

## Arts and Humanities Assessment Report Spring 2015

The Arts and Humanities Department instructors met to decide how to assess the general education outcomes for their department. They decided to take Terri Martin-Parisien's suggestion and assess students' performance in three courses within the department: English 120 (Composition I), Communications 101 (Fundamentals of Public Speaking), and Humanities 202 (Fine Arts and Aesthetics). Two of these courses (English 120 and Communications 101) are ones all students are required to take to receive associate degrees, and the third one (Humanities 202) is one that many students in the associate programs choose and that is required for students seeking admission into an education cohort. Assessing these three courses also worked well for the department since each of the three full-time instructors in the department teaches one of the three courses, so the job of assessing the general education outcomes could be shared equally by all.

The members of the department discussed various ways to assess student performance in the designated classes and decided using rubrics to assess final work in each course would be the most effective method of assessment. They considered but rejected using objective tests, feeling that assessing final projects, papers, and speeches would be more valid, given the nature of the courses and the skills involved. Each instructor found or developed a rubric to use. However, all agree that while it is helpful to have a rubric that articulates expectations for assignments by listing criteria, identifying specific criteria for each level of the rubric does not work well. All prefer articulating expectations and then rating student performance with numbers representing excellent, above average, average, below average, and unacceptable performance.

The department chose to assess with the general education outcomes one, four, five, six, and seven in mind:

General Education Outcome #1 (Communication): "Students will have developed sufficient skills with the English language such that they can read, accurately interpret, critically analyze written material, express themselves effectively through narrative, explanatory, and investigative writing utilizing standard rhetorical techniques in the styles and formats, and at the level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies."

General Education Outcome #4 (Humanities and Social Science): "Students will be conversant with the general knowledge bases and the procedures by which knowledge and artistic expressions are generated and accessed in the two divisions of (1) the humanities and fine arts, and (2) the social and behavioral sciences, and they will be able to select and apply the techniques and procedures of these two areas at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies."

General Education Outcome #5 (Culture/Diversity): "Students will be able to consider a variety of perspectives based on differences such as those stemming from culture, class, gender, ethnicity, historical development, and community, and they apply this awareness at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies."

General Education Outcome #6 (Critical Thinking): “Students will be able to raise vital questions and problems, gather and assess relevant information, come to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, and test those solutions against relevant criteria, think open-mindedly about their assumptions, consider the practical consequences and communicate effectively to find solutions, at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies.”

General Education Outcome #7 (Technology): “Students will be conversant with the general knowledge bases and the procedures and techniques by which knowledge is generated and accessed through the use of technology and procedures of technology at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies.”

The following are each instructor’s assessment report:

### **Erik Kornkven’s Spring 2015 Assessment: Composition II**

#### **Introduction**

I have conducted an assessment based on the final papers of my composition II courses. I taught two courses of Composition II, each of which followed the same curriculum. The final paper that was assessed was a social commentary assignment. The student was asked to identify a pattern or trend in society, use data to prove that the trend exists, then draw conclusions about larger society based on the existence of the trend. The paper was required to be 4-7 pages in length, with a minimum of three unique sources used.

#### **Methods**

I assessed the papers according to five student learning outcomes as expressed in the TMCC Self Study page 70.

1. **Communication:** Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis statement and use facts, statistics, anecdotes, and examples in a written work.
2. **Humanities and Social Science\*:** Students will make effective use of outside sources to engage in knowledge creation within an academic discourse.
3. **Culture/Diversity\*:** Students will bring their own culture and experiences to bear on issues connected to larger society.
4. **Critical Thinking:** Students will analyze data, assumptions, arguments, and inferences.
5. **Technology:** Students will use word processing, including formatting, creating and storing text.

*\* When possible I used existing language for specific goals within the outcomes, but in two instances (culture/diversity, and humanities and social science) I adapted the language to better reflect the course and assignment learning outcomes.*

I scored each paper on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being very little proficiency shown, to 5 being student shows high proficiency.

#### **Results**

A total of 26 papers were assessed with the following results:

Criteria	Average
Communication	3.19
Humanities and Social Science	2.73
Culture/Diversity	3.07
Critical Thinking	3.15
Technology	3.65

### Analysis

This assessment gives me some insight into where my students were at the end of my course. The numbers reveal that my students' largest struggle is with integrating sources to build on existing knowledge. Anecdotally, I had many students express their confusion as we studied citation methods, with some explaining that they had not been required to make use of sources in their previous writing courses. I take that with a grain of salt, but it does suggest that source integration should perhaps get more attention in my course.

In addition to the criteria listed above, I also have some general observations about the students and their writing skills based on their total body of work over the course of this semester.

### Strengths

- The students demonstrate an ability to follow directions, and reproduce genres based on samples and examples. This shows me that they have many of the rhetorical skills we are looking for when they enter the classroom.
- Students for the most part demonstrate an aptitude for basic academic writing genres such as the five-paragraph essay.

### Places for Improvement

- Students at times struggle working in groups.
- Students are comfortable with reporting information, but struggle when asked to create their own data (this is a typical first-year writing challenge).

### Suggestions for the future

This assessment has helped lead me to ideas of ways I can improve my future courses to help meet these realities.

1. Emphasize source integration earlier and assign tasks where students practice the entire research process
2. Allow more freedom for students to design their own documents since they already seem comfortable following step-by-step directions.
3. Incorporate more reading into my courses to encourage analytical thinking.

## Stuart Rieke's Spring 2015 Assessment: Fundamentals of Public Speaking

Item Assessed: a 30-point rubric was used to grade students on their final persuasive or informative speech.

