

Assessment Report – CY 2015 with Appendices

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## General Education Assessment—Summary Report CY 2015

Building on what was learned over the course of the CY 2014 general education assessment, changes were made on both the assessment report form and, critically, in its review and evaluation upon submission. We recognized that readability and understanding of the **Results** section of the form would increase with both percentage and number of students in each of the categories—Exceeding, Meeting, Approaching, Not Meeting—rather than just having the percentage in each.

A more substantive change concerns the addition of a section enabling departments and programs to note whether or not any change had been made from what was detailed in the assessment plan update regarding the assessment tool and measure used. This gives departments and programs the space to note, for example, that assessment in spring 2015 led them to change tool and/or measure for the fall 2015 assessment in an effort to better get a handle on student learning.

As was true in CY 2014, the rubric (appendix 4) developed by the Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC) and refined in light of its first use was used by faculty working in pairs with submitted reports in the categories of American History, Computer and Information Literacy, Fine and Performing Arts, and Writing. However, with CY 2015 each pair was comprised of a member of the AAC and a member of the General Education Council (GAC). This change from CY 2014 was motivated by the desire to have committee and council work more closely together on the shared effort of general education assessment. Because the change was found to be beneficial, we will continue in CY 2016 doing what we did this year.

### Kudos

We did much better this year concerning submitting reports. For the most part, completed reports were received by the deadline. What is more, nearly without exception the reports were on the correct form. This was a welcome change from CY 2014, one perhaps due to the assessment report workshop and better communication with department chairs and program directors.

As was true with the CY 2014 assessment, the aggregated report for each category (appendix 1) reveal that we tended to be strongest with our reporting in the **Results** section. Taken as a whole the CY 2015 assessment revealed that shared shortcomings were apparent in both the **Findings** section and the **Action** section, the former easily addressed and the latter understandable (see below). We were heartened to see more departments and programs offering advice and suggestions in the **Insights** section (appendix 3) than was true in CY 2014. That said, there remains room for improvement in this area.

As a group, the CY 2015 reports show us that most departments and programs take seriously both the assessment of student learning and sharing what that assessment reveals with others as part of the process of helping our students to grow as liberally educated thinkers and doers and our colleagues to develop as teachers. This is to be applauded and celebrated. Appendix 2 offers examples of strong reports.

In the **Results** section, we applaud those departments and programs opting to assess more than the minimum sample size in an effort to more fully apprehend student learning connected to the general education learning outcome(s). We would ask, though, that in the future you indicate in your

assessment plan update the rationale governing your choice of sample size. As always, do be sure to check your arithmetic in order to ensure that your numbers and percentages correspond and add up.

### Cautions

We noted a few matters of caution and concern in the **Findings** and **Action** section that bear pointing out:

--Be sure that your results and findings are explicitly linked to the general education learning outcome(s), rather than either having that link simply implied or having the results and findings linked to other course objectives.

--Be sure that the findings and the results are linked; that is, the narrative in the findings section should correspond to the numbers and percentages listed.

--Be sure to speak to both strengths and weaknesses in the findings section, provided the assessment revealed both strengths and weaknesses in student work; this was the chief shortcoming in the section. We noted several cases where the strengths were highlighted and remarked upon while the weaknesses went unvoiced and unreflected upon, for example.

--Be sure to address both strengths and weaknesses in the action section, provided the assessment revealed both strengths and weaknesses in student work.

--While we recognize that the timing of the report's due date might make it difficult for some departments or programs to identify concrete steps to be taken in an effort to improve student learning, having not yet met to discuss the report and develop a course of action, we would ask that in such instances you at least articulate what it is you and your colleagues will be talking about and deciding upon as you move forward and when you plan to have those discussions and formulate the aforementioned concrete steps.

### Closing

We conclude with observations concerning how the Assessment Advisory Committee and the General Education Council can do better. First, and obviously, the growing pains that come with changing the cycle from academic year to calendar year resulted in the fact, painful to report and doubtless distressing to learn, that the submitted assessment plan updates for CY 2015 went unreviewed; this meant that no feedback was provided to departments and programs as they worked on the CY 2015 general education assessment. For this we apologize. To sound a note more pleasing, and one hopes to assuage distress, assessment plan updates for CY 2016 were reviewed in fall 2015 and feedback was provided to departments and programs prior to the beginning of the calendar year.

