Assessment Glossary for Foundational Studies

**AAC&U:** The Association of American Colleges and Universities is a national association dedicated to furthering liberal education. They focus heavily on demonstrating the value of liberal education and provide the basis for ISU’s Foundational Studies program.

**Artifact:** Samples of assignments and students responses to those assignments that reflect a particular learning outcome. Artifacts can be essays, long-answer test questions, discussion board posts, transcripts of speeches, etc.

**Assessment:** Assessment is the process of collecting data that demonstrates that students are (or are not) meeting particularly learning outcomes. For Foundational Studies, each of the 12 categories are assessed based on their specific set of learning outcomes, using a rubric and artifacts collected from faculty teaching in the category.

**Assessment Cycle:** The Foundational Studies Assessment Cycle is the schedule by which we assess the 12 learning categories. It is a 6 year cycle where 2 categories are assessed each year. This cycle can be found on the Foundational Studies website.

**Authentic Assessment:** Assessment based on artifacts that require students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge through assignments or projects.

**Category:** The Foundational Studies learning categories are broad topics that include courses from a variety of departments. Categories include Composition, Qualitative Literary, and Global Perspectives/Cultural Diversity. Each category includes multiple learning outcomes. There are 12 categories within Foundational Studies.

**Data Collection:** The act of collecting artifacts that demonstrate whether students are meeting learning outcomes. Data collection can occur in a number of ways, from faculty emailing student samples to assessment administrators, to administrators pulling student artifacts from Blackboard courses with the instructor’s permission.

**Direct/Indirect Measures:** As defined by ISU’s assessment office, “Direct assessment methods provide for the direct examination or observation of student knowledge or skills. Examples include presentations, research papers, criterion-referenced exams, portfolios, simulations, and clinical experiences. Indirect assessments offer information about students’ attitudes, dispositions, activities, placement rates, and so on. Preferred measures include surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups.”

**Foundational Studies:** Foundational Studies is a program that prepares students for their majors and their lives as citizens by ensuring they learn skills in a variety of disciplines. These skills include the ability to understand diversity and to be ethical citizens. The foundational studies curriculum include a variety of courses across the 12 categories from which students can choose.

**HLC:** The Higher Learning Commission provides accreditation for institutions of higher education, including Indiana State University. This organization is interested in reviewing the university’s assessment efforts in all areas and visits every 10 years (upcoming Fall of 2020.)

**LEAP:** Liberal Education and America’s Promise is part of AAC&U and provides a set of learning outcomes. The Foundational Studies categories and outcomes are based on this model.

**Learning Outcome:** A learning outcome is something a student should be able to achieve by the end of a particular course or series of courses. The student must be able to demonstrate the learning outcome through an assignment. An example of a learning outcome is “the student will be able to evaluate the ideas of others.”

**Norming:** Norming is the means by which faculty and staff learn to use a rubric in a consistent manner. This usually involves practicing scoring artifacts. The goal is for all assessors in a group to reach similar scores.

**Rubric:** A rubric is a document used to determine whether a student has achieved the learning outcomes for a particular category in a relatively standardized way. Each category in Foundational Studies has its own rubric.

**Self-report:** Self-reporting is when students, faculty, or staff talk about their own learning or experiences. This is an indirect assessment measure.