “component” writings for the larger assignment, esp. a THESIS assignment.

-The Beals book was perceived by some student as too elementary, too naïve—they liked having the author here on campus, but didn’t relate to *Warriors Don’t Cry*.

•Decision-making, based on the preceding discussion, on appropriate action(s) directed to enhancing student learning based on perceived weaknesses and concerns identified by the direct assessment (Major Reading/Writing Assignment--Warriors Don’t Cry for 2007).

ACTIONS—for consideration and final decisions in May and August workshops, followed by implementation in Fall, 2008.

INCREASE emphasis on effective writing in Explorations next year in the following ways:

-Identify and cultivate the higher order thinking we’re looking for in student writing—reflective thoughtful engagement with higher order issues—and develop through sample writings, mini-assignments, “rewrite” features, “peer review” exercises, etc.

-Add a course component on effective writing next year prior to this assignment—with samples of “good/better”—fine discriminations. Educate better writing through example.

-Group and individual class “work” on clarity of thesis and support from the assigned reading, on how to use the reading to strengthen your thesis/arguments, etc.

-Class emphasis on MLA citations and conventional correctness—provide more helpful handout/on-line resource materials for students.

-Improve clarity and specificity of requirements that are contained in the writing assignment.

-Include the specifics of the writing assignment requirements in the grading rubric developed for the assignment.

•Improve the quality of informed decision making through improving the quality of the direct and indirect assessment data collected in Explorations (Major Reading/Writing Assignment—Warriors Don't Cry for 2007).

Adding course components examining sample writings, incorporating rewrite and other “incremental” developmental activities to this Major Reading/Writing Assignment may be expected to enhance the quality and usefulness of the data gathered by this direct assessment.

The addition this past fall (2007) of a content-based pre- and post-test for the course is expected to increase the value of the indirect assessment instruments used in the course.

EXPLORATIONS

Course Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Most recent review and confirmation:
Explorations Workshop of May 12-13, 2008

In structure and intent, the Goals and ILOs listed below aim to express Explorations student learning goals and outcomes in such a way that:

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Goal 1: Through its content and context, Explorations seeks to make each student aware of the importance of many of the academic, personal, and social contexts that are needed for a successful transition to Hendrix, and seeks to facilitate each student's transition.

ILO 1-1: The student exhibits an understanding of the perspectives, processes, habits of mind, and personal choices conducive to a successful transition as well as a progressive understanding of the importance of these attributes.

Course Topics:

Course Introduction and Hendrix Statement of Purpose
Transition and Choices
Resources and Expectations
Integrity and Ethics
Diversity
Liberal Arts Education

ILO 1-2: The student exhibits an understanding of the traditional and experiential components of the academic program of the College as well as the available student resources, mentoring and support systems in place to facilitate a successful experience at Hendrix.

Course Topics:

Course Introduction and Hendrix Statement of Purpose
Transition and Choices
Resources and Expectations
Integrity and Ethics
Engaged Learning (Odyssey)

Goal 2: Through its content and context, Explorations seeks to make each student aware of the importance of developing and refining intellectual skills that are needed for a successful transition to Hendrix, and seeks to facilitate each student's initial improvement/maintenance of these skills.

ILO 2-1: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to communicate both orally and in written form as well as gather and process information and knowledge at a level of sophistication necessary for a successful Hendrix experience.

Course Topics:

Each unit/topic that contains a formal written/oral component

ILO 2-2: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to reason in

an informed and ethical way, think critically, and make decisions in dealing with important issues and topics that are without definitive answers (world hunger, diversity and tolerance, service and leadership, etc.) as well as evidence of developing such abilities through the analysis of one or more such issues addressed in the course.

Course Topics:

Integrity and Ethics
Diversity
Major reading

ILO 2-3: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of her or his ability to work effectively and sensitively in a collaborative context and the continued development of the interpersonal skills and perspectives necessary for such successful collaboration.

Course Topics:

Any topic/unit that requires collaborative effort and/or peer response
(Engaged Learning, one major or minor group assignment)

[NOTE: So long as the course contains at least one component that requires some non-trivial degree of “engaged learning” (extended Odyssey unit or major reflection paper) the following Intended Learning Outcome is adopted for the course.]

ILO 2-4: The student exhibits an understanding of the importance of increasing her/his level of sophistication in thoughtful, cogent reflection on both written and oral materials as well as experiences in engaged learning. The student will exhibit evidence of developing such abilities through the analysis of one or more major issues addressed in the course.

EXPLORATIONS

Experiencing the Hendrix World
Engage, Connect, Learn

Professor:

Phone:

Email:

Office & Office Hours:

Expl. Peer Asst. (EPA):

Phone:

Email:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explorations is a one semester common course taken by all new first-year students at Hendrix. The course meets once a week and carries 0.25 credit. It is designed to assist you in becoming familiar with the mission and expectations of the College, with campus life, and with the broad range of opportunities that are available at Hendrix. Equally important, this course will facilitate your own personal exploration, encouraging you to develop, refine, and expand your abilities and interests. Explorations will enhance your potential for success in all areas of your Hendrix experience.

A second-year Hendrix student will serve as an Explorations Peer Assistant (EPA) for the course. This student brings perspectives and knowledge about Hendrix that adds a vital dimension to the course.

COURSE GOALS

The goals of Explorations are as follows:

1. To assist you in making a successful transition to academic and student life at Hendrix.
2. To assist you in developing and refining your thoughts and abilities in areas relating to your academic and personal fulfillment and success.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Beals, Melba Pattillo. *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1994. (ISBN 0671866397)
- Explorations Notebook & Student Planner (provided)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS, EVALUATION, AND ASSESSMENT

A hallmark of your education at Hendrix is an emphasis on class interaction and discussion. Explorations instructors seek to model these pedagogies with class sessions that include discussion, group activities, and presentations. In order to be prepared for class, you are expected to complete reading and other assignments prior to the class period for which they are assigned. Expect Explorations assignments and experiences to take, on average, two (2) hours per week outside of class, for an expected total of

about 24 hours for the semester. Your grade will be based on the quality of your assigned work, attendance, and class participation and preparation. Missing or late assignments and absences will affect your preparation and participation grade.

Here's how your course grade will be computed:

	Points	
Attendance	25	Grading Scale:
Participation & Preparation.....	25	90-100 pts..... A
Assignments		80-89 pts.....B
Academic Integrity writing assignment	15	70-79 pts.....C
Beals writing assignment (<i>Warriors Don't Cry</i>)	20	60-69 pts..... D
Engaged learning project ("Mini-Odyssey")	15	0-59
TOTAL	100 points	F

ATTENDANCE

Class attendance is assumed at Hendrix. Students may miss one Explorations class without penalty. Each additional absence lowers your attendance grade by five (5) points. **BONUS:** Students attending all class sessions will have five (5) points added to their attendance point total. Absences related to Hendrix varsity athletics **must** be excused prior to the absence occasioned by the team schedule. Excused absence requests related to health issues must be accompanied by a doctor's note, presented not later than one week after the absence. Other excused absences may be considered at the discretion of the section teacher. Refer to the Class Attendance Policy on page 38-39 of the 2007-2008 *Catalog*.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Incidences of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be dealt with by the Committee on Academic Integrity. Refer to the Academic Integrity Policy on pages 39-44 of the 2007-2008 *Catalog*.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

It is the policy of Hendrix College to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student who needs accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. In order to receive accommodations, students with disabilities are required to contact Julie Brown in Academic Support Services at 505-2954.