The second area of improvement concerns the assessment reporting process. Our review revealed the wisdom of having a separate assessment report for each course delivered by a department/program in a particular category. This will enable faculty to better discern what is working and how that might be used in other courses addressing the same general education learning outcome(s); it will also enable them to more finely hone in on areas needing improvement. Feedback from departments/programs also noted that it would be nice to have a place on the form to indicate how many sections of a particular course were part of the assessment.

Appendix 1  
Aggregated Reports

CY 2015					
American History	Data (3)	Findings (4)	Action (3)	Insights (1)	Total (11)
Curriculum and Instruction	3	1	2.5	1	7.5
English	2.5	3.5	2	0	8
History	2	3.5	3	0	7.5
Journalism	3	3	3	1	10

CY 2015					
Computer & Information Literacy	Results (3)	Findings (4)	Action (3)	Insights (1)	Total (11)
Anthropology	3	2.5	2.5	1	9
Art	3	3.5	2.5	1	10
Biology	3	3	3	1	10
Broadcasting	2	3	2.5	1	8.5
Chemistry	3	3	3	0	9
Cognitive Science	3	3	3	1	10
Communications 303	3	3	2	1	9
Communications 317	3	3	2.5	0	8.5
CSC 101	2	1	1	1	5
CSC 102	2	1	1	1	5
CSC 103	2	1	1	0	4
ISC 105 & 110	2	1	1	1	5
CSC 380	2	2	2	0	6
HSC 448	3	3	2.5	1	9.5
HSC 470	3	3	2	0	8
HSC 488	3	3.5	2	0	8.5
HSC 498	3	3	2	0	8
Journalism	3	3	1	0	7
Linguistics	2.5	4	3	1	10.5
Mathematics	3	3	3	1	10
Physics 195	2	2	2	0	7
Physics 313L	3	3	2	0	8
Physics 496	2	3	3	1	9
Public Justice	3	3.5	3	1	11.5
Technology	3	4	3	1	11
AGS - Meteorology	3	2	2	1	8

CY 2015					
Fine and Performing Arts	Results (3)	Findings (4)	Action (3)	Insights (1)	Total (11)
ART 100	2	2	3	1	8
ART 102	2	2	3	1	8
ART 103	2	3	3	1	9
ART 105	2	3.5	3	1	9.5
ART 110	2	3	3	1	9
ART 210	2	3.5	3	1	9.5
CRW 205	3	1	3	1	8
CRW 206	3	2	3	1	9
CRW 207	3	1	1	0	5
CRW 208	3	2	3	1	9
MUS 101	3	4	3	0	10
MUS 112	2	3	3	0	8
MUS 117	2	2	3	0	7
MUS 290-490	3	4	2	0	9
MUS 291-291	3	3	2	0	8
MUS 292-492	3	3	3	0	9
MUS 297-497	3	3	3	0	9
THT 222	3	2	3	1	9



CY 2015					
Writing	Results (3)	Findings (4)	Action (3)	Insights (1)	Total (11)
ENG 102	2	3	2.5	1	8.5

Appendix 2  
Exemplary Reports

# General Education Assessment Report – Fine and Performing Arts

Course: Art 210-Drawing I

Calendar Year: 2015

Knowledge and Skills Areas / Competencies	Learning Outcome	Information				Results <sup>1</sup>							
		Date of Assessment Semester/Year <sup>2</sup>	Students Assessed		Exceeding Standards		Meeting Standards		Approaching Standards		Not Meeting Standards		
			#	% <sup>3</sup>	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Fine and Performing Arts	Understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein	Spring 2015 Fall 2015	85	100	41	48.23	36	42.35	2	2.35	6	7.05	

<sup>1</sup> Each student should be counted only once and the four percentages should total 100%. If assessments have taken place across different courses/course sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Enter the actual date(s) the assessment took place.

