GRD Assessment Results: 2012-13; 2014-15

Assessment of UNCG’s General Education Program is done through a partnership with the General Education Council and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation. Information and data about the assessment of learning in the General Education Program can be found on the OAA website: http://assessment.uncg.edu/academic/GenEd/.

The following materials were developed by the General Education Assessment Coordinator in conjunction with the General Education Council.

If you have any questions about the assessment of the General Education Program, please contact David Carlone (david_carlone@uncg.edu), the Chair of the General Education Council, or Teresa Brumfield (tebrumfi@uncg.edu), the General Education Assessment Coordinator.

Introduction

UNCG’s General Education Program is comprised of five Learning Goals (LGs):

- LG1. Foundational Skills (critical thinking, effective communication, quantitative and information literacies)
- LG2. The Physical and Natural World (math and science)
- LG3. Knowledge of Human Histories, Cultures, and the Self
- LG4. Knowledge of Social and Human Behavior
- LG5. Personal, Civic, and Professional Development

These Learning Goals are distributed across eight categories and four markers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories:</th>
<th>UNCG General Education Program Learning Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Goal 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts (GFA)</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Perspectives (GHP)</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature (GLT)</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics (GMT)</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences (GNS)</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical, Religious, &amp; Ethical Principles (GPR)</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning &amp; Discourse (GRD)</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences (GSB)</td>
<td>√</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markers:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Perspectives (GL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Perspectives (GN)</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Western</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Perspectives (GN)</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Western</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The category-and marker-specific student learning outcomes (GEC SLOs) state how students will accomplish these Learning Goals (see http://utlc.uncg.edu/genedu/slos for current SLOs). To ensure our students are achieving what we state in the GEC SLOs, the GE Program is assessed, using faculty-developed processes.

GE Program assessment process

In May 2011, a group of faculty developed a process to assess the GE Program. The assessment process includes course faculty assessment, peer faculty validation, and data summary/presentation. The process was approved by the GE Council and has been used since spring 2012 assess student achievement of the GE Learning Goals.

In the course faculty assessment:

1. Faculty choose existing course assignments aligned to student learning outcomes (SLOs) specific to the course’s General Education category and/or marker(s).
2. Faculty send unmarked student work products for six students, along with the assignment, to the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA). The students are selected by OAA, through a random-selection process, and their student identification numbers are provided to the instructors.
3. Faculty apply a three-point rating scale (Highly Proficient, Proficient, Not Proficient) to all students’ work for each SLO.
4. Faculty complete an on-line survey, recording aggregate (class) results for each SLO.

In the peer faculty validation:

1. The General Education Council invites faculty to participate in a workshop (held in early January before classes begin) to evaluate student work products. A monetary incentive is provided to eligible participants.
2. Workshop reviewers are grouped by General Education category/marker and paired within each group. Each pair receives the same set of student work.
3. Using the same three-point scale as course faculty, reviewer pairs rate student work products (SWPs) provided by the course faculty. Each member scores the work independently. Two scores are gathered for each student work.
4. The workshop concludes with large-group discussion.

In the data summary and presentation:

1. OAA summarizes data from the course faculty assessment and from the peer faculty validation workshop.
2. The General Education Council presents these summarized data to the University in open forums.
3. Forum participants make observations, suggestions, recommendations, etc., to the Council.
4. A summary report is prepared and posted on the Council’s website.

Results: Reasoning & Discourse (GRD)

2012-13
In 2012-13, GRD student learning outcomes were assessed as part of the General Education Program assessment, which included approximately 20 percent of General Education courses. Results were presented at the February 2013 General Education Program Assessment Forum.

Course faculty (CF) participation
All 28 sampled courses responded, representing 537 – 557 assessed students.

Workshop faculty (WF) participation
Of the 28 responding sections, 24 provided 127 student work products (SWPs) to be rated by peer reviewers.

Of 254 ratings, peer reviewers categorized 57 (or 22%) for GRD slo-1 and 13 (or 5%) for GRD slo-2 as “no ratings”. Reasons cited by faculty included: the assignment did not explicit address the student learning outcome, only partially addressed it, or students chose an option that did not elicit the student learning outcome.

Charts: CF ratings and WF ratings

| GRD SLO-1: Critically evaluate written, oral, and/or visual arguments. (LG1) |
|---|---|
| **Course Faculty Ratings** | **Workshop Faculty Ratings** |
| n = 537 students assessed | n = 197 ratings of SWPs able to rate |
| Not Proficient: 21% | Not Proficient: 56% |
| Highly Proficient: 31% | Highly Proficient: 5% |
| Proficient: 48% | Proficient: 39% |
GRD SLO-2: Construct cogent, evidence-based arguments. (LG1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Faculty Ratings</th>
<th>Workshop Faculty Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 557 students assessed</td>
<td>n = 241 ratings of SWPs able to rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty comments

Course faculty commented on the need for guidelines regarding the proficiency levels and suggested professional development that includes sharing rubrics and assignments explicitly linked to specific student learning outcomes (SLOs). They also commented on the difficulty understanding the GEC student learning outcomes, including the overlap of SLOs across General Education categories and markers.

Workshop faculty commented on the need to explicitly link SLOs and assignments and to ensure all GEC SLOs are being met. They, too, suggested training on the General Education SLOs and on the program and sharing examples of assignments that explicitly met specific GEC SLOs. Faculty stated that the GEC SLOs were problematic: “clarify language”; “multiple verbs in SLOs”; “fuller discussion of implementing SLOs needed (Recertification)”.

