**General Education Committee**
**Annual Assessment Reporting Form**
**(Upload to Moodle by End of Block 7 of each year)**

**MM/DD/YY of Completion:** _____

**Person Preparing Form:** Tyler Seacrest  (**name**);        _____(**signature**)


**1) Attachments:** Individual 2015-2016 Reports from the following General Education Categories are found below:

   a.   Assessment Report for General Education Category:  Behavioral and Social Sciences
   b.   Assessment Report for General Education Category:  History
   c.   Assessment Report for General Education Category:  Humanities:  Expressive Arts
   d.   Assessment Report for General Education Category:  Humanities: Literary and Artistic Studies
   e.   Assessment Report for General Education Category:  Mathematics
   f.   Assessment Report for General Education Category:  Natural Sciences
   g.   Assessment Report for General Education Category:  Written and Oral Communication


**2) Names of Faculty Actively Participating in Annual Assessment:**

Many faculty participated.  Committee members and meeting leaders were Heather Haas, Erik Guzik, Bill Janus, Steve Mock, Tyler Seacrest, Judy Ulrich, Alan Weltzien.


**3) LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes Assessed:**

- Quantitative Literacy (Math)
- Problem Solving  (Math, Science)
- Inquiry and Analysis (History, Math, Science, Behavioral and Social Sciences*)
- Critical Thinking (Behavior and Social Science, Expressive Arts, History, Literary & Artistic Studies, Science)
- Creative Thinking (Expressive Arts)
- Intercultural Knowledge and Competence (History*)
- Civic Knowledge and Engagement (History*)
- Engagement with Big Questions about Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World (Behavioral and Social Science)
- Written Communication (Literary & Artistic Studies, Behavioral and Social Science*, Expressive Arts*)
- Oral Communication (Literary & Artistic Studies)

A * indicates the ELO was a secondary ELO for that category.  Not focused on this year were Ethical Reasoning and Action, Foundations and skills for lifelong learning, Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies, teamwork, and information literacy.


**4) Means of Assessment:**

During the last assessment cycle, an electronic tool was used for instructors to self-report data on the attainment of Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs).  The overall consensus regarding this survey was that it did not collect data that was meaningful for instructors or useful for the general education committee.  Since a universally useful tool seems impossible at this point, instead we decided category areas and even instructors could use their own means of assessment.  This has the benefit that each assessment will be customized to fit the needs of that area or instructor.  This makes it harder to compare different categories, but this problem is inherent in the vast differences between academic disciplines and not due to an inadequate means of assessment.

It was suggested that perhaps a pre- and post-general education test could be designed to better capture what extent the program as a whole is meeting the ELOs.  Here is a quote from the Behavior and Social Sciences report that captures a common sentiment:

> "One instructor remarked that ELO attainment (in this case of Critical Thinking) appeared to be higher in a 200-level Gen Ed course that served more advanced majors as well as Gen Ed students.  This suggests that achievement of these outcomes may develop as students progress through their college careers and that, as such, the course-by-course assessment of the attainment of these outcomes may not really provide a complete picture of students' achievements."

Most seem to agree capturing this general improvement would be valuable but we don't have the resources at this time to implement such a means of assessment.

**5) Area/s and Plan/s for Targeted Improvement:**

We want to give instructors more specific guidelines on how to generate meaningful quantitative data to assist in assessment.  This will be a continuing topic of discussion at general education committee meetings.

As with many institutions we hope to convey to students that general education is not a haphazard collection of classes, but a unified program where they develop knowledge and skills useful for their career and broader life.   Along these lines, we need to make further improvements in vertical (and horizontal) alignment of goals and outcomes.  We've made a lot of improvement the last two years tying student learning outcomes (SLOs) to ELOs, but further improvements could be made here as well as linking SLOs and ELOs to the strategic plan and University mission statement.  Since experiential learning is so central to the University mission statement, experiential learning should be emphasized on course syllabi and in course content.   Bill Janus has created a course syllabus template for this vertical alignment and we will continue to make this example available for instructors.

Here are some other ideas that we will discuss at meetings next year:
- Develop an improved electronic reporting tool to make it easy to collect and maintain assessment data.  This tool would be optional, as again, no tool will work for all category areas.