<sup>3</sup> Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in courses approved as addressing this learning outcome area.

Assessment tool and measure used. Did you use the type of tool (exam questions, assignments, essays, etc.) and measure (quantitative or qualitative) identified in your assessment plan update? If not, please indicate both what you used instead and the rationale for doing so. If more space is needed, you may attach an extra sheet.

Yes, we used the project assignment and project evaluation criteria stated in our assessment plan.

## Major findings of this assessment:

### Strengths:

In review of our findings, we are very pleased that 91% (77) of students are meeting or exceeding standards for the course. We attribute this to a clear and effective competency assignment that successfully addresses the defined learning outcomes.

### Weaknesses:

9% (8) of students are approaching or not meeting standards for the course.

While we are pleased with overall results, we note two conditions: The majority of students surveyed are art majors, implying perhaps more experience/s with art making prior to entering our program than a typical non-major course. Secondly, our Evaluation Rubric was initially created for our assessment of Art 102 and Art 103, historically composed of all non-majors; we adopted this rubric for FPA studio courses Art 105 and Art 210 as well. The Evaluation Rubric was Exceeding Expectations/84-100 (B or higher); Meeting Expectations/74-83 (C to B-); Approaching Expectations/64-73 (D to C-); and Not Meeting Expectations/63 or Lower (D- or E). We speculate if these ranges have influenced instructor decisions on evaluation, as faculty are more familiar with the following Evaluation Rubric for studio courses of Exceeding Expectations [A] Excellent; Meeting Expectations [B] Above Average; Approaching Expectations [C] Average; and Not Meeting Expectations [D] Below Average and [E] Poor. For example, we believe some evaluations that landed in Not Meeting Expectations/84-100 (D- or E) in our survey would actually align in the Approaching Expectations in a course that would traditionally include more non-majors (like some of our other FPA courses).

## General Education Assessment Report – Fine and Performing Arts

Action to be taken in addressing these assessment findings:

We see clear evidence that this course is effective. However, to address weaknesses as noted above, we will revise our Evaluation Rubric to more clearly state what constitutes Exceeding Expectations [A] Excellent; Meeting Expectations [B] Above Average; Approaching Expectations [C] Average; and Not Meeting Expectations [D] Below Average and [E] Poor. We will also meet with faculty to ensure that the rubric is applied consistently between sections and courses, regardless of whether or not students are majors or not.

We will continue to review results with instructors and solicit their feedback on assignments and data collection for improvement.

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

We have prepared and utilized a new Excel document to assist in data collection so that instructors can more easily provide the data to the assessment committee in a timely fashion. We have found this method to be more effective in retaining accuracy of the original data and for calculation and retention purposes. We have also proactively included the instructor's class roster in the Excel file in an effort to collect student data for general program assessment and to ensure necessary data is included in the class roster. We will continue to refine the process as we move forward.

# General Education Assessment Report – American History

Course: HIS 202, HIS 203, HIS 248, HIS 249

Calendar Year: 2015

Knowledge and Skills Areas / Competencies	Learning Outcome	Information				Results <sup>1</sup>							
		Date of Assessment Semester/Year <sup>2</sup>	Students Assessed		Exceeding Standards		Meeting Standards		Approaching Standards		Not Meeting Standards		
			#	% <sup>3</sup>	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
American History	Knowledge of a basic narrative of American history, specifically the ability to demonstrate how certain political, economic, social, and cultural issues, subjects, and/or themes developed over	Fall 2015*	106	40	18	8.5	55	25.9	95	44.8	44	20.8	
	An ability to demonstrate how issues, subjects, and/or themes in American history may relate to each other and indicate problems or questions for appropriate for scholarly analysis.	Fall 2015*	106	40	12	5.7	57	26.9	91	42.9	52	24.5	
	Understanding of America’s evolving relationship with rest of world	Fall 2015*	106	40	20	9.4	59	27.8	97	45.8	36	17	

<sup>1</sup> Each student should be counted only once and the four percentages should total 100%. If assessments have taken place across different courses/course sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Enter the actual date(s) the assessment took place.

