

CURRICULUM AND ACADEMIC POLICIES COUNCIL

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

FALL 2012

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GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In July of 2012, The Strategic Planning Steering Committee released their report "Building on Excellence," which will guide the university over the next decade. Of such importance to the Committee were issues of General Education and assessment that they were identified as the first two concrete goals (Goals 1.1 and 1.2). This, in combination with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's attention to our General Education program in their accreditation report, clearly signifies that our Gen Ed program is at a crossroads. Middle States has asked us to file a follow-up report in April 2013, detailing the completion of our assessment of all six Gen Ed goals, and discussing the ways that Gen Ed Assessment has been used to inform teaching and learning. This is the final report before our follow-up, and thus speaks to the completion of one full cycle of assessment and looks forward to changes based on that assessment.

2011-2012 marks the fifth year of the implementation of the revised General Education Program Assessment plan and the third year of the revised Review and Revalidation process. We continue to refine these processes, and to close the feedback loop in terms of the dissemination of results and the implementation of those results into departmental offerings of General Education. In that context, we realize that we have to make better connections with individual departments to gather assessment data and to put the assessment results to use improving General Education at WCU. As with prior years, however, the results of our ongoing assessment process are mixed. Some of this year's most significant findings include

- Participation in the assessment process remains a challenge, with a lower number of student artifacts provided and a lower rate of compliance by faculty
 - Goal 1 (communicate effectively)=277 artifacts (49% response rate)
 - Goal 2 (employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods)=82 artifacts (37% response rate)
 - Goal 3 (critical and analytical thinking)=347 artifacts (22% response rate)
 - Goal 4 (demonstrating the sensibilities of a person educated in the liberal arts tradition)=79 artifacts (14% response rate)
- There were a total of 2,606 students selected for the sample of all four goals. From these, 785 artifacts were collected (up from 571 last year): 277 for Goal 1 courses (oral and written communication courses), 82 for Goal 2 courses (math) courses, 347 for Goal 3 courses (natural science and social science courses) and 79 for Goal 4 courses (diverse communities courses) courses.
- 7.8% of student artifacts were non-measurable (the artifacts could not be assessed using the current rubrics because they did not adequately address any of the learning outcomes on the rubrics).

- For Goal 1 (communicate effectively), the goal we piloted this year, results were encouraging with a 49% response rate for student artifacts and 50% or more of students scoring 3s and 4s in all three of the learning outcomes.
- For Goal 2 (employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods), the results were extremely impressive with 70% or more of students scoring 3s and 4s in all four learning outcomes on the rubric.
- For Goal 3 (critical and analytical thinking), Learning Outcome A saw a slight increase over last year. However, the difference is too small to be anything of significance. Learning Outcomes B, C, and D show decreases in scores. A lingering problem for Goal 3 is collecting student artifacts that are measurable against all four learning outcomes on the rubric.
- For Goal 4, we conducted an additional collection of in Fall 2011 in order to supplement the small N mentioned in last years' report. These data are combined with Spring 2011 data. However, changes to Goal 4 obviate these assessment results somewhat.
- 2 courses were reviewed as part of the Review and Revalidation process.

BACKGROUND

General education at West Chester University is described this way in the 2012-13 Undergraduate Catalog:

A broad education emphasizes the enhancement of oral and written communication skills and mathematics, and encompasses experiences in the humanities; the social, behavioral, and natural sciences; and the arts. At the same time, this education must be versatile because of the many new courses and areas of study that are constantly becoming available. At West Chester University, the General Education program is designed to provide students with the knowledge, perspectives, and competencies expected of them as citizens of the state and of the world. The University believes that a liberal education base will prepare students to think and communicate as professionals, to understand social and global contexts of their lives, to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting and career to another, to recognize ethical implications of professional practice, and to balance the various dimensions of their personal and professional lives. Therefore, West Chester University strives to give students the abilities to

- 1. communicate effectively,*
- 2. employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods,*
- 3. think critically and analytically,*
- 4. demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person educated in the liberal-arts tradition,*
- 5. respond thoughtfully to diversity, and*
- 6. make informed decisions and ethical choices.*

The CAPC General Education committee has worked very hard over the past several years at refining, streamlining, and in some cases completely changing our assessment processes for General Education, all in the hopes of finding an effective balance between what we need institutionally with respect to General Education assessment and what we can organizationally bear in terms of faculty workload and organizational culture. We continue to learn each year and we find ourselves regularly “assessing our assessment.” The lessons learned, and resulting changes, from this ongoing process are discussed in the first section of this report.