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GRD Assessment Results: 2012-13; 2014-15

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2014-15 Pilot of AAC&U Critical Thinking VALUE rubric

With the identification by UNC system faculty of critical thinking and written communication as two core competencies, the Council’s Assessment Subcommittee decided to pilot three of the AAC&U VALUE rubrics (http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics?CFID=21223692) in fall 2014:

- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Written Communication

All three of these competencies are included in the General Education Programs Learning Goal 1 (Foundational Skills).

In August 2014, Dr. Ashley Finley, Senior Director of Assessment & Research at AAC&U, came to campus and presented a VALUE rubric training workshop to faculty who had agreed to participate in the pilot.

The fall 2014 pilot process included:

- GRD, which piloted the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric;
- GL/GN, which piloted the Information Literacy VALUE rubric; and
- WI, which piloted the Written Communication VALUE rubric.

Departments (all from CAS) represented included:

- Communication Studies
- English
- Philosophy
- Political Science

Results were presented at the August 2015 General Education Program Assessment Forum.

Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric

The Critical Thinking rubric is made up of five criteria (or dimensions) and five performance levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (or dimensions):</th>
<th>Performance Levels:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• CT01: Explanation of issues</td>
<td>• PL 4: Capstone [highest level]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CT02: Evidence 9selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion)</td>
<td>• PL 3: Milestone 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CT03: Influence of context and assumptions</td>
<td>• PL 2: Milestone 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CT04: Student’s position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</td>
<td>• PL 1: Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CT05: Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</td>
<td>• PL 0: Does not meet benchmark (PL 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• NA: student work is not intended to meet the criterion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics
For the purposes of this pilot, performance level 2 (PL 2) was used as an approximation for “proficient” on the three-point proficiency scale.

Course faculty (CF) participation
Thirteen GRD sections from two departments, representing 286 students, volunteered to participate in the pilot.

In this pilot, GRD course faculty applied the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric, rather than the three-point proficiency scale, to score all students’ work for their selected assignment(s).

Workshop faculty (CF) participation
From the 13 participating GRD sections, 78 sample students’ work products were provided for peer review (n=156 ratings). Faculty also applied the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric, rather than the three-point scale, to score the sample student work products.

Charts: CF ratings and WF ratings

Chart 1 provides the course faculty (CF) and workshop faculty (WF) ratings for each of the five criterion (CT 01 . . . CT 05).

To make the five performance levels somewhat comparable to the three-point proficiency scale, “> PL-2” approximates “highly proficient”, “= PL-2” approximates “proficient”, and “< PL-2” approximates “not proficient”.

Chart 1 shows the comparison between course faculty and workshop faculty ratings using the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric.
Table 1, which presents the median (the point in a distribution at which 50% of scores lie below) and mode (the score of greatest frequency in a distribution) of course faculty and workshop faculty ratings, shows the consistency of ratings within each faculty group.

### Table 1. Comparison of Median and Mode

**Critical Thinking: 78 SWPs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Course Faculty</th>
<th>Workshop Faculty Raters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>CT01 CT02 CT03 CT04 CT05</td>
<td>CT01 CT02 CT03 CT04 CT05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2 2 2 2 2</td>
<td>2 2 2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>2 2 2 2 2</td>
<td>2 2 2 1 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty Comments**

Piloting course faculty commented on:

- the challenges of using the VALUE rubrics:
  - It took a burdensome amount of time to score students’ work products using the rubric (too complex). Maybe other rubrics (e.g., Watson & Glaser) would be more effective/efficient.
  - Even though assignments evoked critical thinking, the VALUE rubric may not have shown an accurate representation of these skills.
  - It was difficult to separate grades given to students versus competencies.

- whether the results were reflective of student learning in the General Education Program:
  - The product and the instructor rubric were a better representation; the VALUE rubric did not yield results that were accurately reflective of student learning.
  - The rubric had good points but did not work for all assignments.
  - Currently, courses are designed around the GEC objectives, which do not align directly with competencies.

- how the information gained from using the VALUE rubric would improve student learning in their General Education course:
  - It helps instructors to think about intentionality when designing course assignments.
  - It illuminated potential gaps in the course and room for improvement.
  - It provided an opportunity to make sure assignments had a critical thinking component to them.

Workshop faculty commented on:

- what they liked about using the VALUE rubric to rate student work products:
  - It eliminated the ambiguity of using the three-point proficiency scale.
  - The rubric provided a clear delineation of expectations.
  - VALUE rubrics presented a good basis for the standardization of rating student work products.
  - Using the rubrics made it easier to score in a relatively objective manner. It also helped faculty to focus on the identified skill.
• what they disliked about using the VALUE rubric to rate student work products:
  o Some criteria measured more than one thing, e.g., “evidence” on Critical Thinking rubric.
  o Critical Thinking rubric did not distinguish between reliable, credible, peer-reviewed evidence and non-reliable, etc., evidence.

• ways the VALUE rubrics could be used effectively to evaluate student learning in the General Education Program:
  o Use the rubrics as a tool to educate and train faculty, who could then use it to evaluate their own students’ performance and their existing assignments.
  o “If we moved to a competencies-based GE, rubrics would allow for streamlined assessment, consistency across courses, and provide a unifying aspect that is currently missing in our GE program.”
  o These rubrics could be used to standardize expectations for student learning. Currently, there is a lack of consistency for different elements of the SLOs.