<sup>3</sup> Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in courses approved as addressing this learning outcome area.

\*Miscommunication between the outgoing and incoming department chairs resulted in no data being collected in the Spring 2015 semester. In order to address this oversight the sample size was doubled in the Fall 2015 semester. Additionally, each of the 106 artifacts gathered were assessed by two different members of the department.

Assessment tool and measure used. Did you use the type of tool (exam questions, assignments, essays, etc.) and measure (quantitative or qualitative) identified in your assessment plan update? If not, please indicate both what you used instead and the rationale for doing so. If more space is needed, you may attach an extra sheet.

\*The department utilized the tool and measure found in its revised American History assessment plan.

Major findings of this assessment:

1. Most students assessed either failed or only approached the expectations we had set for these learning outcomes.
2. Students had slightly more difficulty demonstrating an understanding of causal links and influences in American history than indicating knowledge of basic content (*i.e.* “facts”).
3. Students in smaller sections (19-35 students) were more likely to meet or exceed expectations in both categories. While the sample size was large, the actual number of students assessed was not so it is difficult to determine if there is a correlation but it warrants further analysis in future assessments.

## General Education Assessment Report – American History

Action to be taken in addressing these assessment findings:

1. Continue to develop assessment protocols within the department so miscommunication is reduced and preparation enhanced. For example, we need to find ways to improve how instructors embed the assessment within their course. Strides have been made in this area but there is much room for growth.
2. Incorporate more content (readings, papers, exams) in class that highlights as well as rewards students for understanding broad trends (or change over time) in American History. The same holds true for aspects of America's relationship with the rest of the world.
3. Study the possible link between poor student performance and larger class sizes. For example, do the lectures and generic surveys texts that students get in large classes (50-100 students) have the tendency to inhibit learning in these areas? Should this be true, which will not be known without further assessment, can different pedagogical strategies mitigate the situation?

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

Nothing at this time

# General Education Assessment Report – Computer and Information Literacy

Course: LIN 400: Investigating a Language

Calendar Year: 2015

Knowledge and Skills Areas / Competencies	Learning Outcome	Information				Results <sup>1</sup>							
		Date of Assessment Semester/Year <sup>2</sup>	Students Assessed		Exceeding Standards		Meeting Standards		Approaching Standards		Not Meeting Standards		
			#	% <sup>3</sup>	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Computer and Information Literacy	Perform the basic operations of personal computer use	Spring/2015	9	100%	7	78%	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	
	Understand and use basic research techniques	Spring/2015	9	100%	6	67%	2	22%	1	11%	0	0%	
	Locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources	Spring/2015	9	100%	4	44%	3	33%	1	11%	1	1%	

<sup>1</sup> Each student should be counted only once and the four percentages should total 100%. If assessments have taken place across different courses/course sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Enter the actual date(s) the assessment took place.

<sup>3</sup> Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in courses approved as addressing this learning outcome area.

Assessment tool and measure used. Did you use the type of tool (exam questions, assignments, essays, etc.) and measure (quantitative or qualitative) identified in your assessment plan update? If not, please indicate both what you used instead and the rationale for doing so. If more space is needed, you may attach an extra sheet.

We used the culminating research paper for LIN 400 to evaluate computer and information literacy. This evaluation is based on a rubric, which breaks down the three learning outcomes each into four separate criteria. For instance, with regard to Learning Outcome 1 (Perform the basic operations of personal computer use), we evaluate the paper using these four criteria: a) Paper appropriately and consistently uses special character symbols, italics, underlining and other font-related devices to identify and highlight language data; b) Paper appropriately and consistently uses the table function or other such devices to sort, organize and present linguistic data; etc. For each criterion, students' papers are assessed on a scale of 5 to 1, with 5 equal to "strongly agree" and 1 equal to "strongly disagree". This qualitative measure is the measure indicated in our assessment plan. The criteria we created reflect the expectations and requirements for students in the Linguistics Program.