EXPLORATIONS SCHEDULE—FALL 2007

WK	DATE (Tu-Th)	SEMINAR TOPICS	ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES	RECOMMENDED EVENTS
1	Aug. 21-23	Introduction; Goals & Expectations of Course; Statement of Purpose; Resources		<u>ACTIVITIES FAIR</u> : Aug 24, 11a.m. - 1 p.m., Burrow Pecan Grove
2	28-30	Liberal Arts; Engaged Learning; <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i> (WDC)	WDC, Ch 1-10 (pages 1-105)	
3	Sept. 4-6	Transitions & Expectations Resources; Choices; <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i>	WDC, Ch 11-21 (pages 106-220)	
4	11-13	Academic Integrity & Ethics; <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i>	WDC, Ch 21-28 (pages 221-312)	<u>LECTURE</u> : Suzan Lori Parks, Sept 11, 7:30 pm, Staples
5	18-20	Diversity; <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i> discussion	<u>PAPER DUE</u> : Academic Integrity <u>HOMEWORK</u> : Bring 5 questions to class that you would ask M.P. Beals <u>CONVOCATION</u> : Melba P. Beals, Sept 20, 11:10 am, Staples	
6	25-27	Diversity; <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i> discussion, cont'd.		<u>WAC DEDICATION</u> : Bill Bradley, date/time TBA, Wellness & Athletic Center
7	Oct. 2-4	FLEX DAY	<u>PAPER DUE</u> : <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i>	
8	9-11	FALL BREAK (Oct 11-14) NO EXPLORATIONS CLASSES THIS WEEK		
9	16-18	Social Norming; Social Responsibility; Wellness Log; Choices	<u>CONVOCATION</u> : Trent Stewart, Engaged Learning & Artistic Creation, Oct 18, 11:10 am, Staples	
10	23-25	FLEX DAY		
11	Oct. 30- Nov. 1	Engaged Learning Projects	<u>CLASS PRESENTATIONS</u> Engaged Learning	<u>MAJORS FAIR</u> , Nov 1, 11:00am - 1:00pm, Burrow
12	Nov. 6-8	Engaged Learning Projects	<u>CLASS PRESENTATIONS</u> (con't) Engaged Learning	
13	13-15	Liberal Arts & Engaged Learning		
14	20-22	THANKSGIVING (Nov 21-25) NO EXPLORATIONS CLASSES THIS WEEK		
15	27-29	Synthesis & Wrap-up; Course Assessment		

Explorations Student Feedback

	Unit 1: Understanding Hendrix							Unit 2: Character & Hendrix					Unit 3: Core Components of your Hendrix education						
	Transition & Choices				Mission								Critical thinking			Experiential Engaged Learning			
	Habits of success	Resources and Mentors	Expectations & etiquette	Learning styles	Mission, stmt of purpose, motto	Liberal learning--aims and values	Liberal arts readings	Academic ethics and integrity	Academic integrity policy with paper	Social Ethics/personal responsibility	Diversity & tolerance	Major reading	Reflective writing or paper on major reading	Diversity & tolerance	Major reading convocation	Engaged Learning (pre-Ody) Your Hendrix Odyssey - Overview	Odyssey Exemplar event	Individual Project in Engaged Learning	
2004 GPA (6 pt scale)	3.66	4.04	3.98	3.54	3.74	3.98	3.56	4.24	3.97	3.83	3.78	¹ 4.53	¹ 4.11	3.78	--	3.92	--	--	
2005 GPA (6 pt scale)	3.94	4.14	4.00	--	3.92	4.15	3.84	4.04	3.99	3.96	3.91	¹ 4.51	¹ 4.17	3.91	--	4.19	--	--	
2006 GPA (6 pt scale)	4.47	4.88	4.80	--	4.75	4.90	3.83	4.88	4.58	4.68	4.82	¹ 5.05	¹ 4.72	4.82	--	4.89	--	4.89	
2007 GPA (6 pt scale)	4.72	4.92	4.88	--	4.89	5.07	--	5.02	4.75	4.81	4.83	² 4.56	² 4.43	4.83	² 5.03	4.93	4.20	5.01	

¹Frankl: *Man's Search for Meaning*²Beals: *Warriors Don't Cry*

	Unit 3: Core Components of your Hendrix education									Final thoughts 1st sem at HC			
	Experiential Engaged Learning cont.						Synthesis & Planning						
	Artistic event and reflection	Service learning exp	Global awareness exp	Professional and leadership dev	Library Literacy	UGR	Library & UGR	Academic, Career, and Life Planning	Personal Mission Statement/Resume	High-quality learning experience	Positive experience overall	Would recommend to a friend	Return to Hendrix next fall
2004 GPA (6 pt scale)	4.35	4.38	4.40	3.74	3.19	3.76	--	3.87	3.85	5.14	5.05	5.22	5.27
2005 GPA (6 pt scale)	4.39	4.32	4.47	3.78	--	--	3.25	3.97	3.85	5.27	5.28	5.44	5.44
2006 GPA (6 pt scale)	4.42	4.58	3.83	4.09	--	--	4.18	--	--	5.45	5.32	5.50	5.48
2007 GPA (6 pt scale)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5.46	5.35	5.49	5.50

Explorations 2007
Student Feedback

2/25/2009

		Unit 1: Understanding Hendrix					Unit 2: Understanding Hendrix and Yourself			Unit 3: Core Components of Your Hendrix Education						Final thoughts for your first semester at Hendrix								
		Transition & Choices			Mission		Character & Hendrix			Critical Thinking			Experiential, Engaged Learning			Overall experience this semester								
Section	Survey #	Habits of success	Resources & Mentors	Expectations & etiquette	Mission, Statement of Purpose and Motto	Liberal learning--aims and values	Academic ethics and integrity	Academic Integrity policy, with paper	Social ethics and personal responsibility	Major reading -- WDC	Melba Beals reading assignment	Reflective writing / paper on WDC	Diversity & tolerance (tie in to WDC)	Engaged Learning: Your Hendrix Odyssey	Major reading (book) convocation	Melba Beals WDC	Odyssey Exemplar event	Trent Stewart Convocation	Individual Extended Project in Engaged Learning	High quality learning experience	Positive experience overall	Would recommend Hendrix College	Want to return to Hendrix College next fall	
#As = Strongly Agree		68	80	94	110	136	118	113	96	103	65	109	110	164	77	126	197	186	224	238				
#Bs = Agree		145	153	150	116	103	130	94	127	85	97	119	128	71	88	114	87	86	55	37				
#Cs = Tend to Agree		70	66	47	60	55	48	58	62	70	86	51	52	44	76	50	22	28	20	26				
#Ds = Tend to Disagree		18	12	9	14	12	7	28	15	23	36	15	13	15	24	10	4	7	8	1				
#Es = Disagree		9	2	3	7	4	3	12	3	12	13	7	2	9	18	9	1	2	1	5				
#Fs = Strongly Disagree		2	0	3	4	2	4	7	5	19	15	10	3	8	9	3	0	1	3	3				
#n/a = Not Applicable to my Class		2	1	8	3	2	3	1	4	1	1	2	3	2	19	1	1	2	1	2				
no answer		1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	3	3	3	3				
Total Count		315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315
Quality Points																								
#As x 6 =		408	480	564	660	816	708	678	576	618	390	654	660	984	462	756	1182	1116	1344	1428				
#Bs x 5 =		725	765	750	580	515	650	470	635	425	485	595	640	355	440	570	435	430	275	185				
#Cs x 4 =		280	264	188	240	220	192	232	248	280	344	204	208	176	304	200	88	112	80	104				

**Explorations 2007
Student Feedback**

2/25/2009

#Ds x 3 =		54	36	27	42	36	21	84	45	69	108	45	39	45	72	30	12	21	24	3
#Es x 2 =		18	4	6	14	8	6	24	6	24	26	14	4	18	36	18	2	4	2	10
#Fs x 1 =		2	0	3	4	2	4	7	5	19	15	10	3	8	9	3	0	1	3	3
Quality points total		1487	1549	1538	1540	1597	1581	1495	1515	1435	1368	1522	1554	1586	1323	1577	1719	1684	1728	1733
GPA (Quality points/total count)		4.72	4.92	4.88	4.89	5.07	5.02	4.75	4.81	4.56	4.34	4.83	4.93	5.03	4.20	5.01	5.46	5.35	5.49	5.50

Fall 2006 Data, page 2												
	Response Scale:											
	<i>This topic or activity added to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.</i>											
	Strongly Agree (A)= 6											
	Agree (B) = 5											
	Tend to Agree (C) = 4											
	Tend to Disagree (D) = 3											
	Disagree (E) = 2											
	Strongly Disagree (F) = 1											
	Not Applicable to my Class (n/a) = 0											
	Experiential, Engaged Learning							Overall experience this semester				
	Your Hendrix Odyssey	PL-Professional Leadership	SW-Service to the World	UR-Undergraduate Research	GA-Global Awareness	AC-Artistic Creativity	Extended project in engaged learning	High quality learning experience	Positive experience	Would recommend	Want to return	
#As = Strongly Agree	83	59	91	58	60	82	99	155	150	180	189	
#Bs = Agree	100	80	83	82	75	79	89	84	65	48	38	
#Cs = Tend to Agree	52	43	39	48	42	44	38	14	35	21	19	
#Ds = Tend to Disagree	7	20	8	16	10	9	11	3	5	5	5	
#Es = Disagree	5	9	5	9	7	7	7	2	3	0	2	
#Fs = Strongly Disagree	6	3	8	5	6	5	4	3	3	5	7	
#n/a = Not Applicable to my Class	1	32	19	26	49	25	6	0	0	0	0	
Total Count	254	246	253	244	249	251	254	261	261	259	260	
Quality Points												
#As x 6 =	498	354	546	348	360	492	594	930	900	1080	1134	
#Bs x 5 =	500	400	415	410	375	395	445	420	325	240	190	
#Cs x 4 =	208	172	156	192	168	176	152	56	140	84	76	
#Ds x 3 =	21	60	24	48	30	27	33	9	15	15	15	
#Es x 2 =	10	18	10	18	14	14	14	4	6	0	4	
#Fs x 1 =	6	3	8	5	6	5	4	3	3	5	7	
Quality points total	1243	1007	1159	1021	953	1109	1242	1422	1389	1424	1426	
GPA (Quality points/total count)	4.89	4.09	4.58	4.18	3.83	4.42	4.89	5.45	5.32	5.50	5.48	

Explorations 2005 Student Feedback

Fall 2005 Data, page 1

Response Scale:

This topic or activity added to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.

