Arkansas Tech University
Assessment Committee
General Education Sub-Committee Minutes
November 5, 2007
Health and Physical Education Conference Room

The Gen Ed Sub-Committee of the Assessment Committee met in the Health
and Physical Education Conference Room on Monday, November 5, 2007; at
2:00 p.m. Members present were Dr. Jan Jenkins, Dr. Robin Lasey, Dr. Brenda
Montgomery, Dr. David Roach and Dr. Carey Roberts. Members absent were Dr.
Annette Holeyfield and Dr. Hanna Norton.

Call To Order	Dr. Carey Roberts called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm.
Update: Dr. Holeyfield (Absentee)	There was a miscommunication with Parks & Rec. about what was needed from them in regards to Gen Ed Assessment. Efforts to create a common set of questions for all physical activity courses will continue.
Update: Dr. Norton (Absentee)	Dr. Norton has made progress with the Speech faculty in creating criteria for spoken communication. They divided the Communication Gen Ed goal into written, spoken and electronic sub-goals and created three criteria for each. She also had the speech faculty working on several ways to assess these criteria. The sub-committee received an email from Dr. Cory Shaman outlining the ETS Criterion Service that the English department has been using for writing assessment. (see below) Dr. Roberts stated that the University will use the Criterion Service to assess written communication for the remaining two years of the English Dept.'s assessment grant. Another system will then need to be created.
Update: Dr. Roach	Dr. Roach presented his approach to the Critical Thinking Gen Ed goal. ➤ Key words for Critical Thinking assessment: "argument" or "reasoning;" although students should not just express their own arguments, but also analyze the arguments of others.

	➤ Examples of Critical Thinking questions that he provided to faculty teaching US History I, US History II and American Government:
	    ○ AP essay prompts
	    ○ GRE exam questions
	    ○ Assorted multiple-choice questions
	
	Questions over possible criteria:
	➤ How well do they identify a conclusion?
	➤ Can they identify evidence?
	➤ Does the evidence support the argument?

Update: **Dr. Jenkins**	Dr. Jenkins created the criteria for arts and humanities and met with the appropriate faculty to make questions to assess the criteria. She expected the questions to be submitted by Thanksgiving, and that these would then be included in the Fall 2007 final exams (as a trial run).
Update: **Dr. Lasey**	Dr. Lasey continued to work on creating criteria, having found a great example for Scientific Reasoning from the University of Michigan-Flint. The Scientific Reasoning sub-category was well on its way to being ready for assessment, with life sciences faculty having already created a scientific method quiz to be administered in Biology lab periods. Questions to be included in Chemistry Gen Ed courses were still unfinished. The Mathematical Reasoning sub-category is not quite as far along, with the Math department attempting to make an internal assessment measure that will relate to the Gen Ed criteria and provide data for departmental use. Dr. Roach expressed that Dr. Lasey's goal was closely related to Critical Thinking, so these assessment measures might be used to provide data on both goals.
Update: **Dr. Montgomery**	Dr. Montgomery continued to collect possible sources for assessing Ethics in ATU's curriculum. ➤ Codes of Ethics (Business and Engineering) ➤ Plagiarism and Hazing regulations ○ Possibly www.turnitin.com

	She relayed that Jerry Forbes was willing to include ethics questions in the questionnaire sent to incoming freshmen this Spring. There was some debate over what constituted Tech's responsibility to teach ethics: to promote only Professional ethics or to develop both Personal and Professional ethics? No consensus was reached. It was suggested that a standardized test of ethics could be an effective direct measure and would give the university a quantifiable score to work with. Such tests were available and relatively inexpensive. Other avenues of research suggested by the members: ➚ Other universities' attempts to assess ethics ➚ Nursing exam for an ethical part ➚ Create criteria for the Ethics goal o Use codes of ethics to guide the division
Update: **Dr. Robert**	Dr. Roberts expressed several points for the Sub-Committee to keep in mind. ➚ The goal of Gen Ed assessment at ATU is to assess if the students are reaching a standard of knowledge and ability, not to assess growth. So Post- and Pre-Testing will not play a central role in this process. ➚ The information from these assessments will be stored in Banner and connected to the student's T-numbers. ➚ Due to the large amount of data entry being asked of the faculty, assessment of Gen Ed may have to be done through sampling (several professors or a few classes a semester). ➚ Because trend data was the goal and the professors were responsible for creating the questions, this sub-committee's job was to create the sub-categories and criteria that the questions were to address. It was decided that it was far more important that the questions spoke to the criteria than how they were implemented.
To Do List	1) Drs. Roberts and Jenkins Meet with Dr. Brucker

	2) Drs. Roberts and Roach
	    Meet with History and Political Science faculty
	3) Dr. Montgomery
	    Attempt to create some criteria for the Ethics goal
	
	The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 27.

Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Email on English Dept's Written Communication Essay Grading Service

Dr. Roberts,

Dr. Brucker has asked me to describe the ETS Criterion software we are currently using to explain its value in providing information about our writing classes for general education assessment purposes.

The feedback we receive covers a comprehensive range of composition skills that correlates directly to standard primary material addressed in our writing courses. With each student essay submitted to the service, we get a detailed analysis of those skills in the following three categories:

1. Grammar, usage, and mechanics (analyzed in 28 areas: from possessive errors and run-on sentences to subject-verb agreement and spelling)

2. Style (analyzed in 6 areas: from word usage and sentence variety to passive voice)

3. Organization and development (analyzed in 6 areas: from introductions and conclusions to transitions and supporting material)

The software locates specific errors, identifies ill-planned patterns, and recognizes construction flaws. As you can see, we are able to gauge student understanding in global ways regarding large structural issues, but we can also examine their writing at the level of sentence, word, and punctuation. The scope and depth of the analysis gives us a comprehensive view of student knowledge in direct practice. Using the software's structure we can easily distill a manageable set of measurements which would supply appropriate data for general education assessment purposes. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have about this program.

Cory Shaman