

Assessing Civic Engagement

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A Presentation for SCHEV and Virginia Colleagues

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Thanks to my JMU Colleagues

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Overview

- Conceptualizing civic engagement
- Prominent civic engagement assessment strategies across the United States
- JMU's approach
- Sharing assessment practices

How are These Competencies Different?

- Writing
- Critical thinking
- Quantitative reasoning

VS

- Civic engagement

Conceptualizations of Civic Engagement

There are a LOT of terms...

active citizenship
citizenship
civic achievement
civic action
civic attitudes
civic behavior
civic capacity
civic commitment
civic communication
civic competency
civic covfefe
civic dispositions
civic education
civic efficacy
civic engagement
civic identity
civic inclination
civic inquiry

civic knowledge
civic learning
civic learning spiral
civic literacy
civic mindedness
civic motivation
civic motives
civic participation
civic reflection
civic responsibility
civic skills
collective action
community involvement
democratic engagement
democratic participation
democratic skill building
engaged sociology
socially just citizenship

global citizenship
political activism
political behavior
political efficacy
political engagement
political involvement
political participation
political knowledge
service learning
social action
social agency
social involvement
social justice
social responsibility
social trustee
voluntary action

Jingle/Jangle Problems?

Jingle: same term for different things

Jangle: different terms for the same things

Reschly, A. L., & Christenson, S. L. (2012). Jingle, jangle, and conceptual haziness: Evolution and future directions of the engagement construct. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 3-19). Springer US.

Biggest Issue

- What's the distinction between “Civic” and “Community” engagement?

Non-political Community Engagement & Political Engagement

- Desired outcomes are likely to differ for these two initiatives, necessitating different approaches to assessment

From an assessment perspective, might be useful to change JMU's conceptualization from this...

...to this.



Do we want to assess civic engagement at the broader level or assess each subarea separately?

Separate assessment may be preferable since outcomes are likely to differ.

Helpful Resources for Synthesizing Terms

- Reason, R. D., & Hemer, K. (2015). Civic learning and engagement: A review of the literature on civic learning, assessment, and instruments.
- Finley, A. (2011). Civic learning and democratic engagement: A review of the literature on civic engagement in post-secondary education.
- Torney-Purta, J., Cabrera, J. C., Roohr, K. C., Liu, O. L., & Rios, J. A. (2015). Assessing civic competency and engagement in higher education: Background, frameworks, and directions for next-generation assessment.
- *AASCU's Educating Students for Political Engagement: A Guide to Implementation and Assessment for Colleges and Universities.*

Measures for Assessing Civic Engagement

- Knowledge and skills
- Attitudes
- Behavior
- Participation in activities

Attitudes

- There are many....Here are a few:
 - 1) Civic-Minded Professional Scale by Hatcher (2008)
 - 2) Student service-learning course survey by Wang, Ye, Jackson, Rodgers & Jones (2005)
 - 3) Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire by Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron, & McFarland (2002)

Behavior & Participation

- Actual voter turnout
- Involvement in civic related activities

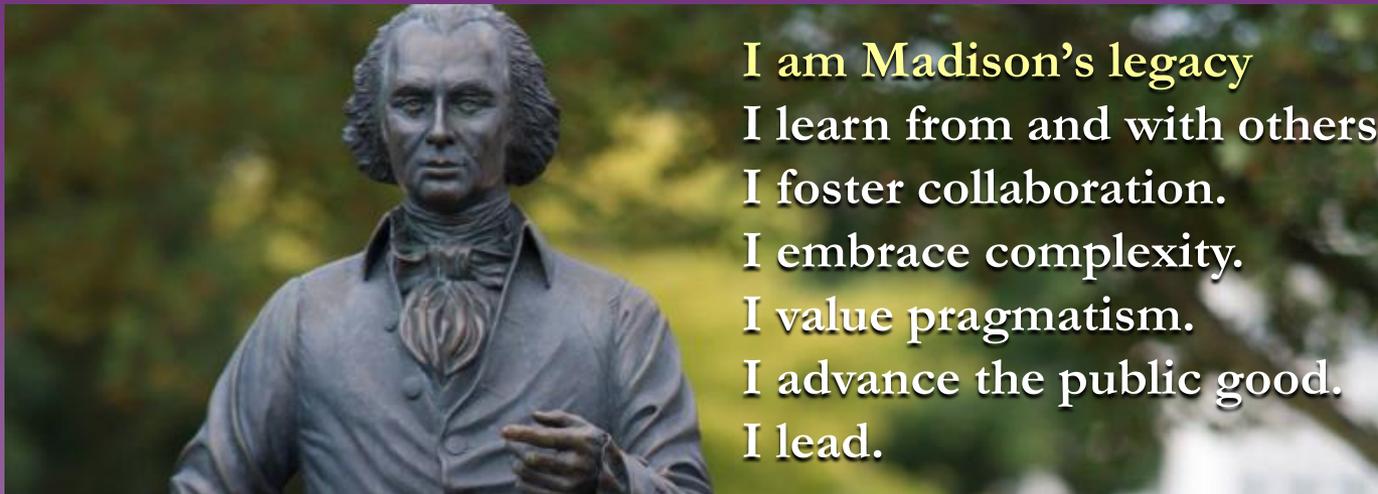


NSSE

national survey of
student engagement

Recent Civic Engagement Goals at JMU

- Launch James Madison Center for Civic Engagement
- Develop civic competency framework



