

Update on the General Education Assessment Pilot

The Learning Assessment Committee is pleased to announce that the 2014-2015 General Education Assessment Pilot is reaching a conclusion. The main goals of the study were as follows:

1. To determine the efficacy of AAC&U Value Rubrics as measurement tools for FSW's General Education curriculum.
2. To measure achievement of the General Education competencies across the disciplines.

After working collaboratively to score student assignments, faculty scoring team members have submitted rubric scores and qualitative feedback sheets for analysis. The Office of Academic Assessment is in the process of analyzing the data. Initial results (mean achievement by rubric dimension, inter-rater reliability, and qualitative themes) have been reviewed by the Learning Assessment Committee. The final results will be disseminated to all faculty early in the fall.

Reflections on the Scoring Process

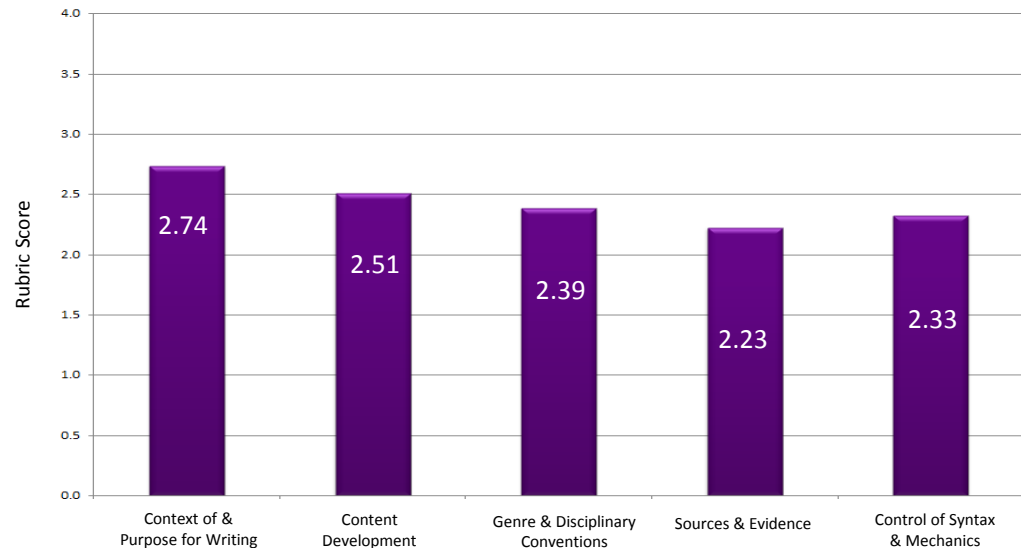
The members of the critical thinking team had the task of assessing how students at FSW applied critical thinking skills to their course assignments. We had many artifacts which represented several disciplines. This was an opportunity for many of us to learn about how students in other disciplines engage in critical thinking. Through the assessment of the artifacts, we used a multi-point rubric and focused on how students process and consider information through writing essays and responding to arguments. In other artifacts, students demonstrated critical thinking through synthesizing and analyzing information and submitting their findings in written format. - **Fernando Mayoral, Professor, Spanish**

Written Communication Achievement by Rubric Dimension

Figure 1 displays a summary of the achievement results for the communication (COM) competency. The faculty used the AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric which measures achievement of the following dimensions on a 4-point scale:

- Content and Purpose of Writing
- Content Development
- Genre and Disciplinary Conventions
- Sources and Evidence
- Control of Syntax and Mechanics

The Learning Assessment Committee discussed the strengths and areas for improvement in students' written communication. These baseline data will be used to set goals for 2015-2016. Additional analyses will be conducted to determine the relationship between Written Communication achievement and the number of FSW courses completed.



General Education Assessment

Assignment Feature

Class: SLS 1515 Cornerstone Experience

COM

Communication

CT

Critical Thinking

The purpose of this assignment is to write an essay that reflects upon the main themes/topics of the course that were most influential or important to you. The essay will conclude with a description of a “new” plan for achieving success in college.

The essay will be evaluated on the demonstration of Critical Thinking (see specific outcomes on the Critical Thinking Rubric). It is our expectation that all college written work must adhere to Standard English grammar and mechanics.