- Schedule courses intended to improve written and oral communication skills early in student's college career may help in the attainment of other ELOs.
- Share rubrics for evaluating written and oral communication.
- Secure more resources for visiting faculty and field experiences.  For the expressive arts category area, bringing in visiting artists and field trips are critical to support the university mission statement of experiential learning.

**6) Financial or Other Resources Necessary to Facilitate Planned Improvements:**

To make the improvements listed above, we'd appreciate
- more support from administration in the form of release time and clerical help to improve all aspects of assessment,
- the support of ITS to develop an electronic assessment reporting tool that can be easily implemented year after year, and
- increasing resources for visiting faculty and field trips to support experiential education.

Here are some other ways resources could be directed to improve general education:

- Support more tenure track lines for increase stability in staffing,
- Increase the library budget,
- Continue improvements in data and wireless infrastructure, and
- Increase faculty development funds.

# Assessment Report for General Education Categories

**General Education Category:** Social & Behavioral Sciences
**Time & date of meeting:** online communication
**Attendance:** Janelle Handlos, Bonnie Graham, Heather Haas, Mark Krank, Amanda Richmond, Michael Francisconi, Estee Aiken

**What are the primary LEAP essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that define courses that belong to your general education category?**

*Engagement with Big Questions about Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
*Critical Thinking

**To what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**

The degree to which these ELOs were attained appeared to vary considerably not only across students but also across courses.  Most instructors, however, appeared to be generally satisfied with the degree to which the outcomes had been achieved.

One instructor remarked that ELO attainment (in this case of Critical Thinking) appeared to be higher in a 200-level Gen Ed course that served more advanced majors as well as Gen Ed students.  This suggests that achievement of these outcomes may develop as students progress through their college careers and that, as such, the course-by-course assessment of the attainment of these outcomes may not really provide a complete picture of students' achievements.

**Are there any secondary LEAP ELOs you found that were addressed in a significant number of the courses from your general education category?**

*Inquiry & Analysis
*Written Communication

The two major LEAP areas were also referenced, without focus on particular ELOs per se:

*Personal & Social Responsibility
*Intellectual & Practical Skills

**To what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**

The degree to which these ELOs were attained appeared to vary considerably not only across students but also across courses.  Most instructors, however, appeared to be generally satisfied with the degree to which the outcomes had been achieved.

**What other data did you discuss and what conclusions did you reach regarding that data?**
We did not emphasize other data, but we did try to identify the methods by which various faculty were assessing the achievement of these outcomes. The most common method appeared to be to assess the outcomes as a part of normal grading of course assignments and/or exams. Other faculty have tried or were planning to try post-test or pre-test/post-test assessment, and one had tried a student survey of perceptions of LEAP emphasis during the course. A number of faculty expressed a desire for more information on their assessment options.

**Based on data that you analyzed and the conclusion you drew from this analysis, list all items that were chosen for action by your program area:**

Individual instructors will continue to refine course content to improve course outcomes and continue to try new techniques of assessment (two possibilities mentioned, for example, included using content analysis of essays to document growth in critical thinking, and surveying students about their perceptions regarding the extent to which the various LEAP outcomes were emphasized).

**Describe any follow-up on plans and actions from the previous assessment cycle in your program area.**

No items were previously identified for action in this area. Last year's report did, however, suggest including pre-post testing in courses as a means of determining ELO percentages, and several instructors who participated in this year's assessment report did indicate either using pre/post measures or planning to do so in the future.

The move away from using the Gen Ed Course Survey also responds to concerns about the structure of that survey and about the way that survey was implemented.

**Provide any recommendations for items that require resources outside the control of your general education program area or require action on behalf of another general education action area (or academic unit).**

*More intensive and earlier efforts to improve students' oral and written skills might help students achieve other LEAP outcomes.

*Faculty need more information about the assessment process and options for assessing achievement of the LEAP objectives. This is especially true for those who are adjuncts or who teach online or only occasionally in the Gen Ed program but concerns about these issues were expressed by almost all faculty who participated.