**Major findings of this assessment:**

- a. Results indicate that students are strong with respect to Learning Outcomes 1 and 2, that is, perform the basic functions of personal computer use and understand and use basic research techniques. 78% and 67% of students exceed the expectations, 22% meet the expectations. No student fails to meet the expectations. This result is not surprising, considering that most students who take this class are seniors or second semester juniors and have had extensive use of computers to handle various academic tasks.
- b. Results suggest that students struggle a bit more with regard to Learning Outcome 3, locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources. Only 44% and 33% of students exceed or meet the expectations. 11% of students either approach the expectations or outright fail to meet the expectations. This finding is understandable as it is the hardest of the three learning outcomes. In evaluating this outcome, we assess students' work to determine whether they make effective use of external sources, triangulate data from multiple sources, support findings from multiple sources, and intentionally evaluate and question the data and sources. The two weaker papers are weak with respect to all four of the criteria we used to assess this outcome.

## General Education Assessment Report – Computer and Information Literacy

Action to be taken in addressing these assessment findings:

- a. These results suggest that more focus need to be placed on Learning Outcome 3, that is, develop students' ability to locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources. With respect to this outcome, the challenge lies more in evaluating and synthesizing the data and information from different sources, according to our analysis. Even though this finding is understandable as synthesizing and evaluating reflects higher-level critical thinking abilities in Bloom's taxonomy, something can be done about it. Clearly, developing these skills cannot just take place in LIN 400. It needs to start in LIN 100, followed up in LIN 200, 201 and 300. We plan to share the findings with the professors in charge of these courses, start to develop students' understanding of the need to evaluate and synthesize information from more than one source and start requiring students to back up their claims and findings from more than one source in various assignments they do in these courses.
- b. This is the first time we used the rubric we created to assess computer and information literacy. This experience reveals that some of criteria we developed are not sufficiently distinct from one another. As a result, they are harder to use and do not always provide us with a fine-grained analysis of students' computer and information literacy. We plan to revisit the rubric to see if some of the criteria can be revised and made more precise and more distinct from one another.

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

In assessing computer and information literacy, the Linguistics Program is more interested in whether linguistics students can apply their computer and information technology in collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and reporting linguistic data and findings, not just whether they know or have these skills. For this reason, we chose the capstone paper that LIN 400 students are required to complete to assess their application of computer and information literacy. The challenges in assessing qualitative data such as a term or culminating paper are, of course, how to assess students' application of skills as relevant to the expectations and requirements of the Linguistics Program, and how to assess them objectively. The criterion-based rubric we created is intended to achieve these assessment objectives. Our experience with using this rubric suggests that this can be done, that it can help us identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and that the findings, as revealed by the analysis, can be useful for making programmatic and course-internal changes. We believe that this finding can be helpful to those programs that rely on qualitative data to assess GE requirements.



# General Education Assessment Report – Computer and Information Literacy

Course: Math 454

Calendar Year: 2015-16

Knowledge and Skills Areas / Competencies	Learning Outcome	Information				Results <sup>1</sup>							
		Date of Assessment Semester/Year <sup>2</sup>	Students Assessed		Exceeding Standards		Meeting Standards		Approaching Standards		Not Meeting Standards		
			#	% <sup>3</sup>	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Computer and Information Literacy	Perform the basic operations of personal computer use	10/2 – 10/30 Fall 2015	17	89.5	5	29.4	11	64.7	1	5.9	0	0.0	
	Understand and use basic research techniques	10/2 – 10/30 Fall 2015	17	89.5	3	17.6	5	64.7	7	17.6	2	0.0	
	Locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources	10/2 – 10/30 Fall 2015	17	89.5	4	23.5	10	58.9	2	11.8	1	5.9	

<sup>1</sup> Each student should be counted only once and the four percentages should total 100%. If assessments have taken place across different courses/course sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Enter the actual date(s) the assessment took place.

<sup>3</sup> Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in courses approved as addressing this learning outcome area.

Assessment tool and measure used. Did you use the type of tool (exam questions, assignments, essays, etc.) and measure (quantitative or qualitative) identified in your assessment plan update? If not, please indicate both what you used instead and the rationale for doing so. If more space is needed, you may attach an extra sheet.