Very Much	Somewhat	Not at all	Not Applicable
1 2	3 4	5 6	n/a

	Understanding Hendrix				Understanding Hendrix and Yourself				Habits of Successful Students			Core Habits of Success	
	Liberal Learning	Mission, Stmt of Purpose	Liberal arts readings	Expectations & etiquette	Ethics and integrity	Academic Integrity policy	Social Ethics/personal responsibility	Diversity & tolerance	Habits of success at Hendrix	Resources	Learning styles	Frankl reading or alternate	Frankl paper or alternate
Total responses (1-6)	251	252	252	247	251	252	249	233	251	249		252	250
# of 1s	34	26	20	26	37	34	27	20	29	38		63	46
# of 2s	61	56	63	65	60	67	66	63	63	64		85	65
# of 3s	95	79	81	77	69	66	72	72	71	79		54	66
# of 4s	36	58	47	50	55	48	46	44	49	38		25	41
# of 5s	19	29	26	21	21	21	29	23	30	23		18	22
# of 6s	6	4	15	8	9	16	9	11	9	7		7	10
Quality points 1s (x6)	204	156	120	156	222	204	162	120	174	228		378	276
Quality points 2s (x5)	305	280	315	325	300	335	330	315	315	320		425	325
Quality points 3s (x4)	380	316	324	308	276	264	288	288	284	316		216	264
Quality points 4s (x3)	108	174	141	150	165	144	138	132	147	114		75	123
Quality points 5s (x2)	38	58	52	42	42	42	58	46	60	46		36	44
Quality points 6s (x1)	6	4	15	8	9	16	9	11	9	7		7	10
total points	1041	988	967	989	1014	1005	985	912	989	1031		1137	1042
GPA (6pt scale)	4.15	3.92	3.84	4.00	4.04	3.99	3.96	3.91	3.94	4.14		4.51	4.17

Response Scale:

This topic or activity added to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.

Very Much		Somewha		Not at all		Not Applicable
1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a

	Experiential, hands-on learning							Understanding Yourself		Overall Hendrix experience this semester				
	Engaged hands-on learning	Service learning exp	Global awareness exp	Artistic event attend & reflection	Professional and leadership dev	Library Literacy	UGR	Library & UGR	Academic, Career, and Life Planning	Personal Mission Statement/Resume	High-quality learning experience	Overall experience a positive one	Would recommend to a friend	Return to Hendrix next fall
Total responses (1-6)	248	236	246	252	236			251	233	243	197	195	194	193
# of 1s	33	46	69	56	17			19	32	37	99	104	132	140
# of 2s	81	75	74	74	51			39	50	52	64	56	34	24
# of 3s	69	55	41	63	80			55	72	59	24	25	15	13
# of 4s	36	37	35	37	50			53	47	44	9	6	9	8
# of 5s	23	14	19	15	27			42	21	35	0	3	3	5
# of 6s	6	9	8	7	10			43	11	16	1	1	1	3
Quality points 1s (x6)	198	276	414	336	102			114	192	222	594	624	792	840
Quality points 2s (x5)	405	375	370	370	255			195	250	260	320	280	170	120
Quality points 3s (x4)	276	220	164	252	320			220	288	236	96	100	60	52
Quality points 4s (x3)	108	111	105	111	150			159	141	132	27	18	27	24
Quality points 5s (x2)	46	28	38	30	54			84	42	70	0	6	6	10
Quality points 6s (x1)	6	9	8	7	10			43	11	16	1	1	1	3
total points	1039	1019	1099	1106	891			815	924	936	1038	1029	1056	1049
GPA (6pt scale)	4.19	4.32	4.47	4.39	3.78			3.25	3.97	3.85	5.27	5.28	5.44	5.44

Explorations 2004 Student Feedback

Fall 2004 Data, page 1

Response Scale:													
<i>This topic or activity added to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.</i>													
Very Much			Somewhat			Not at all			Not Applicable				
1	2		3	4		5	6						n/a

	Understanding Hendrix				Understanding Hendrix and Yourself				Habits of Successful Students			Core Habits of Success	
	Liberal Learning	Mission, Stmt of Purpose	Liberal arts readings	Expectations & etiquette	Ethics and integrity	Academic Integrity policy	Social Ethics/personal responsibility	Diversity & tolerance	Habits of success at Hendrix	Resources	Learning styles	Frankl reading or alternate	Frankl paper or alternate
Total Responses	243	243	225	225	242	242	238	211	212	227	190	242	240
# of 1s	25	23	22	31	37	28	22	24	16	40	20	57	40
# of 2s	57	50	31	53	75	65	55	44	43	50	26	80	68
# of 3s	80	70	57	66	67	67	66	56	68	58	54	60	54
# of 4s	55	56	67	42	42	48	64	50	37	47	46	29	45
# of 5s	20	28	36	22	14	21	18	23	33	21	24	12	23
# of 6s	6	16	12	11	7	13	13	14	15	11	20	4	10
Quality Points 1s (x6)	150	138	132	186	222	168	132	144	96	240	120	342	240
Quality Points 2s (x5)	285	250	155	265	375	325	275	220	215	250	130	400	340
Quality Points 3s (x4)	320	280	228	264	268	268	264	224	272	232	216	240	216
Quality Points 4s (x3)	165	168	201	126	126	144	192	150	111	141	138	87	135
Quality Points 5s (x2)	40	56	72	44	28	42	36	46	66	42	48	24	46
Quality Points 6s (x1)	6	16	12	11	7	13	13	14	15	11	20	4	10
Total Points	966	908	800	896	1026	960	912	798	775	916	672	1097	987
GPA (6 pt scale)	3.98	3.74	3.56	3.98	4.24	3.97	3.83	3.78	3.66	4.04	3.54	4.53	4.11

Response Scale:

This topic or activity added to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.

Very Much Somewhat Not at all Not Applicable
 1 2 3 4 5 6 n/a

	Experiential, hands-on learning								Understanding Yourself		Overall Hendrix experience this semester			
	Engaged hands-on learning	Service learning exp	Global awareness exp	Artistic event attend & reflection	Professional and leadership dev	Library literacy	UGR	Library & UGR	Academic, Career, and Life Planning	Personal Mission Statement	High-quality learning experience	Overall experience a positive one	Would recommend to a friend	Return to Hendrix next fall
Total Responses (1-6)	208	232	226	216	191	242	139		229	234	237	236	236	232
# of 1s	24	57	61	56	21	21	17		40	40	110	110	141	156
# of 2s	53	65	61	60	33	48	29		52	49	75	62	49	32
# of 3s	54	47	49	44	56	35	33		48	49	37	40	21	18
# of 4s	45	38	29	30	49	44	33		42	47	9	17	12	11
# of 5s	24	21	15	12	20	40	17		22	29	3	3	8	7
# of 6s	8	4	11	14	12	54	10		25	20	3	4	5	8
Quality Points 1s (x6)	144	342	366	336	126	126	102		240	240	660	660	846	936
Quality Points 2s (x5)	265	325	305	300	165	240	145		260	245	375	310	245	160
Quality Points 3s (x4)	216	188	196	176	224	140	132		192	196	148	160	84	72
Quality Points 4s (x3)	135	114	87	90	147	132	99		126	141	27	51	36	33
Quality Points 5s (x2)	48	42	30	24	40	80	34		44	58	6	6	16	14
Quality Points 6s (x1)	8	4	11	14	12	54	10		25	20	3	4	5	8
Total Points	816	1015	995	940	714	772	522		887	900	1219	1191	1232	1223
GPA (6 pt scale)	3.92	4.38	4.40	4.35	3.74	3.19	3.76		3.87	3.85	5.14	5.05	5.22	5.27