Final essay guidelines:

Write an essay that is a minimum of 500 words that includes the following components:

- 1- Introduction-Start by describing your thoughts and feelings at the beginning of the term. Then introduce your main topics/ideas that you found most influential across the semester. (1-2 paragraphs)
- 2- First idea/topic that was influential to you. Develop with specific examples and discussion. (1-2 paragraphs)
- 3- Second idea/topic that was influential to you. Develop with specific examples and discussion. (1-2 paragraphs)
- 4- Third idea/topic that was influential to you. Develop with specific examples and discussion. (1-2 paragraphs)
- 5- Conclusion- Describe your plan for achieving success and summarize the three topics/ideas that you found to be most influential. (1-2 paragraphs)

Notes from Dr. Tawil and Professor Schultz



Dr. Martin Tawil
Cornerstone
Faculty

Critical thinking and communication are the foundation of students’ success and part of the Cornerstone class. Students are assessed utilizing several modalities during the course to ensure these skills are attained and mastered. The final essay serves as the summative assessment of the course where students demonstrate their newly enhanced skills in communication and critical thinking.



Mary Ellen Schultz
Cornerstone
Faculty

The Cornerstone Experience Final Essay Assignment promotes the general education competencies of communication and critical thinking in several ways. Students are expected to demonstrate effective written communication skills to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their learning at the culmination of the course. For the essay’s introduction, students describe their thoughts at the beginning of the semester; many of them recall a nervous first day of college. After reflecting on the many topics, activities, and experiences that the course provides, students evaluate three that were most influential to them as a result of, hopefully, enhanced introspection and

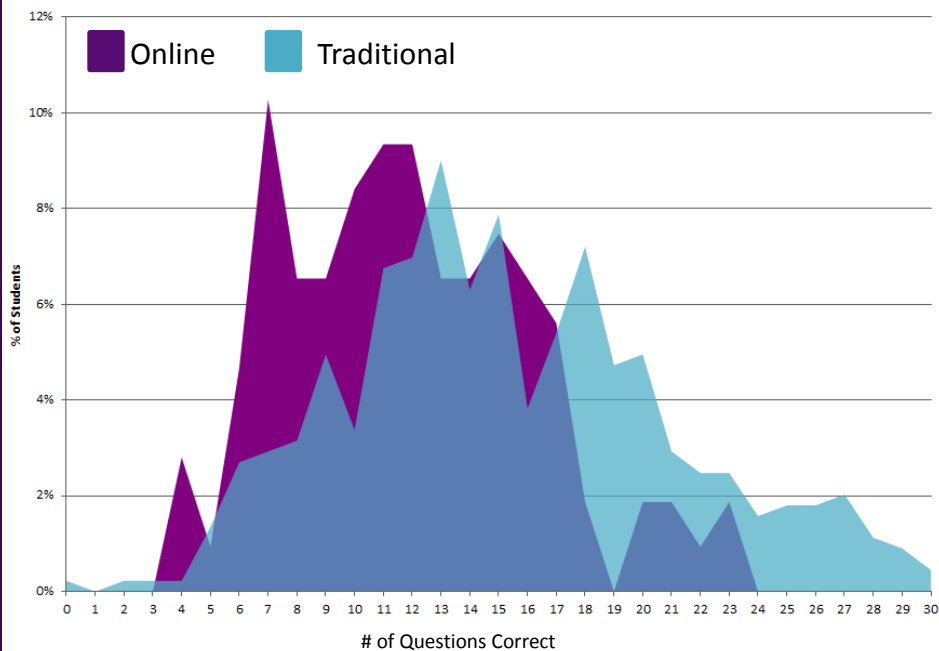
metacognitive skills. Students justify each of their three choices by applying examples and analyzing how the learning will move them toward personal and academic success. At the conclusion of the essay, students synthesize course learning with their increased self-awareness by developing and describing a new personal plan for future success. The development of critical thinking skills, as indicated by this activity, facilitates independent and inspired learning, while the development of the communication competency allows students to effectively relate this growth to others.

