

Explorations Assessment Annual Report, 2022-2023

The Explorations Working Group met on May 12, 2023 to conduct our annual Assessment Meeting. In attendance were Todd Berryman, Julie Brown, Liz Gron, Lars Seme, & Gabby Vidal-Torriera. The entire committee was in attendance.

In the Fall of 2022, Explorations offered 31 total sections, averaging 11.7 students per section. Of these 24 were taught by those students' CNSA advisor, three by a faculty member not on CNSA, and four by staff members. This is similar to our composition of CNSA/non-CNSA led sections in the past few years; a section of Explorations II was also taught in the Spring for students who did not successfully complete Explorations their first semester. There were four total students in Explorations II. The Spring class was taught by Ms. Julie Brown, from the Office of Academic Success.

For Fall 2022, the only major curricular change was based around Career and Vocation. In previous years, instructors selected from a menu of options; this year, most sections had a representative from the Office of Career Services attend and lead this session, with a focus on working toward gaining a first internship opportunity. This change was driven by data from Career Services that indicated that students, especially new students, wanted this information and felt it was more relevant to them in their first semester than thinking explicitly about career and after-Hendrix.

Student Assessment Plan:

For the Fall 2022 semester, the learning goals were:

Program Learning Goal 1: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to recognize the skills and resources necessary to make a successful transition to academic and student life at Hendrix.

Program Learning Goal 2: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to reflect critically on their values, interests, and abilities as they relate to academic and student life at Hendrix.

These goals have been in place for three years – though PLG1 was slightly rewritten this year from “Upon completion of the course, students will be able to *articulate* the skills and resources” to “students will be able to *recognize* the skills and resources...” The Working Group had been struggling both with what the actual intent was as well as how to assess PGL1 and believes that this reflects these ideals better.

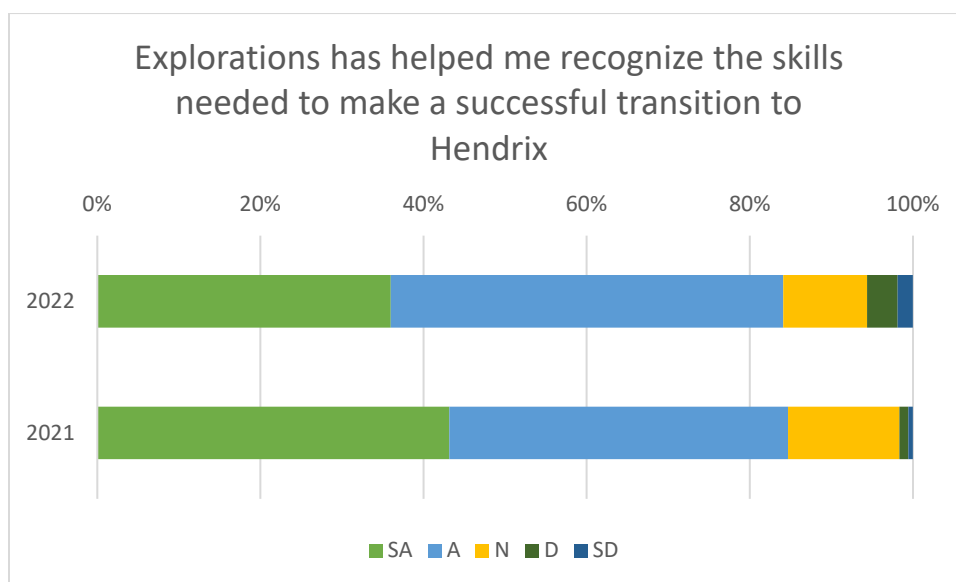
Indirect assessment information was collected for both goals from student feedback forms, but direct assessment information was collected only for the first learning goal. We directly assessed

PGL1 (in its “articulate” form) in 2020-2021, and the direct and indirect assessment data was collected in the same way this year.