*There is some concern that individual course assessments may be the wrong level of analysis: Do we really think any individual course will significantly impact any of these outcomes? Isn't the question how the Gen Ed (and other courses) work TOGETHER to improve these outcomes? If so,

shouldn't the assessment be done at the end of the Gen Ed program or college career rather than at the end of individual courses?

*Greater administrative support of assessment efforts is needed:  to the extent to which faculty must be saddled with the task of program assessment, the necessary clerical help and release time to do the job properly should be provided.

**General Education Category:** History
**Time & date of meeting:** 11:30pm, March 29, 2016
**Attendance:** John Hajduk, Bill Janus, Aaron Weinacht, Erin Zavitz, Elizabeth Borrowman

**What are the primary LEAP essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that define courses that belong to your general education category?**

To maintain consistency in comparing outcomes from one reporting cycle to the next, the History faculty decided to retain the following as the primary LEAP ELOs, which were originally identified last year for the Behavioral & Social Sciences (of which History was considered a part):

1. Critical Thinking
2. Inquiry and Analysis

**To what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**

Based on those assignments by individual faculty in their general education classes that directly measured the primary ELO's, we found the following success rates (percentage of students achieving satisfactory scores):

Elizabeth Borrowman: 80% achieved acceptable ratings (20/25)
John Hajduk: 91.5% achieved acceptable ratings (43/47)
Bill Janus: 69% achieved acceptable ratings (43/62)
Aaron Weinacht: 75% achieved acceptable ratings (68/91)
Erin Zavitz: 79.5% achieved acceptable ratings (59/74)
Totals: 77.9 % achieved acceptable ratings (233/299)

Notes:
1. These figures do not include data from Block 8, during which two additional gen ed History classes were offered.
2. The range of students (year, age, experience, etc.) within Gen-Ed classes further complicates the accurate assessment of learning outcomes.

**Are there any secondary LEAP ELOs you found that were addressed in a significant number of the courses from your general education category?**

Based on the available data and group consensus, last year the following secondary LEAP ELOs were identified for our category:

1. Intercultural Knowledge and Competence
2. Civic Knowledge and Engagement

We continue to encourage our students to embrace the Lifelong Learning ELO in our classes.

**To what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**

Success rates were essentially the same as for the primary ELO's, somewhat lower in some cases, and somewhat higher in others, but not by a significant amount in either direction.

**What other data did you discuss and what conclusions did you reach regarding that data?**

Our group discussed a number of additional issues that relate to the understanding and capture of relevant assessment data within Gen-Ed courses:

1. We discussed how the specific ELO's are broken down into component parts related to historical practice (research, primary source analysis, citation style, etc.) and how to balance those in computing success rates in meeting the outcomes.
2. We still feel (as reported last year) that the purpose and structure of our General Education program is somewhat in flux, making it difficult to standardize our systems of assessment. Gen-Ed courses require a consistent, coherent system of measuring outcomes, capable of generating actionable data.
3. Given that many of our students enter college level history classes with limited experience in the discipline (which is not uniformly required throughout high school curricula), and that there are no remedial programs like those in Math and Writing, it is unlikely that we will ever achieve 100% success rates in meeting ELO's.


**Based on data that you analyzed and conclusion you drew from this analysis, list all items that were chosen for action by your program area:**

We will work next year on improving the precision with which we define our ELOs in the gen ed syllabi. We will also discuss and possibly develop a standard assignment that can be integrated into all our gen ed courses to provide a reliable point of comparison in evaluating the respective outcomes.

**Describe any follow-up on plans and actions from the previous assessment cycle in your program area.**

None.

**Provide any recommendations for items that require resources outside the control of your general education program area or require action on behalf of another general education action area (or academic unit).**

None.

# Assessment Report for General Education Expressive Arts Category

## 3.28.163:30pmMain Hall

**Attendees: Judy Ulrich, Eva Mastandrea, Francis Davis, Michael Hengler, Brenna Saxton**

**Leading discussion & reporting: Judy Ulrich & Brenna Saxton.**

1. **What are the primary LEAP essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that you propose to define courses that belong to the Expressive Arts category?**

Critical Thinking

Creative Thinking

**During 2015-16, to what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**

- Eva (visual arts): Did not provide a number
- Francis (creative writing):

(I offer my students a significant amount of critical and creative thinking opportunities in my Introduction to Creative Writing 240 classes, fully meeting the ELO requirements.

