

# A Better Way to Design General Education

## AAC&U Workshop

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### Agenda for workshop

- Introductions and Overview
- Practice as a Design Team
- Break
- Thinking Differently: Organization Theory
- Straight-up Advice
- Questions and Closing

### Watching the Video    *ABC News Nightline 07-13-99 "The Deep Dive"*

1. What are the identified rules of group work? (Fem Ad)
2. What are the main characteristics of how the work is structured?(Male Ad)
3. Which elements of IDEO's approach would work in an academic setting?  
(Fem fac)
4. What aspects of this concept seem not to be transferable?(male fac)

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<sup>1</sup> The ideas in this workshop are the product of collaboration. Thanks to Merilee Klemp, Joan Griffin, Dallas Liddle, Ambrose Wolf, and Lori Brandt Hale of Augsburg College. Special thanks to Karl Smith, University of Minnesota, for his introduction of the Deep Dive to me and to colleagues working with the Collaboration for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, St. Paul, MN.

### **Design Team Directions**

(Self selected small groups of 5 people; the person who traveled the least distance is group facilitator)

Your group task:

After introductions, take 5-7 minutes to determine by what rules or guidelines you will operate for this activity. Identify 3-4 rules you will follow as a team and write them a sheet of white paper so they can be read.

For the next 20 minutes, your charge is to design the curriculum for a 1 hour orientation for participants invited to present workshops at AAC&U conferences. (25 participants) What do you think is important to accomplish in the orientation and how might that happen? Use additional paper for your work.

*BREAK*

### **Applying Organizational Theory: Another specific tool for design**

Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* Jossey-Bass San Francisco 1999.

Bolman and Deal offer the concept of frames which are different vantage points and tools for action. They directly influence organizational decision making.

The 4 frames:

#### *Structure*

Organizations exist primarily to accomplish established goals; hierarchy, specialization and procedures

#### *Human Resource*

Organizations exist to serve human needs; advancement, careers, professional development

#### *Political*

Organizations are coalitions with differing values, information and perceptions of reality.

#### *Symbolic/Cultural*

Individual differences in understanding matter; how people understand what things mean

*Organizational decision making* is the essentially the identification of problems and the determining of solutions within an organizational context. (Daft, 2004)

How you proceed can be effected by the degree of problem consensus and the amount of solution knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Problem consensus is the degree of understanding and agreement about nature of the problem and which goals to pursue; solution knowledge refers to understanding and agreement about how, technically, to solve problems (Daft 2004:470)

		<b>Problem Consensus</b>	
		<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
<b>Solution Knowledge</b>	<u>Low</u>	1	2
	<u>High</u>	3	4

(from Daft, 2004)

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<sup>2</sup> See the work of Richard Daft, *Organizational Theory and Design*. 2004 South-Western Thomson Learning. See also Stephen L. Trainor "Designing a Signature General Education Program" *Peer Review* Fall 2004 AAC&U publication.

## Advice

Specific recommendations for how to operate as a design team.

The hypothesis is that the more recommendations that are followed, the increased chances for success.

- Ask for input: know what you can know empirically
- Design Team operation: 5-7 “non-representative” members, intensive (summer if you can do it), rewarded, designated space
- Mission
- “Who’s gonna hate this?”
- No surprises, no surprises, no surprises.
- Group Think Check  
(Illusion of morality, illusion of unanimity, mind-guarding, self-censorship, rationalization, negative stereotyping of outsiders)
- Embedded outcomes and assessment
- Steering Committee
- Teaching not tossing
- Dissemination: lobby, listen and count

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# Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne General Education Assessment Process

## Advantages of area-based general education assessment:

- Improved relevance of assessment for faculty
- Enhanced interdisciplinary communication among faculty
- Opportunities to review and revise general education learning outcomes for each discrete area
- Flexibility in designing data collection and other processes
- Reduction of assessment task to a limited, manageable responsibility for each committee

## Challenges of area-based general education assessment:

- Duplication of assessment activities across the areas
- Implementation of micro-level assessment processes and methods
- Missed opportunities for institution-level discussions of general education
- Difficulties in coordination across the areas
- Lack of shared responsibility and ownership for general education across campus

To: Faculty Teaching General Education Area II courses  
From: GE Area II Assessment Task Force  
Date: March 16, 2005  
Re: General Education Assessment

This memo is to invite you to participate in the continuing pilot assessment of General Education Area II. The aim is to measure achievement of the program goals established in SD 99-25. You may review SD 99-25 at <http://www.ipfw.edu/senate/document/1999-00/SD99-25.htm>.

### Principles

The GE Assessment Task Force established the following principles:

- \$ our task is **program assessment**, not assessment of departments, courses, or faculty;
- \$ the assessment should be minimally intrusive to faculty and students;
- \$ the assessment should make use of existing samples of student work wherever possible.