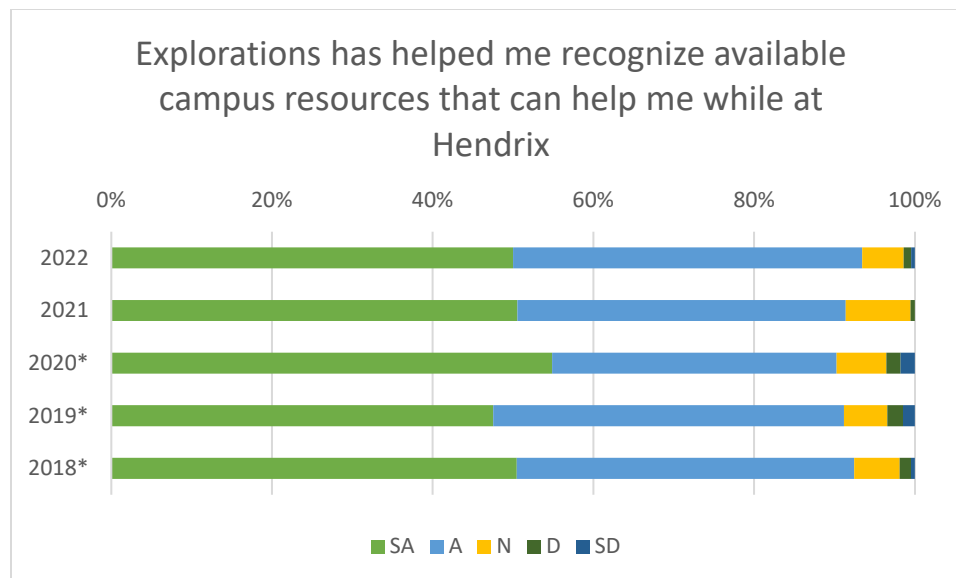
Indirect Assessment

Two questions on the end-of-course student feedback forms speak directly to PLG1. Each of these is scored on a Likert scale from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. We had 59% of enrolled Explorations students submit feedback. This is similar to last year (60%), but below the previous two the last two years – 76% in 2020 and 73% in 2019 – and non unlike 2018 (64%), which was the first year we went online with feedback forms.

Two of the questions on the student feedback form speak directly to PLG1. The first was added in Fall 2021.



A second question has been asked at least since 2018 (at least in a similar form – see Appendix A for precise wording changes).



Across both questions, the indirect data shows that our students believe that they are achieving PLG 1, and that this belief is consistent across multiple years. More than 80% of students claim that the course helped them understand the skills necessary to be a successful student, and roughly 90% that the course made them recognize the resources available on campus. Data seems mostly consistent across multiple years – though of course in the case of the first question we only have two total years to consider. Though our Assessment Plan will have us focus on PLG2 next year, we will still collect these data, and will react if there are significant changes.

Direct Assessment

For Fall 2022, the Explorations Working Group created a simple, ungraded pre/post quiz which was given to Explorations students. A similar quiz was given in 2020, but with open ended questions and answers, and instructors used their judgement to rank students based on a rubric. We noted last year that this has some positives – “there are situations that can be handled by students appropriately in various ways – it can make assessment more difficult.” We determined that it made more sense to give this as a pre/post test and to track student performance across both. Again recognizing that no system is perfect, this allowed us to have an objective look at student knowledge and comfort with how Hendrix works, which seems to fit the overall theme of PLG1.

This quiz consisted of 10 questions about how Hendrix works, and was multiple choice, given using an online Microsoft Form. A total of 330 students took the pretest, 328 took the posttest – there were 296 students who took both, representing about 81% of the freshman class. We will focus on these 296 students.

On the pretest, the average number of correct responses was 7.15, while on the posttest the average was 7.84, for an increase of 0.69 correct responses, and a standard deviation of 1.325. A paired *t*-test

does show a statistically significant difference in mean correct answers between the pre- and post-tests:

- $t = 9.00$,
- one-sided $p = 1.4 \times 10^{-17}$,
- 95% confidence interval for the difference in mean number of correct responses of (0.543,0.847), and
- effect size of $d = 0.52$

While a statistically significant increase in student understanding of how Hendrix works is nice, this increase is not really that big; students in general started with a good understanding – at least as measured by this particular quiz – and finished their first semester with slightly more understanding. In addition, of course, any increase noted cannot be necessarily ascribed to Explorations – likely simply being on campus for an additional three months has increased student awareness of the college policies and workings.

