



State University of New York College at Geneseo

Plan for the Assessment of General Education

February, 2002

Revised June, 2002

Introduction

Development of the Assessment Plan

The general education curriculum at SUNY Geneseo is organized into nine areas: Social Science, Natural Science, Fine Arts, Humanities, Critical Writing and Reading, Numeric and Symbolic Reasoning, Non-Western Traditions, U.S. History, and Foreign Language. In most of these areas, students fulfill general education requirements by choosing one or more courses from a list of eligible courses. (The most noteworthy exception is the Humanities requirement, which students fulfill by taking a two-semester sequence, Humanities I and Humanities II. Critical Writing and Reading is a quasi-exception, fulfilled through one course offered under a variety of topic headings.)

Each area has its own oversight committee charged with approving eligible courses or topics (or, in the case of Humanities, periodically reviewing and, when necessary, amending the course syllabus). The addition, deletion, or modification of general education courses requires approval first by the appropriate oversight committee, then by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee of the College Senate, and finally by the College Senate as a whole.

The same area committees responsible for overseeing the content of general education at Geneseo have now assumed responsibility for implementing outcomes assessment. A General Education Committee, chaired by the Dean of the College and representing the various general education areas as well as students, coordinates the activities of these area committees.

To arrive at the present Plan for the Assessment of General Education at Geneseo, each of the area committees developed its own list of learning outcomes. These lists were discussed with the Dean, with the Associate Dean principally responsible for general education, and with the Associate Provost before being revised and finalized. Each of the area committees then created its

own assessment plan. Because the outcomes in information management and oral discourse are not addressed exclusively within particular general education areas, but are instead met through activities and requirements diffused throughout Geneseo's curriculum, the assessment plans for these outcomes were drawn up by the General Education Committee itself.

Once drafted, the Plan for the Assessment of General Education at Geneseo was presented to the Executive Committee of the College Senate. The Executive Committee accepted the Plan and moved its acceptance at the College Senate meeting of February 5, 2002. The Senate voted unanimously to approve the Plan on first reading. The Assessment Planning Committee has reviewed the Plan and has made suggestions for revisions.

Reporting Procedure

The area oversight committees will submit their assessment reports to the Assessment Planning Committee. The reports will include:

- a description of improvements/actions taken based on previous assessments;
- the results of the current-year assessment;
- the number and percentage of students assessed;
- a description of how current assessment results will be used for improvement.

The APC will review the reports for suitability before forwarding them to the General Education Committee.

General education areas will conduct assessment on a three-year cycle. In addition, the general education learning outcomes related to oral discourse will be assessed within majors, and the results will be reported to the APC as part of each major's program assessment. The assessment of computer skills will be conducted by the library.

The planned three-year cycle is as follows:

- 2002-2003: Critical Writing and Reading, Numeric & Symbolic Reasoning, Humanities;
- 2003-2004: Social Science, Foreign Language, Fine Arts, Information Management;
- 2004-2005: Natural Science, US History, Non-western Traditions, Oral Discourse.

Validity and Reliability

Without exception, the oversight committees have chosen to use rubrics as their primary means of assessment. This method places responsibility for assessment at the committee level and is consistent with the current structure of general education at Geneseo. In some cases the rubrics will be used by area assessment

committees to evaluate representative samples of student work; in other cases they will be used in Primary Trait Analyses conducted by individual faculty members. *Rubrics and other assessment instruments referenced in this report are provided in a separate document titled "Assessment Tools for General Education."*

Rubrics are reliable only when applied consistently by different individual raters. To ensure that rubrics will be applied consistently within particular general education areas, the College will conduct a workshop every semester for those faculty actively involved in assessing general education outcomes. In these workshops, faculty will apply chosen rubrics to samples of student work and discuss the results. Together, practice and discussion should narrow the range of variation among individual raters sufficiently to ensure reliable and valid scoring.