Our current program-level assessment plan began in 2007-2008. In this plan, assessment is based on a representative sample of West Chester University students enrolled in General Education courses, according to the specific goal being assessed. Examples of student work are collected for each student in the sample and these artifacts are assessed by an independent group of faculty during the summer using a scoring rubric developed by the General Education committee.

Since Fall 2005, CAPC has been using the table below to identify the primary (common) and secondary (recommended) goals to be included on syllabi and assessed in recommended and attribute-driven General Education courses.

Gen Ed Area/Type of Assessment	Common Goals	Recommended Goals
Academic Foundations:		
English Comp/ WRT	1	3,6
Mathematics	2	1,3
Communication	1	3,4
Diverse Communities	5	4,6
Interdisciplinary	4	3,6
Distributive Requirements		
Science	3	2,6
Behavioral and Social Sciences	3	2,4,5
Humanities	6	3,4,5
The Arts	4	1,3
Writing Emphasis	1	3

This is the sixth year of the implementation of our revised program-level goal assessment plan, aimed at increasing the reliability of assessment data and of increasing the participation rate for gathering assessment data. During 2007-2008 we implemented our new plan and made significant efforts to streamline and improve the data collection process. We also targeted assessment of Goal 5 (respond thoughtfully to diversity) and began a pilot for Goal 3 (critical and analytical thinking). The primary goals targeted for assessment in 2008-2009 were Goal 5 and Goal 3; we also piloted assessment of Goal 6 (informed decisions and ethical choices). In 2009-2010, we focused on Goal 5 (respond thoughtfully to diversity), Goal 3 (critical and analytical thinking), Goal 6 (making informed decisions and ethical choices) and we piloted

Goal 4 (demonstrating the sensibilities of a person educated in the liberal arts tradition). In 2010-2011, we assessed Goals 3, 4, 6, and piloted Goal 2 (employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods). In AY 2011-2012, we assessed Goals 2, 3, and 4, and piloted Goal 1 (communicate effectively). Assessment data for these goals are presented in section four, "Assessment Outcomes by Goal".

In addition, we continued the efforts of our revised Review and Revalidation process, our sixth year of full implementation of this process. We have continued to refine this process and the outcomes and lessons learned from five years of implementation are discussed in the fifth section of the report.

In the sixth section, we lay out our revised assessment plan for 2012-2013. While the procedures are very similar to last year, we have refined some of the timelines and processes as a result of ongoing reflection about our assessment processes. These changes are increasing the efficiency of our assessment plans and maximizing the use of data collection by removing redundancies and leveraging other institutional assessment processes for the purposes of General Education assessment.

Finally, in section seven, we discuss changes made to the General Education program in 2011-12, among which are a revision of the language of Goal 4 and a phase-out of the prefix-based system which allows non-recommended courses to count for Distributive requirements. In this section, we also discuss plans for following up on the 2011 Middle States review. As mentioned above, MSCHE asked us to provide an update when we completed assessing each of the six General Education goals, which we have now done. MSCHE also requested that we include an update about how our assessment results are being used by faculty to improve student learning in their General Education courses. These updates are due in April 2013.

In addition, we have again included in Appendix B good examples of student assignments or exam questions that have proved very useful for assessment given the rubrics used by the assessment team. Faculty were asked for permission for these to be posted and we are grateful to have a variety of good examples for faculty to draw on in their preparation of exam questions or assignments that could be used to produce student artifacts for assessment.

Appendices C through H contain the current rubrics for Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The General Education committee and CAPC encourages faculty to copy, distribute, and use these rubrics not only for General Education assessment but also for assessment of program learning goals wherever appropriate.