I did use the type of tool (assignment) and measure (quantitative) identified in my assessment plan update.

Major findings of this assessment:

The assignment was run over a four-week period (each week dedicated to one of parts A – D). At the conclusion of each week, students reported on (lack of) progress. At this time, guidance was provided to those having trouble meeting interim objectives. Most students needed assistance; for many it was at most one small nudge / hint per learning outcome. Once put on track, they were able to complete other similar tasks. These students were judged as having met the standard.

With two exceptions, students were unable to isolate a lead digit in R. It was recommended they try in Excel (the LEFT call is especially well suited). Still, a good number of students had trouble with this.

Students generally wrote well and organized their reports well. But most violated APA style guidelines repeatedly. Many also failed to cite all sources, and improperly cited online sources. Two students submitted perfection in this regard: They simply applied the APA style macro to a Latex document. (Most students wrote in Word.)

The descriptive statistics work – fundamental to presentation of research – was (as anticipated) handled quite well.

## General Education Assessment Report – Computer and Information Literacy

Action to be taken in addressing these assessment findings:

Many Math majors see little of this sort of task. Students need more background in two areas: Data access / formatting, and proper implementation of appropriate formatting and citation of their work. Both of these will be addressed with the creation of a simpler, shorter, and less involved assignment asking students to rehearse these tasks, before moving on to the larger project that forms the assessment vehicle.

In Math 354, more emphasis needs to be placed on the link between mathematical models (in this case, probability distributions) and real data.

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

This was our first assessment of Computer and Information Literacy. Perhaps the task we use is a bit too lengthy – certainly some streamlining could be in order. On the other hand – it really hits on the meeting between the math, data, and reporting.

Armed with the appropriate tools, students can easily do a bang up job in facets of Computer and Information Literacy. R (part of the course of instruction in Math 354) enables students to construct very nice statistical plots with minimal effort. Similarly, use of the Latex package (only spottily covered in math courses) engendered flawless formatting of written work.

## Appendix 3

### Insights

## Fine and Performing Arts—Insights

1. We have prepared and utilized a new Excel document to assist in data collection so that instructors can more easily provide the data to the assessment committee in a timely fashion. This document is provided to instructors for Art 100, along with the Assessment Plan and rubric, well before the beginning of the semester. We have found this method to be more effective in retaining accuracy of the original data and for calculation and retention purposes.
2. As will be mentioned on all this year's CRW assessment reports for Fine and Performing Arts: the ability to discuss similar issues across creative writing genres was particularly useful. Although the different genres had differing criteria on their rubrics, we still found similarities in strengths and weaknesses across courses, which led to a discussion of shared goals going forward (namely: more close reading). The group that met included tenure-track and adjunct faculty. Lead faculty from three different genres were present. Perhaps this goes without saying, but we encourage this community aspect of assessment as a way to make the process more productive, even if it might seem that different courses within a program are assessing very different things.
3. Keep asking questions! Not all change is good, but all good things come from change.
4. Require reading of the textbook prior to lectures. Engage students in questions during the lecture. Hold review sessions.
5. Assessment is ...
6. It would be great if there was a place in this rubric to submit the number of sections being assessed (the data seems confusing, unless you know we're looking at 2 sections with a cap of 14 students each)

## American History—Insights

1. One faculty member realized that students need multiple opportunities and multiple ways to demonstrate their understanding of the learning outcomes. A mid term or a final exam are not always the best ways to assess student learning in the outcomes listed. Ongoing assessments throughout the course should be implemented over 15 weeks.
2. All faculty better understand the important of writing and teaching writing as a result of the assessment of learning outcomes.  
Sustained effort should be made to find innovative ways to engage students with the course readings and overall content.
3. Nothing at this time