**Explorations 2007
Pre and Post test comparisons**

	My present knowledge of academic and social expectations that Hendrix has of its students	My present level of knowledge of academic and student programs, resources, and support systems in place for Hendrix Students	My present level of knowledge of the liberal arts tradition at Hendrix and in education more generally	My present understanding of the standards of academic honesty and the systems governing academic integrity at Hendrix	The degree to which I have considered the academic and personal choices and habits that ensure a successful college experience at Hendrix	My present knowledge of experiential and engaged learning opportunities for Hendrix Students	My present ability to reason in an informed ethical way and to deal with important topics and issues that are without definitive answers (diversity and tolerance, civil rights and responsibilities, service, leadership, etc.)	My present knowledge and understanding of particular ongoing social issues and needs of our time, as reflected in the book Warriors Don't Cry	My present ability to gather information and to process and communicate it in a written paper in ways that increase my knowledge and understanding	My present ability to gather info and to process and communicate it in an oral presentation in ways that heighten my understanding and growth	My present ability to analyze and reflect on written materials and class discussions encountered in traditional academic settings	My present ability to analyze and reflect on the knowledge, insights, and understandings gained through a self-selected, experiential, hands-on, engaged learning experience
	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>	<i>pre</i> <i>post</i>
Average:	2.55 3.12	2.31 2.89	2.39 3.03	3.01 3.40	3.05 3.25	2.58 2.89	2.88 3.31	2.49 3.15	2.66 3.12	2.45 2.92	2.71 3.15	2.79 3.15

Legend:	
Questions 1, 3, 4, 6, 8:	Questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
4.00 Very Extensive	4.00 Very High
3.00 Extensive	3.00 High
2.00 Moderate	2.00 Moderate
1.00 Limited	1.00 Limited
0.00 Very limited	0.00 Very Limited

EXPLORATIONS

Experiencing the Hendrix World

Engage, Connect, Learn

Fall, 2007

Student Feedback Form

Constructive student feedback is important to all courses at Hendrix. Explorations benefits each year from the feedback and suggestions of students who took the course in past years. Your thoughts will help the course to continue to develop in ways that benefit new Hendrix students.

Here again, from your syllabus, are our aims and goals for the course:

“[Explorations] is designed to assist you in becoming familiar with the mission and expectations of the College, with campus life, and with the broad range of opportunities that are available at Hendrix. Equally important, this course will facilitate your own personal exploration, encouraging you to develop, refine and expand your abilities and interests....

The goals for the course are as follows:

- to assist you in making a successful transition to academic and student life at Hendrix;
- to assist you in developing and refining your thoughts and abilities in areas relating to your academic and personal fulfillment and success.”

Please complete the attached Explorations Student Feedback Form to give us your thoughts and suggestions on the Explorations course and on your first semester at Hendrix.

Thank you for your help. Your constructive feedback will benefit the development of Explorations.

EXPLORATIONS STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM—FALL, 2007

Based on the class topics, activities, and assignments in your Explorations section, please help us to evaluate the course by responding to each item below. Though some topics were discussed in multiple weeks, the items are grouped according to the main units of the course, listed in the general order in which they were covered.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE COURSE SURVEY

1. For each item below, please respond to the following statement:

“This topic or activity contributed to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.”

- A = Strongly Agree
- B = Agree
- C = Tend to Agree
- D = Tend to Disagree
- E = Disagree
- F = Strongly Disagree
- N/A= not applicable to my class

2. Put the letter of your response (A,B,C,D,E,F) in the blank provided. If the item was not covered in your class, please put N/A—not applicable.

UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING HENDRIX

FOR EACH ITEM, RESPOND TO THIS STATEMENT AND PUT THE LETTER OF YOUR REPNSE IN THE BLANK:

“This topic or activity contributed to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.”

- A=Strongly Agree
- B= Agree
- C= Tend to Agree
- D= Tend to Disagree
- E= Disagree
- F= Strongly Disagree
- N/A= not applicable to my class

•Habits of Successful Students—Transition and Choices at Hendrix

- _____ Hendrix habits of success (choices, time management, wellness, etc.)
- _____ Academic and other resources and mentors for Hendrix students
- _____ Academic expectations and etiquette—ideas from faculty, students, etc.

(Your instructor may add items here that were specific to your section.)

•Hendrix and its Mission

- _____ Hendrix Statement of Purpose and motto (“Unto the Whole Person”), etc.
- _____ Liberal Learning—the aims and values of liberal arts education

(Your instructor may add items here that were specific to your section.)

UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING HENDRIX AND YOURSELF

FOR EACH ITEM, RESPOND TO THIS STATEMENT AND PUT THE LETTER OF YOUR REPOSE IN THE BLANK:

“This topic or activity contributed to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.”

- A=Strongly Agree
- B= Agree
- C= Tend to Agree
- D= Tend to Disagree
- E= Disagree
- F= Strongly Disagree
- N/A= not applicable to my class

•Character and Hendrix

- _____ Academic integrity and ethics at Hendrix—class discussion
- _____ Hendrix Academic Integrity Policy—reading/reflection paper
- _____ Social ethics and personal responsibility—class activities and discussion

(Your instructor may add items here that were specific to your section.)

UNIT 3: CORE COMPONENTS OF YOUR HENDRIX EDUCATION

FOR EACH ITEM, RESPOND TO THIS STATEMENT AND PUT THE LETTER OF YOUR REPOSE IN THE BLANK:

“This topic or activity contributed to my understanding of Hendrix and/or to my self-understanding.”

- A=Strongly Agree
- B= Agree
- C= Tend to Agree
- D= Tend to Disagree
- E= Disagree
- F= Strongly Disagree
- N/A= not applicable to my class

•Critical Thinking through Reading and Writing:

- _____ Melba Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry* (book reading assignment)
- _____ Reflective writing/paper—*Warriors Don't Cry*
- _____ Diversity and tolerance—discussions and activities on *Warriors Don't Cry*

(Your instructor may add items here that were specific to your section.)

•Experiential, Engaged Learning at Hendrix

- _____ Engaged Learning: “Your Hendrix Odyssey”—overview and discussion

Engaged Learning Exemplars:

- _____ Melba Beals (Convocation)
- _____ Trent Stewart (Convocation)

Personal Engagement:

- _____ Individual Extended Project in Engaged Learning (“mini-Odyssey Project) in one Odyssey area, with written pre-reflection and post-reflection, with class oral presentation

(Your instructor may add items here that were specific to your section.)

FINAL THOUGHTS FOR YOUR FIRST SEMESTER AT HENDRIX:

Response options: A=Strongly Agree
 B= Agree
 C=Tend to Agree
 D= Tend to Disagree
 E=Disagree
 F= Strongly Disagree

•Overall Hendrix experience this semester

_____ Hendrix has provided a high-quality learning experience for me.
_____ My experience at Hendrix this semester has been a positive one.
_____ I would recommend Hendrix to a friend.
_____ I want to return to Hendrix next fall.

SHORT ANSWER:

What aspects of Explorations did you MOST enjoy?

What aspects of Explorations did you LEAST enjoy?

Did you like having the same students in Journeys and Explorations? Why or why not?

Did you like having a student peer assistant in class? Why or why not?

What topics NOT covered in Explorations would you like to see added to the course? Explain.

Are there any topics covered in Explorations that you feel should be OMITTED? Explain.

What other general suggestions for improving the course would you like to offer?

On average, I have worked _____ hours per week outside of class on this course. At this point, I anticipate that my course grade will be _____.

What have been your greatest successes at Hendrix this first semester?

What have been your greatest concerns or regrets? How might you address them?

Other Comments, Suggestions, Ideas:

EXPLORATIONS

Experiencing the Hendrix World

Engage, Connect, Learn

The class topics, course assignments, and other content areas of Explorations are designed to increase your knowledge and abilities in areas important to your academic and personal success at Hendrix.

Your answers to the twelve questions below will help us understand the background you bring to Explorations. Your responses will help us to shape the course in ways that are beneficial to new students.

At the end of Explorations you will be asked these same questions again, varied slightly to discern the extent to which the course may have influenced these aspects of your Hendrix education.