ASSESSING THE ASSESSMENT: LESSONS LEARNED IN 2011-2012

We made a few major changes to the assessment process in 2011-12 as a result of things we learned in previous years. Because we were dissatisfied with participation rates for Goals 3 and 4, we chose to collect artifacts during the Fall of 2011 in addition to our usual Spring collection. Also, we took the opportunity offered by the assessment of Goals 1 and 2, where the foundational courses are housed in only three departments (Math, English, and Communication Studies) to collect artifacts in a slightly less centralized way. However, participation in the assessment of all the goals was lower than expected. Compared to AY 2009-2010 year, we collected less than half of the number of student artifacts (AY2009-10=1624; AY2010-11=571; AY2011-12=772).

Comparing the collection of artifacts for Goals 1 and 2 to that for Goals 3 and 4 can lead us to consider a number of factors influencing the low rates of participation. The big difference between Goals 1 and 2 and all of the other goals (3-6) is that the first two goals are mainly “owned” by one or two departments at the foundational level. That is, if we are thinking of Gen Ed goals 1 and 2 as being satisfied by the foundational courses (WRT120, SPK208, MAT103, MAT104, MAT 121)—which we will see is problematic in a moment—then the collection of the data is much more centralized than that for Goals 3, 4, 5, and 6.

To take one example: for Goal 3 we collect data from introductory science courses such as PSY100, BIO100, and PHY100, some of which are taught by temporary faculty. The emails that request student data come from a distant CAPC official rather than from a person within their department, and it is quite probable that nobody in their department knows about the request, and won't know if the instructor supplies student data or not. No one involved in the instructor's evaluation is aware of the request, and, if they were, it would be a violation of the CBA to evaluate the instructor's participation or lack thereof. Thus, there is very little incentive to participate in Gen Ed Assessment. And this hypothetical example presumes that the instructor is aware of his/her class being a part of the Gen Ed program, and that they think of critical thinking as one of its objectives, and that they assess student work toward that end. If any of these elements is missing, there is an outright *disincentive* to participating in Gen Ed assessment.

For further consideration, then, is the question of how to increase participation in assessment. In the case of Goals 3 and 4, which have been in the assessment process for multiple years, it is our recommendation that we step back, enjoy the few years until we need to assess them again, and try to solve problems with gathering data for Goals 1-2.

In contrast, collecting student artifacts from WRT120 and SPK208 courses promised to be much more orderly. Both English (ENG) and Communication Studies (COM) regularly collect student data from these courses. COM has a system for videotaping student speeches, and ENG collects student portfolios. Conceivably, we should have been able to assess nearly 100% of the student work in these two courses; not 100% of the *sample*, but 100% of the entire

population. Hoping to build on the existing departmental assessment structures, Dr. Mader worked with Assessment Coordinators Bessie Lawton from COM and Hannah Ashley from ENG.

However, as it turns out, we uncovered flaws in the systems for collecting both student speeches and student writing. We were able to collect *many* of the artifacts that we requested, but various factors led to a response rate of less than 50%. That's still a good rate, and better than that for other Goals we have assessed. If we were to collect student artifacts from SPK208 and WRT120 again, we would try to improve the process by ironing out some communication glitches. We believe that COM and ENG both learned something from this process, which will benefit both their departmental assessment and Gen Ed assessment in the future.

A problem remains with the assessment of Goal 1, however. Because we are collecting artifacts from what are mainly first-year classes (WRT120 and SPK208), they rarely demonstrate excellence; as you will see below, the scores tend to fall in the 2-3 range, with few 4s. Conversations with the Raters reveal that they are reluctant to give the highest score to first-year student writing or speeches, and that, even when they do so, the artifacts are considered to be excellent only *relatively*; that is, they are excellent for the speeches or essays of first-year students. However, our Gen Ed goals represent competencies that we want students to gain *by the time they graduate*, leading us to believe we should be collecting artifacts from the other end of students' careers. Rather than assessing artifacts from WRT120 and COM208, then, we should collect artifacts from Writing Emphasis courses, in particular those at the 300-400 level, for assessment in 2013. Unfortunately, we predict that this will negatively affect participation (because Writing Emphasis courses tend to be regarded similarly to Interdisciplinary courses, which is to say that they are not always clearly identified as Gen Ed, and instructors may not even be aware of the WE designation; see the conversation about Goal 3 and 4 courses above).

Therefore, in AY2012-13, we will collect student essays from 300-400-level Writing Emphasis courses, and apply the same rubric to them. This will give us multiple data points in order to develop an understanding of how "effective communication" is being realized at the program level.