General Education Outcome Assessed: #1 (Communication) Addressed: “Students will have developed sufficient skills with the English language such that they can read, accurately interpret, critically analyze written material, express themselves effectively through narrative, explanatory, and investigative writing utilizing standard rhetorical techniques in the styles and formats, and at the level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies.”

Number of Students in Final Grading Pool: 16

Average Total Score on 30-point Rubric: 24

(Plus 10-points for Dialogical Listening and Feedback for Classmates)

Average Total Percentage of Points on Final Speech: 85%

High Score(s) on 30-point Rubric: 30

Low Score on 30-point Rubric: 18

Rubric Categories	Mean	Median
Preparation	4	
Introduction	4	
Body	5	
Conclusion	3	
Organization	4	
Delivery	4	

Narrative Assessment on Class and Rubric:

The rubric I designed needed to sound less punitive and be more “congratulatory” as many students struggled with the assignments and the act of public speaking. On the whole, students preferred my using the rubric to a flat score. They wanted as much feedback as possible, so it was an effective tool. I need more experience utilizing a rubric also, I scored directly onto the rubric rather than taking notes, jotting suggestions, and grading while speeches were going on. I will do it differently next time in that way.

My assignments need to be looked at because the first few were far too easy and required little. In Sisseton, when I taught, the first assignments were more rigorous—and the speeches were better to begin. Speeches were on a range of topics from local and personal issues, to global and national issues, to tribal issues.

### **Peggy Johnson’s Spring 2015 Assessment: Fine Arts and Aesthetics**

**I considered the following general education outcomes when evaluating final projects submitted for the course:**

General Education Outcome Assessed: #4 (Humanities and Social Science): “Students will be conversant with the general knowledge bases and the **procedures by which knowledge and artistic expressions are generated** and accessed in the two divisions of (1) **the humanities and fine arts**, and (2) the social and behavioral sciences, and they will be able to **select and apply the techniques and procedures of these two areas at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies.**”

General Education Outcome Assessed: #5 (Culture/Diversity): “**Students will be able to consider a variety of perspectives** based on differences such as those stemming from culture, class, gender, ethnicity, historical development, and community, and **they apply this awareness at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies.**”

General Education Outcome Assessed: #6 (Critical Thinking): “Students will be able to raise vital questions and problems, gather and assess relevant information, come to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, and test those solutions against relevant criteria, think open-mindedly about their assumptions, consider the practical consequences and communicate effectively to find solutions, at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies.”

General Education Outcome Assessed: #7 (Technology): “Students will be conversant with the general knowledge bases and the procedures and techniques by which knowledge is generated and accessed through the use of technology and procedures of technology at a level of complexity appropriate to their TMCC studies.”

Objectives for Fine Arts and Aesthetics include that students who take the course will

- Develop critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills as they relate to artistic creativity
- Acquire and demonstrate an understanding of the creative process
- Through an individual project creatively present a message that is meaningful to them and their community

<b>Criteria Used to Evaluate Projects</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Understanding of Creative Process	2.9	3
Craftsmanship/Skill	4.1	4.4
Creative Expression/Originality	2.93	3
Effort/Time Dedicated to Project	4.2	4.4
<b>Areas Used to Assess Technology Skills</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Accesses/Responds to Email	4.2	5
Posts and Responds to Others' Posts	4.3	5
Demonstrates Ability to Upload and Submit Files in Appropriate Formats	4.4	5
Successfully Navigates Jenzabar Course--Accessing Handouts, Bookmarks,	4.6	5

Quizzes/Tests, Assignment page, Forum, Gradebook		
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#### Analysis:

- Overall the projects submitted this semester were better than ones I have received in previous semesters. Nearly all of the students had spent a great deal of time on their projects, and the craftsmanship/skill shown by the results impressed me. Many of the students clearly have talent and artistic ability. The areas of greatest weakness are in understanding the creative process and in creativity/originality. For examples, many students produced very attractive projects but had done so imitating someone else's work rather than creating their own designs. In addition, many students struggled to explain why they chose to create something in a certain way or what the significance of the project was to them. When I teach the course again, I will emphasize the importance of originality in the creative process and also have students submit "in progress" reports on their project both to discourage last minute projects and to provide feedback at a time when changes to projects are still possible. While I have been requiring students to submit a project proposal early in the semester, I have not required them to submit progress reports.

Since the students I assessed were all taking an online class, they may have better technology skills than those who choose face-to-face classes. Most know how to use technology, but a few did struggle with some types of work. For example, a few even at the end of the semester were uploading files in inappropriate formats or uploaded work but forgot to click "submit." At one time those assignments would not have been submitted at all, but Jenzabar now automatically submits any uploaded files after the due dates passes. Perhaps it is because there is no penalty anymore that a few students continued to forget to "submit" even after being told they needed to do so.

I believe the general education technology outcome should be revised to reflect changes in the skills of the students we now have. Most seem comfortable using technology. However, are they aware of how to use technology legally and ethically, and are they fully aware of issues of Internet safety? Some of the assignments I've had students do throughout the semester concerning use of technology suggest some have never considered the implications of technology use and problems that can result.

While many of the projects students submitted reflected their Native American culture and heritage, not all of the projects did so, nor was that a requirement for the project. I observed that those who chose creative projects that reflected their heritage often did so without seeming to consider why their heritage or the skills associated with their heritage are important to them. For example, one explained that it was important for Native Americans to know how to do beadwork because a lot of non-Natives make and sell beadwork when Native Americans should

be the ones making money in this way instead. Others chose to make jingle dresses for their daughters but didn't explain why this tradition is important to them.