Assessment of Assessment

The general education assessment program will be evaluated on a yearly basis and at the end of each three-year cycle. At the end of each year a subcommittee of the Assessment Planning Committee will meet with those general education faculty who have conducted assessment in their general education areas that year. The discussion will focus on any problems encountered in implementing assessment plans, possible improvements in the process, and any useful information gained from the assessment. In addition, student responses to the general education questions on the annual Senior Survey will be examined to determine whether the students have perceived improvements. At the end of the entire three-year cycle, all faculty teaching general education courses will be surveyed to evaluate their views of the assessment process and their perceptions of improvement in general education.

Areas Assessed in 2002-2003

Numeric and Symbolic Reasoning

SUNY MATHEMATICS OUTCOME

- Students will show competence in quantitative reasoning skills.

GENESEO NUMERIC AND SYMBOLIC REASONING OUTCOMES

Students will demonstrate:

1. the ability to convert a problem into a setting using symbolic notation;
2. the ability to connect and find relationships among symbolic quantities;
3. the ability to construct an appropriate symbolic framework;
4. the ability to carry out algorithmic and logical procedures to resolution;
5. the ability to draw valid conclusions from numeric/symbolic evidence.

Assessment Method

Because the Numeric and Symbolic Reasoning Requirement is met by courses offered by the Departments of Computer Science, Geography, Mathematics, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology, and because quantitative critical thinking is highly discipline-specific in matters of notation, terminology, and content, a generic test of reasoning skills would not adequately measure students' gains in critical thinking or help to improve classroom learning.

Instead of administering a standardized test, faculty who teach courses fulfilling this requirement will:

- select one of their classroom assignments testing critical thinking in their discipline;
- develop a detailed scoring rubric, in the form of a primary trait analysis;
- compile aggregated student scores using the rubric; and
- analyze the students' scores and determine whether changes in the classroom would help students improve their quantitative reasoning skills in the discipline.

At the end of the each year the Numeric and Symbolic Reasoning Committee will ask each instructor in a block of the courses (rotating on a three-year basis) to provide evidence that appropriate assessment is taking place. In one year the Mathematics courses, the Computer Science courses or the Social Science courses will be selected for review. Each instructor will be asked to present a classroom assignment or test, the scoring rubric, and aggregated student scores; an analysis of the data; and any changes planned for the enhancement of student critical thinking skills.

The Committee will review the materials forwarded from the classroom instructors. Faculty involvement in closing the loop at the classroom level is one of the key benefits of this classroom-based model. The Committee will report aggregated results both to faculty teaching courses for this requirement and to the Assessment Planning Committee.

Critical Writing and Reading

SUNY BASIC COMMUNICATION-WRITING OUTCOMES

- Produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms.
- Demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts.

SUNY CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES

- Identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or others' work.
- Develop well-reasoned arguments.

GENESEO CRITICAL WRITING AND READING OUTCOMES

1. Students will read significant texts carefully and critically, recognizing and responding to argumentative positions.
2. Students will write sustained, coherent and persuasive arguments on significant issues that arise from the content at hand.
3. Students will write clearly, following the conventions of Standard English.

Assessment Methods

A committee of faculty who teach Writing Seminar (Intd 105) will apply a common rubric to a sample of 50 student papers randomly selected from all sections of the course each semester. Results will be reported to faculty teaching sections of Writing Seminar and to the Assessment Planning Committee.

Humanities

SUNY HUMANITIES OUTCOME

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Assessment Methods

Outcomes 1 and 2 will be assessed using a representative sample of Humanities I and II final exams. Student responses to the essay question portion will be evaluated according to a scoring rubric. Rubric scores will be supplemented by collected faculty observations relevant to these two outcomes. As they read, faculty may record their thoughts about a single exam or, preferably, about patterns recurring on more than one exam. These thoughts may include critical assessments as to what Geneseo students are not yet achieving, or constructive suggestions as to how student outcomes could improve. In any event, these informal observations are to be offered in a spirit of open-ended inquiry and with an eye toward curricular and pedagogical improvement. Faculty will pass along their scores and subjective remarks, in written form, to the Humanities Core Committee. This entire record will form the basis for future Humanities faculty discussion and action.

Outcome 3 will be assessed using a representative sample of student Humanities I and II essays. Teams of two faculty readers will assess the sample using the appropriate rubric.