Despite the fact that participation from ENG, COM, and MAT has not been as robust as we had hoped, we still think the procedure of working with departmental assessment coordinators is preferable where one or two departments can be linked to a Gen Ed goal. We might consider extending this to even those goals where there is no single department responsible. Why can't we work with Associate Deans and the TLAC in order to facilitate Gen Ed Assessment? We will discuss this with the relevant parties in Fall 2012.

Finally, we accomplished two major program changes that directly result from our assessment efforts. First, we passed a policy at CAPC to begin to restrict the Distributive requirement to apply only to those courses listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. The current system relies on prefixes, so that *any* course beginning with LIT fulfills a Humanities Distributive. This makes our assessment difficult, because we can't assess every LIT course (and

all the rest of the Distributive prefixes for science, behavioral and social sciences, humanities, and arts courses). Beginning in Fall 2014, only those courses listed in the catalog under for each Distributive Area will count. A series of informational sessions in Fall 2012 includes discussion of this change so that the campus community—especially advisors—is fully informed well in advance.

Our assessment of Goal 4 revealed a good deal of confusion over the definition of the liberal arts, and the connection between the liberal arts and interdisciplinarity (see last year's report for a more extensive discussion). In order to clarify the goal and its relation to interdisciplinarity, we revised the Goal 4 to read, "to demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries." However, our current assessment plan includes arts courses within Goal 4, which the revised Goal 4 would not be able to do. This should be among the questions discussed by the Gen Ed Committee in the next year: where do we articulate our requirement for arts courses? What Student Learning Outcome do they address?

ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES BY GOAL

Goal 1 Assessment (Pilot)

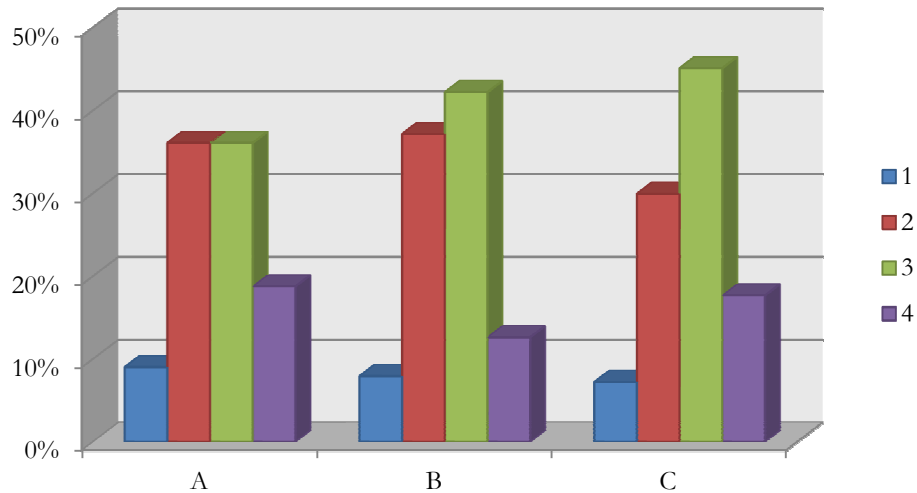
Goal 1 of the Gen Ed Program strives to give students the ability to communicate effectively. Assessment of Goal 1 was piloted in this cycle. The two foundational courses associated with communication are WRT120 (Effective Writing) and SPK208 (Public Speaking). We chose to collect artifacts from these two courses (a decision which will be discussed in more detail below). Both departments offering these courses, English and Communications Studies, have rubrics that they developed and use for these courses. As one might assume, there are overlapping competencies. Those rubrics were merged by Dr. Mader and reviewed by the summer assessment team. Dr. Mader worked closely with assessment coordinators from English and Communications Studies in order to collect student essays and digital recordings of student speeches. These were assessed using the rubric.

Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Content Students will demonstrate the ability to present a persuasive speech or essay, including a clear thesis with adequate support.	The paper or speech fails to make a claim, present a controlling idea, or state a thesis, OR fails to provide details or evidence in support of an idea, claim, or thesis.	The paper or speech attempts to state claims, controlling ideas, or theses, but the results are vague or not compelling. Details or evidence provide insufficient support.	The paper or speech consistently states clear claims, theses, or controlling ideas, AND supports them with adequate details or evidence.	The paper or speech consistently states clear claims, theses, or controlling ideas, AND supports them with adequate details or evidence. The result is an especially convincing or compelling argument.
B. Form Students will demonstrate control over formal properties of effective communication as appropriate to spoken or written communication in an academic context.	Formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are inadequate.	Some formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are adequate, while others are not.	Formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are adequate.	Formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are excellent.
C. Organization Students will produce organized essays that effectively lead their audience through their	The speech or paper does a poor job of guiding the audience, with a weak introduction and	The speech or paper does an inadequate job of guiding the audience, missing	The speech or paper does an adequate job of guiding the audience, but may	The speech or paper does an excellent job of guiding the audience through a strong introduction

arguments.	conclusion, and inadequate transitions and/or signpost words.	one or more of the following elements: a strong introduction, a strong conclusion, or effective transitions and/or signpost words.	be missing one of the following elements: a strong introduction or conclusion, or effective transitions and/or signpost words.	and conclusion, and effective transitions and/or signpost words.
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2012 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Content Students will demonstrate the ability to present a persuasive speech or essay, including a clear thesis with adequate support.	9.03% (25)	36.01% (100)	36.10% (100)	18.77% (52)
B. Form Students will demonstrate control over formal properties of effective communication as appropriate to spoken or written communication in an academic context.	7.94% (22)	37.18% (103)	42.24% (117)	12.64% (35)
C. Organization Students will produce organized essays that effectively lead their audience through their arguments.	7.22% (20)	29.96% (83)	45.13% (125)	17.69% (49)

Goal 1 2011: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome



Key Findings and Resulting Action Plans: Goal 1 Assessment

- During the pilot phase, the initial assessment results were impressive with 62% scoring on the high end for Learning Outcome C, with 3s or 4s, while half or better scored 3 or 4 for Outcomes A (54%), and C (62%). This is an impressive set of results for a pilot year.
 - Note, however, that the scores fall heavily in the middle range (2-3). Ultimately we will want more scores in the higher range.
 - The reluctance of the raters to score essays and speeches as “excellent” may be related to the fact that the data come from first-year students, as discussed above and in the Action Plan below.
- Action Plan: we will focus on 300-400-level Writing Emphasis courses during the next cycle of assessment, under the idea that they more accurately reflect the intent of the Gen Ed goal, which is to *graduate* students with effective communication skills.

Goal 2 Assessment

Gen Ed Goal 2 is that students graduating from West Chester University will be able “to employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods.”

This is the second year of assessment for Goal 2. The rubric that was developed in consultation with faculty from Mathematics in AY2010-11 was used to score artifacts during this past summer. Unlike most of the other goals, responsibility for teaching courses listing Goal 2 is entirely satisfied by faculty in Math (in courses such as MAT103, MAT104, and MAT121). The coherence of this cohort should lead us to expect a more robust participation, but the 2011-12 rate is actually *lower* than that from 2010-11 (although the number of artifacts is higher): in 2010-11, we collected 68 artifacts, with a 69% participation rate, whereas in 2011-12, we collected 82 with a 37% participation rate.

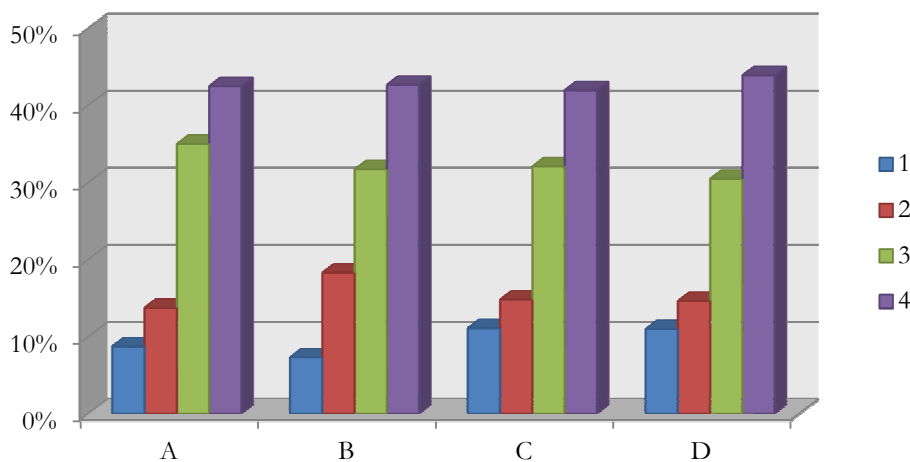
Dr. Mader shared results of last year’s assessment with the Math Department at a department meeting last year, and we are sure there is widespread understanding of the assessment process. Assessment is also embraced by the Chair of the Department, Dr. Kathy Jackson, which undoubtedly has had a beneficial effect on the results. This year, rather than Dr. Mader contacting faculty members directly, Math’s Assessment coordinator contacted his colleagues. We assumed that making a faculty member within the department the contact person would have increased participation, but it seems to have decreased it. The Gen Ed Committee will discuss this during this year.

Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Understand and use mathematical symbolism	Student fails to identify, or misidentifies, mathematical symbols used in statements or formulas.	Student correctly identifies mathematical symbols but fails to use them correctly in computation or argument.	Student correctly uses given mathematical symbols.	Student correctly applies new mathematical symbols as appropriate for a calculation or argument, or in a new or unfamiliar situation.
B. Employ calculations correctly to draw mathematical conclusions	Student calculates incorrectly.	Student performs simple calculations correctly but cannot put them together into a larger computation.	Student calculates correctly but fails to draw appropriate conclusions consistent with calculated results.	Student calculates correctly and draws appropriate conclusions.
C. Understand the nature and use of mathematical arguments	Student fails to recognize or understand mathematical arguments.	Student can answer some questions about the nature of some mathematical argument.	Student shows understanding of arguments but cannot independently apply them.	Student understands and can apply mathematical arguments.

D. Understand how mathematics is used to gain insight into nature and as a tool in the world of human affairs	Student shows little awareness of a connection between mathematical symbolism, calculations, and arguments and their use outside mathematics.	Student often responds incorrectly to questions about previously discussed examples of applications of mathematics.	Student can respond appropriately to questions about previously discussed examples but cannot deal successfully with new applications.	Student shows understanding of how mathematics is used and can work new examples of applications.
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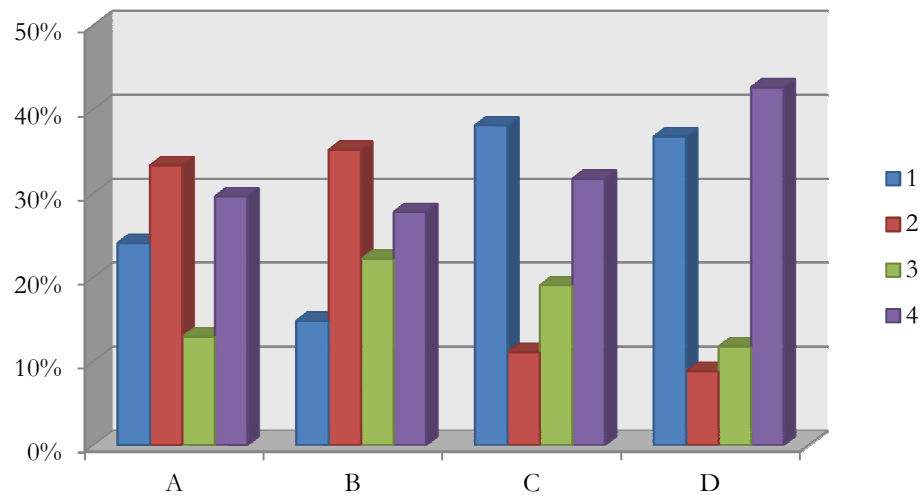
2012 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Understand and use mathematical symbolism	8.75% (7)	13.75% (11)	35.00% (28)	42.50% (34)
B. Employ calculations correctly to draw mathematical conclusions	7.32% (6)	18.29% (15)	31.71% (26)	42.68% (35)
C. Understand the nature and use of mathematical arguments	11.10% (9)	14.81% (12)	32.10% (26)	41.98% (34)
D. Understand how mathematics is used to gain insight into nature and as a tool in the world of human affairs	10.98% (9)	14.63% (12)	30.49% (25)	43.90% (36)