Looking at the individual questions, there was a small increase in the number of correct responses for each of the ten:

#	Pre	Post	Questions
1	67.88%	76.83%	You have to miss a class unexpectedly (illness, emergency, etc). In the absence of different instructions from your professor, you should:
2	74.85%	86.59%	You have a question during class that you recognize is somewhat off topic. You should:
3	94.55%	97.26%	A student accused of cheating admits responsibility (i.e. admits that they did the action they were accused of) to the professor. Then,
4	98.79%	99.70%	Another student continually leaves a mess in a common area of your residence hall. You have talked with them, but their behavior has not changed. Your next step should be:
5	18.48%	18.60%	The college uses a points-based system for alcohol and substance violations. Sally calls an RA to help another student in distress who is in need of medical care. However, the RA also notices that...
6	70.00%	80.49%	You want to take HIST 123, a great class you have heard about in the Spring, but are not sure if the class is open (i.e. there are seats available). The first thing to do is:
7	97.27%	98.48%	You have decided to change a spring semester course. To accomplish this, you must:
8	53.33%	65.24%	True or False: You cannot receive Odyssey funding for a project in a category if you have previously received Odyssey credit in that category:
9	61.82%	78.96%	In order to graduate, students must complete:
10	72.42%	82.93%	The Odyssey Program at Hendrix is, in a nutshell:

Table 1: Percentage Correct for Pre-and Post-test, question by question

(the complete form, with questions and answers is provided in Appendix B)

We highlight two interesting questions:

Question #5 is about the social conduct policy – specifically the amnesty program for students who have been in violation of the alcohol or substance policy, but reach out for medical help for themselves or others. Most students selected the option that there was no punishment for such students. However, the Student Handbook says “The system also offers ‘points amnesty’ from controlled substance or alcohol-related violations to students who step forward to get medical assistance for themselves or others. While students who have consumed alcohol or controlled substances receive 0 points because they sought help for themselves or others sought help for them, they still receive a conduct charge” (Hendrix Student Handbook, 29). The correct answer to the quiz question has students recognize the conduct charge part of this – however, in our experience, this has not typically been addressed during the Social Conduct day of Explorations. We will make sure this is addressed in future years.

Though more than half of students correctly answered question #8 about Odyssey funding, it was a True or False, and also had a (relatively) low correct answer rate. We may want to consider if students might be confused about the first-time travel expense grants that are provided to students in UR or AC project presentations. We want to make sure that students do not decline to participate in an Odyssey project because they are (incorrectly) concerned that this may impact their ability to receive funding for a later planned project.

As this was the first year using this assessment tool, the Working Group will consider revisions to the questions and method of delivery.

Analysis

The data supports a conclusion that students are achieving the intended goals. More than 80% of students rate themselves as Explorations helping them become able to recognize the resources and skills needed to be successful. Direct assessment – at least as indicated by the pre/post quiz supports this.

Changes, Updates and Future Plans:

We believe that the data supports leaving the curricular part of the course alone, and we plan no major changes to the student experience in the classroom for the coming year. Instead, we plan to focus on updating and improving our assessment tools themselves.

Pre/Post Quiz

As noted above, students improved their scores on the post quiz relative to the pre quiz. However, as a group we are not happy with the questions, and do not believe that they capture what we are

hoping. The Working Group will rewrite the questions to be knowledge-based and specifically directed toward the individual curricular goals of the relevant course days. As currently formatted, they are too normative.

Student Feedback Form -- Timing

As noted above, our response rate on the student feedback forms has dropped the past two years (~60%) compared to previous years (~75%). Fall 2021 was the first year that Explorations student feedback was collected along with “regular” course feedback; previously, the online window was open for students to fill out while the course was still going on (our last meeting is about a week before Thanksgiving), this is no longer possible. As this drop in feedback completion has coincided with the change in schedule, the Working Group needs to consider alternative ways to try to increase our response rate. We plan to include as part of the final course meeting specific content about Student Feedback, how it is used, and why it is done, as well as sharing the questions used in Explorations and the standard 10 questions asked in other classes.