These opportunities include, but are not limited to, writing major assignments (both individual projects, such as crafting a short story, and group work, such as writing and performing a ten-minute play), Moodle discussion posts of published poems, workshop discussions of student work, and self-reflective cover letters included in a portfolio of work submitted by each student at the end of a block.)

- Michael (visual arts): Did not provide a number
- Judy (theatre):

Creative thinking – 75% -- as assessed by daily "What did I learn today?" journal entries; essay exam reflections on the creative work of peers, notable artists; and own creative work (improvisational drama, creating sculpture and architectural models; creating film story boards)

Critical thinking – 80% -- as assessed by daily "What did I learn today?" journal entries; essay exam reflections on the creative work of peers, notable artists; and own creative work (improvisational drama, creating sculpture and architectural models; creating film story boards)

**3. Are there secondary LEAP ELOs that you found to be addressed in a significant number of courses that belong to the Expressive Arts category?**

Not significantly, said Michael and Eva

Writing, said Judy and Fran

**4. What other data did you discuss and what conclusions did you reach?**

We discussed the use of critiques (oral and written) by peers and professor; oral presentations;\sketchbooks and models; portfolios, self-evaluation; in-class and Moodle discussions; and before-and-after essays in assessing the expressive arts throughout each class. We have come to the conclusion that these high-taxonomy and progress-based tools competently assess how students meet class objectives and the LEAP essential learning outcomes.

5. **List the action items for your program area:**

- Add prerequisites to some of the visual arts classes
- Enforce attendance assignments for performances and guest speakers, Dances with Words, and the like
- Collaborate more between professors and courses (such as helping each other with resources and access to venues and inter-class projects)
- Track individual student progress and needs throughout the expressive arts GenEd category
- Reinforce themes being taught in other expressive arts classes and throughout the Gen Ed program
- Encourage GenEds to be completed by the end of sophomore year
- Implement linked courses

**Describe any follow-up plans and actions from the previous assessment cycle in your program area:**

- Implemented a new 2-year certification and BA program for the Visual and Performance Arts department
- Hosted more diverse guests
- Acquired a performance arts fund to supplement budget
- Will soon begin construction for a third performance venue (Legacy Plaza)

- Continued to upgrade equipment
- Strong collaboration with drama and art clubs
- Created three new honors courses for Expressive Arts category
- Creative writing course students have published in the Twisted Ink online newsletter
- Adjusted courses and student interactions based on previous feedback, reports, and review of student success
- Proposed a new glass-blowing curriculum
- Created new performing arts series, with sponsorship by local business
- Continued growth in attendance by students at Dances With Words

**Do you have any recommendations for items that need action above or outside of your General Education program area?**

- Continue visiting artists and writers programs
- If writing or oral skills to be part of Gen Ed program outcomes, they must be met through courses in which direct instruction is provided

**8. Were there any other issues and concerns you discussed?**

We discussed concern over the current budget cut and how that has effected courses and opportunities for creative exposure outside of campus. Department budgets have remained the same for decades or have decreased, which limits the number of field trips that can be afforded or validated fund-wise.   Class fees and ticket sales (which have not increased in years), and the largess of the student senate (for guest artist support, student ticket-waivers to shows, club support [Twisted Ink, drama, music, and art club) cannot be counted on to support the academic program.

Faculty development funds and funds for travel to conferences needs to be increased.

There was also concern over the lack of tenure-track professors available. In order to have and give permanence to our faculty, we would like to encourage more tenure-track positions. We feel this would positively affect the expressive arts and General Education programs in general.

# Assessment Report for General Education

# LITERARY & ARTISTIC STUDIES Category

**April 4, 2016    Main Hall 206**

**Attendees: Ashley Carlson, Brent McCabe, Delena Norris-Tull, Judy Ulrich**

**Leading discussion & reporting: Judy Ulrich**

1. **What are the primary LEAP essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that you propose to define courses that belong to the Expressive Arts category?**

Written and oral communication skills

Critical Thinking

**During 2015-16, to what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**

Written and oral communication skills

       Brent:  85-90%

       Judy:  80%

Critical Thinking

       Brent: 85-90% -- probably the best Music Lit class I've had so this is probably a conservative number for that course.   (Also teaches History of Rock & Roll in this category)

       Judy:  75%

(Others declined to give numbers)

**Are there secondary LEAP ELOs that you found to be addressed in a significant number of courses that belong to the LITERARY AND ARTISTIC STUDIES category?**

Not yet – agreement that we need to focus on the two for now (actually there are three, since oral and written communication are basically two separate items).