## Computer and Information Literacy--Insights

1. The more one can find ways to integrate general education assessment into student learning with respect to content of the major (i.e., the more ecologically valid the assessment), the better. Most elements of the Computer & Information Literacy assessment for cognitive science majors was incorporated fairly naturally into the framework that was established for the students' capstone research projects. For the most part, the assessment served to enrich, and enhance the integrity of, the research experience for the students.
2. It is important to craft assignments that clearly articulate the outcomes you are seeking to measure. We continually revise our assignments to improve our articulation of what we are looking for students to demonstrate.
3. In the future, it would be worthwhile to consider adding yet another component to the assessment plan for COM 303 that asks students specific exam questions they should be able to answer. The pre-post survey design was helpful in determining students' initial comfort levels in performing certain tasks and the end-of-the-semester assessment provided a useful comparison. Additionally, students papers were another way in which the learning objectives were assessed, however the sample size was rather small ( $N = 10$ ) due to the fact that students completed these projects in groups. Adding specific exam questions that address desired skills would add yet another level that assesses individual-based evaluation of computer and information literacy.
4. Students having a choice on the subject matter related to their discipline when assigned to write a paper or give a presentation is highly recommended. A practical spreadsheet application of using data in their discipline to plot data and perform statistics keeps the student interest.
5. Asking students to work on these skills in only one class is not enough. Repetition throughout your program is beneficial.
6. We have prepared and utilized a new Excel document to assist in data collection so that instructors can more easily provide the data to the assessment committee in a timely fashion. We have found this method to be more effective than previous methods, and will continue to refine the process as we move forward. We have also prepared a detailed rubric with our own sub categories for each of the learning objectives to help instructors evaluate student work more effectively. Instructors found the rubrics helpful and clear.
7. It takes time to combine the assessment data from multiple sections. To help with this in future assessment cycles, I will record scores in the same system or spreadsheet for all sections in the reporting year.

With small sections or sample sizes, it is difficult to have data samples large enough to conduct comprehensive item analyses on objectively-scored items. For example, with test responses of 26 students, it would be difficult to determine item discrimination values or conduct a distractor analysis. With larger sections/samples, highly discriminating items can be determined by conducting item analyses. Positively discriminating items can then be selected for an assessment tool that is useful in separating students who have mastered content from those who have not.

Creating and using well-defined analytic rubrics helps improve teaching and learning.

8. We are trying to take advantage of existing sources of data rather than create new ones. For example, for our LO#3 evaluation, instructors were already grading a certain assignment (required or all sections of that course), and our rubric for LO3 was simply completed at the same time the instructors were grading those papers.

Also, we have implemented common finals for two core classes – for reasons beyond assessment – and these are rich sources of data for assessment and are done for “all” majors.

9. This was our first assessment of Computer and Information Literacy. Perhaps the task we use is a bit too lengthy – certainly some streamlining could be in order. On the other hand – it really hits on the meeting between the math, data, and reporting.

Armed with the appropriate tools, students can easily do a bang up job in facets of Computer and Information Literacy. R (part of the course of instruction in Math 354) enables students to construct very nice statistical plots with minimal effort. Similarly, use of the Latex package (only spottily covered in math courses) engendered flawless formatting of written work.

10. The calendar year approach posed problems for this assessment. Although ANT 310 is where we focus on assessing CIL, it does not permit the longitudinal study that we believe would be most useful. We assess CIL in ANT 310 in large part to enable us to address shortcomings in competence in the capstone (ANT 410), which is normally taken in the following (Spring) semester. This year we will repeat our assessment of CIL learning outcomes in the capstone and compare the results with those obtained in ANT 310. Although we wish to have all students at least meet standards by the time they complete ANT 310, what is most important, of course, is that they achieve this level (or better) by the time they complete our program.

11. Nothing really, though there may come a time where the first learning objective of the Computer and Information Literacy assessment may no longer be relevant and we as a society become more reliant on computer systems. However, the assessment of other learning outcomes is important in making sure that students are aware of and competent on a number of computer programs and applications.

