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Georgia Southwestern State University
Americus, Georgia  31709
Assessment of general education outcomes is conducted according to the procedures outlined in the General Education Manual. These procedures provide for assessment of outcomes on a three-year rotation. During academic year 2011-2012 outcomes were assessed for Area A1 (communication), Area A2 (mathematics), and Goal III (critical thinking). In all areas, assessment was conducted in courses that satisfy the specified component of the Core Curriculum. All assessments were successfully conducted, results were shared among faculty in the academic departments involved, and responses to the results were crafted. A description of these assessments, results of assessment, and response to the results are on the following pages.

The procedures for assessment of general education also provide that each fall a plan will be submitted for assessment to be conducted during that academic year. For academic year 2012-2012 outcomes will be assessed for Area C (Humanities/Fine Arts), Area E (Social Sciences), and Goal 1 (US Perspectives). Plans for assessing these outcomes in courses that satisfy these components of the Core Curriculum are included as part of this report.
Assessment of Core Area A1: Communication
Learning Outcome: Students will be able to write effectively for a variety of audiences to
demonstrate collegiate-level development in various contexts.

To assess students’ mastery of this learning outcome writing skills were assessed in
ENG1101 and ENG1102 during the spring 2012 semester. The intent was to demonstrate
development of writing skills as students progress through the course sequence. In ENG1101
students’ midterm writing assignments were collected in LiveText (n=153). In ENG1102 an
assigned research paper was collected in LiveText (n=112). These student artifacts were
evaluated by a faculty committee using a rubric developed by the faculty of the Department of
English and Modern Languages. Faculty evaluators were trained in the use of LiveText and the
rubric and consistency of evaluation was tested.

Results showed that few of the students exceeded expectations for writing skills and that
a substantial number of students even in ENG1102 failed to meet expectations (Tables 1 and 2)

| Table 1. Results of assessment of writing skills for ENG1101, Spring 2012 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                            | Mean | Mode | Stdev | Exceeds (3 pts) | Meets (2 pts) | Falls Below Expectations (1 pts) |
| Purpose                    | 1.88 | 2    | 0.64  | 23             | 88            | 42                           |
| Conceptual                 | 1.76 | 2    | 0.62  | 16             | 85            | 52                           |
| Development/Research       | 1.68 | 1    | 0.74  | 25             | 54            | 74                           |
| Structure/Organization     | 1.75 | 2    | 0.62  | 15             | 85            | 53                           |
| Language                   | 1.9  | 2    | 0.48  | 11             | 116           | 26                           |

| Table 2. Results of assessment of writing skills for ENG1102, Spring 2012 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                            | Mean | Mode | Stdev | Exceeds (3 pts) | Meets (2 pts) | Falls Below Expectations (1 pts) |
| Purpose                    | 1.77 | 2    | 0.63  | 12             | 62            | 38                           |
| Conceptual                 | 1.75 | 2    | 0.61  | 10             | 64            | 38                           |
| Development/Research       | 1.71 | 2    | 0.68  | 14             | 50            | 46                           |
| Structure/Organization     | 1.63 | 2    | 0.61  | 8              | 54            | 49                           |
| Language                   | 1.79 | 2    | 0.55  | 8              | 73            | 31                           |

These results were shared with faculty in the Department of English and Modern
Languages and possible responses were discussed. The faculty are not convinced that the
midterm in 1101 is accurately reflecting our students’ work. Anecdotal evidence from professors
suggests, for example, that the readings for the F12 midterm were considerably more complex
than previous exams. More than one professor has expressed frustration at the way this was
reflected in their students’ essays. So, we plan to change the 1101 midterm to an assessment that
allows students to choose an artifact from their essays in 1101 that they decide reflects the
critical thinking and gen ed writing standards. The artifact will require source integration and
will be due in Livetext at the end of the term. The faculty think that this shift will more accurately reflect the outcome of the writing process that is being taught in 1101. Additionally, it will function like a mini portfolio in that the students will choose the appropriate artifact and will, arguably, have to use critical thinking to address that part of the process as well.

The data from the writing template is not what faculty would expect since the 1101 students seem to have written better essays than the 1102 students. The faculty feel that changing the artifact for 1101 will result in a truer comparison of data since the 1101 artifact was considerably more prescriptive than the 1102. For example, for 1101 the students didn’t do any research; the research was given to them. The 1102 artifact is based on research the student has acquired.

For academic year 2012-2013 the Department of English and Modern Languages will be conducting assessment of writing skills using the modified approach (described above) in an attempt to collect data that better represent students’ mastery of this learning outcome.
Assessment of Core Area A2: Mathematics

Learning Outcome: Students will be able to analyze and apply mathematical concepts in various forms in order to solve a variety of quantitative problems.