For each question below, please **circle the response that best describes** your level of ability or knowledge in the area covered by the question. Please be as honest as possible in your self-evaluation at this point. Most of these questions deal with abilities and habits of mind that you will develop progressively throughout your Hendrix career.

Thank you for your thoughtful response to these questions. Your answers are completely anonymous.

•My present knowledge of the academic and social expectations that Hendrix has of its students is (circle one)

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present level of knowledge of the academic and student programs, resources, and support systems in place for first-year Hendrix students is (circle one)

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present knowledge of the liberal arts tradition in education and at Hendrix is (circle one)

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present understanding of the standards of academic honesty and the systems governing academic integrity at Hendrix is (circle one)

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•The degree to which I have, to this point, considered the academic and personal choices and habits that ensure a successful college experience is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present knowledge of the diversity and scope of experiential and engaged learning opportunities that Hendrix makes available to students is

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to reason in an informed ethical way and to deal with important topics and issues that are without definitive answers (diversity and tolerance, civil rights and responsibilities, service, leadership, etc.) is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present knowledge and understanding of the social issues and needs of our time, as reflected in and shaped by the school integration conflicts of the mid-20th century, is

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to gather information and to process and communicate it **in written form** in ways that increase my knowledge and understanding is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to gather information and to process and communicate it **in an oral presentation** in ways that increase my knowledge and understanding is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to analyze and reflect on written and oral materials encountered in traditional academic settings is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to analyze and reflect on the knowledge, insights, and understandings gained through an experiential and engaged learning experience is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

EXPLORATIONS

Experiencing the Hendrix World
Engage, Connect, Learn

Through its content, discussions, assignments and projects, the Explorations course aims to enhance your knowledge, abilities, and potential in areas important to your academic and personal success at Hendrix.

In the first week of Explorations, we asked you to answer the twelve questions below. Your answers now, at the conclusion of the course, to these same twelve questions will help us to understand ways in which the course may have influenced these aspects of your Hendrix education over the past semester. Your responses will help us to shape the course in ways that are beneficial to new students.

For each question below, please **circle the response that best describes** your current level of ability or knowledge in the area covered by the question. Please be as honest as possible in your self-evaluation at this point. Most of these questions deal with abilities and habits of mind that you will develop progressively throughout your Hendrix career.

Thank you for your thoughtful response to these questions. Your answers are completely anonymous.

•My present knowledge of the **academic and social expectations that Hendrix has** of its students is (circle one)

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present level of knowledge of the academic and student **programs, resources, and support systems in place for Hendrix students** is (circle one)

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present knowledge of the **liberal arts tradition at Hendrix** and in education more generally is (circle one)

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present understanding of the standards of academic honesty and the systems governing **academic integrity at Hendrix** is (circle one)

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•The degree to which I have **considered the academic and personal choices and habits that ensure a successful college experience at Hendrix** is (circle one)

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present knowledge of **experiential and engaged learning opportunities for Hendrix students** is

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to **reason in an informed ethical way and to deal thoughtfully with important social issues** that are without definitive answers (diversity and tolerance, civil rights, personal values and responsibilities, leadership, etc.) is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present knowledge and understanding of particular ongoing social issues and needs of our time, **as reflected in the book *Warrior's Don't Cry***, is

Very Extensive Extensive Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to **gather information and to process and communicate it in a written paper** in ways that increase my knowledge and understanding is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to **gather information and to process and communicate it in an oral class presentation** in ways that heighten my understanding and growth is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to **analyze and reflect on written materials and class discussions** encountered in traditional academic settings is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

•My present ability to **analyze and reflect on the knowledge, insights, and understandings gained through a self-selected, experiential, hands-on, engaged learning experience** is

Very High High Moderate Limited Very Limited

11/26/07: Request from the Odyssey directors for your quick reply to this question—with their thanks:

WHEN I CAME TO HENDRIX THIS FALL, I ALREADY HAD A PASSPORT. ____ YES ____ NO

EXPLORATIONS:
Experiencing the Hendrix World

Engage, Connect, Learn
First-year Seminar at Hendrix College

FINAL REPORT

June 2006 Visit
(Covering the period Fall 2003 – Fall 2006)

Prepared by

Wendy G. Troxel, Ed.D.

*External Assessment of the Explorations First-year Seminar
for
Hendrix College*

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Explorations Assessment Project
Hendrix College

February 5, 2007

I. INTRODUCTION/CONTEXT

Institutions are more likely to succeed in helping first-year students make a successful transition to college if they provide challenging educational experiences accompanied by effective support services and programs. (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005, p. xii)

In the Fall of 2003, Hendrix College implemented a first-year seminar titled “Explorations”. The goals of the one-semester common course are:

- To assist [students] in making a successful transition to academic and student life at Hendrix; and
- To assist [students] in developing and refining [their] thoughts and abilities in areas relating to [their] academic success and personal fulfillment and success. (Source: Explorations Syllabus, Fall 2005)

Having finished its third year of the course, the College is working to further refine the process for program review, and assess the impact of the course on student learning and developmental outcomes. This evaluation focuses on those individuals who have been affected by both the process and ongoing outcomes of the initiatives that have been put into place as direct components of the Explorations course. While it is difficult to isolate variables in this type of evaluation, it is reasonable to focus discussion and examination of impact on the participants, as well as the documentation of the course content and processes.

The evaluative case study (Merriam, 1998) approach examines the impact of the initiatives as guided by the goals of the program directors and the implementation strategies of the institution. The outcomes of the Explorations course initiatives are continually assessed by the College through both quantitative and qualitative evaluation initiatives implemented during the first three years of the course. The logic model approach to the case study allows for the assessment of a program already underway, while recognizing the limitations of the design in terms of “causality”. Analysis of the program attempts to determine if it is (1) delivering opportunities, training, and development that is intended to (2) result in a changed educational environment for faculty, staff, and students, which is intended to (3) result in improved learning and developmental outcomes for students.

The evaluation, then, was designed to reveal the initiatives that have been put in place during the first stages of the first-year seminar and then determine the extent to which evidence has been used to track effectiveness and impact of the course goals and objectives. That analysis matches a program review rubric against an assessment of program goals, using focused conversations during the site visit, and document review.

II. PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Institutional Characteristics

Hendrix College, a private, undergraduate institution of the liberal arts related to the United Methodist Church, offers academic programs in a residential, coeducational setting. Enrollment is approximately 1,100 students, with about 42% coming from outside of Arkansas (including internationally). It is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and accepts about 25% of its applicants into the freshman class. (Source: Hendrix College web site)

Explorations Seminar Initiatives

This evaluation was conducted at the request of Hendrix College representatives to capture the effectiveness and impact of two key areas within the first-year seminar. The results are intended to be used by faculty and staff to determine areas of positive outcomes, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement and revision. The following brief descriptions of the two areas of emphasis are as follows:

1. Current Components of the Explorations Course

“Explorations is a one-semester common course taken by all new students at Hendrix. The course meets once a week and carries a .25 credit. It is designed to assist you in becoming familiar with the mission and expectations of the College, with campus life, and with the broad range of opportunities that are available at Hendrix. Equally important, this course will facilitate your own personal explorations, encouraging you to develop, refine and expand your abilities and interests. Explorations will enhance your potential for success in all areas of your Hendrix experience.” (Explorations Master Syllabus, Fall 2005, p. 1).

2. Course Delivery and Coordination

Two administrators (who also have faculty appointments) oversee all aspects of the course, along with a large “working group” of faculty and staff who are involved with course planning, delivery, assessment, and ancillary programming. Detailed course and resource materials are provided for faculty, staff, and students. Assessment results are available in a number of formats and are used for continual review.

III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Throughout the past three years, the campus leaders have articulated first-year initiative alignment with major goals for the College to 1) foster an ongoing engagement with the liberal arts experience, 2) to facilitate the transition of new students to the Hendrix community, and 3) to enhance students’ potential for success in their collegiate studies. (Hendrix College Guide to Academic Planning 2006-2007, p. 7).

All of these goals are intended to be addressed through the many academic and co-curricular programs and services designed and delivered within the institution, but also now more specifically through the initiatives made possible by the Explorations course. Evaluation activities have focused on both the parts and the sum of the parts at each point in the curriculum, and specifically,

- How does each component of the Explorations course support the three goals above? (intended outcomes, strategies and activities), and
- How is each component assessed in light of the three goals? (Direct and indirect measures from participants, students, other faculty and staff not directly involved with the initiatives, upper administration, and other stakeholders)

Given the complexity of the assessment task, and recognizing the need for a multi-method, multi-measure approach to evaluating efficiency, effectiveness, and impact, the program directors chose to shine the spotlight of this particular evaluation on the curricular components and representative participants.

