Abstract

Our poster describes practical strategies that are proving to be effective towards developing a system of assessment of general education at Cal Poly Pomona, a comprehensive public university in Southern California. The university named as a High Research-Intensive Institution in 2009 and has since embarked on a comprehensive system of assessment. Our process involved the utilization of faculty for a University GE Assessment Committee, the development of learning outcomes and the GE Program, the identification of appropriate GE classes to address each outcome, assignment of particular assessment methods, the creation of rubrics to evaluate the outcomes, and finally the formation of a faculty learning community to study the effectiveness of the outcomes. Each of these steps has been approached in a consultative manner that has engaged a busy faculty for whom assessment is not a top priority. We will share details of these steps and the results of the efforts.

1. Project Objectives

The Cal Poly Pomona GE Assessment Committee was formulated to Fall 2009 to develop a sustainable mechanism for Assessment of Learning Outcomes in the University General Education program. Committee members included faculty representatives from each of the seven Colleges on campus and the Vice President of Academic Programs. Our Committee was tasked to:

1. Develop Learning Outcomes for the GE program
2. Determine which Learning Outcomes are addressed by which specific GE courses.
3. Develop a series of tools and methods to assess each Learning Outcome, along with a 5-year timeline for implementing these assessment tools
4. Carry out and evaluate pilot efforts to implement different assessment tools.

2. GE Learning Outcomes

The Committee consulted Department Chairs and GE instructional faculty in developing language for the thirteen Learning Outcomes shown below. These Outcomes were modified from the LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Promise) outcomes to integrate with the five GE Areas covered by the Cal Poly Pomona GE program: Area A = Communication and Critical Thinking; Area B = Physical Science; Area C = Humanities; Area D = Social Science; Area E = Lifelong Understanding and Self-Development.

3. Mapping of Outcomes to GE Courses

A campus-wide survey of Department Chairs and GE Curriculum Coordinators was conducted to determine which GE Learning outcomes are addressed in specific GE courses. Response rate was excellent (94%), with 299 courses reporting out of a total of 318 GE courses taught in the University. The matrices to right map the Learning Outcomes addressed vs. the GE Area. The colored chart shows the degree of agreement between reported responses from various GE Areas. In general, Area B Physical Science courses tend to map with the Science-related Learning Outcomes (but not Humanities or Social Science-related outcomes), while Area C Humanities courses and Area D Social Science courses map well to their related Learning Outcomes (but less so to Science).

4. Assessment Timeline Development

The GE Assessment Committee met several times to discuss the types of direct and indirect Assessment Tools that might be appropriate for evaluation of each Learning Outcome. We also met with the University Graduate Writing Test committee to explore ways to utilize GWT results for evaluation of those outcomes that require writing mechanics or written reflection on social or global issues. The timeline at the right was designed to assess each of the Learning Outcomes at least twice over a five year period, using both direct and indirect assessment measures. The timeline brought out a need to develop rubrics for three Learning Outcomes (IIa, IIc and IIIa) for which previously tested rubrics were not available (see Part 5 below).

We are currently in Year 2 of this Five-Year Plan.

5. Rubric Design Workshop

Three teams of 8-10 GE instructors met during spring and summer of 2010 to devise rubrics for Learning Outcomes IIa, IIc and IIa. Instructors who participated in this workshop teach GE courses linked to these outcomes by the mapping matrix of Part 3 above. Below are the three resulting rubrics:

6. Analysis of GWT Results

We analyzed results of 6829 GWT exams from winter 2011. Junior or senior-level transfer students represented about half the scores. Among other metrics, pass rates for first-time test takers were compared between various cohorts with different levels of GE course experience. Results include:

* First time pass rates increased significantly from 84% to 99% for students who had taken 0 to 8 upper division GE synthesis courses taken.
* Non-transfer students generally had higher pass rates than transfer students, regardless of how many GE synthesis courses taken.
* Junior vs. senior class standing does not appear to matter; first time pass rate was 94% for both groups.

7. Rubric Pilot Results

* Rubrics For Outcomes IIa and IIc were piloted by teams of GE instructors who evaluated work products from Winter and Spring of 2011. Below are results from one of the classes scored with Rubic IIa:

**Both teams found that the rubric language could be modified to better communicate the wide range of GE courses identified in Part 3 and the variety of student work products encountered.

*** The Rubric IIc team suggested substantial changes to the wording of their rubric.

Conclusions / Next Steps

1. Thirteen GE Learning Outcomes were developed through faculty participation.
2. The Learning Outcomes map consistently to specific GE courses in five GE Areas addressed at Cal Poly Pomona.
3. A 5-year rolling timeline was devised to apply various direct and indirect assessment tools to the GE Learning Outcomes.
4. Through intensive engagement of GE instructors, rubrics were designed and piloted for three of the Learning Outcomes.
5. Results of the rubric pilot program and GWT scores indicate general applicability to GE Program Assessment.
6. Faculty suggestions for improving rubric language and evaluating GWT results will be incorporated into the next round of GE Program Assessment.

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Cal Poly Pomona Provost Martin den Boer provided stipends to support GE instructional faculty endeavors related to design and piloting of the rubrics. The Faculty Center provided a comfortable meeting place and refreshments to facilitate various workshops and Learning Communities.

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III. Develop social and global knowledge.

a. Explain the importance of active engagement in communities for the betterment of personal and public life.

b. Analyze and evaluate representations of diversity and injustice as they relate to personal and public life.

c. Assess and critique works that illuminate the role of diversity and difference in shaping the core institutions and practices of individuals and societies.

IV. Develop content knowledge:

a. Analyze and evaluate the development of diverse cultures and analyze the role that cultural diversity plays in shaping the core institutions and practices of individuals and societies.

b. Evaluate how cultural diversity shapes the development of individuals and societies.

c. Evaluate how cultural diversity shapes the development of individuals and societies.

d. Assess and critique works that illuminate the role of diversity and difference in shaping the core institutions and practices of individuals and societies.

V. Assess critical thinking:

a. Explain the development of diverse cultures and analyze the role that cultural diversity plays in shaping the core institutions and practices of individuals and societies.

b. Analyze and evaluate the development of diverse cultures and analyze the role that cultural diversity plays in shaping the core institutions and practices of individuals and societies.

c. Explain the development of diverse cultures and analyze the role that cultural diversity plays in shaping the core institutions and practices of individuals and societies.

VI. Communicate effectively:

a. Present ideas and arguments in appropriate and effective ways.

b. Present ideas and arguments in appropriate and effective ways.

c. Present ideas and arguments in appropriate and effective ways.

d. Evaluate the effectiveness of the rubrics. Each of the three teams of 8-10 GE instructors met during spring and summer of 2010 to devise rubrics for Learning Outcomes IIa, IIc and IIIa.

VII. Evaluate outcomes:

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VIII. Engaging Faculty In Assessment of General Education: A Case Study

Assistant Professor of Business Administration; Chari Pradel, Assistant Professor of Art; Claudia Pinter-Lucke, Associate Vice President of Academic Programs

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