Think logically: Using logic models in a faculty-staff collaboration to develop first-year learning outcomes

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Objectives for this session

- Understand the importance of learning outcomes in curricular and co-curricular program development.
- Learn about the process of outcome development and implementation for first-year students at Wheelock College, a small (< 1,000 students) liberal arts and professional college in Boston.
- Create a logic model you can use to articulate the need and process for learning outcome development on your home campus.
- Edit, refine and improve upon your first draft through pair work with one another.
- Leave with a list of references and further reading on learning outcomes, logic models, and high impact practices.

Inputs vs. Outcomes

- "Accreditation… is largely focused on inputs, more on how many books are in a college library, than whether students can actually understand them. Institutions are asked, 'Are you measuring student learning?' And they check yes or no. That must change. Whether students are learning is not a yes-or-no question. It's how? How much? And to what effect?" (Bollag, 2006, p.A1)

- Margaret Spellings, former U.S. Secretary of Education

Importance of Learning Outcomes

- Stakeholder expectations
  - Students, parents, faculty, administrators, trustees
- Accountability for student learning
  - Accrediting bodies, government, media
- "If [higher education] can't prove the worth of a program, then it needs to examine itself. Wherever taxpayer dollars are being spent, there has to be accountability." (Field & Quizon, 2011)

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), chair of the House education committee's subcommittee on higher education

Stakes could not be higher

- No significant gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, or writing skills in 45 percent of sample in a recent study.
- Higher education appears to reproduce inequality and solidify class location.
- Graduation rates “stagnant or decreasing,” and time to degree “on the rise.”
- Peer influence places higher value on social instead of academic learning.

Source: Arum, R. & J. Roksa. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (pp.36, 38-40, 53, 59)

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How to create learning outcomes

- Undertake a collaborative and systematic process to develop and articulate outcomes

1) Begin with the end in mind
   - Use mission, vision, and other guiding principles
   - Ground your work in current theory and practice
     - CAS & Learning Reconsidered
     - AAC&U "Essential Learning Outcomes"
     - Compare with other institutions
2) Identify high-impact practices that lead to growth in key learning outcomes (Kuh, 2008)
3) Identify resources

