

The Odyssey Engaged Learning Program Student Assessment Plan

With the formal adoption of the Odyssey Learning Goals during spring 2013, the Odyssey staff and Associate Provost for Engaged Learning developed the Student Assessment Plan during the 2013-14 academic year. Assessment data were also collected during that year, and will be on an ongoing annual basis.

Odyssey Learning Goals

The below list identifies the four chief learning goals of the Odyssey program. No one Odyssey course, activity or project is expected to achieve all four goals, and engaged learning experiences will understandably be designed with varying degrees of emphasis on the different goals. By completing the graduation requirement of at least three Odyssey credits in three different categories, however, Hendrix students achieve the following four outcomes:

- I. Enhancement of learning—both what they know and how they come to know—by:
 - the examination of ideas in new contexts,
 - the application of theories to practice,
 - the first-hand discovery of how things are in the world,
 - the exercise of, and reflection upon, their powers of judgment in practical situations.
- II. Vocational Self-Discovery and Professional Development through:
 - the discovery of qualities and capacities they possess for acting effectively in the world,
 - the exercise of resourcefulness and problem-solving abilities in new and complex situations,
 - the identification and exploration of vocational and a-vocational passions,
 - the reflective delineation of values, life plans, graduation and career goals in light of hands-on experience.
- III. Development of a sense of ownership over one's educational pursuits and of the habits conducive to life-long learning by:
 - independently structuring educational projects in accordance with self-selected learning goals
 - applying previous learning to new contexts in creative and novel ways
 - discovering unforeseen connections among disciplines, schools of thought, or social practices,
 - learning to learn from critical reflection upon both success and failure.
- IV. Increased awareness of one's responsibility for linking action and understanding in the effort to respond effectively "to the social, spiritual, and ecological needs of our time" (*Hendrix Statement of Purpose*) by:
 - discovering one's capacity to explore the world and act as an effective agent within it,
 - becoming reflective and articulate about how one's values and beliefs influence one's actions and actions shape and reveal one's values and beliefs.
 - gaining exposure to, and critically reflecting upon, previously unfamiliar avenues of response to intellectual queries and social problems,
 - making conscious decisions in the selection or design of hands on projects responsive to local and/or global communities.

Output Data

For the past several years, the Odyssey Office has produced a “dashboard” for internal purposes. This dashboard is used not to assess student attainment of the Odyssey goals, but rather to report various outputs of the Odyssey program. The dashboard includes:

- Odyssey credits completed and in progress
- credit distribution: courses, activities, projects
- category distribution: AC, GA, PL, SP, SW, UR
- graduation data (percent meeting requirement, number of categories earned)
- funding
 - number of proposals submitted and funded
 - total requested funding and funding awarded
 - funding for first-time travel grants (including NCUR)

Direct Assessment Measures

More important are the data collected that directly assesses student goal attainment.

Odyssey Exemplars

During each academic year, several students or groups of students present their project to the larger Hendrix community. Students are selected for the Exemplar series in one of three ways: 1) the Odyssey credit requires a presentation; 2) students request a presentation; and 3) Odyssey staff identifies worthwhile projects for presentation.

For each Exemplar presentation, the Odyssey Director, the Odyssey Associate Director, and/or the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning (and sometimes other professors at the request of Odyssey leadership) attend the presentation and use a rubric (see Appendix A) to assess learning goal attainment.

Frequency: several times throughout the academic year
Data collected: rubric scores

Faculty and Staff Development and Assessment

From time to time, the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning, in cooperation with the Odyssey Director, holds professional development workshops with members of the faculty and staff who work with students on Odyssey projects. Whenever possible, these workshops will include activities which have participants assess student achievement through evaluation of student work (Odyssey proposals, reflections, and completion forms). Participants will apply the rubric to determine level of goal attainment.

Frequency: ad hoc and dependent upon funding
Data collected: rubric scores

Indirect Assessment Measures

Student Focus Groups

Every spring, graduating seniors are selected at random and invited to attend a catered dinner on campus. Each small group of students is joined by two faculty members familiar with Odyssey and the Odyssey learning goals. One of the professors facilitates discussion of the learning goals (see Appendix B) and the other listens intently, records, and marks the learning-goal rubric according to the discussion. After the dinner the professors meet to finalize reporting according to the rubric.

Frequency: annually Data collected: rubric scores

Young Alumni Survey

This survey is periodically administered by the Offices of Career Services and Alumni Affairs. Three questions specifically target Odyssey:

1. One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me identify the post-graduation plan that I am currently engaged in.
2. One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me identify the post-graduation plan that is best for me.
3. One or more of my Odyssey experiences helped me develop attitudes, abilities and/or knowledge helpful to meeting my post-graduation challenges.