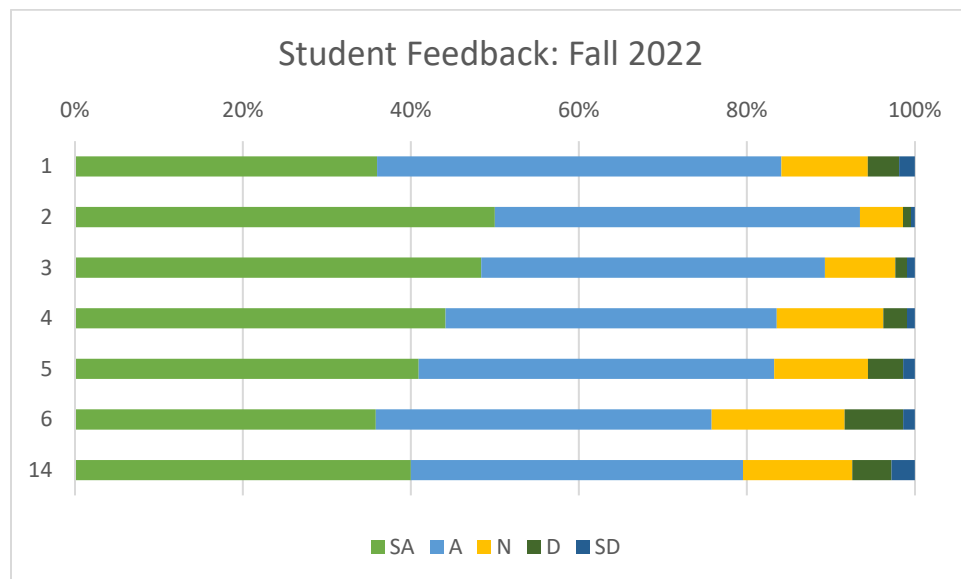
Appendix A

Fall 2022 Student Feedback Summary

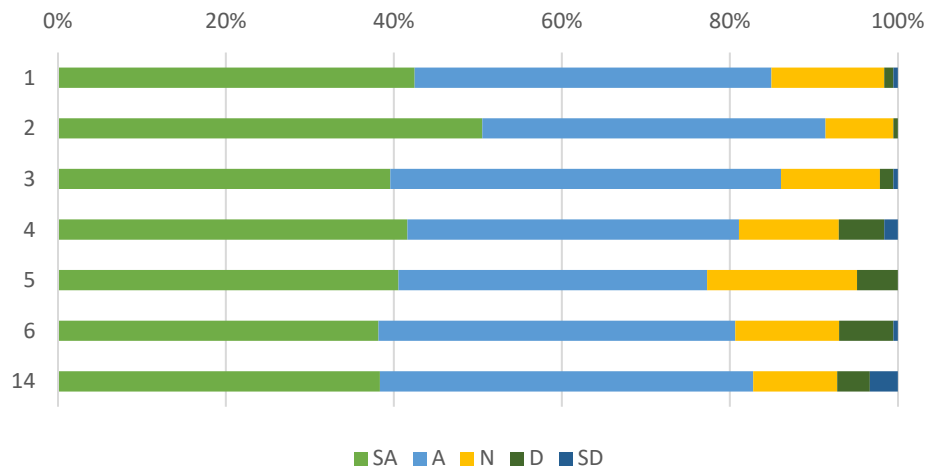
Beginning with the 2021 Fall semester, we slightly reworked the student feedback form. The same form was used for Fall 2022. Relevant questions are listed below:

Each of these is answered on a Likert scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree

- 1 - Explorations has helped me recognize the skills needed to make a successful transition to Hendrix
- 2 - Explorations has helped me recognize available campus resources that can help me while at Hendrix. (Note: For 2018 – 2020, this question read “Explorations has increased my awareness of the resources available on campus.”)
- 3 - The learning goals for Explorations were clearly articulated throughout the course.
- 4 - It was clear to me how course assignments contributed to the learning goals.
- 5 - Explorations has helped me reflect on what is involved in selecting a major
- 6 - Explorations has helped me reflect on future career exploration.
- 14 - Overall, I found Explorations to be a positive experience



Student Feedback: Fall 2021



Appendix B

This quiz will be given as a pre-test on the first day of class and again on the last day of class as a post test. It serves at least two purposes:

- As an assessment tool for PGL 1 – “Upon completion of the course, students will be able to articulate the skills and resources necessary to make a successful transition to academic and student life at Hendrix.” At the end of the semester, instructors will fill out a rubric in order to directly assess their students’ achievement of this goal, using the results of this test.
- A way to initially set the table (“here are some of the things we will be learning about in Explorations”) on the first day and conclude the course (“see what you learned!”) at the end.