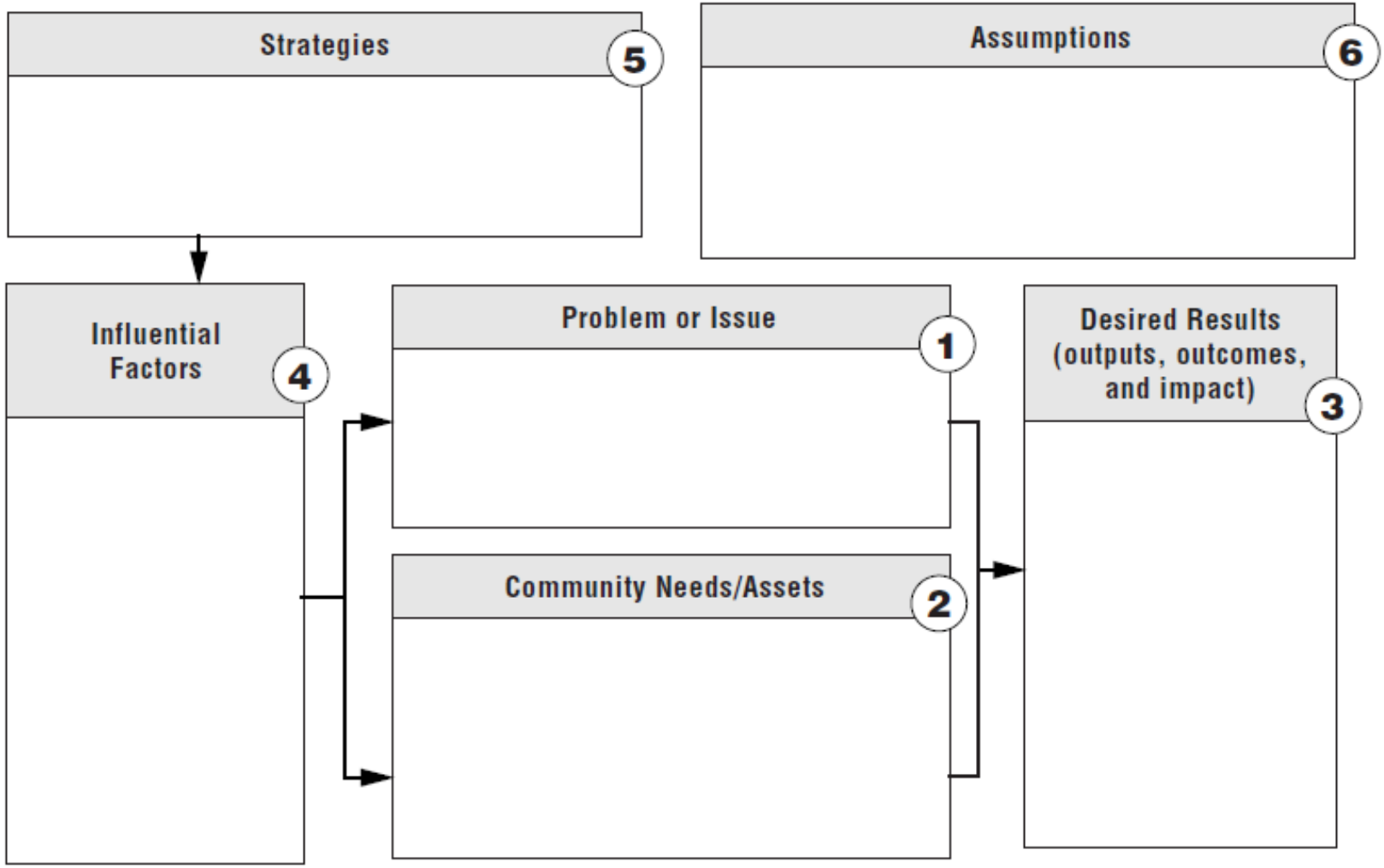
Logic Models

- A narrative for our programs… “A picture of how you believe your program will work.”

- “The purpose … is to provide stakeholders with a road map describing the sequence of related events connecting the need for a planned program with the program’s desired results.”

(W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, pp.1-3)

Logic model for Program Planning (a.k.a. Theory of Change)



Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004). Retrieved online May 2 from http://www.wkkf.org/knowledge-center/resources/2010/Logic-Model-Development-Guide.aspx

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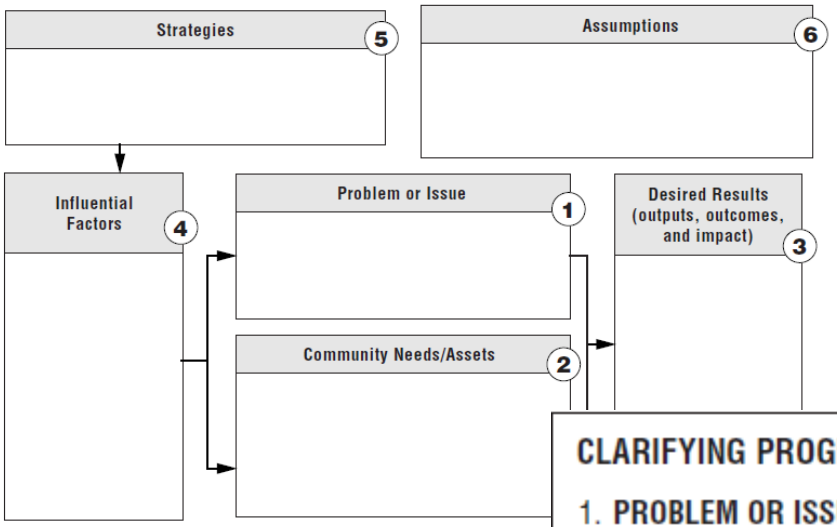
Logic model for Program Planning (a.k.a. Theory of Change)



CLARIFYING PROGRAM THEORY:

1. **PROBLEM OR ISSUE STATEMENT:** Describe the problem(s) your program is attempting to solve or the issue(s) your program will address.
2. **COMMUNITY NEEDS/ASSETS:** Specify the needs and/or assets of your community that led your organization to design a program that addresses the problem.
3. **DESIRED RESULTS (OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS):** Identify desired results, or vision of the future, by describing what you expect to achieve near- and long-term.
4. **INFLUENTIAL FACTORS:** List the factors you believe will influence change in your community.
5. **STRATEGIES:** List general successful strategies or "best practices" that have helped communities like yours achieve the kinds of results your program promises.
6. **ASSUMPTIONS:** State the assumptions behind *how* and *why* the change strategies will work in your community.