Course-Level Assessment Feature

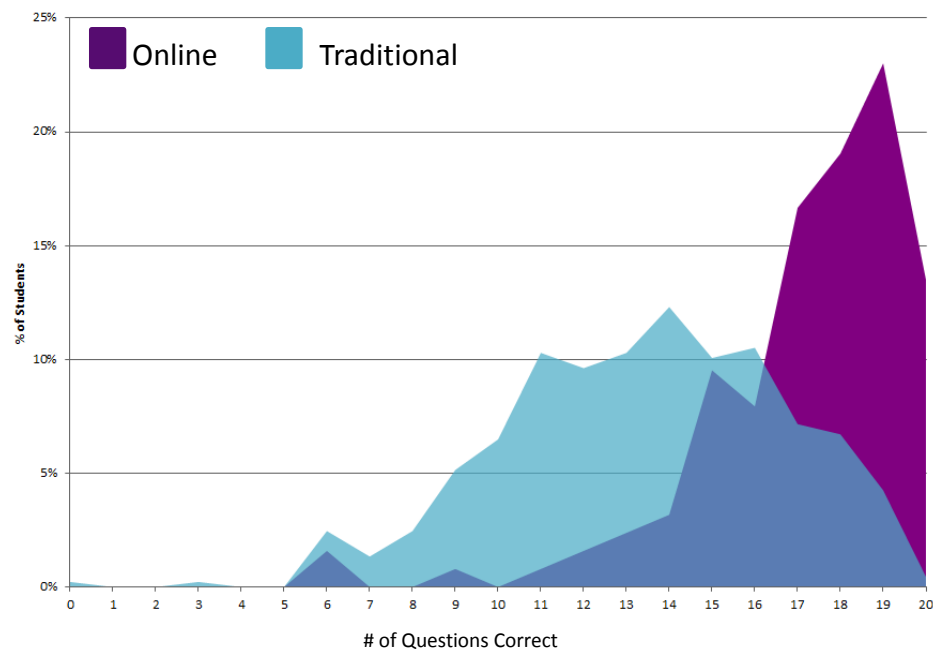
Principles of Macroeconomics (ECO 2013) & Human Growth and Development (DEP 2004) Online vs. Traditional Modality

A vital part of academic assessment is analyzing the data to measure achievement and inform improvement. Figures 3 and 4 compare online vs. traditional artifacts from DEP2004 and ECO2013. In both cases, the achievement of students enrolled in online courses differ significantly from the students enrolled in traditional courses. In one case, the online students' overall achievement scores are significantly higher and in the other case significantly lower. Using these data, faculty in these disciplines can discuss possible reasons for these differences in order to improve instruction, evaluate the assessment tool, and promote comparable achievement across traditional and online sections.

Data Distribution of Online vs. Traditional Artifacts
for Principles of Macroeconomics (ECO 2013), Fall 2014
TUCE Exam



Data Distribution of Online vs. Traditional Artifacts
for Human Growth and Development (DEP 2004), Fall 2014
Common Course Assessment



Learning Assessment Committee Reflections from the Edge (Or How We Learned to Love Gen. Ed.)



Marty Ambrose
Professor of English
Chair, Learning
Assessment Committee

As my two-year tenure as Chair of the Learning Assessment Committee comes to a happy closure, I wanted to reflect on the last two years with my wonderful colleagues who've done so much to bring assessment to new heights at the College. When we started together in Fall, 2013, as a new standing committee, we spent the first meeting electing our Chair and deciding how we wanted to operate as a committee. However, one aspect stood out right from the beginning: We wanted to set aside time in every meeting to talk through our ideas and processes—even if it meant our meetings went overtime (and they frequently did).

We began tentatively during that fall semester, simply trying to acquire a sense of each department's course-level assessments and find a way to memorialize what had been completed. Gradually, we developed spreadsheets and uploaded reports. Most fun! Along the way, we felt that having a point person in each department would facilitate departmental voice in assessment and assist the Chairs. Thus, our committee proposed Assessment Coordinators who would be members of LAC, receive a small stipend, and serve as assessment liaisons. Dr. Wright liked the idea, and these positions were elected in individual departments in Spring, 2014. He also gave us one of our best assets for LAC: Dr. Eileen DeLuca as our administrative support committee member and assessment guru. Her May, 2014, assessment training initiated a whole new cohesiveness to LAC's work, connecting the dots between institutional, program, and course-level assessment. (It was followed by "Assessment 101" in Spring, 2015.)

As the 2014 – 2105 academic year began, we'd had a subcommittee convene during the summer with Dr. DeLuca to plan the General Education Assessment Pilot; and, we were ready to implement the plan. In addition, many of our members were newly-minted Assessment Coordinators, and we added yet another asset: Dr. Joe Van Gaalen who had been hired as the Coordinator of Assessment. At that point, our committee really began to take off—with the pilot (no pun intended), training sessions, and scoring teams. All good! Our hearts now beat to the collective hum of Compliance Assist.

At our last LAC meeting, we had a non-alcoholic beverage toast to our committee, and we elected our new Chair—the multitalented, Dr. Amy Trogan. She will be leading our merry band for the 2015 – 2017 academic years.

Lastly, on behalf of the Learning Assessment Committee, I would like to express our appreciation to the faculty at FSW for always stepping up and participating in assessment. We could not have accomplished our goals without the faculty support.

Have a lovely summer break!
Marty Ambrose