**What other data did you discuss and what conclusions did you reach?**

(Judy's notes – This part of the discussion was the most productive component of our meeting, it seems – and we spend most of our time on these matters: what we did that was successful – or not – what we might do in our next classes, clarifying for students (and ourselves and our peers, what ELO assessment means, and the like.   )

English teaches only three General Education classes that have multiple sections: WRIT 101, LIT 110, and CRWR 240. Of these classes, LIT 110 was taught for the first time this year so both instructors, Bethany Blankenship and Ashley Carlson, constructed their own syllabus using various outcomes offered by the LIT matrix on the BOR Transfer website. Because the LIT matrix offered no consistent outcomes in LIT 110, Ashley and Bethany consulted and shared outcomes.

I believe we also need to clarify that it's most helpful if all faculty who teach courses during given the academic year in this category contribute to these discussions.

Ashley – used quantitative assessment in Lit 169 – such as historical links to JANE EYRE, SHERLOCK HOLMES, LORD OF THE RINGS, HARRY POTTER, as well as contemporary links; 1890's newpapers to SHERLOCK;   used MLA elements in scoring rubrics, too.  Links to fan fiction, too.

Brent - In both History of R & Roll and in Music Literature -- Lots of facts and knowledge in the beginning of the block.  I do concert reviews (which didn't work so well in R&Roll History this time so I might change the rubric for this particular class.  The didn't follow it as they didn't understand it, and they focused on book report and wikipedia style info.)   These are either 4 short essays or a longer one and 3 short ones. . . or an option.  Oral presentations, too; some are team presentations; at least 2 formal oral presentations, with informal lead-ins or practice presentations.

 Score assignments, etc. with rubrics using different proficiencies.  Use Bloom's taxonomy.

Sometimes constructed own tests, some rubrics.

Integrate music to science & just about everything.  For example, "classical" to R & Roll.  Making connections, strong critical thinking. American History – e.g. Industrial Revolution and great migrations connected to Rock and Roll.    Leap Outcome connections very high in this course, too.  "Essential Questions" covered.   Connecting disciplines; this time around I had to make connections.

Delena – PHIL 241: had about 50% freshmen and 50% sophomores through seniors.   She scaffolded critical thinking items within rubrics, and then added more of these items on critical thinking for the last paper . . . .  Used the Ed rubric for written and oral comm skills, but didn't assess it that thoroughly because I didn't teach it directly.     Not going to push oral communication too much (keep with "practice and not fainting) as two ELO's are enough (that is, oral communication is essentially a third ELO).

I added APA rubric format to the writing skills scoring rubmis; I will add MLA rubric to the appropriate courses, too.

Judy – ARTH 160:  Direct instruction of critical thinking skills includes analyzing art work of notable artists, peers' work, own work, and arts events on campus. . .  students read about and discuss what critical thinking is, in-class practice, criteria for analysis.   Textbook has some material, too.   Only two formal essays and two essay exams, so not much data within 18 days.  Similar processes with oral and written communication.   "Bar is raised" as weeks progress (for students to demonstrate – both ELO's

(Judy's note – Since this meeting I have thought about trying to align scoring rubrics for some graded activities, across different classes in this category, and have asked Delena if she'd like to give it a try next year, perhaps in both critical thinking and communication skills.   Perhaps, too, we can try similar direct teaching activities in these areas, so we reinforce common terms, build upon skills from one semester to the next – perhaps this can be a discussion via email over the summer and at our August meeting.)

**List the action items for your program area:**

Delena: In Hist and Philosophy of Science, since I have all levels (e.g. freshmen through seniors, I have four levels of proficiency – so I'll use that.

All: agree to share rubrics.