[www.jmu.edu/universitystudies/civicingement/projects.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/universitystudies/civicingagement/projects.shtml)

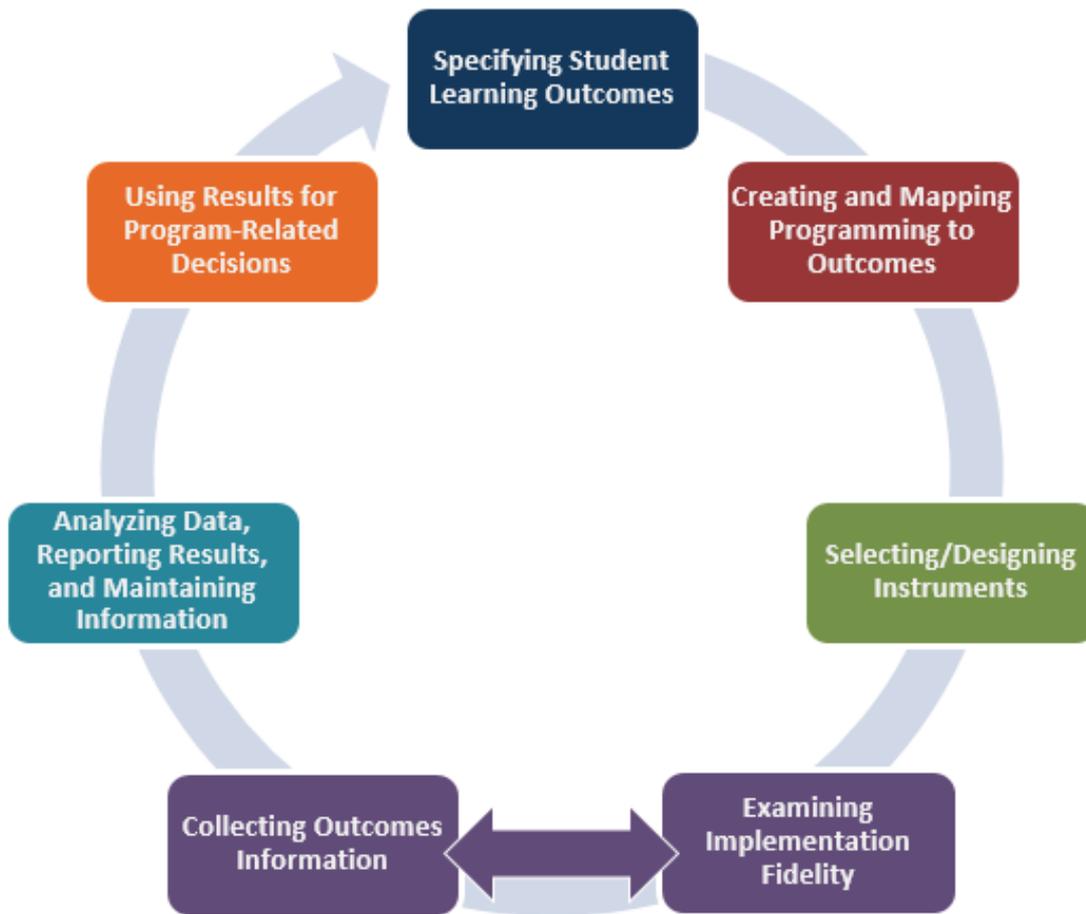
I advance the public good...

By preferring the common good over my own private interests.

By recognizing my obligation to participate in civic life.

By persevering to advance a just society.

Assessment at JMU



www.jmu.edu/studentaffairs/staff-resources/saac/tools/assessment-cycle.shtml

Our initial goals for civic engagement assessment:

- Identify existing assessments at JMU related to civic engagement
- Consider existing conceptualizations of civic engagement and approaches to its assessment in the literature

General Education's Cluster 4: Social & Cultural Processes

Students completing an **American Experience** course will be able to identify, conceptualize and evaluate:

- Social and political processes and structures
- Key primary sources relating to.... American history, political institutions and society
- The nature /development of the intellectual concepts that structure American political activity
- The history and development of: 1) American society and culture and 2) American involvement in world affairs, 3) American democratic institutions

Students completing a **Global Experience** course will be able to identify, conceptualize and evaluate:

- Basic global problems and global political, social, cultural and economic systems that shape societies
- The issues involved in analyzing societies different from one's own and the theoretical models used in studying global problems
- The strengths and limitations of solutions to global problems across and within cultures

All students at JMU required to complete one **American Experience** course and one **Global Experience** course.

