

Summaries of Learning Outcome Committees

Arts and Humanities, March 8, 2012

Christine McCullough, Matthew Mazuroski, Mike Crist, Deborah Mower, Sharon Stringer, Tod Porter

Learning outcomes – Some of the participants questioned that the learning outcomes did not include any mention of creativity. There was a discussion about whether it was appropriate to include classes that involve creation of art (teaching how to play an instrument, paint, or act) should be included in the list of general education courses. Currently, all the courses dealing with the arts survey different artistic periods or genres. One suggestion was to include the term “informed interpretation” to the learning outcomes.

Criteria for inclusion in general education – Participants were asked to e-mail criteria for discussion in a later meeting

Criteria for assessment – Participants were asked to e-mail criteria for discussion in a later meeting

Natural Sciences, March 21, 2012

Greg Sturru, Jodie Krontiris-Litowitz, Nina Stourman, Tom Maraffa, Sharon Stringer, Hillary Fuhrman, Tod Porter

Learning outcomes – Participants suggested that learning outcome #2 be changed to “... application of scientific method and principles.” It was also suggested that learning outcome #3 was too specific and suggested the alternative: “Use and interpret data in a manner appropriate to the discipline.”

Criteria for inclusion in general education – The following were suggested for additional criteria for inclusion in general education:

1. Is the course consistent with the mission and resources of the department or college?
2. Is the course teaching principles of basic science or is it teaching an application of those principles?
3. Does the course require prerequisites introducing the basic science?
4. Is the course testing a scientific hypothesis using the scientific method?

Criteria for assessment – Participants were asked to e-mail criteria for discussion in a later meeting

Social Sciences, March 22, 2012

Loren Lease, Keisha Robinson, Cryshanna Jackson, Molly Jameson Cox, Rebecca Curnalia, Tom Maraffa, Matt O'Mansky, Sharon Stringer, Tod Porter

Learning outcomes – There was discussion as to whether all courses in the group addressed criteria #3. It was suggested that “the approaches and perspectives” replace “methodologies”.

Criteria for inclusion in general education – The following were suggested for additional criteria for inclusion in general education:

1. Is the course grounded in principles and concepts rather than applications and training
2. Ideally, ideally a student can come in and be successful and grasp the concepts of the course with a minimal background in the field.
3. Should be broad in the scope of topic and serve a broad group of students
4. The course should define a field or major subfield for the student

Criteria for assessment – Participants were asked to e-mail criteria for discussion in a later meeting

Natural Sciences, 4/25/12

Maraffa, Sturuss, Stourman, Palardy, Porter, Stringer

A variety of different techniques for gathering assessment data were discussed. These included:

- Results from specific questions included on multiple choice exams
- Faculty focus groups that would complement results from exams
- Lab reports
- Gathering data through the use of clickers

Given the difficulties in evaluating lab reports the option with the most support was to rely primarily on questions from multiple choice exams. One strategy would be to evaluate the results at the department level and then create a domain-level report by summarizing the conclusions of the individual departments.

Social Sciences, 4/26/12

Bonhomme, Cox, Curnalia, Stringer, Palardy, Porter

The following comments were made:

- The evaluation of achievement of the learning outcomes should be grounded in the individual disciplines
- Each department should be asked to come up with 2-3 multiple choice questions that address the learning outcomes
- Discussed whether students in all courses could be asked the same set of questions from multiple disciplines
- Discussed the need for questions at different levels of sophistication: knowledge based, application, and synthesis
- Could questions be asked via Survey Monkey? This would allow the results to be downloaded into SPSS easily. How could faculty be encouraged to motivate their students to take the survey?

Arts and Humanities, 4/26/12

McCullough, Mazuroski, Mower, Crist, Palardy, Porter, Stringer

The group started with a discussion of the class sizes and the implications for different types of assessment:

- Art – Art history classes are capped at 40 students, one minute papers might be effective
- Theater – History of motion pictures is capped at 60 and uses multiple-choice exams, Understanding Theater is capped at 30 and papers are assigned
- Philosophy – A variety of test styles are used, some essay, some multiple choice. The professional ethics classes are typically capped at 40 students
- Music – Classes range from 20 to 100, a variety of different types of tests are used, larger classes use multiple choice, other classes use short answer and essay. The focus is on having students listen to the music and being able to identify the music and elements of the piece.

There was general agreement that the assessment should not rely entirely on multiple choice questions. All participants agreed that the quality of student writing is a problem. One person characterized the differences between the disciplines as: how to listen (music), how to look (art) and how to analyze (philosophy). The following two criteria were proposed:

- Be able to communicate, analyze, and interpret
- Demonstrate awareness of concepts, terms, genres, and historical periods as appropriate