Guide to Dev eloping Unit Assessment Plans

Office of Academic Success Initiatives

course. They may wish to conduct this as an active research study and look at the difference
between low and high study skills students on course grades. This would make a strong case
for causal effects for their initiative. In sum, don’t choose to measure a “point of success”
when you cannot timely obtain data for your reporting cycle.

2) Identify the type of outcome consistent with your point(s) of success (could be more than one
type or a “hybrid”):
x Student Focused: learning, satisfaction, access/equity, participation, problem-solving,
implementation of a new service, etc.
x Staff Focused: professional development, office efficiency/productivity, best practice,
technological/procedural improvement, skills used in implementing a new service, etc.
x Burning Professional Question: your “great idea,” an active research study.

3) Write your outcome statement:
Ideally, an outcome statement will include the following parts:
a. A target variable: (e.g., attitudes towards X, course grades in ENC 1000, student satisfaction,
increased access to X, increase enrollment).
b. The subject(s) affected: (e.g., students, counselors, consultants, staff, those who attend Y
event, those who are in cohort year Y, or in STA 2023).
c. The degree or direction of expected change: (e.g., by X points, % higher than last year’s
scores, by Y%, above a mean rubric score of 2.90). It is not uncommon to leave the
“degree” part out of the outcome, but you will be asked “how do you know you were
successful?” later in the report.

Example outcomes:
 Improve mean satisfaction ratings of center attendees by 5%.
Improve average course GPA in all ABC 2122 sections by ¼ letter grade
Improve liberal art student involvement in undergraduate research opportunities
Create and implement a Teaching/Learning program for faculty
Increase access to tutoring services for at-risk students as determined b] TJ
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Implementing Strategy: What are you going to do with regard to the outcome you described
above? Describe the intervention being used, why you chose it, and who is involved. You may also
outline how you will communicate to or involve stakeholders. If you are comparing groups, you

Notice how each of these designs answers a different type of question. Summative assessments
tell us how we did. Formative assessments tell us how we are doing. Longitudinal assessments tell
us if we are doing better than we did in the past, and pre-post tests indicate how much gain we
were able to produce for an individual student or group of students, while removing extraneous
influences.
3) Describe your assessment method: You could include one or more of the following elements in your description:
a) What assessment(s) will be used (include things like how many items are on the test, the
number and description of rubric factors, the type of scale range employed, etc.).
b) How it will be scored (will you produce a total score or sub-scores). c) When it will be administered (i.e., which design you are going to use). d) Who is going to take it.
Example of an assessment method

x Gain: Gain scores are used with pre-post test designs. While you may simply state
“Participants will significantly increase their scores from their pre-test measure” it may be
useful to set a % gain such as “Group results will show a mean gain of X% (or points).”

Example of setting a success criterion
Students completing the RI vignette will realize a minimum average gain of one (1) full rubric point.

Data Analysis, Summary and Evaluation:

1) Provide your results: You can put your results in text or in a table if the results are
considerable in size. Be sure to include:
a) How you calculated your results.
b) A brief description of your results and any limitations/problems in the collection or sampling
process. You can use graphs, figures, statistical outputs, etc. as attachments to the report.

2) Interpret your results: Make sure you explain what the results mean and make any
connections to the implementation.

Example of a data analysis summary
Pre-test to post-test gain scores (reported in average score differences) indicated mixed results of
success. Students in the RI workshops showed significant gains in information literacy (1.25) and
hypothesis testing skills (1.0). Minimal improvement was demonstrated in their ability to
communicate research results (.5). No practically significant gains were found on their
experimental design (.05) and data analysis skills (-.05). We met our outcome goals for some, but
not all of the student skills. Experimental designing examples were limited for non-science majors,
and this may have led to the lack of gain in experimental design and data analysis skills. The fact
that students did not collect real data prevented them from getting hands-on experience in data
analysis.

Program Improvement:

How will you use the results for further improvements moving forward? Show how the results
drove any decisions you made.

Example of Program Improvement
Our workshop committee will meet to refine teaching strategies, particularly for experimental
design and data analysis skills. There is an online tutorial program on experiment designing we will
review and incorporate into the workshops so that student can engage in a self-paced experience
with multiple non-science examples.

Final tips for completing your overall assessment plans: x Don’t choose more than four outcomes. x Choose outcomes that have meaning for you (impactful). x Complete the report in Word and paste it into the system when you are ready. x Attach assessments, rubrics, research studies or any other materials to your report if you feel
they are necessary. Those evaluating your plan will be able to better understand what you
are doing. x The examples written above had to be limited for brevity. While you don’t have to write a
book for your report, you should give a thoughtful and thorough reply to each section,
particularly the program improvement section.