

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)	<p>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.</p> <p>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)</p> <p>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.</p>
Update: Dr. Roach	<p>Dr. Roach presented his approach to the Critical Thinking Gen Ed goal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Examples of Critical Thinking questions that he provided to faculty teaching US History I, US History II and American Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AP essay prompts ○ GRE exam questions ○ Assorted multiple-choice questions <p>Questions over possible criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How well do they identify a conclusion? ➤ Can they identify evidence? ➤ Does the evidence support the argument?
<p>Update: Dr. Jenkins</p>	<p>Dr. Jenkins created the criteria for arts and humanities and met with the appropriate faculty to make questions to assess the criteria.</p> <p>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).</p>
<p>Update: Dr. Lasey</p>	<p>Dr. Lasey continued to work on creating criteria, having found a great example for Scientific Reasoning from the University of Michigan-Flint.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Update: Dr. Montgomery</p>	<p>Dr. Montgomery continued to collect possible sources for assessing Ethics in ATU's curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Codes of Ethics (Business and Engineering) ➤ Plagiarism and Hazing regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Possibly www.turnitin.com

	<p>She relayed that Jerry Forbes was willing to include ethics questions in the questionnaire sent to incoming freshmen this Spring.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Other avenues of research suggested by the members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Other universities' attempts to assess ethics ➤ Nursing exam for an ethical part ➤ Create criteria for the Ethics goal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use codes of ethics to guide the division
<p>Update: Dr. Robert</p>	<p>Dr. Roberts expressed several points for the Sub-Committee to keep in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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.
<p>To Do List</p>	<p>1) Drs. Roberts and Jenkins Meet with Dr. Brucker</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2) Drs. Roberts and Roach Meet with History and Political Science faculty3) Dr. Montgomery Attempt to create some criteria for the Ethics goal <p>The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, November 27.</p>
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

Arkansas Tech University
 Assessment Committee
 General Education Sub-Committee
 November 28, 2007
 Health and Physical Education Conference Room

The Gen Ed Sub-Committee met in the H&PE Conference Room on Tuesday, November 28, 2007; at 1:00 p.m. Members present were Dr. Annette Holeyfield, Dr. Jan Jenkins, Dr. Robin Lasey, Dr. Hanna Norton, Dr. Carey Roberts, and Dr. Brenda Montgomery. Member absent was Dr. David Roach.

Call To Order	Dr. Carey Roberts called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm.
Opening Business	<p>The sub-committee members expressed their belief that dividing up the Assessment Committee was helpful as the sub-committees could be more focused and productive as small groups.</p> <p>Dr. Jenkins volunteered to report on Gen Ed at the upcoming December Assessment Committee meeting.</p>
Goal: Critical Thinking (Dr. Roberts)	<p>Drs. Roberts and Roach met with faculty in the Social Science and Philosophy department to discuss embedded questions for critical thinking. Several professors contributed questions relating to specific parts of critical thinking, which were included in a handout. These were to be embedded in final exams in several courses in Fall 2007.</p> <p>This concluded the creation of preliminary direct measures for the Critical Thinking goal.</p>
Goal: Ethical Perspective (Dr. Montgomery)	<p>Dr. Montgomery sent out an email looking for codes of ethics throughout campus. She received 8-10 responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The point in collecting codes of ethics was stated that a program with ethical standards should already be collecting data applicable to Gen Ed assessment. <p>Several upper level courses on campus were mentioned as directly relating to ethics. However, it was concluded that if Gen Ed direct assessment were to expand beyond Gen Ed courses to upper level courses, the process would become</p>

	<p>overly complicated.</p> <p>There was a question about the endgame for ethics assessment (what the final model would look like). No decision was achieved on this topic.</p> <p>All sections of specific Gen Ed courses would not cover the same information or bear the same focus; so even if one professor's section of a course (such as Intro to Biology) had a conscious ethical perspective, his or her colleagues may not emphasize ethics in their own sections.</p> <p>Thus indirect measures must form the bulk of the final ethical perspectives assessment model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These indirect measures should not focus on negatives (speeding tickets, cheating, etc.). ➤ There was debate on focus though. Should we measure students' actual morality, look for opportunities the students are provided to develop ethical perspectives, or show how their ethics are developing over time? No conclusion was reached. <p>It was proposed that instead of focusing on assessments first, they should divide the goal into clear sub-categories, then find assessments that matched the latter. The sub-committee came up with three criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Foster Integrity and Credibility Individually and Institutionally 2) Support Principle-Centered Leadership 3) Develop Ethical Perspectives relating to New Technology and Knowledge
<p>Goal: Humanities (Dr. Jenkins)</p>	<p>After meetings with Dr. Jenkins, Drs. Morris, Caldwell and Mitchell had all either completed or were still working on questions to embed in World Civ, Philosophy, Art and Music Gen Ed courses to assess the Humanities goal.</p> <p>Discussions with the English Dept. were still pending.</p>

