

2016 – 17 Summary of Executive Summaries – General Education

The General Education Committee selected “The student will be able to demonstrate effective communication skills for personal, academic and professional purposes” as the general education outcome to be assessed by departments in the 2016 – 2017 assessment cycle. This outcome was selected from the Communication category of general education outcomes based upon two criteria, 1) effective communication skills in a broad range of forms (including but not limited to written, oral, visual and technological media) is a key goal of our general education curriculum; 2) Difficulties specifically with written communication has become a concern of faculty across disciplines.

A review of the 2016 – 2017 Executive Summaries – General Education submitted by CUNE Department chairs support that the goal of the assessment process is first and foremost the improvement of student learning. Each report exemplifies the involvement of entire departments in careful consideration of assessment outcomes and analysis and interpretation of results.

Important points noted in the General Education Executive summaries include:

1. Students performed at or higher than the anticipated level in 30% of Departments

- a. HHP - Success for assessment was defined as 80% of the participants receiving a score of B or better on the pst quiz/exam. Analysis shows that 100% of the 12 participants scored a B 80% or better.
- b. Music – In four of the five categories (organization, writing style, writing details, and citations) all students achieve a satisfactory score. In the remaining category (use of sources), all but one student achieved a satisfactory score.
- c. Natural Science – We assessed 42 artifacts from four general education courses across the discipline. Of those, 2 scored a 1 (4%), 3 scored a 2 (11%), 8 (30%) scored a 3- the minimum acceptable score, 7 (26%) scored a 4, and 8 (30%) scored a 5. Overall, 85% scored a 3 or above, meaning we met our standard of success. While we met our standard for success, 30% of the artifacts met the minimum standard, meaning we have room for improvement. Overall we felt students did an acceptable job of writing about scientific ideas, but they were weaker in using appropriate techniques (such as in-text references). This is the area we need to focus on.

2. Action plans were developed by departments to address outcomes that were below anticipated levels.

- a. ART – The 4 Steps of Art Criticism paper is turned in step-by-step, not all at once. 1. Not accept papers deficient of color reproduction. 2. Students must earn a 4 or above for the 1st Step- Description, before moving on to the 2nd Step – Analysis, as the Description and Analysis steps were the lowest scores in the four step process and establish the foundation for the 3rd Step – Interpretation and 4th Step – Judgement.
- b. Business and Math – In the future, the instructor will intervene earlier in the semester with students who seem to be struggling with proof writing.
- c. English, Communication, Theatre Arts (ECTA) – We plan to improve student use of sources by integrating further informational literacy teaching from Billy Moore at

the Library. We plan to provide more details in the assignment instructions about the number of sources and that sources need to be cited and highlighted in the written outline. We will review these assignment details in class and the written form of the assignment. We anticipate that the library instruction will help students locate more sources of high quality. The library instruction will also show students how to use database tools to create written source citations easily. These citations will be more likely to appear in the outlines if they can be more easily placed there. The renewed emphasis in assignment details and in class about citing sources will result in more citations of good sources in the outline.

- d. History, Geography and Criminal Justice (HGCI) – The department learned that pre-presentation activities and/or materials demonstrating or discussing how to deliver a speech that is engaging would be beneficial to our students.
- e. Human and Social Sciences (HHS) – The Department shares this course as a writing course across majors and will continue to build in the iterative nature of the assignment to assure students’ level of competence in understanding and communicating application to the social sciences. Special note is made to emphasize the skills identified as areas for improvement in this course and across the curriculum.
- f. Intercultural Studies and Modern Languages (ISML) – We realize from this year’s assessment results that many of our Education major language students are not “on track” to achieve these levels. As a result, we plan to start with ASL (for this year) to implement a cycle of curriculum review (paired with subsequent revamping of the final exam) in an effort to improve the rigor of the ASL course sequence.
- g. Theology, Philosophy and Biblical Languages – Instructions will be revised to provide three or four characteristics of grace, based on the Old Testament and New Testament passages before the writing assignment begins so that the definition of grace may be understood and communicated in a consistent definition.

3. Results were used for the confirmation or improvement of teaching.

- a. Business – In the future, the instructor will intervene earlier in the semester with students who seem to be struggling with proof writing. The performance of students who are not native speakers of English indicates that intentional efforts should be made to assist these students earlier in the semester.
- b. ECTA – We will review [the] assignment details in class and in the written form of the assignment.
- c. Human and Social Sciences (HHS) – Encouragement to instructors should be given to continue the process of iterative instruction regarding research in the field and working through the application and reporting of findings. This on the surface with limited review indicates that we need to expand our target of meeting these goals into other course content bringing in a more iterative approach of instruction across the curriculum.
- d. Natural And Computer Science – Because the assessment showed that students can already explain scientific ideas correctly, we are not going to make significant changes. We are going to emphasize correct citation style for in-text citations, as this was the most widely-noticed problem in the artifacts.

4. Several departments revised their data collection tools, and or assessment process.

- a. ART - The 4 Steps of Art Criticism paper is turned in step-by-step, not all at once. 1. Not accept papers deficient of color reproduction. 2. Students must earn a 4 or above for the 1st Step- Description, before moving on to the 2nd Step – Analysis, as the Description and Analysis steps were the lowest scores in the four step process

and establish the foundation for the 3rd Step – Interpretation and 4th Step – Judgement.

- b. English, Communication and Theatre Arts (ECTA) – There was an item on the rubric that was based on the number of sources and it needed to have more gradations in the ranking. We need a gradation where students can score a 3, not just a 2 or 4 on the scale.
 - c. Music – We note that the rubric category “use of sources” was difficult to evaluate without a knowledge of the sources. There might not be a good solution to this as this is an important component of writing a research paper, although it could conceivably be replaced with a category such as “accuracy of information.” We also note that the categories “writing style” and “writing details” might be combined into a single category “writing,” and that an additional category of “persuasiveness” might be appropriate.
 - d. Natural and Computer Science – The SCI 202 artifact is a wonderful assignment, but not especially well suited to this assessment, as students were not required to explain scientific ideas in any depth. We should choose another artifact for future assessments. Our requirements for communicating scientific ideas appropriately varied from instructor to instructor, especially in terms of citing references in text. Our SCI 365 instructor will include a requirement for this assignment in the future.
5. **Several departments utilized the addition of the BUDGET IMPLICATIONS section on the executive summary form.**
- a. Health and Human Performance (HHP) – While there is no action item defined, there has proven to be a need for more sections of this course, while the reality is we are having to reduce the number of offerings. With a lack of on-site courts and the rental fees growing too large, it is recommended to build on-campus racquetball courts.
 - b. Human and Social Sciences – When considering the need for more iterative work with students class size must be considered as assignments become more timely to grade and to give effective feedback. Additional courses might need to be considered to better account for the content needed for our students to better grasp the content and nature of the subject matter.
 - c. Intercultural Studies and Modern Languages – We would like to request \$500 to hire a curricular consultant from the University of Virginia to help us work through a review and alteration of our current ASL program curriculum, materials and assessment.