Ashley: English upper division courses – the rubrics and expectations are higher.    The categories are the same but percentages change.   Her rubrics have solid criteria.

All: None of us seem to directly grade group work, so perhaps we should come up for something, commonly used, for that.

**Describe any follow-up plans and actions from the previous assessment cycle in your program area:**

Delena: I'd like to do more direct instruction for oral presentations – I'll try

Judy: Overall, in any gen ed course which identifies (as an ELO) and assesses written and oral communication, I'd like to see more direct instruction

**Do you have any recommendations for items that need action above or outside of your General Education program area?**

Improve the following:

- library budget
- faculty development funds
- support for guest teachers, artists, etc.

**Were there any other issues and concerns you discussed?**

Need to get together again before syllabi and assessments are "solidified" before fall.

Need to encourage others to directly participate in these efforts.

# Assessment Report for General Education Categories

**General Education Category**:  Mathematics
**Time & date of meeting**:  March 23, 2016, 3:30
**Attendance**:   Eric Dyreson, Debbie Seacrest, Tyler Seacrest, Liz Vandree, Eric Wright.


**What are the primary LEAP essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that define courses that belong to your general education category?**
Quantitative Literacy (QL)
Problem Solving (PS)
Inquiry and Analysis (IA)


**To what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**
Performing a wide array of calculations is an important and necessary building block in QL, PS, and IA, and we felt this aspect of the ELOs were met.  Depending on the instructor, other aspects of these ELOs could use further improvement.  Examples needing improvement include creating correct mathematical representations of story problems (QL), adopting the right theoretical framework for attacking a problem (IA), and evaluating a solution (PS).  When we did meet these learning outcomes, we wished we could cover a wider breadth of topics and not sacrifice any of the calculation-based fluency.


**Are there any secondary LEAP ELOs you found that were addressed in a significant number of the courses from your general education category?**
Not at this time.

**To what degree were these ELOs attained by your program area?**
Not applicable.

**What other data did you discuss and what conclusions did you reach regarding that data?**
We didn't discuss other data at this time.

**Based on data that you analyzed and conclusion you drew from this analysis, list all items that were chosen for action by your program area:**
In regards to improving our attainment of the ELOs, we talked about reorganizing a course so that issues that we indicated could use improvement are constantly being thought about and practiced right alongside the calculation based building blocks of the course.   We also talked about how experiential

components, such as students taking data outside of course, can give context, build intuition, and ultimately help students understand these issues.

We talked about how we wanted to make it more explicit to students of the course through our course syllabi the meaning and purpose of the ELOs, exactly how they tie into the course outcomes, and how the ELOs will be assessed within a given course.  Also through our course syllabi, we wanted to emphasize how each course meets the university mission of using concentrated experiential education.

We had a discussion regarding how we wanted to improve our assessment in the future.  We decided it would be a good first step to have all the instructors identify or create problems and assignments that measure learning outcomes that match well with the ELOs.  After assessing student work, we will tally up the scores and bring them to the yearly mathematical general education assessment meeting. However, this may require us more precisely defining what we mean by QL, PS, and IA in the context of our discipline, and more thoughtfully mapping our course learning outcomes to the ELOs.

**Describe any follow-up on plans and actions from the previous assessment cycle in your program area.**
Like we mentioned in the previous assessment cycle, we want to continue to have discussions of specific examples of assignments and student work that embodies the ELOs, so that we have a better collective sense of what they mean, what it looks like to attain them, and how to better structure our classes to attain them.

**Provide any recommendations for items that require resources outside the control of your general education program area or require action on behalf of another general education action area (or academic unit).**
We greatly appreciate the IT department continuing to support our mathematical software such as *Mathematica* and *Matlab*, and continuing to build internet and wireless infrastructure to support use of these programs.

**(Upload to Moodle by End of Block 7 of each year)**

**MM/DD/YY of Completion:** ____04/5/2016_____

**Person Preparing Form:** ___Steve Mock_____(**name**); _____(**signature**)

**1) Attachments:** Table of results for Natural Sciences Gen Ed courses. Results were generated by self-reporting of professors within Natural Sciences (Env. Science and Biology).