Goal 2 2012: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome



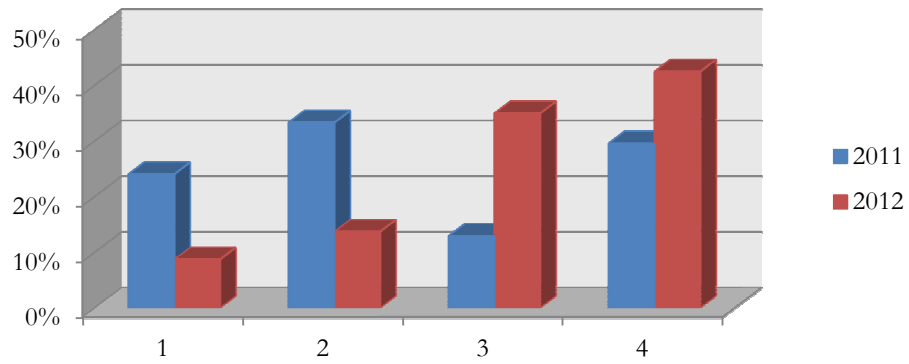
2011 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Understand and use mathematical symbolism	24.07% (13)	33.33% (18)	12.96% (7)	29.63% (16)
B. Employ calculations correctly to draw mathematical conclusions	14.81% (8)	35.19% (19)	22.22% (12)	27.78% (15)
C. Understand the nature and use of mathematical arguments	38.10% (24)	11.11% (7)	19.05% (12)	31.75% (20)
D. Understand how mathematics is used to gain insight into nature and as a tool in the world of human affairs	36.76% (25)	8.82% (6)	11.76% (8)	42.65% (29)

Goal 2 2011: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome

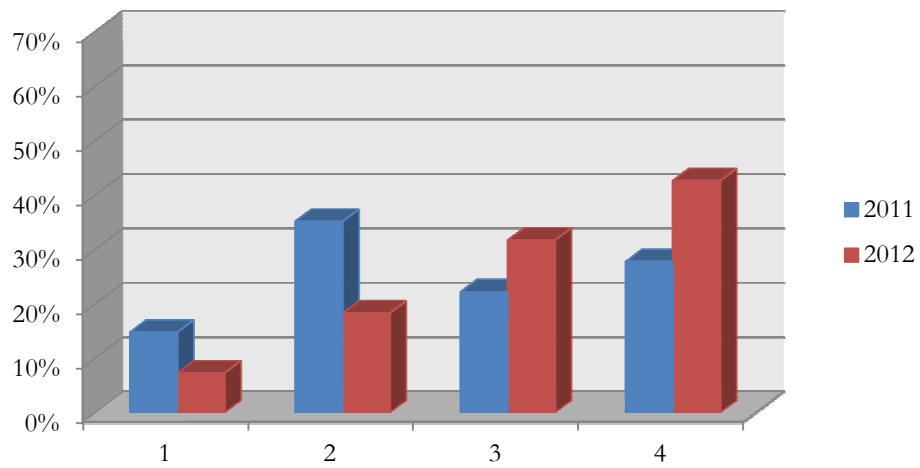


Comparison of results for learning outcomes by year of assessment

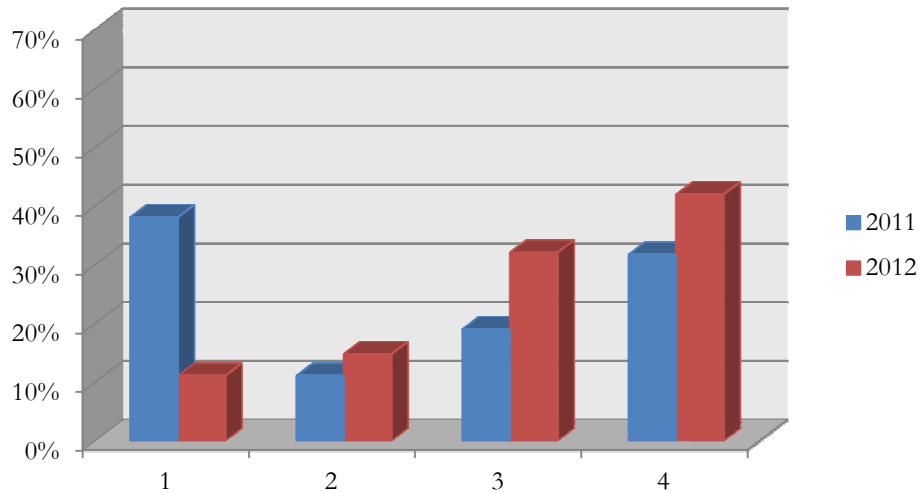
Goal 2 Learning Outcome A: Understand and Use Mathematical Symbolism



