Learning Outcomes Assessment Communication– Aggregate Results

Assessment Type: GEC   **Year/Term:**   2012-2013

Level: Three 100-level courses; three 200-level courses

Learning Outcome: Communication

Assessment Method/Tool: Common Rubric

Measurement Scale: 1-3

Sample Size: 111

	Developing (# of students)		Adequate (# of students)		Proficient (# of students)	
Clearly focuses and logically organizes communication	8	7%	46	42%	56	51%
Presents convincing evidence	18	16%	41	37%	52	47%
Edits carefully and accurately	11	10%	35	31%	65	59%
Employs graphics, media, and source materials appropriately and ethically	9	8%	57	51%	45	41%
Averages (based on 111 student sample size)		10%		40%		50%

Benchmark:	85%	Institutional benchmark goal for percent of students to meet "Adequate" or "Proficient" levels
Number Achieving Benchmark:	**100**	**of how many participants? 111**
Percent Achieving Benchmark:	**90%**	Actual percentage of students meeting "Adequate" or "Proficient" levels
Data Analysis: What do these results mean?		The following discipline areas are represented in this 2012-2013 sampling of the Communication learning outcome for General Education: **Art 204, two sections of WR 121, two sections of MATH 211 (one online), and ECON 115.** The distribution is weighted towards the sciences and the arts & humanities. GERM 101 and COM 111 participated in the norming and assignment

development, but did not complete the data collection for this learning outcome.

The GEC Assessment Coordinator piloted a new methodology during two norming sessions in Fall 2012. Criteria mapping for the learning outcome was discipline-based and successfully engaged the faculty in thoughtful discussion of those traits most critical in the discipline that aligned with the common GEC rubric. The participating faculty were given sufficient time to consider the learning outcome from a disciplinary perspective in the first session, which increased enthusiasm for participating in the assessment process compared to previous samplings. Faculty had a chance to share discipline-specific traits and appreciate the commonalities and differences in each discipline's approach to the Communication outcome.

In the second follow-up session, faculty came together again after mapping discipline-based criteria (aligned to the common rubric) in a way that was useful to them. The freedom to use the language of the discipline to get at the essential traits being assessed helped faculty process what the common rubric meant. Faculty were also asked to bring the assignment that would be used in the assessment and explain how the assignment embedded the traits to be assessed. In every case, faculty were asked to be consistent in timing of the assignment and in preparing students for the assessment:
1. Either the assignment was situated near the end of the course so that students were able to optimize their demonstration of the assessed traits after sufficient preparation, or the assignment was sequenced in such a way that that traits were clearly measured progressively;
2. Faculty were asked to communicate explicitly with students about the assignment being assessed, and share with students the rubric against which the assignment would be assessed.

Processing assessment criteria through a discipline-based understanding of the learning outcome and designing assignments with the expected traits very clearly embedded were the two most important changes in the approach to GEC assessment for this GEC sampling. 90% of students demonstrated adequate or proficient performance in the Communication learning outcome for this sampling, compared with 65% in 2009-10, though it should be noted that aggregate results do not necessarily reflect disciplinary/course gaps in meeting finer criteria.

Closing the Loop: Although the students in the two sections of WR 121 (47) performed very strongly in the "presentation of evidence" trait,

students in Math, Art, and Econ did not perform as strongly in the same trait. Students in ART 204 performed very strongly in oral communication and use of source materials, but weren't as strong in the written component of the learning outcome. MATH 211 students were weaker in traits 2 and 3 in this interdisciplinary sampling, and were more uncertain about communicating mathematical concepts than students sampled in the other disciplines, but with explicit guidance from instructors, were able to perform, although one class did not achieve the 85% benchmark (75%).

Important take-aways from this assessment that will be used to improve student learning generally and in outcome areas for GEC specifically:

- Design assignments with the learning outcome in mind
- Share learning outcome expectations for assessed assignments with students –either in the syllabus or in the assignment itself
- Share the assessment rubric with students either in the syllabus or with the assignment to be assessed. Bother to explain the traits that help students demonstrate the learning outcome and allow time for students to ask questions about the traits
- Scaffold towards an assessed assignment and be explicit with students that practicing the skills along the way is part of the learning process that leads to levels of performance with the skill