A form [HERE](#) has the pre-test version and [HERE](#) is the post-test. The questions are the same, but only the post-test reveals the answers.

Questions – each question is multiple choice. The right answer is highlighted here. For discussion purposes, we have also listed the topic(s) covered by the question and connected back to the syllabus day.

- 1) [Academic Etiquette] You have to miss a class unexpectedly (illness, emergency, etc). In the absence of different instructions from your professor, you should:
 - a. <wrong: Ask the professor during your next class period what you missed>
 - b. **At your earliest convenience, email the professor informing them of your absence and request instructions on how to turn in any work that was due that day.**
 - c. <wrong: Ask a classmate what you missed>
 - d. <wrong: Email the professor detailed information about your reason for missing and request a time to come to office hours for a make-up lecture/class>
- 2) [Academic Etiquette] You have a question during class that you recognize is somewhat off topic. You should:
 - a. <wrong: Ask anyway, as long there are no other hands up>
 - b. <wrong: Say “this is off topic, but...” and then ask your question>
 - c. **Contact the professor after class and make an appointment to discuss your question**
 - d. <wrong: Bring it up during class time the next day>
- 3) [Academic Integrity] A student accused of cheating admits responsibility (i.e. admits that they did the action they were accused of) to the professor. Then,
 - a. <wrong: under all circumstances, the student fails the course>
 - b. **The professor determines a sanction, and the student can either accept the recommended sanction, or request a review by the Committee on Academic**

- Integrity** <wrong: the student is suspended from Hendrix for either one semester or two>
- c. <wrong: the student can request to drop the course in lieu of the penalty>
 - d. <wrong: for a first offense, there is no penalty in class>
- 4) [Social Conduct] Another student continually leaves a mess in a common area of your residence hall. You have talked with them, but their behavior has not changed. Your next step should be:
- a. **Inform an RA**
 - b. <wrong: Call public safety>
 - c. <wrong: Let Housekeeping know>
 - d. <wrong: Contact the Dean's Office>
- 5) [Social Conduct] The college uses a points-based system for alcohol and substance violations. Sally calls an RA to help another student in distress who is in need of medical care. However, the RA also notices that Sally, who is under age, is visibly intoxicated
- a. <wrong: Sally receives a conduct charge and the full number of points on her record, but can appeal for a reduction to the Dean of Students>
 - b. <wrong: Sally receives a conduct charge and only 50% of the points she would get otherwise>
 - c. **Sally receives no points, but still receives a conduct charge**
 - d. <wrong: Sally receives no points or conduct charge>
- 6) [Gen Ed/advising] You want to take HIST 123, a great class you have heard about in the Spring, but are not sure if the class is open (i.e. there are seats available). The first thing to do is:
- a. <wrong: email the professor of HIST 123>
 - b. **Check the online course schedule**
 - c. <wrong: ask your academic advisor to see if the course is open>
 - d. <wrong: contact the Registrar's Office via email or by going to their office>
- 7) [Gen Ed/advising] You have decided to change a spring semester course. To accomplish this, you must:
- a. **Make an appointment with your advisor.**
 - b. <wrong: Make appt with that course instructor>
 - c. <wrong: You can do it by yourself on Campus Web>
 - d. <wrong: Show up to that class first day of the Spring semester>
- 8) [Odyssey] True or False: You cannot receive Odyssey funding for a project in a category if you have previously received Odyssey credit in that category:
- a. <wrong: True >
 - b. **False**
- 9) [Odyssey] In order to graduate, students must complete:
- a. <wrong: All six Odyssey categories>
 - b. <wrong: At least three Odyssey projects, in at least two different categories>
 - c. **At least three Odyssey projects, in at least three different categories**
 - d. <wrong: At least four Odyssey projects, in at least three different categories>
- 10) [Odyssey] The Odyssey Program at Hendrix is, in a nutshell:

- a. <wrong: educational adventures designed and tailored for each student by Hendrix College>
- b. <wrong: a series of educational activities that each student must propose and then get approved>
- c. **designed to encourage all Hendrix students to embark on educational adventures in engaged learning**
- d. <wrong: designed to help students fund their study abroad experiences>