

Learning Outcomes Assessment – Inquiry Aggregate Results

Assessment Type: GEC

Year/Term: Fall 2011-2012

Learning Outcome: Inquiry

Assessment Method: Rubric

Measurement Scale: 1-3

Assessment Tools: variable

Sample Size: 213

Courses: ANTH 220, ART 120, ART 260, BOT 201, PSY 201, LIB 127 (MUS 111 data excluded)

	Developing (# of students)	Adequate (# of students)	Proficient (# of students)
1. Identifies problem	27	124	62
2. Methodology	44	74	95
3. Technology	25	88	100
4. Research and Expertise	34	55	123

Benchmark: 85%

Institutional benchmark goal for percent of students to meet “Adequate” or “Proficient” levels

Percent Achieving Benchmark: 86% Divide the number achieving by the number participating

Data Analysis: 86% of students are adequate or proficient in criteria #1.
74% of students are adequate or proficient in criteria #2.
87% of students are adequate or proficient in criteria #3.
80% of students are adequate or proficient in criteria #4.
In traits #2 and #4—methodology and research leading to deeper understanding—students are below the institutional benchmark.

Interpretation: Interpretations are limited because in at least two courses, the assessment was conducted using extra credit assignments rather than embedded in the course or the result of a sustained effort on the students’ part. The strongest criteria performance appear to be in conception of a problem or question at the heart of the inquiry and appropriate use of technology to answer the question or solve the problem. The weakest criteria performance is in use of appropriate methodology and deeper

knowledge and understanding of a problem or question through research.

Closing the Loop:

While some assignments explicitly engaged students in the use of an appropriate methodology and allowed adequate out-of-class time for carrying out the research, others did not (used as extra credit in the context of a final exam), accounting for weak performance in two of the criteria—methodology and research. Inquiry needs to be taught explicitly within the “ways of knowing” of the a discipline in order for students to appreciate its several characteristics that enable them to practice and perform this learning outcome in other learning contexts.

Recommendations:

- Faculty development in writing inquiry assignments incentivized by mini-grants.
- GEC learning outcomes need to be explicitly taught and explicitly tied to an assignment embedded in the course rather than tied to extra credit.
- One-on-one training in TracDat over two phases: 1) data entry and 2) data analysis, interpretation, and closing the loop.