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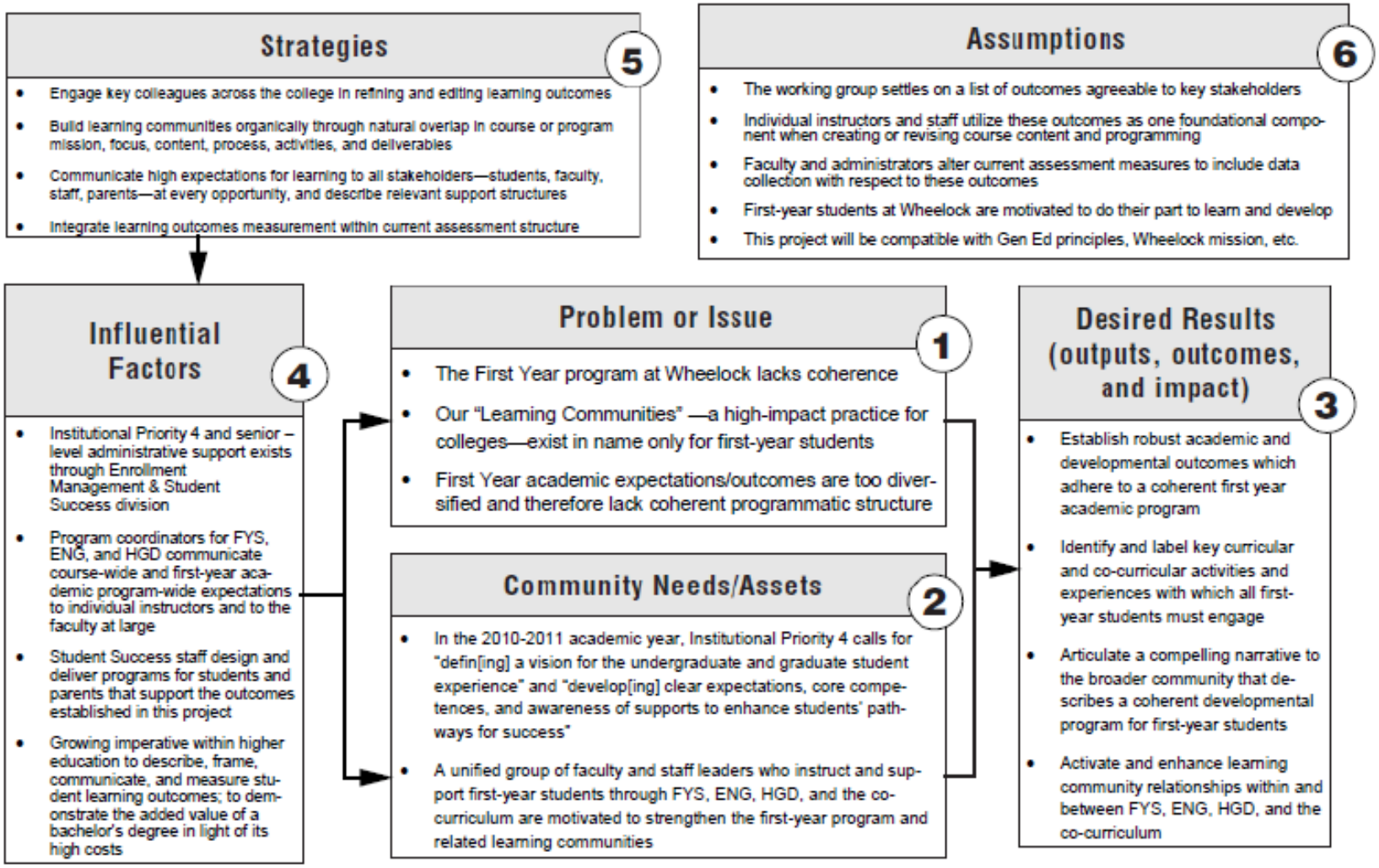
Wheelock logic model