**2) Names of Faculty Actively Participating in Annual Assessment:**

Wendy Ridenour, Mike Morrow, Craig Zaspel, Karl Ulrich, Swede Troedson, Steve Mock

**3) LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes Assessed:**

Inquiry and Analysis, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving

**4) Means of Assessment:**

Project reports, exam questions/problems, oral presentations, lab reports

**5) Brief Commentary:**

There was no survey data taken this year so data was not easily available, easy to compile, or uniformly submitted.

As a group, we have now agreed that we will always include three ELOs into each of our courses: Inquiry and Analysis, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving.

The results we were able to compile this year show results consistent with last year: 70-90 of the students achieve the designated ELOs in the Natural Sciences General Education courses.

**6) Area/s for Targeted Improvement:**

a. Most importantly, we believe that there should be some form electronic survey so that data can be easily and uniformly submitted, accessed, and compiled.

b. Each Natural Science Gen Ed class should be sure to assess <u>each</u> of the three ELOs.

c. Ensure that all course syllabi include ELOs as well as SLOs mapped to the appropriate ELOs.

d. Ensure that all Gen Ed classes assess these ELOs and report the results on the (not currently available) electronic survey instrument.


**7) Plan/s to Implement and Assess Targeted Improvements:**

Members of the group agreed to place additional effort into the above areas 6b-d.

**8) Financial or Other Resources Necessary to Facilitate Planned Improvements:**

No significant resources are necessary but we would like to see that whoever creates and maintains the assessment surveys tailor the surveys to each Gen Ed area (i.e., Natural Sciences) to help ensure consistent selection of ELOs.  We would also like to receive back the results of specific course surveys to each instructor.

# Natural Sciences General Education Assessment Data for AY 2015-16
## April 5, 2016

The following are data that were submitted by individual instructors as there was no electronic survey instrument in place. Each instructor determined themselves how to assess the Essential Learning Outcomes and what constituted a measure of each student meeting (or not) the outcome).

Essential Learning Outcomes assessed: Inquiry and Analysis (IA), Critical Thinking (CT), and Problem Solving (PS). Data shown indicated percentage of students achieving each outcome.

| Course | Block | Instructor | I&A | CT | PS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PSYX 103 | 2 | Zaspel | 89 | 82 | 87 |
| ASTR 110 | 3 | Zaspel | 93 | 75 | 85 |
| BIOB 101 | 6 | Morrow | 81 | 81 | 81 |
| BIOB 101 | 2 | Ridenour | 94 | 82 | -- |
| BIO 160 | 4 | Gilbert | 70-90 | 70-90 | 70-90 |
| CHMY 141 | 5 | Gilbert | 70-90 | 70-90 | 70-90 |
| CHMY 141 | 1 | Mock | 63 | 85 | 55 |
| CHMY 141 | 2 | Mock | 92 | 83 | 70 |

**General Education Committee**
**Annual Assessment Reporting Form**

**MM/DD/YY of Completion:** 18 May 2016

**Person Preparing Form:** O. Alan Weltzien, Shane Borrowman

1)  **Names of Faculty involved with Assessment of Written Communication:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| W. (Jed) Berry | Bethany Blankenship | Shane Borrowman |
| Ashley Carlson | Sally Cobau | Francis Davis |
| Teresa Pletch | O. Alan Weltzien | |

2)  **LEAP Essential Outcomes Assessed:**
    Written Communications
    Inquiry and Analysis
    Foundations for Lifelong Learning

3)  **Means of Assessment:**
    Student Essays
    Student Projects
    Course Syllabi
    Reports on Final Grades

4)  **Analysis:**
    Instructors of WRIT 101 once again reported attaining, with an overwhelming majority of students, the three primary ELOs, with a slightly lower level of attainment or satisfaction with Foundations of Lifelong Learning. I again determined that two secondary LEAP ELOs— Information Literacy and Critical and Creative Thinking—form a routine part of instruction and pedagogy in WRIT 095 and 101. With these two secondary ELO's, a lower level of attainment was recorded (but one that indicates more than a majority level of satisfaction).

