Assessment Begin Date: 1 April 2004
Assessment Completion Date: 15 June 2004
Agreement is for Credit

Student: E. Christopher Mare
Interim Mentor: Georgia Persons, Ph.D.
Faculty Reader: Robert Silverman, Ph.D.
**Learning Goals**

Through the completion of the proposed course of study for this Knowledge Area, I will:

- Gain an understanding of the epistemologies underlying and informing various methods of social and scientific research and traditions of practice
- Develop and demonstrate competence in making comparative distinctions among epistemologies, evaluating them in terms of their unique contributions to and relative effectiveness for various approaches to inquiry
- Acquire the ability to meaningfully cite exemplars of these various approaches to inquiry
- Uncover and define underlying assumptions or prejudices informing my own way of acting, knowing, and being in the world
- Become acquainted with the working model of the “scholar-practitioner”
- Initiate practice as an active research-scholar, networking within a global community of scholars
- Investigate the importance of research ethics as well as alternative traditions of ethics
- Subscribe to and become familiar with a scholarly journal in my chosen field
- Learn to write in A.P.A. format

**Readings (foundational texts, journals, web resources)**

Suggested Online Resources from FELIX

- The 2003 Learning Guide for HOD-753a, KA-1: Scholar-Practitioner Inquiry
- The 2003 Scholar-Practitioner Resources for HOD-753a
The Scholar-Practitioner Model – from the HOD Professional Practice Team

The Professional Use of Substantive Knowledge: Assessing One’s Competencies – by Bob Silverman


Getting Started in the Community of Scholars – by Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shelley K. Hughes

Journal Articles (to be discovered)

Foundational Texts: Epistemologies of Scholarly Research


Foundational Texts: General Epistemology


Additional Recommended Resources: Epistemologies of Place


**Reference Companions**

- The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology (2002)

**Learning Plan and Demonstration of Learning**

Since this is the inaugural study for my doctoral program, I want to use it to lay a strong foundation of understanding for all that will follow – to prepare myself well for my new vocation as a scholar-practitioner. For that reason, this KA strongly emphasizes becoming acquainted with foundational texts and reference materials in the field. Through the course of this study, I will read and/or become familiar with all the above resources: For those books that I read in full, I will take organized notes, afterward producing a Book Review. For each of the reference materials, I will gain a working familiarity with their contents.

As the scheduled time for closure draws near, I will produce a scholarly paper of 20 pages highlighting my findings and interpretations. In this paper, I will focus on the relevance of various epistemologies for conducting multi-dimensional research in my chosen field – Sustainable Community Design.

While this study is underway, I want to maintain ongoing reflective interaction with my regional HOD cluster group and with my OPS anchor group, since many of these people will be conducting simultaneously a study of “Epistemologies of Scholar-Practitioner Approaches.” I want to help create within my sub-
community of scholars an environment conducive to the cross-pollination of ideas and discoveries. My final paper will be meant to serve as a contribution to the Global Ecovillage Network, as well as to initiate questioning for the substantive research work that will follow in the course of this degree. I will post all of my original writing on my website: (www.villagedesign.org).

**Specific Scholar-Practitioner Skills to Work On**

1) Ability to distinguish different methods  
2) Depth of knowledge of a particular method  
3) Ability to describe strengths and weaknesses of various methods  
4) Ability to connect method to research objectives and questions

**Expectations of Faculty Assessor**

1) Clear and explicit communications regarding faculty expectations at the outset and during the course of this study  
2) Reasonable expediency in evaluating materials at the scheduled completion time of this study  
3) Accessibility for the duration of this study, not to exceed 15 minutes every two weeks  
4) Particular attention and critical feedback evaluating listed “skills to work on in this KA”

**Quotable Quotes**

“That which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I regard as my own nature.” - Chuang-tzu, circa 376 BC

“The senses, being the explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge.” - Maria Montessori
“Our knowing is in our action.” – Donald Schor (p. 49)

“Knowledge is a dynamic and ongoing process of an organism forging relationships to the possibilities presented by an environment [and not the grasping of something held entirely in the head].” – Christopher Preston (p. 64)

“Knowledge is not a static mental state but an ongoing process of being able to function in an environment that continually exerts its energy and forces upon the organism.” – Christopher Preston (p. 56)

“Cognition becomes a process of making selections for how an organism is going to interact with information extant in the environment.” – Christopher Preston (p. 64)

Sustainability: “The integration of human settlements together with nature so as to meet the requirements of humanity in ways that preserve, upgrade, enrich and evolve the biosphere” – David Orr, from With Earth in Mind

“The fundamental error of the Mind is, then, this fall from sub-knowledge by which the individual soul conceives of its individuality as a separate fact instead of as a form of Oneness and makes itself the centre of its own universe instead of knowing itself as one concentration of the universal. From that original error all its particular ignorances and limitations are contingent results. For, viewing the flux of things only as it flows upon and through itself, it makes a limitation of being from which proceeds a limitation of consciousness and therefore of knowledge…It is conscious of things and knows them only as they present themselves to its individuality and therefore it falls into an ignorance of the rest and thereby into an erroneous conception even of that which it seems to know; for since all being is interdependent, the knowledge either of the whole or of the essence is necessary for the right knowledge of the part. Hence there is an element of error in all human knowledge.” – Sri Aurobindo, from The Life Divine (p. 171)