<p>Goal: Communication (Dr. Norton)</p>	<p>Written Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment will be done through the English Dept.'s computerized composition program. <p>Spoken Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Still pending. ➤ A difficulty arose from the necessity that every question produce a "binary result" (answering if the student was correct or not, with no gradation or qualification), which is difficult to achieve in spoken communication assessments. ➤ It was concluded that although the answers reported to the University must be binary, the questions themselves did not have to be. The professor may establish a standard of achievement, then grade pass or fail on a scaled assignment according to a student's meeting the standard. <p>Electronic Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This was dropped due to a lack of enthusiasm among faculty.
<p>Goal: Wellness/Health (Dr. Holeyfield)</p>	<p>The Recreation and Parks faculty created five open-ended questions to be included in all of their activity courses.</p> <p>The Health and Physical Education/Wellness Science faculty created five multiple choice questions to be added to the final examinations of every Gen Ed course in Physical Education and Wellness Science.</p>

<p>Specific Next Steps or Homework</p>	<p>Dr. Montgomery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look at how accreditation programs define ethics and expect it to be assessed ➤ Schedule meeting with Dr. Roberts to continue work in Spring 2007 semester <p>Dr. Norton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meet with Dr. Boop on assessing Spoken Communication through Career Service's mock interviews ➤ Make further attempts to communicate the importance of achieving a pass-fail product from the speech courses (even if the assessment itself is scaled)
<p>Gen Ed Assessment Implementation</p>	<p>As much as possible, the scores should be tied to individual student's T-Numbers. Batch scores would not be specific enough to provide useful analysis of the existing demographic data.</p> <p>It was raised that demanding scores be connected to T-Numbers at the program's beginning would raise the ire of the faculty by doubling their grading paperwork, thus it would be better to begin the program with collecting batch scores and then integrating individual scores later.</p> <p>The sub-committee concluded that the focus this year should primarily be on batch scores in order to obtain a baseline, leaving individual scoring according to T-Numbers for a later date.</p>
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.</p>

Dr. Holeyfield's Handout Information

Five questions provided by Recreation and Parks faculty:

1. Define wellness.
2. How do you practice wellness as a college student?
3. How do you plan to practice wellness after graduation?
4. How does this activity class relate to the concept of wellness?
5. Why did you choose this activity class

Five questions provided by Health and Physical Education/ Wellness Science Faculty:

Here's what we propose to assess the General Education Goal of "understanding wellness concepts."

After reviewing course syllabi and tests that we currently use in classes, as well as information from the Healthy People 2010 Report and other initiatives, we decided to formulate very broad questions in three areas: current wellness/fitness status of the population, how to improve wellness status, and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. These questions would serve as a direct measure, and would be asked in each PE and WS activity class.

1. The three leading causes of death in the United States are
 - a. cancer, diabetes, and cirrhosis
 - b. hypertension, stroke, and heart disease
 - c. heart disease, stroke, and cancer
 - d. diabetes, osteoporosis, and cirrhosis
2. Approximately what percentage of Americans are not regularly physically active?
 - a. 20%
 - b. 30%

c. 60%

d. 80%

3. In designing a personal fitness program, one should consider the F.I.T.T. principle. For what does the acronym, F.I.T.T. stand?

a. flexibility, interest, tension, and tone

b. frequency, intensity, time, and type

c. fatness, isolation, thinness, and technique

d. flexibility, intuition, tightness, and technique

4. According to the Healthy People Report, how many times per week should one engage in moderate-intensity physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day?

a. 2 times per week

b. 3 times per week

c. 5 times per week

d. daily, 7 times per week

5. Which of the following is/are true regarding participating in regular physical activity?

a. Physical activity helps protect against the development of chronic diseases.

b. Physically active people, in general, outlive those who lead sedentary lifestyles.

c. Participation in physical activities enhances self-concept and overall wellness.

d. Participation in physical activities enhances creativity and intellectual functioning.

e. All of the above.

Dr. Norton's Handout Information

Communicate Effectively

1. Written:

- a. Ability to gather thoughts and present them in a cohesive, written manner.
- b. Ability to synthesize information into a collective argument.
- c. Ability to use proper grammar.

2. Spoken:

- a. Ability to verbally present thoughts in a clear, concise manner.
- b. Ability to speak with confidence on subjects of interest.
- c. Ability to use proper grammar in speech.

3. Electronic

- a. Ability to perform basic computer functions to attach computer files.
- b. Ability to construct a well-considered, grammatically correct e-mail.
- c. Ability to perform basic computer functions without assistance.

Direct Measure for Written Communication:

1. Essay or written assignment in ENGL 1013 and/or ENGL 1023

Other ideas:

Indirect Measures for Written Communication:

1. Reading and Writing of Praxis 1
2. Writing of Praxis 2
3. Essays or essay questions in fine art courses (embedded as part of exam).
4. Paper in PHIL addressing ethical or philosophical issue.
5. Synthetic essay in World Lit. or Am. Lit course discussing several literary works.
6. Essay over course content in Social Science course (embedded as part of exam).
7. Resumes submitted and reviewed by the Career Services.
8. Written papers from honors students.

Other ideas:

Indirect Measures for Spoken Communication:

1. Speeches delivered as part of Public Speaking courses.
2. Evaluation of honors presentations (derived from written paper).
3. Exit interviews with graduating seniors (embed standardized question for all participating depts.).
4. Focus groups with selected students (either in selected majors [to be rotated] or for selected courses).

Indirect Measures for Electronic Communication:

1. Questions directed to computer services help desk.
2. Have professors request documents be submitted with attachments and gauge students' success.