A. Research Questions

For the purposes of this assessment activity, and at the request of the College, the consultant focused on the content and delivery components of the Explorations first-year seminar course. In order to guide the evaluation methodology and collection of evidence, the following research questions were developed:

Research Question 1: Has the Explorations course been developed and implemented under a framework of effective educational practice?

Research Question 2: How have the implementation strategies, professional development activities, and curriculum contributed to the intended outcomes of the Explorations course, according to some participants?

The evaluation strategies were designed to gather evidence that provides answers to these research questions. Before the visit to Hendrix College, the consultant reviewed the course syllabus and assessment documents for first two years of the Explorations course. On site, the consultant reviewed curricular information, academic planning documents, and supplementary materials for the Explorations course, the Odyssey program, The Hendrix Experience, and other documents provided by the institution. The consultant engaged in focused conversations with administrators, faculty, and students throughout the two-day visit. See Appendix A for the site visit schedule.

The totality of the processes was evaluated against a list of “critical elements” that leads to a systematic assessment plan, which includes: 1) program goals, objectives, and intended student learning outcomes; 2) systematic assessment of student learning (direct measures, methodologies, and capture points); 3) feedback from key stakeholders (indirect measures); and 4) analysis of results/feedback mechanisms and response (see Appendix B).

The purpose of this visit was to corroborate and augment the information contained in the institution’s reports and to collect information on the institution’s performance, from the perspective of the participants. The “nature” of the visit was collegial – the interactions were conversational and intellectually stimulating. This was not an “accountability-type” visit, but rather a “consultant-type” interaction among professional educators seeking improvement through evidence.

B. Protocol for Participant Groups

The assessment protocol was designed to elicit evidence of impact according to Explorations stated goals and indicators of quality for each participant group. For the purposes of this study a purposive sample was used and the consultant acknowledges that no generalizations may be made to the population of faculty, administrators, and students at Hendrix College. See Table 1 below for a list of participant groups, and the number of participants who were interviewed for this evaluation.

Table 1.

Participant Group	Sample Interviewed*
a. Explorations directors and coordinators	Conversations and interviews (n = 2)
Hendrix College administration – Provost, Assoc. Provost	Focused Conversations (n=2)
b. Hendrix College administration – student affairs reps.	Focused Conversation (n = 5)
c. Hendrix College administration & faculty – academic affairs	Focused Conversation (n=10)
d. Hendrix College students	Focused Conversation (n=7)

*Some participants were members of more than one participant group

A total of 24 individuals were involved in a minimum of one interview or focus group, representing all constituent groups within the college. See Appendix A for the site-visit schedule.

A semi-structured interview protocol was used for this study, designed not only to prompt responses to the research questions, but to also take a phenomenological approach to study the perception of the impact of the Explorations curriculum.

C. Data collection and analysis

The purpose of this assessment activity was to examine the effectiveness of the Explorations course for the College through the eyes of the major participants and the use of documents. Merriam (1998) provides a framework for this type of research, and uses the term “evaluative case study” to *describe* the experiences of the participants, *explain* the relevance of the evidence based on the context of the setting, and *judge* the impact of the specific interventions under examination. Additionally, a “best practice” approach to evaluating the assessment processes and products allows for a more formative interaction which is meant to be helpful rather than judgmental (Huba & Freed, 2000).

Notes were taken during the focused conversations rather than recorded due to the more casual nature of the site visit. The use of phrases and words to describe perceptions and experiences are unique to the individual, but there are themes and patterns that emerge from the evidence that allows synthesis of the results.

The consultant utilized multiple sources and observers to attempt to confirm findings. Due to the scope of this activity, however, a limitation of this evaluation is the lack of data from individuals outside of the Explorations program, as well as direct measures of student learning. Some of these areas are identified in the “Recommendations” section.

D. Role of the Consultant

The consultant holds a doctorate in education from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, with specialization in educational research. She has worked professionally in educational evaluation and assessment since 1993, and from January 2000 to April 2005 was the Director of the University Assessment Office at Illinois State University. She is currently a full-time faculty member in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations at Illinois State University. The consultant had no other formal or informal relationship with Hendrix College or with College representatives before or during the assessment activity.

IV. FINDINGS RELATED TO ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The findings are based on research questions articulated from the goal statements and indicators of quality developed by the district, and within the framework of appropriate elements of an assessment plan (see Appendix B). For each section, a simple set of questions is posed:

- 1) *What SHOULD be here?*
- 2) *What is found in this plan or set of processes?*
- 3) *What would make it better or more complete?*

The language used in the “exemplary” column of the review rubric is used for question one, with a brief discussion of findings. More detailed recommendations can be found in the next section.

A. Program goals, objectives, and intended student learning outcomes

Exemplary Level: Program goals and intended student learning outcomes are developed, measurable, reflect the uniqueness of the program, and are related to mission

The goals and intended learning outcomes of the Explorations course are clearly articulated, and are explicitly related to the mission of the College. Revisions are currently underway to further define and operationalize the intended outcomes statements, with proper alignment to instructional strategies and assessment activities.

B. Systematic assessment of student learning (direct measures, methodologies, and capture points)

Exemplary Level: Systematic assessment of student learning using multiple & appropriate qualitative and quantitative measures are evident, and reflects the uniqueness of the academic program and discipline [or course, in this case]; rationale for assessment choices are fully articulated

Attention to appropriate assessment strategies and evidence has gathered momentum since the course was implemented. Particularly noteworthy is the development of a few common assessment activities to bring consistency and validity to the program-level analyses. The

formation of an Assessment Group to oversee all aspects of the process and products was an important next step for the College.

C. Feedback from key stakeholders (indirect measures)

***Exemplary Level:** Feedback is gathered from all key stakeholders (current students, alumni, employers of graduates, graduate schools, etc.) using resources available at both the departmental and institutional level*

Clearly the language of this element can be adjusted for the appropriate level of an individual course within a curriculum, and the attention to the importance of the “voices of Hendrix” is evident. As the years go on and revisions are made to the place of the course in the curriculum, the scope of stakeholders will increase, yet become more focused. The new intended learning outcomes can be revisited at all levels of the collegiate experience, and on to assessing impact of continuous learning and development after graduation. While it is not appropriate (or necessary) for “cause and effect” relationships to be inferred from a single course taken in the first semester, the foundations of outcomes are formed intentionally at that point. Focused studies on the differences between “native” students and “transfer” students (those who were not required to take Explorations) might be interesting from time to time, using both direct and indirect measures of learning and development.

D. Analysis of results/feedback mechanisms and assessment “logistics”

***Exemplary Level:** Evidence of a continuous formal and effective feedback & improvement mechanism: program faculty & staff are engaged in a regular assessment and review process, with student learning and stakeholder feedback used to improve curriculum, instruction, learning, & development. Assessment system is public, explicit, and used throughout the planning process; evidence is gathered regularly and is embedded in daily operations and/or curricula; all faculty and/or staff are committed to, and accountable for, specific areas of responsibility*

Concern and attention to this aspect of a new curricular component is clearly evident. Intentionality in coordination, regular meetings to discuss and review evidence, focused workshops for new and returning instructors, the implementation of the Assessment Group, the revised goals and outcomes documents, the willingness to be externally reviewed, are all critical elements of a formal and effective feedback and improvement plan. The faculty and staff of Hendrix College are to be applauded for your professionalism and dedication to the learning experience for students.

V. FINDINGS RELATED TO PARTICIPANT GROUPS

In order to guide the evaluation methodology and collection of evidence, two primary research questions were posed. The evaluation strategies were designed to synthesize the evidence that provides answers to the research questions.

Research Question 1: Has the Explorations course been developed and implemented under a framework of effective educational practice?

Virtually all of the participants noted the intentionality of the program as being key to its success. Additionally, each component of the Hendrix College first-year experience can stand on its own or be done in combination, which allows for multiple pathways for exploration and academic growth for student-leaders.

A. “*Relevant Foundation*” – *Hendrix College Students*

The Explorations course, especially coupled with the Journeys program is a win-win scenario for students who desire the experience and opportunity to gain solid academic skills while beginning a study of interest to them, and for faculty and staff who wish to share knowledge and to nurture young scholars. While some of the juniors (students) perceived that the Explorations course was “too easy”, the sophomores noted that significant changes had been made to the course and found the elements to be useful and relevant. All students recognized that the skills and abilities addressed in the course had broad implications for future success at Hendrix College.

