



Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool (AUDiT)

Exercises to Stimulate Constructive Discussion

We have found that three exercises can be helpful in beginning an environmental change process inside a unit, one that unit members can “own” and participate in effectively. This is the first of the three.

Functional/Dysfunctional Unit Characteristics

This is a simple, effective way to surface issues in a relatively non-threatening way.

- (1) Distribute blank index cards to all present.
- (2) Participants should not write their names on the cards.
- (3) Ask each to write, on one side of the card, three to five characteristics of a highly functioning unit that he or she would be proud to be a member of, and on the other side, three to five characteristics of a dysfunctional unit.
- (4) The question will likely come up whether this is about “our” unit. Respond that this is a thought exercise, and participants should write about “a” or “any” academic unit.
- (5) Once everyone has filled out the cards, collect and mix the cards ostentatiously.
- (6) Enlist at least two volunteer scribes (for a large group, get four, each with an easel and flip chart or space on a white board), and start calling out one written item at a time from different cards, making sure to mix them up as you go, so you are working from different cards, and different sides each time.
- (7) As you read each statement, ask the group which list it goes on: functional or dysfunctional?
- (8) If an item is a repeat of an already-noted topic, put a check mark by the already-recorded so it is clear it has come up before.
- (9) At the end, ask the group to contemplate the two lists. Ask:
 - (a) “Which unit would you rather belong to?”
 - (b) “Which one is this unit more like?” (Elicit both positive and negative features present.)

Facilitate a discussion on these topics. At some point, move to the next activity.