At the end of the spring term [2012] the Mathematics Department evaluated the proficiency of core level mathematics students in solving a single problem based on the content of each separate course in the core, MATH 1101 [Elementary Mathematical Modeling], MATH 1111 [College Algebra], MATH 1113 [Precalculus], and MATH 1120 [Calculus I]. The assessment used the five-point rubric spelled out in the General Core Assessment Document, and reproduced in a footnote [1]. The results are presented below, both as a combined assessment of all these courses, and for individual courses separately. Notice that 51% of students in Mathematics core courses had little or no proficiency in solving a content-based problem. The situation was somewhat similar for the individual courses MATH 1101, 50%; MATH 1111, 61%; MATH 1113, 32%; MATH 1120, 64%. These numbers are much worse than those for comparable courses taken in the fall of 2011. Unfortunately, this is no great surprise, since department records suggest that students with weaker mathematical skills tend to populate spring-term classes. Following up, the Department will continue to address this issue in a number of ways: more emphasis on translation of problems into symbolic language, and on practical problem solving methods. In addition, the faculty will try to sharpen problem-solving skills by requiring that students include explanations to justify steps in the problem-solving process. There is also a project to develop prototypes of MATH Workstations for all core-level Mathematics courses, starting with MATH 1111. This should be ready in spring 2013.

Combined Assessment

5. 15%
4. 11%
3. 23%
2. 10%
1. 15%
0. 26%

Individual Course Assessment

MATH 1101

5. 6%
4. 19%
3. 25%
2. 6%
1. 19%
0. 25%

MATH 1111
5. 22%
4. 0%
3. 17%
2. 13%
1. 22%
0. 26%

MATH 1113

5. 14%
4. 18%
3. 36%
2. 7%
1. 11%
0. 14%

MATH 1120

5. 16%
4. 8%
3. 12%
2. 12%
1. 12%
0. 40%

Samples of student work, with rubric scores, are included as separate PDF files, one for each randomly selected class per course.

[1] Rubric for Mathematics  [5 point scale]

5. Solves the given problem, and in a way which has a wider range of applicability (A, B)
4. Solves the given problem. (A, B)
3. Understands the given problem and attempts to solve it, but fails to get an acceptable solution. (C)
2. Shows evidence of understanding the problem, but does not attempt to solve it. (D)
1. Fails to understand the problem, but attempts a solution. (F)
0. Does nothing or submits an attempt that suggests little effort. (F)
Assessment of Goal III: Critical Thinking
Student Learning Outcome: Students will be able to analyze and evaluate the main issues that relate to problems or texts, and then apply an organized, coherent and accurate response.

To assess student mastery of this learning outcome writing samples collected in ENG1101 and ENG1102 during spring 2012 (the same writing samples used to assess writing skills, see Assessment of Area A1 above) were collected using LiveText. These student artifacts were evaluated by a faculty committee using a rubric developed by the faculty of the Department of English and Modern Languages. Faculty evaluators were trained in the use of LiveText and the rubric and consistency of evaluation was tested.

Results show that students fell below expectations in the areas of analyzing, integrating, and evaluating source material (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Assessment of students’ critical thinking skills in ENG1101, spring 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Stdev</th>
<th>Level 5 (5 pts)</th>
<th>Level 4 (4 pts)</th>
<th>Level 3 (3 pts)</th>
<th>Level 2 (2 pts)</th>
<th>Level 1 (1 pts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualize</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Assessment of students’ critical thinking skills in ENG1102, spring 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Stdev</th>
<th>Level 5 (5 pts)</th>
<th>Level 4 (4 pts)</th>
<th>Level 3 (3 pts)</th>
<th>Level 2 (2 pts)</th>
<th>Level 1 (1 pts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualize</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results were discussed by faculty in the Department of English and Modern Languages. The faculty discussed ways to specifically address the problem with analyzing, integrating, and evaluating source material. One strategy being employed is a series of workshops offered by the Writing Center including a Plagiarism Workshop, a Citation Workshop, and a Writing Across the Curriculum Workshop.
Plan for Assessment of Area C: Humanities and Fine Arts
Student Learning Outcome: Students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning literature, and one of the fine or performing arts.

To assess student mastery of this learning outcome during the spring 2012 semester a student writing assignment that contains all components of the outcome will be assessed using a rubric developed by faculty members in that area. For example: in Art Appreciation classes the assignment chosen to assess this outcome is a final paper the students are required to write. The topic is for the students to research a chosen piece of art and critically analyze the work, both conceptually and formally, from an educated platform and based upon what they have learned in the class.