B. “*You’re Not Alone*” – *Course Coordinators and Instructors*

The support for new and continuing instructors for Explorations is innovative, impactful, and effective. Representatives from the College provide an integrated professional development plan that provides a breadth of necessary information, along with access to those who have been a part of the program from the beginning. Those who teach the course for the first time appear well-prepared.

C. “*From Data to Information*” – *Explorations Working Group and Assessment Group*

The first-year initiatives at Hendrix College, as well as the integration of the full program of study and experiential learning components, represent a complex curriculum that is intentional and relevant. The scope of participation at all levels of the College is impressive, starting with the Explorations Working Group. While many institutions would settle for a representative sample of faculty and staff involved at a deep level of planning and process, the Working Group (as far as I can tell) excludes no one. All have ample opportunity to be involved in the conversations and review of past, present, and future evidence toward improvement.

But full involvement by such a large number of individuals can be difficult to coordinate, especially given the many different facets of a program like this. Sometimes a more focused approach to certain aspects of the program is necessary. So particularly noteworthy is the development of the new Explorations Assessment Group,

which meets regularly to plan assessment activities, review evidence, and make recommendations for future revisions. This group has also coordinated professional development workshops for members of the Working Group, and has implemented course activities such as a “mini-feedback” system in the classes during Fall 2006. The use of classroom assessment techniques (Angelo & Cross, 1993) and other elements of effective educational practice (Huba & Freed, 2005) brings theory to practice in both the local and national context.

D. “*Focused Educational Experiences*” – *Course Goals and Intended Learning Outcomes*

The working draft of the revised course goals and intended learning outcomes for Explorations: Liberal Arts for Life reveals a process of continual improvement and intentionality to the educational experience. The course goals are revised as follows:

Goal 1 – Through its content and processes, Explorations seeks to facilitate each new student’s successful transition to Hendrix.

Goal 2 – Through its content and processes, Explorations seek[s] to facilitate each new Hendrix student’s collegiate success.

Intended learning outcomes follow each, and are appropriately oriented toward an “action” or demonstration of skills, abilities, and dispositions by the student. At first glance, the expectations are high for a one semester, once-a-week seminar, but it is clear that care was taken to word the intended outcomes statements to allow for “progressive refinement” of skills and attitudes. Course activities and topics are then properly aligned to each intended outcome statement. The next important piece of the plan is to match (as you’ve noted) specific assignments and assessment strategies for each.

The Grading Rubric for Reflective Assignment is a great start at capturing the difficult “habits of mind” elements specified in ILO 1-1, for example. One recommendation is to consider how “demonstration of personal growth” would be revealed during the first reflection (during the first week of class?). In other words, using a rubric at the beginning of a course should be crafted to be helpful for the student to self-assess his/her “place at the moment”. It should be “okay” for someone to be a “novice” when just starting out, and then allow for the kind of growth you’d like to see by the end of the course (or for that matter, the end of 4 years of study!).

Additionally, given that you want to assess “reflection” with the rubric, you might consider that currently more weight is applied to the mechanics of writing and following directions (3 points out of 5) than the actual reflective and connective nature of the activity. You’re probably already working on that . . . good to get some sample papers of the kind of work you’d desire to see out of the students and do some pilot testing of the rubric itself. The wording is so important, and difficult to craft, but once it’s done it can be an incredibly useful tool, as you know!

Lastly, when I first looked at the ILOs for each goal I thought, “How will they pull this off in a one-semester course?!?” But obviously you’ve crafted the language to be useful for multiple points throughout a student’s academic career at Hendrix College. Do you

have plans to revisit these outcomes later, such as through the Odyssey experience? That would be impressive!!

So, this innovative curricular model and effective delivery system provides students with a valuable educational experience, as well as promoting important processes and services to the College from dedicated academic professionals.

Research Question 2: How have the implementation strategies, professional development activities, and curriculum contributed to the intended outcomes of the Explorations course, according to some participants?

The goals and intended learning outcomes are clearly stated, and the processes surrounding the course are transparent and accessible to faculty and staff.

The upper administration clearly supports the place of the course within the curriculum, especially with its connections with the Odyssey Experience. There is appropriate concern for assessing outcomes, as well as a commitment to ensure that faculty and staff workload issues are addressed through proper channels in departments and units.

The faculty and staff involved in Explorations exhibit an impressive passion and commitment to the goals of the course and beyond. I was most struck by the clear understanding of roles and responsibilities (at least from the people I talked to) surrounding the course. Though there were many elements of the College represented (academic affairs, student affairs, etc.), all spoke with a similar “language” about the Hendrix Experience and the integration of the full breadth of the program of study. That kind of collegiality isn’t always evident, even at relatively small schools. I came away thinking, “Hendrix College would be a fun place to work!”

The 7 students I spoke to (1 had just finished first year, 2 had finished sophomore year, 4 were about to be seniors, so all took Explorations) were honest and forthcoming about their experiences at Hendrix, particularly with the Explorations course. When I asked them to tell me about Hendrix, they answered with seemingly complex concepts. One student described it this way: “We live in a bubble . . . everyone knows each other!” When I asked if that was a good thing or a bad thing, he laughed, and said, “Well, for me, that’s a good thing!” Another described Hendrix as a “liberal campus with loose affiliation to the Methodist Church . . . so it’s open-minded to the extent that you’re open minded”.

Two students came to Hendrix specifically because there aren’t fraternities and sororities – “they’re just not healthy”, one said. And another added, “this is a very inclusive community . . . I was shocked at how easy it is to make friends here.” All clearly felt loyalty to Hendrix College, and were glad they came. One student was a first generation college student and spoke passionately about how nervous he was his first week in school, but that he had transitioned easily to life on campus, with Hendrix exceeding his expectations, “which were pretty high to begin with!”

When we talked about Explorations specifically, it was clear that the changes made in the last couple years were needed. The seniors who took the course during its first year in existence spoke about the lack of challenge: “It was AWFUL . . . I mean, we took notes on

taking notes!” Another agreed that the course was too much about basic skills – “they made some students feel incompetent”; most felt they didn’t really need to be there, and already had the skills they were teaching. One student reflected, “It gave the wrong impression about Hendrix”, meaning they were told how difficult Hendrix is, and it wasn’t; or the Explorations Course was too easy compared to their other courses. The younger students tended to defend the changes that were made in the course, with some commenting on the relevancy of the reflections to help them focus their goals better. Regardless, all of these students recommended that the faculty err on the side of rigor, rather than seeming apologetic that they were only receiving .25 credit overall.

It is clear that all stakeholders are given a “seat at the table” to express opinions and evidence about how well the course is working toward its intended goals and outcomes.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hendrix College officials express healthy concern about the ability of the institution to sustain and increase the momentum that has been established since the implementation of the Explorations course, as well as to build and maintain an assessment process that works toward improvement.

A few specific observations and recommendations are posed as a result of this evaluation:

- The materials developed around the course denotes a caring attitude from the College – while some information you provide to students is procedural, the “special advise” in a narrative tone make it seem personal and relevant
- The implementation of the Assessment Group is critical for providing direction, focus, and awareness of the proper use of evidence to make decisions and improvements
- Good advice from faculty continues to be used. Keep working at “hearing” from current students – especially more from peer advisors – sending student information back to students might encourage a goal to become a peer advisor someday (as you’ve found, it’s tough to get students to show up to focus groups these days – you might consider adding a couple students to your assessment team to seek both their feedback and help develop creative ways to gather more)
- The use of peer advisors requires work and attention, but is truly a “best practice” element nationally
- The path through the semester makes sense – both etic and emic – timely according to the transition phases of the collegiate experience
- It looks like you’re working at giving more attention to connections with other classes and co-curricular experiences during the 1st semester, then Odyssey takes it beyond – very impressive!
- Seems to take a “less is more” approach, which provides a positive experience for students. There will always be difficulty determining the level of academic challenge required. Students seem to respond better to relevant challenges than if the work is too easy for them.
- Continue to refine the specifics of assessments (rubrics, etc.) – maybe could add to information on the portfolio or where the reflections go from here, who reads it, what are they looking for? How will the student “interact” with it throughout?

- Actively engage in planning for strategic use of personnel and fiscal resources to extend the successful elements of the Explorations course initiatives to the entire academic experience, given the inevitable potential for turnover in coordinator positions. Determine how to achieve capacity for the culture of experiential learning at Hendrix College so the initiatives become less dependent on “personalities” of those in charge. You appear to be doing this better than most institutions I’ve seen!

