


Ask 100 Students and
What Do You Get?
The Mount Royal
Assessment Seminar

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Overview of the Session

- About Mount Royal
- About the Assessment Seminar
 - Who's involved
 - What we've done
 - What we've learned
 - Where we're going
- Is it making a difference?

mtroyal.ca/assessmentseminar

About Mount Royal University

- Calgary, Alberta
- 98 years as community college
- Recent transition to university status
- ~14,000 students (76% full-time)
- 425 FT faculty; ~500 PT
- Commuter campus

What is the Mount Royal Assessment Seminar?

...an ongoing, university-wide assessment project in which rich, qualitative data on a range of possible topics is collected annually from students through structured one-on-one interviews



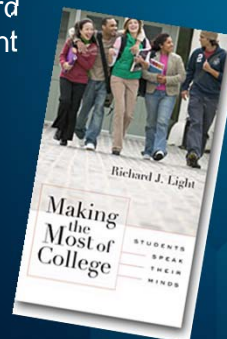
Purpose

...to inform ongoing enhancement of students' undergraduate experience, broadly-defined, at Mount Royal University

...in the context of university transition and new program launches



The Harvard Assessment Seminar



Nature of the Initiative

- Holistic view of the undergrad experience
- Meta-level focus
- Collective effort – faculty, students, staff
- Significant student involvement
- Action-oriented
- Iterative



Who is Involved?



Round 1 Interviews March 2010

Students Completing First-year of their Degree Program



Question

If you had opportunity to interview freshman students approaching the end of their first year of study, what one or two questions would you ask them?



Areas of Inquiry, March 2010

- Motivation and goals
- Transition to post-secondary
- Teaching and learning
- Engagement in campus life
- Student services
- Personal growth and change



Sample Interview Questions

- What has been the best part of your experience this year, and why?
- How did you choose the courses you took?
- What was the best piece of advice you got?
- What was difficult academically in your first semester?
- Was there a single course that profoundly affected you this past year? If yes, how and why?



Sample Interview Questions

- Apart from your coursework, tell me about your involvement in Mount Royal campus life.
- Has anybody at the university shown concern or caring beyond what you might normally expect?
- What is the biggest surprise you've experienced since you arrived here at Mount Royal?
- What is one specific thing you value highly about Mount Royal that you would not change?



Round 1 Interviews – March 2010

Focus on early-experience degree students

- 23 item interview protocol
- 45-60 minutes in length
- 96 interviews conducted by trained student interviewers, March 2010
- ~1300 pages of transcripts



Round 1 Participants (Mar 2010)

Year of Study	First Year	49	50.5%
	Second Year	47	48.5%
Gender	Male	39	40.2%
	Female	57	59.8%
Age	Overall (mean)	20.8 yr	-
	Male (mean)	21.4 yr	-
	Female (mean)	20.4 yr	-
	22 and over	18	18.8%
Residence	Alberta	93	95.9%
	Other	3	3.1%
Working		68%	10-20 h/wk



Data Analysis

1st Pass

- 10 data teams / 10 transcripts each
- Themes, key words/phrases, quotes


2nd Pass

- Deeper and more comprehensive analysis in three key areas
 - 1st-year transition
 - Engagement in campus life
 - General Education




First-pass Analysis

7 Overarching Findings




1. Overwhelming endorsement of Mount Royal's "smaller" class sizes




2. Primacy of the student-faculty relationship




3. Students' experience of teaching and learning



4. General Education



5. Transition to post-secondary study



6. Student services



7. Campus involvement



2nd Pass Analysis

- Foci
 - First-year transition
 - General Education
 - Involvement in Campus Life
- Interest-based, ad hoc analysis groups
- Reports at:
 - mtroyal.ca/assessmentseminar



Questions at this point...?

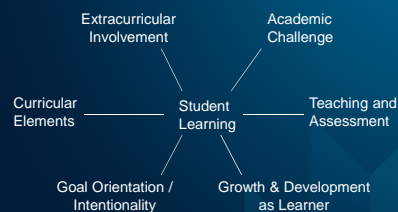


Dissemination of Results

- Presentations++
- University-wide planning committees
- Reports and website
- Campus Conference (October 6)
- “It’s in the air”...



March 2011 Interviews - 3rd Year Students



Winter 2012 Interviews

4th year, final semester,
baccalaureate students about to
graduate from their degree,
reflecting holistically on their
undergraduate experience at MRU
and thinking forward to life beyond
Mount Royal



Making a difference?



Making a Difference? Member Perspectives

- Early days but...
 - Deepens our understanding of the student experience
 - Important role in fostering cross-divisional and cross-role dialogue about the student experience at MRU
 - Fosters relationships and mutual understanding of the work done by other areas
 - BUT – action needs to come out of our efforts



Making a Difference? Member Perspectives

- Action in response to findings...
 - Academic Plan & St. Services Plan
 - New student orientation
 - Chem-Bio Student Society
 - Learning Services initiatives
 - “Campus Connect” proposal
 - Course-based group work



Questions/Discussion