In the first assessment cycle for Humanities, outcome 4 will be assessed only in selected team-taught sections of Humanities in which the two instructors represent different disciplines. In these sections, the essays used to assess outcome 3 will be used, in conjunction with an expanded rubric, to assess outcome 4 as well. After the first cycle of assessment, outcomes 3 and 4 will be assessed in all sections.

Areas Assessed in 2003-2004

Social Science

SUNY SOCIAL SCIENCE O

4. Students will demonstrate understanding of social scientific methods of statistical or interpretative analysis.

GENESEO SOCIAL SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES

5. Students will demonstrate knowledge of some major social science concepts.
6. Students will demonstrate knowledge of some major social science models.
7. Students will demonstrate knowledge of some major social science concerns.

GENESEO KNOWLEDGE OF PUBLIC ISSUES OUTCOMES

8. Students will demonstrate knowledge of some social issues of concern to social scientists.
9. Students will demonstrate knowledge of some political issues of concern to social scientists.
10. Students will demonstrate knowledge of some economic issues of concern to social scientists.
11. Students will demonstrate knowledge of some moral issues of concern to social scientists.

Assessment Method

Each faculty member teaching a course in the Social Science area will do the following:

1. Select one classroom assignment which tests critical thinking in the discipline.
2. Score the assignment using the Social Science Rubric.
3. Compile aggregated student scores using the rubric.
4. Analyze the students' scores and determine whether changes in the classroom would help students improve their social science skills.

At the end of the year, the Social Science Committee will ask each instructor to provide evidence that appropriate assessment is taking place. Specifically, each instructor will be asked to present a classroom assignment or test, the scoring rubric and aggregated student scores, analyses of the data, and any changes the instructor plans for enhancing student social science skills. The committee will review the materials sent by the instructors and report results to the Assessment Planning Committee and to faculty teaching general education courses in Social Science.

Fine Arts

SUNY ARTS OUTCOME

- Understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.

GENESEO FINE ARTS OUTCOMES

- 1. Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret works of art by analyzing**

assessment coordinator, who will aggregate the results for all FL 201 courses. The coordinator will review the materials sent by the instructors and report results to the Assessment Planning Committee and to faculty teaching general education courses in Foreign Language.

Information Management, Basic Communication - Research

SUNY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES

- Perform the basic operations of personal computer use.
- Understand and use basic research techniques.
- Locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

SUNY BASIC COMMUNICATION - RESEARCH OUTCOME

- Research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details.

GENESEO INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Identify, access, and use the basic operating system features of a personal computer
 - a. User Name and Password
 - b. Basic Peripherals
 - c. Drives (saving, downloading)
 - d. File Management
2. Identify, access, and operate the appropriate software for a given task
 - a. Word processing
 - b. Presentation
 - c. Printing
3. Access and navigate the Intranet
 - a. Main – Locate, create folders, save, and retrieve information
 - b. Athena Outboxes – access, deposit, retrieve, and view files
4. Access, navigate, and evaluate information and resources on the Internet
 - a. College Pages
 - b. ERES
 - c. World Wide Web
5. Use a computer to communicate with others
 - a. CRT
 - b. Web mail
 - c. Eudora (freeware)/Outlook

3.

student names should be attached. A cover sheet on the set should indicate the course number and name and the section; however, this cover sheet will be removed and discarded when assessment is being done. The submitted set will be assessed using a common rubric. Results will be reported to faculty teaching courses for the Non-Western Traditions requirement and to the Assessment Planning Committee.

Natural Science

SUNY MATHEMATICS OUTCOME

- Data analysis.

SUNY NATURAL SCIENCE OUTCOMES

- Understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical analysis.
- Application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.

Assessment Method

Faculty who teach general education courses in natural science will apply a common rubric to sets of questions embedded in laboratory and lecture exams. Faculty will report the results to the Natural Science Committee, which will aggregate the results for all courses in that area. Objective examination (mostly multiple-choice) is the form of evaluation common to all general education courses in natural science. The assessment rubric will list the categories in each of the two outcomes for the identification and/or development of questions. Assessors will determine student success by the number of multiple-choice