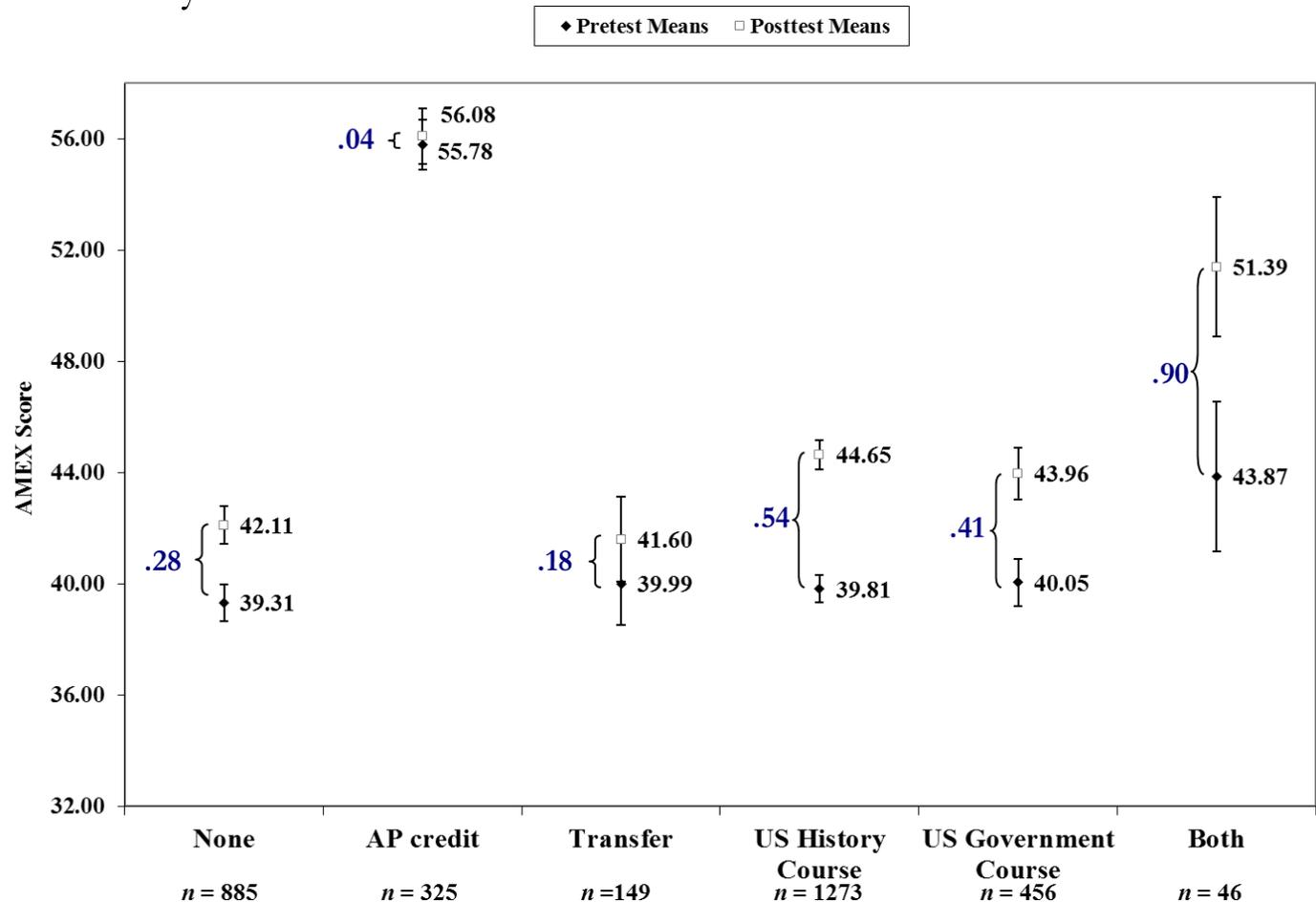
Faculty developed instruments have been used to assess the learning objectives.

Assessment Days at JMU

- Assessment data collected during two annual Assessment Days yielding a pretest/posttest design
 - Pretest:** Incoming freshmen in August & **Posttest:** Students with 45-70 credit hours in February

Pretest and Posttest means on AMEX (and Cohen's d) across 6 cohorts by American History experience completion status

Pastor, D. A., Kaliski, P. K., & Weiss, B. A. (2007). Examining college students' gains in general education. *Research & Practice in Assessment*, 1, 1-20



Existing Assessments at JMU

- Cluster 4 assessments
- Voting participation rates
- Civic engagement items added to our continuing students survey
- NSSE
- Self-report scales
 1. 25-item **Civic-Mindedness** Scale
 2. 7-item **Social Justice Responsibility** subscale
 3. 8-item **Civic Action** subscale

We've administered these instruments for other purposes.

Should they be used for the assessment of civic engagement?

1) Adapted from the Civic-Minded Professional Scale by Hatcher (2008)

2) From Student service-learning course survey by Wang, Ye, Jackson, Rodgers & Jones (2005)

3) From Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire by Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron, & McFarland (2002)

Enough about JMU, how about you?

- Think, Pair, Share

Thank You!

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