    As with two years ago, this group emphasized the crudeness of the formerly used Survey Monkey instrument for data collection regarding WRIT 095 and 101 and ELOs. We've reviewed, again, the value of teaching some practical skills in 095/101 as well as the desire to avoid clichéd, polemical topics in this course. We continue to visit about the advantages and disadvantages of common topics and the relation of this class to the needed "culture of college" kind of freshman seminar (UMW having had a skills-based transition course at certain times in the near past).

    In Writing, specifically, and English courses, generally, experiential education forms the foundation of our work at Montana Western. In WRIT 095 and WRIT 101, plus general-education courses like CRWR 240 Introduction to Creative Writing, students master the skills

employed by professional writers, including peer-review activities and the formal preparation of/presentation of written work in academic and non-academic settings.

Beyond WRIT and CRWR courses, students engage in a wide range of experiential-learning activities in their other general-education classes in English (best exemplified by prompts taken directly from the appropriate syllabi).

_from_ LIT 110 Introduction to Literature:
In her textbook, Kelly Mays writes, "Rather than talking _about_ things, [writers] bring them to life for us by _representing_ experience, and so they _become_ an experience for us—one that engages our emotions, our imagination, and all of our senses, as well as our intellects.

How specifically can a literary work do this for you?

In this class, experiential learning means learning to think like critical reader: that is, you must understand how literature applies to your own experience.  By exploring the question, How do I experience literature, you will learn how literature creates experiences for you. As we've learned throughout this course, literature often has common threads running through it, no matter which author produced it. Writing this essay gives you the opportunity to understand on a deeply personal and critical level just how connected your experiences are to the world through its literature.

_from_ LIT 274: Geoffrey Chaucer and the Manuscript Tradition:
For your manuscript project, you will write an explication (at least 5 pages) AND illuminate at least 5 lines of medieval poetry or prose. This assignment is designed to encourage both your creative and critical sides, the combination of which will lead you to a deeper understanding of the cultural context in which medieval writers composed.

An explication is an explanation; that is, you'll thoroughly explain the meaning YOU find in the words and figurative language used by the writer. The lines you choose to explicate will be the lines you illuminate…ah, experiential learning.

_from_ LIT 285: Mythologies:
Remnants of ancient myths are present everywhere today from our cars (Honda Odyssey) to our on-line bookstores (Amazon). But beyond just the titles of myths and their characters' names, mythological themes and concepts, now, more than ever, make up the majority of film and book plots. The hero's journey, in particular, is told again and again.

Why do certain ancient myths keep getting retooled and retold? Because myths matter.

In this class, experiential learning means learning to think like Joseph Campbell: that is, you must understand how myths apply to your own experience. By exploring the question, Why do myths matter?, you will learn how mythological motifs apply to your experiences through what you see every day. As we've learned throughout this course, myths often have common threads running through them, no matter what culture produced them. Writing this essay gives you the opportunity to understand on a deeply personal level just how connected your experiences are to the world through its myths.

5) **Areas for improvement:**
In 2016-2017, we will begin a formal assessment of students in WRIT 095 and WRIT 101 in two ways. Students will, on the first day of all WRIT classes, write to a common prompt, and this writing will be evaluated based upon a shared rubric. Additionally, WRIT 101 students will now be assessed in the same programmatic way that students in LIT 110 and LIT 300 currently are (a blind-assessment with a shared rubric appropriately linked to the outcomes for WRIT 101 held in common across the MUS):

--Read texts thoughtfully, analytically, and critically in preparation for writing tasks.
--Use writing as a means to engage in critical inquiry by exploring ideas, challenging assumptions, and reflecting on and applying the writing process.
--Develop multiple, flexible strategies for writing, particularly inventing, organizing, drafting, revising, and copyediting.
--Formulate an assertion about a given issue and support that assertion with evidence appropriate to the issue, position taken, and given audience.
--Demonstrate an understanding of research as a process of gathering, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources.
--Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation and audience.
--Demonstrate proficiency in the use of the conventions of language and forms of discourse, including grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics.

Additionally, we continue to discuss our use of shared texts, assignments, and rubrics across our general-education curriculum. Significant staffing changes across the last four years have caused this work to stall, but it is our expectation that the stability now present in the English Department's staffing will allow for both meaningful analysis of our work with assessment across the last few years and our efforts as we move forward.