### Process

The first step was to recast the SD 99-25 goals for each GE Area as learning outcomes. The Area II learning outcomes are listed on the attached cover sheet. The next step is to collect artifacts of student work in a manner that protects students and faculty, as follows:

1. Each faculty member is asked to choose one written assignment (report, essay exam, analysis paper, etc.) from his/her Area II course(s) this semester, and to submit copies of the students' work to the committee.
2. Remove or conceal the students' names before photocopying the artifacts to be sent.
3. Send the photocopied artifacts, together with the attached cover sheet, to **Erin Frew, Assessment Director, KT 255**. You may send the student work at any time after receiving this memo, but **not later than January 15, 2005**. The cover sheet asks you to identify the course and section number, to indicate which of the Area II learning objectives are measured by the assignment, and to attach or reproduce the instructions for completing the assignment.
4. With each set of artifacts received, we will check off the course and section number from a master list of Area II courses offered this semester. The purpose is to determine whether we have received student work from a reasonably representative sample of GE Area II courses.
5. The papers will then be separated from the cover sheets and sorted into groups representing the various learning objectives.
6. After the end of the semester, a faculty team will assess a random sample of the papers using a rubric. Findings will be reported to the Assessment Council and published for information to the campus.

Thank you in advance for your participation. If you have questions, contact Steve Sarratore at 6795 or at [sarrator@ipfw.edu](mailto:sarrator@ipfw.edu).

**IPFW**  
**GENERAL EDUCATION AREA II**  
**Fall 2004**

COVER SHEET for student work submitted for General Education Assessment.

Please complete this cover sheet for each set of artifacts you submit. Complete a separate sheet for each section.

1. Course prefix and number: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Section number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Check the learning objective(s) that are measured by the assignment you are submitting:

Upon completion of GE Area II, students will:

- Describe the physical, chemical, or biological bases of living and non-living systems
- Explain how scientific knowledge is developed, how observations are made, how hypotheses are formulated and tested, how theories are developed
- Demonstrate their familiarity with scientific literature
- Understand data collection, analysis, and quantitative problem solving
- Apply their knowledge in written and/or oral communication

4. Please attach the instructions that students were given for completing the assignment, or reproduce the instructions here.

Return this sheet, bundled with the student papers you are submitting, to Erin Frew, Assessment Director, KT 255 no later than January 15, 2005. Thank you.

Indiana University Purdue University-Fort Wayne  
 General Education Area II Assessment Rubric 2004

<b><i>GE AREA II Assessment Rubric</i></b>	<b>Accomplished</b>	<b>Competent</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Beginning</b>
<b>Describe bases of living and non-living systems</b>				
<b>Depth and Knowledge</b>	Correct use of extensive knowledge includes extension to novel situations.	Correct use of extensive knowledge except when applied to novel situations.	Shows breadth of knowledge, but not always applied correctly.	Limited knowledge and common misapplication of information.
<b>Explain development of scientific knowledge</b>				
<b>Understanding and Use of Scientific Method</b>	Understands scientific method, differentiates between science and non-science, hypothesis and theory. Can formulate hypotheses.	Attempts to properly formulate hypotheses and apply the scientific method. Does not wholly understand the vocabulary or application.	Can recite scientific method but cannot apply it. Does not fully differentiate between science and non-science; hypothesis and theory.	Shows minimal understanding of scientific methods. Cannot differentiate between science and non-science; hypothesis and theory.
<b>Understand data collection, analysis, and quantitative problem solving</b>				
<b>Data Collection</b>	Capable of reapplying appropriate data collection approach to novel situation. Can collect data independently.	Collects accurate and precise data, and understands rationale for why those data are being collected.	Follows directions relatively well, but does not comprehend reasoning behind approach. Collects poor data.	Unable to follow directions.
<b>Evaluation and Application</b>	Clearly understands and applies concepts and can see application beyond the original issues.	Understands concepts and can apply to current situation.	Generally arrives at correct solution but application incomplete.	Usually does not arrive at correct answer nor see how to apply findings.

<b>Quantitative Problem Solving</b>	Capable of extending logic to novel situations and to develop further hypotheses to test.	Can work through data and derive logical explanation. Cannot make extension to novel situation or derive new hypotheses.	Relatively successful at following directions. Cannot conceptualize approach.	Cannot derive appropriate results from data. Has trouble following directions.
<b>Demonstrate familiarity with scientific literature</b>				
<b>Depth of Citations</b>	Extensive use of appropriate citations to support work.	Clear evidence of appropriate citations.	Some evidence of citation.	No references cited.
<b>Depth of Analysis</b>	Extensive analysis of citations to support arguments.	Incorporates most citations appropriately in analysis.	Some evidence of analysis of literature.	No interpretation of cited material.
<b>Written and/or oral communication</b>				
<b>Communicates scientific information coherently and logically</b>	Excellent grammar, sentence structure and logical presentation.	Average to good grammar, sentence structure and logical presentation.	Poor to average grammar, sentence structure and logical presentation.	Incorrect grammar and sentence structure, arguments not logically presented.

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