Frequency: annually (or as administered) Data collected: survey data

Project Completion Forms

Every completed Odyssey project and pre-approved activity requires an up to 150-word description submitted to the Odyssey Office. The Director or Associate Director read all of these with special consideration of impact and learning-goal attainment.

Frequency: continually Data collected: anecdotal

Assessment Reporting

The data identified above, and collected by the Odyssey Office, will be analyzed by the Odyssey Director. These analyses, including narrative, will be included with the Odyssey annual report and provided as needed to the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning, the Provost, and other members of the Senior Leadership Team as requested.

Appendix A

Odyssey Learning Goals

Assessment Rubrics – Individual Project Presentation

Student(s): _____ Assessor: _____

Date: _____ Category: _____

Goal 1: Enhancement of learning (both what they know and how they come to know)

	Basic (partial, intermittent evidence)	Proficient (awareness of evidence)	Capstone/Advanced (analysis of evidence)
examination of ideas in new contexts	evidence of application of knowledge acquired traditionally (such as in the classroom)	critically tests/ deconstructs those ideas while applying them to new context	creates new hypotheses built on ideas and tests them in new environment
Comments/Score:			
application of theories to practice	evidence of application of theories in new environment/context	enumerates theories that have been applied	tests, deconstructs and synthesizes theories in practice (perhaps creating new theories)
Comments/Score:			
first-hand discovery of how things are in the world	evidence of such discovery through engagement	enumerates new discoveries through the engagement	describes how specific first-hand discoveries advance learning beyond the classroom
Comments/Score:			
exercise of, and reflection upon, powers of judgment in practical situations	evidence of application of such judgment	enumerates instances of applying powers of judgment during engagement	demonstrates thorough understanding of importance and development of judgment in enumerated instances
Comments/Score:			

Goal 2: Vocational Self-Discovery and Professional Development

	Basic (partial, intermittent evidence)	Proficient (awareness of evidence)	Capstone/Advanced (analysis of evidence)
discovery of qualities and capacities they possess for acting effectively in the world Comments/Score:	evidence of discovery of qualities and capacities	enumerates personal qualities and capacities discovered through engagement	links those qualities and capacities to effective acting; identifies personal limitations; leads to vocational discovery
exercise of resourcefulness and problem-solving abilities in new and complex situations Comments/Score:	evidence of execution of resourcefulness and problem-solving	enumerates circumstances when resourcefulness and problem-solving are applied	links resourcefulness and problem-solving to successful navigation of new and complex situations (understands the reality of complexities)
identification and exploration of vocational and a-vocational passions Comments/Score:	evidence of such exploration	enumerates passions created, identified, refined, cemented by engagement	articulates how engagement lead to such passions; commitment to following passions through future engagement
reflective delineation of values, life plans, graduation and career goals in light of hands-on experience Comments/Score:	evidence of delineation of values, plans, goals	enumerates way in which engagement brought focus to such values, plans, goals	articulates why engagement is important to such delineation, and articulates plan for future engagement to refine values and goals

Goal 3: Development of a Sense of Ownership over One's Educational Pursuits and of the Habits Conducive to Life-Long Learning

	Basic (partial, intermittent evidence)	Proficient (awareness of evidence)	Capstone/Advanced (analysis of evidence)
independently structuring educational projects in accordance with self-selected learning goals	evidence of congruence between designed projects and learning goals	enumerates links between goals and self-designed projects	articulates importance of such links; identifies ways planning for goal achievement will be used in future
Comments/Score:			
applying previous learning to new contexts in creative and novel ways	evidence of creative application of knowledge	discusses instances of application of learning in creative and novel ways	discusses importance of developing goals and plan for ownership and life-long learning
Comments/Score:			
discovering unforeseen connections between disciplines, schools of thought, or social practices	evidence of such new discoveries	provides examples of discovered connections	speaks of ways the discovery of connections advanced understanding, enhanced ownership and/or deepened commitment to life-long learning; values interdisciplinarity (multiple ways of knowing holds power)
Comments/Score:			
learning to learn from critical reflection upon both success and failure	evidence of critical reflection	enumerates instances of such critical reflection	specifies how critical reflection leads to enhanced learning; indicates commitment to critical and ongoing reflection
Comments/Score:			