Final Paper Assignment
Learning outcomes:

1. Identify and critique the visual elements/formal qualities of a given work of art. Visual elements/formal qualities include: line, shape, value, texture, and color.
2. Identify and critique the design elements of a given work of art. Design elements include: balance emphasis, scale and proportion, and rhythm.
3. Analyze and discuss the contextual importance of the work of art. Contextual importance includes: historical time period in which the work was created, environment in which the work was exhibited, political climate of the day in which it was created vs. political climate in which the work is being viewed currently.
4. Critique the artwork’s conceptual expression and impact. Conceptual expression and impact include: artist statement and artist intent, viewer’s interpretation of the work, impact on society and/or relevance to society.

Numbers one and two in the above chart fulfill the General Education student learning outcomes involving factual knowledge concerning fine arts. Numbers three and four in the above chart fulfill the General Education student learning outcomes involving conceptual knowledge concerning fine arts.

Grading rubric for this assignment is as follows:

40 points = thorough discussion of conceptual components of the work: artist’s intent, citing artist’s statement, cultural context, environmental context, context of location of the exhibition and current political climate, purpose of alternative presentation, etc...

40 points = thorough analysis of the formal components of the work/visual elements: medium used, line, shape, color, texture, value.

This assessment has been piloted during the Fall 2012 semester and will be implemented Spring 2013.
Plan for Assessment of Area E: Social Sciences
Student Learning Outcome: Students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning historical and societal dynamics.

Plan for Assessment of Goal 1: US Perspectives
Student Learning Outcome: Students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning historical and societal dynamics within the United States.

The Department of History & Political Science offers five general education courses in Area E of the Georgia Southwestern State University curriculum: World Civilization I & II, U.S. History I & II, and American Government. Area E emphasis is placed on the social sciences and it has the specific mission of ensuring that “students will be able to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning historical and societal dynamics.” Goal 1 stipulates that students be able to articulate such knowledge with respect to the U.S. context.

Sections (both in-class and online) of each of these five courses will therefore be assessed in the spring 2013 term. The courses will be assessed respectively by Drs. Bragg and Robins (U.S. History), Drs. Martin and Parkinson (World Civilization), and Drs. Berggren, Smith, and Kline (American Government).

With the final exams, instructors in the courses will include several essay questions that look at the ability of students “to articulate factual and conceptual knowledge concerning historical and societal dynamics.” The rubrics below will be used to evaluate student work, and a summary of results will be compiled.

The rubrics to be applied in HIST 1111 & 1112, World Civilization I & II:
5 - Provides accurate, comprehensive, and complex analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the U.S. context and is able to articulate knowledge in clear and precise language.
4 – Provides concise and accurate analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the world context and is able to articulate knowledge in effective language.
3 – Provides only major and basic analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the world context and is able to articulate knowledge in acceptable language.
2 – Provides only basic and generally accurate analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the world context and cannot articulate knowledge in acceptable language.
1 – Provides minimal and partially accurate analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the world context and cannot articulate knowledge in acceptable language.

The rubrics to be applied in HIST 1111 & 1112, U.S. History I & II:
5 - Provides accurate, comprehensive, and complex analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the U.S. context and is able to articulate knowledge in clear and precise language.
4 – Provides concise and accurate analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the U.S. context and is able to articulate knowledge in effective language.
3 – Provides only major and basic analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the U.S. context and is able to articulate knowledge in acceptable language.
2 – Provides only basic and generally accurate analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the U.S. context and cannot articulate knowledge in acceptable language.
1 – Provides minimal and partially accurate analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the U.S. context and cannot articulate knowledge in acceptable language.
1 – Provides minimal and partially accurate analysis of the historical facts and societal dynamics within the U.S. context and cannot articulate knowledge in acceptable language.

The rubrics to be applied in POLS 1101, American Government:
(4) Strong performance – the student demonstrates excellent comprehension of factual and conceptual knowledge concerning historical and societal dynamics, and is able to articulate it in clear and precise language;
(3) Satisfactory performance – the student demonstrates basic comprehension, though some factual or conceptual errors are in evidence, and is able to communicate it reasonably clearly;
(2) Weak performance – the student demonstrates only partial comprehension of factual and conceptual knowledge, and cannot articulate it in a clear manner;
(1) Unsatisfactory performance – the student fails to demonstrate a comprehension of the basic factual and conceptual knowledge, and consequently cannot communicate it in a clear manner.

Student mastery of the learning outcome for Area E will also be assessed using application of an appropriate rubric to a student writing assignment in courses satisfying this area of the Core Curriculum that are not taught within the Department of History and Political Sciences (e.g. PSYC1101, SOC1101).