As individuals move through the many phases of the Hendrix Experience there is a clear integrated and intentional approach to the preparation of students who are leaders and scholars. The opportunity for leadership starts in the classroom, where expectations for student learning are high and attainable within a community that supports each other in healthy and professional ways. There is a clear commitment to building lasting relationships with colleagues, and there is consistent and stable support from the upper administration. The College encourages individuals to get involved outside of their disciplines, and the healthy attitude of collegiality and community with individuals who hold the many different and necessary roles within the College allows faculty and staff to take ownership for the success of the students in the classroom, the students in the co-curriculum, and the community of learners across the institution.

References

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APPENDIX A

Site Visit Schedule for Dr. Wendy Troxel

Wednesday, May 31st

Arrive 3:45 on Am Eagle Flight 4037

Rent car

Stay Hampton Inn, Conway, AR

Dinner with Carole Herrick

Thursday, June 1st

- 9:00 a.m. Discussion and overview
Dr. Joyce Hardin, VP Student Affairs
Dr. Carole Herrick, Assoc. Provost for Advising and Retention
- 10:00 Administrative conversations (individual)
Dr. Tim Cloyd, President
- 10:20 Dr. Bob Entzminger, Provost
- 11:00 Current Components
Christy Coker, Career Services
Cassie Bailey, Dean of Students
Dave Wagner, Student Activities
Dr. Joyce Hardin, VP Student Affairs
Dr. Carole Herrick, Assoc. Provost for Advising and Retention
- 12:00 Lunch with students
- 1:30 Current components (continued)
Rev. J.J. Derden, Lilly Vocations Initiative
Dr. Nancy Fleming, Odyssey
Dr. Joyce Hardin, VP Student Affairs
Dr. Carole Herrick, Assoc. Provost for Advising and Retention
- 2:30 Explorations Working Group
 - group input and general discussion
- 4:00 North Central Assessment Discussion
Dr. Bob Entzminger, Provost
Dr. David Sutherland, Associate Provost
Dr. Joyce Hardin, VP Student Affairs
Dr. Carole Herrick, Assoc. Provost for Advising and Retention

Friday, June 2nd

- 9:00 Explorations Assessment
 Dr. David Sutherland, Associate Provost
 Dr. Joyce Hardin, VP Student Affairs
 Dr. Carole Herrick, Assoc. Provost for Advising and Retention
- 10:30 Working Session
 Dr. Joyce Hardin, VP Student Affairs
 Dr. Carole Herrick, Assoc. Provost for Advising and Retention
- 11:30 Lunch and closure

APPENDIX B

Review of Academic Assessment Plans – Status and Implementation

Elements	Undeveloped (0)	Developing (1-2)	Established (3-4)	Exemplary (5)
Program goals and intended student learning outcomes	Absence of program goals and intended student learning outcomes	Program goals are developed, but intended student learning outcomes are only partially developed	Program goals and intended student learning outcomes are developed but lack disciplinary uniqueness & relatedness to the mission	Program goals and intended student learning outcomes are developed, measurable, reflect the uniqueness of the program, and are related to mission
Systematic assessment of student learning (methodologies and capture points)	Absence of methods of assessment, or plan for implementation	Methods of assessment, and procedures for implementation are partially developed, but lack multi-method and multi-measure approach	Implementation of several assessment activities (methods and procedures) are developed to assess most learning goals and intended outcomes, but lack embeddedness	Systematic assessment of student learning using multiple & appropriate qualitative and quantitative measure, and reflects the uniqueness of the academic program and discipline; rationale for assmt choices are fully articulated
Feedback from key stakeholders (indirect measures)	No evidence of collection of feedback from students, alumni, or employers at the program level	Feedback is gathered from some stakeholders on a limited basis, for limited purposes	Feedback is gathered from most key stakeholders (at least current students and alumni) through a number of methods, and is disseminated for analysis at the program level	Feedback is gathered from all key stakeholders (current students, alumni, employers of graduates, graduate schools, etc.) using resources available at both the dept and inst. level
Analysis of results/feedback mechanisms and response	No analysis of student outcomes is evident; no action or response identified or implemented	Some evidence of a periodic review of student learning outcomes for some learning goals; response or action identified but not implemented	Evidence of formal review process of actual student learning outcomes for most program goals; response or action based on feedback identified and implemented for most learning outcomes	Evidence of a continuous formal and effective feedback & improvement mechanism: program faculty & staff are engaged in a regular assessment and review process, with student learning and stakeholder feedback used to improve curriculum, instruction, learning, & development
Assessment system and “logistics”	Absence of assessment system; any evidence gathered is ad hoc, at best, and is unconnected to specified intended outcomes; reactive in nature.	Assessment system is implicit, but not yet fully documented or assigned; many staff members are still opposed to “doing” assessment or using evidence regularly; decisions are based on “hunches” and intuition.	Assessment system is public, explicit, but is not used enough in the planning process; evidence is gathered often, but is not yet fully integrated or shared; the majority of staff are using, and held accountable for gathering and using assessment results.	Assessment system is public, explicit, and used throughout the planning process; evidence is gathered regularly and is embedded in daily operations and/or curricula; all faculty and/or staff are committed to, and accountable for, specific areas of responsibility
Overall coherence, readability, and usability	Very little documentation – too many pieces are still missing	Good start at documentation – still needs work before going public	Very good documentation - could use a bit of revision to be clearer	Outstanding documentation

Source: Troxel, W. G. (2005 - Illinois State University)

Troxel, W. G. (February 2007)

EXPLORATIONS

RESPONSE TO CONSULTANT'S REPORT

August 21, 2007

EXPLORATIONS CONSULTANCY

Dr. Wendy G. Troxel, Ed.D.

Campus Visit: May 31-June 1, 2006

Final Report: February 5, 2007

Dr. Troxel's program and assessment consultancy for Explorations has exerted a strong influence on the course. Her evaluation, recommendations, and expertise have provided direction and guidance to our program enhancement efforts—content and assessment—in a number of areas since her campus visit in June, 2006.

Dr. Troxel's Final Report, received in February, 2007, has been a key ingredient in the work of the Coordinators (Hardin and Herrick), the Explorations Assessment Group (Bailey, Collins, Fought, Herrick, Muse), and the full Explorations Working Group this past spring and summer. The Report augments and amplifies the directions set through her June, 2006, campus consultant's visit.

Here are some specific considerations and responses made to date to Dr. Troxel's campus consultancy and Final Report for Explorations:

- The *Explorations Annual Assessment Plan Report, 2006-2007*, dated May 18, 2007, contains a summary of activities for 2006-07 relating to program development and assessment. Dr. Troxel's observations and recommendations from her visit in June, 2006, informed those activities in significant ways. Her final report, received in February, 2007, added some important "detailing" to the mix. As a package—visit and report—her consultancy as a whole has yielded "informed progress" since June 2006, as summarized in the Annual Assessment Report.

- In July and August, 2007, the Explorations Assessment Group (EAG) carefully reviewed Dr. Troxel's Report, and in particular her comments and recommendations relative to the goals, learning outcomes (ILOs), and assessment materials and patterns for the course.

- Full discussions in the Explorations Working Group, led by the EAG and Dr. David Sutherland, occurred in May and August Workshop sessions for Explorations. Group consideration focused on Dr. Troxel's report and the opportunities for ongoing progress towards "best practice" in first-year seminar content and assessment that her recommendations and expertise have provided for Explorations.

Based on the work of these two groups, the following changes have been made in the Explorations course for fall, 2007:

◦We continue to refine our focus on the two goals of the course, as stated in the syllabus, and also our course content in light of those goals. To this end, the course content continues to be “debulked” in helpful ways. We want just the right things in just the right proportions; we’ll work on that balance always.

◦The ILOs in place for 2006-07 have been reworked with a stronger focus on “measurability” for 2007-2008.

◦The course assessment materials and patterns for 2006-07 have been restructured (reduced) to include one direct assessment yearly and at least one indirect assessment. For Fall, 2007, the direct assessment will be focus on the engaged learning project and reflection contained in the course.

◦All three direct assessments for the course (academic integrity reflection, diversity paper, engaged learning experience and reflection) will have “new and improved” rubrics in place for 2007.

◦A pre-test/post-test indirect measure focusing on student exposure to course topics and processes prior to and subsequent to Explorations has been added to the course.