

## Step 1: Describing the Teaching Context

**Descriptions** convey the mission and objectives of the instructional activity, innovation, or course being assessed and set the frame of reference for all subsequent decisions. Items to include in a description are:

- ***A Statement of Need*** that describes the purpose for assessing the instructional activity, innovation, or course.
- ***The Expected Effects*** of instruction that convey what the instructional activity, innovation, or course is supposed to accomplish to be considered successful
- ***Instructional Activities*** including the specific steps, strategies, or actions and their appropriate sequence
- ***Resources Available*** to conduct instructional activities including time, human skills and knowledge, technology, data, money, and other assets
- ***Instructional Context*** includes the instructional setting and environment (e.g., student demographics, social milieu, fiscal conditions, and organizational relationships) within which the teaching occurs

Use ***Worksheet A*** (below) to document the teaching context.

- Record course, student, and classroom characteristics to help you identify the purpose and uses of your assessment, and to formulate central questions.
- It may be necessary to informally survey students to complete the *Student Characteristics* portion of the form.
- You can also use Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) during the first week of the term to gather information on the students enrolled in your course.

## Worksheet A: Describe Your Teaching Context

Course Characteristics				
Course title:				
Enrollment:				
Course objectives:				
Required for major/degree plan? Yes No Identify:				
Is the course Upper or Lower Division?				
Is the course part of a sequence? Yes No Related courses:				
Instructional resources available:				
Student Characteristics				
% Majors:				
% Freshmen:	Sophomores:	Juniors:	Seniors:	Graduate:
% International:				
Top 5 reasons students take the course:				
Student expectations for course:				
Classroom Characteristics				
Seating capacity:				
Seating configuration:				
Available technology:				