

Assessing General Education Across the Curriculum

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New Jersey Council of County Colleges

- One of 19 community colleges in the Council.
- The Council coordinates policies and practices of the 19 community colleges.
- Must meet the Council Gen Ed criteria, but can add requirements or outcomes.

Our Gen Ed Program

- LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes were adopted in Spring 2013.
- Movement away from a distributive model to an integrative one.

Assessment Background

- First time to assess our General Education program.
- Wanted to assess students across the college.
- Wanted a faculty driven process.

Our Project

- The Gen Ed Committee looked at oral and written communication as well as critical and creative thinking.
- Faculty were invited to submit all their student artifacts from one assignment.
- A Gen Ed Assessment Committee evaluated the work of students who had a minimum of 45 credits using the LEAP Value rubrics.

Creative Thinking Value Rubric (24 points)

	Mean (Average)	Median
Acquiring Competencies	1.7	2.0
Taking Risks	1.6	1.0
Solving Problems	1.6	1.0
Embracing Contradictions	1.4	1.0
Innovative Thinking	1.5	1.0
Connecting, Synthesizing, Transforming	1.8	2.0
Total Score	8.7% or 36%	7.0 or 29%

Critical Thinking Value Rubric (20 points)

	Mean (Average)	Median
Explanation of Issues	2.5	3.0
Evidence	2.2	2.0
Influence of Context and Assumptions	2.2	2.0
Student's Position	2.1	2.0
Conclusions and Related Outcomes	2.1	2.0
Total Score	10.7 or 53%	10.0 or 50%

Written Communication Value Rubric (20 points)

	Mean (Average)	Median
Context of and Purpose for Writing	2.8	3.0
Content Development	2.6	3.0
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2.7	3.0
Sources and Evidence	2.2	2.0
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	2.7	3.0
Total Score	11.5 or 58%	11.0 or 55%

Observations: Process

- Effective means to assess our Gen Ed program
- Inclusive
- Easy to replicate

Observations: Assignments

- Faculty expectations were uneven
- Were not well thought-out
- Did not ask students to think critically; some asked students to restate information
- Students answered what was asked

Observations: Rubrics

- What do we expect of our students?
 - Is it appropriate to use the same rubric for two & four year institutes?
 - Is *Developing* acceptable for community college students?

Next Steps

- Show students rubrics in advance.
- Offer faculty workshops:
 - Curriculum
 - Assignments
 - Bloom's Taxonomy
- Encourage faculty dialog of shared expectations.

Next Steps, cont.

- The Gen Ed committee is reviewing all Gen Ed course syllabi to see if the learning objectives include critical thinking.

Conclusions

- The assessment provided a snap shot of student abilities and a baseline of skills.
- Assessing across the curriculum lets us learn about student experiences across the curriculum.
- Creates shared expectations.
- Provides evidence to employers of 21st century core skills.

Thank You!