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Practice

- Work individually (or in pairs or small groups with others from your college) to create a logic model for learning outcome development on your home campus
- Work in pairs (from different colleges) to review and edit language in your logic model, and to clarify your rationale
- Group discussion and reflection

First-Year Learning Outcome Development at Wheelock College

Successful First-Year students at Wheelock will:

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Core Competencies for FYS, ENG, HGD

- Understand the value of a general education in the arts and sciences, and how required coursework in the arts and sciences contributes to the education and development of the student.
- Effectively express logically supported arguments and interpretations in both written and oral communication.
- Respect and explore diverse cultures and life experiences through the course materials, discussions with peers, and community engagements.
- Tailor writing to meet the expectations of specific audiences with the goal to inform and persuade.
- Revise drafts to improve linguistic accuracy, clarify reasoning, strengthen credibility, and simplify organization.
- Distinguish between various types of assertions, including facts, theories, and opinions.
- Strengthen reading comprehension skills to accurately synthesize information and arguments.
- Contribute meaningfully to a class discussion by listening respectfully to the opinions of others and remaining open to new lines of thought.
- Create or validate knowledge through thoughtful questioning, meaningful debate, and healthy skepticism.

English 110-111	First Year Seminar	Human Growth & Development	Collegiate and Life Skills
• Compose rhetorically effective and logically sound essays utilizing the conventions of different genres, including expository, persuasive, and research essays • Engage meaningfully with the process of writing by embracing the revision process as an opportunity to more clearly articulate thoughts, opinions, interpretations, and proposals • Utilize library recourses (including FLO catalog and online databases) to conduct productive research • Demonstrate the literacy skills necessary to pass all portions of the Wheelock Literacy and Communication Exam, including spelling, grammar and mechanics, summary, and persuasive argumentation skills • Create an effective and professional resume and cover letter	• Use critical thinking and inquiry to recognize, investigate, analyze, and solve problems and to value the process of that discovery • Read and analyze texts and/or other media closely and critically for main ideas, supporting ideas, details, meanings and assumptions • Engage in academic behaviors that support academic success, including attendance, promptness, focus, preparation, and participation in the discourse of the class • Understand, evaluate and analyze evidence and/or data in one or more fields of academic inquiry • Develop the ability to read and evaluate quantitative information presented in a variety of media • Demonstrate research (and information literacy) skills by locating, evaluating, and synthesizing information • Engage in the Wheelock community through active participation in organizations and events	• Challenge conceptions of "development" to include personal growth and change through the life span • Demonstrate understanding of major theories and research findings about human development through the life span • Critically reflect on beliefs, expectations, and observations about human behavior and human development • Understand how historical and socio-cultural contexts influence human development and people's ideas about it. • Gain skills in data collection and analysis techniques central to developmental research, with particular emphasis on naturalistic observation and interview methodology • Complete field placements and use knowledge of developmental research to analyze observations of human behavior and explore multiple settings in which development takes place • Create and deliver engaging oral presentations for a variety of audiences	• Demonstrate self-advocacy by seeking out help in a variety of academic and professional resources, including professors, librarians, advisors, peer resources, and counseling resources • Participate fully in the first-year advising process, including regular meetings, activities, and success planning • Using the Undergraduate Career and Professional Development Framework as a guide, thoroughly explore potential majors, career interests and employment opportunities. • Design a personalized time management schedule that meets individual needs and personality • Compose stylistically appropriate emails for professors, administrators, and professionals in the field • Utilize time at college to expand experiential horizons by taking advantage of living in a major American city • Form healthy relationships with peers • Consistently take intelligible notes in class that allow for effective review and study • Behave professionally and utilize professional skills in the classroom and while in the field • Participate in (or form) groups and clubs that connect with interests and passions • Engage in the life of the college by participating in required and suggested academic, developmental, and social activities and programs

Draft as of 9-Aug-11

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Did we accomplish our outcomes?

- Establish academic and developmental outcomes → Completed and published in syllabi
- Identify key curricular and co-curricular activities with which all FY students engage → Getting there! 9 of 11 co-curricular programs this Fall
- Articulate a compelling narrative that describes a coherent FYE → Redoubling our efforts with faculty
- Activate and enhance learning community relationships → Faculty planned at least one LC activity this Fall

References & Questions

- Arum, R. & J. Roksa. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
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Thank you!

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