12. By assessing the class, it helped the instructor hone in on what exactly public relations professionals need to do to develop effective campaigns. It enabled the instructor to take a step back, and rather than teach a course grounded in academic theory, it is important to teach a course that will enable our students succeed in the work place. It is important to give the students the skills they need to succeed, rather than just teach a course because that is what academics want to teach. Bridging the lessons learned in the classroom with the skills needed in the professional work place should be the focus of an instructor. Certainly assessing students' computer information and literacy skills is important, but in this day and age, it seems unnecessary. Most students can teach the instructor a thing or two about technology. Of the students who earned non-passing grades or average grades, it was not due to their computer skills. It was due to their own motivation, time management skills, and abilities. If these students were evaluated purely on their computer skills, they would earn high marks most likely.

13. In assessing computer and information literacy, the Linguistics Program is more interested in whether linguistics students can apply their computer and information technology in collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and reporting linguistic data and findings, not just whether

they know or have these skills. For this reason, we chose the capstone paper that LIN 400 students are required to complete to assess their application of computer and information literacy. The challenges in assessing qualitative data such as a term or culminating paper are, of course, how to assess students' application of skills as relevant to the expectations and requirements of the Linguistics Program, and how to assess them objectively. The criterion-based rubric we created is intended to achieve these assessment objectives. Our experience with using this rubric suggests that this can be done, that it can help us identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and that the findings, as revealed by the analysis, can be useful for making programmatic and course-internal changes. We believe that this finding can be helpful to those programs that rely on qualitative data to assess GE requirements.

14. Gen Ed Assessment and Program Assessment are not on synchronous schedules, utilize different reporting structures, and are not streamlined processes. These factors make it difficult for one committee to coordinate both initiatives. This committee recommends that Gen Ed and Program Assessment be handled by two different groups of people in the department.



## Writing—Insights

1. This is the second time we have petitioned for and received a reduction of the study's required sample size from 20% to 10%. We find this reduction very wise. Our work involved double-reading 116 portfolios consisting of four texts each, then deliberating on 3 learning outcomes for each portfolio, which took the assembled committee 25-30 hours across a week before classes began (so a total of 125-150 reader-hours for the five-member committee). We don't feel we'd have reached different conclusions if we'd continued reading.
2. We also recommend continuing to use our alternate phrasing for learning outcome 3, focused on sourced writing. We may also consider proposing a revision of the outcomes at this year's conference of the SUNY Council on Writing, in March. SUNYCoW is the system's organization of faculty teaching writing, and it was instrumental in the establishment of the outcomes and rubric when they were approved by the SUNY GEAR Group.
3. We feel mixed about the new assessment calendar. We appreciate the idea that we can communicate our results and reflections more directly to faculty in the program than when assessments are done in May, just as school ends. But we also found ourselves pressed to finish at an urgently busy moment in the academic calendar.

## Appendix 4

### Rubric

## Learning Outcomes with Information and Results

Did they report numerical data?

0 No entries

1 Learning outcomes have most of the (a) numeric values for n and percent of students **and** (b) n and percent of students exceeding, meeting, and approaching.

2 Every outcome has (a) numeric values for n and percent of students **and** (b) n and percent of students exceeding, meeting, and approaching.

3 Every learning outcome has (a) numeric values for n and percent of students **and** (b) n and percent of students exceeding, meeting, approaching, and not meeting. The sample size is appropriate.

## Major Findings

Did they provide an analysis of the data?

0 No entry; or no entry that speaks to the learning outcomes.

1 The report identifies only strengths or weaknesses but not both.

2 The report identifies strengths and weaknesses in student learning with respect to learning outcomes. Fails to specify method of analysis.

3 Some indication of method of analysis is described. The report identifies strengths and weaknesses in student learning with respect to learning outcomes.

4 Method of analysis is fully described with sufficient detail. Findings are supported by the data. The report identifies strengths and weaknesses in student learning with respect to learning outcomes.

## Action

Did they specify actions to be taken to address shortcomings identified in the analysis?

0 No entry

1 Suggests an action that indicates some awareness of and reflection on shortcomings.

2 Partially identifies appropriate action to address shortcomings, but does not clearly identify specific steps.

3 Clearly identified specific steps to be taken. Action is an appropriate means to address the identified shortcomings. [Or no shortcomings identified and the data and analysis support this.]

## Insights

Did I learn anything helpful about assessment?

1 [Bonus] Report provides something useful