Goal 4: Increased Awareness of One's Responsibility for Linking Action and Understanding in the Effort to Respond Effectively "to the Social, Spiritual, and Ecological Needs of our Time" (*Hendrix Statement of Purpose*)

	Basic (partial, intermittent evidence)	Proficient (awareness of evidence)	Capstone/Advanced (analysis of evidence)
discovering one's capacity to explore the world and act as an effective agent within it Comments/Score:	evidence of discovery of capacities	discusses examples of exploration and effective action	speaks of how such engagement increases understanding; how values affect effectiveness; and a commitment to action
becoming reflective and articulate about how one's values and beliefs influence one's actions and actions shape and reveal one's values and beliefs Comments/Score:	evidence of reflection about links between values/ideas and actions	enumerates ways in which actions are shaped by values and ideas; in turn how values and beliefs are shaped by action	effectively articulates why such linkages are important; how they contribute to value refinement; and how they capacity-build for future engagement
gaining exposure to, and critically reflecting upon, previously unfamiliar avenues of response to intellectual queries and social problems Comments/Score:	evidence of exposure to and critical reflection upon unfamiliar avenues	enumerates exposures to, reflections on, and responses to local and global problems	understands how exposure and reflection has led to increased awareness of responsibility, value development, and capacity for community engagement
making conscious decisions in the selection or design of hands on projects responsive to local and/or global communities Comments/Score:	evidence of such decisions	articulates process of designing responsive projects and important characteristics of such projects	explains how such projects have led to value development/clarification and deeper understanding of one's capacity

Appendix B

Odyssey Senior Dinner Faculty Facilitator Guidance

Purpose of dinners: To determine what students feel they are getting out of their Odyssey projects and (after the dinner) to compare this to what we claim Odyssey is doing for our students, i.e., the Odyssey Learning Goals (attached).

During the dinners: One person will be the main discussion facilitator and the other person the main note taker, though of course should feel free to pipe-in. The schedule of events at each dinner will be:

6:00 p.m. Students begin arriving; when all or most are there you might go ahead and sit down and make introductions

6:30 p.m. Dining services will begin serving buffet; soon as all are seated discussion begins. (SEE DISCUSSION GUIDE BELOW)

8:00 p.m. End

After the dinners: We would like to receive two things from the facilitators:

- Typed notes of the discussion;
- The **attached rubric** completed (two facilitators can discuss and send in one form)

Materials should be sent to the Associate Provost for Engaged Learning prior to the end of the semester.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Guide the conversation so that students talk about what they are taking away from their Odyssey experiences. Try to let *them* name the benefits and outcomes as they tell about their experiences. Avoid directly asking “Did you get X out of Odyssey?” until maybe at the end. If towards the end, nothing has been said that is relevant to one the learning goals, then it is time to find out if that’s just because the conversation did not bring it out or no one feels that learning goal speaks to their experience. The following flow to the conversation is suggested:

I. Introduce the purpose of the gathering: to find out what they have gained from their Odyssey experiences. It is not to evaluate them or their projects. It’s not even to evaluate how the Odyssey office or application process works. Be happy to take note of complaints in this area and communicate them on your rubric. But please keep the conversation focused as much as possible in the takeaways, the learning outcomes, since the point of the dinner is to find out how well we are meeting the Odyssey Learning Goals.

II. Beginning the Discussion: Get them telling their stories.

- What was your favorite Odyssey experience (s) and what made it a good experience?
OR MAYBE
- What was your most transformative Odyssey Experience and why?

In describing the experience, students inevitably begin naming what they “got from” the experience.

III. Unpacking initial comments-- They will probably begin with great generalities: it was life-changing; it gave me a whole new perspective on things. Those of course are outcomes, but we sure would like them to be more specific. Guide them into unearthing what’s behind these general descriptions.

Other suggested potentially helpful questions:

- Did any of you have Odyssey experiences that did not go well? Did you learn anything from them anyway?
- What was the value for you in having 3 Odyssey experiences required? (This moves the discussion away from their takeaways from individual projects to their takeaways from the requirement as a whole.
- What connection is there between any of your Odyssey experiences and what you plan to do after graduation?
- Were there any particularly helpful elements to Odyssey projects? E.g.—having to write for funding; the time spent with a professor; having to take care of myself; journal writing. (This question begins to move into assessing Odyssey processes, but it can unearth some helpful information about what makes Odyssey work when it works).

V. Leading questions about learning goals that haven't been touched on.

VI. Close with cheery thank you's and best wishes.

VII. Decide on a plan between the two of you regarding getting the notes turned in and completing the Assessment Rubrics.