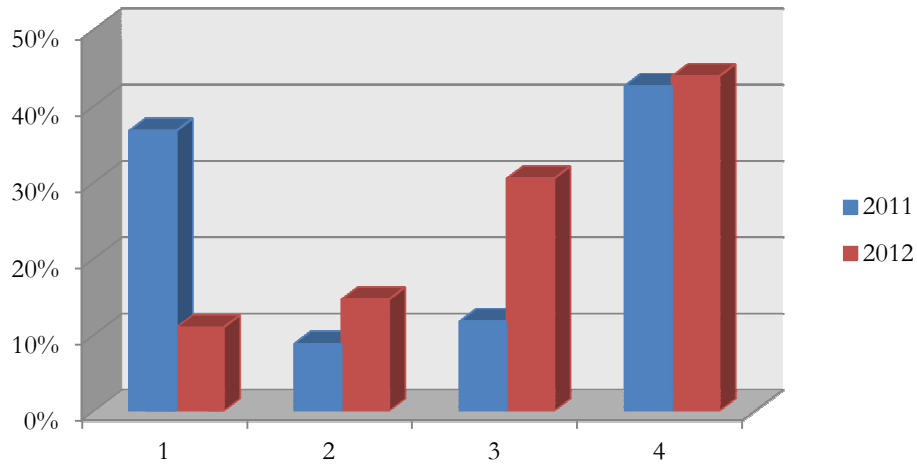
Goal 2 Learning Outcome B: Employ calculations correctly to draw mathematical conclusions



Goal 2 Learning Outcome C: Examines Quality of Evidence



Goal 2 Learning Outcome D: Considers conclusions, implications, and consequences



Key Findings and Resulting Action Plans: Goal 2 Assessment

- During the pilot phase, the initial assessment results were impressive with 42.59% scoring on the high end for Learning Outcome A, with 3s or 4s, while half or better scored 3 or 4 for Outcomes B (50%), C, (50.79%), and D (54.41%). In this year, we see even more impressive results with a significant increase in those artifacts receiving a score of 3 or 4 across the four learning outcomes. For Learning Outcome A, (77%) of the artifacts received a 3 or 4, B, (74%), C, (74%), and D (74%).

- Action Plan: The results for the assessment of Goal 2 are very encouraging. We will share these results with the campus community and use them as an example of the assessment producing beneficial results in student learning outcomes.
- The next time that Goal 2 comes up for assessment, we will have to decide whether the Gen Ed Chair or the Departmental Assessment Coordinator should collect data. This is a conversation that should involve Department coordinators, chairs, and Associate Deans.

Goal 3 Assessment

This is our fourth year assessing Goal 3, which says that students “graduating from West Chester University will be able to think critically and analytically.” This is arguably one of the most important goals to the university as a whole, and nearly every faculty member thinks she or he is teaching critical thinking in one way or another, according to their disciplinary perspective. For the purposes of assessment, however, courses in the Sciences and Social Sciences have been identified as fulfilling this part of our General Education program.

Mark Halx and Earle Reybold point to the widespread difficulties of assessing critical thinking: “Faculty, for the most part, support critical thinking development as a part of their teaching charge, but they are rarely taught how to define critical thinking, much less how to effectively facilitate its development... Students, then, become participants in a pedagogical experiment (293-94). ” * Unfortunately, after four years, the Gen Ed Committee and the summer assessment team have also been participants in such an experiment. Assessment data remain confusing, and faculty participation in the process decreases with each year. We will take a step back and “assess our assessment” during the next year.

The rubric for Goal 3, developed by a team of Science and Social Science faculty, articulates the following subgoals.

Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Effectively frame a research question, including differentiating among facts, opinions, and inferences by assessing and evaluating sources.	Student cannot frame research question, uses sources inappropriately.	Student frames an incorrect or ineffective research question (cannot be operationalized, inconsistent appropriate use of sources).	Student frames adequate research question (can be operationalized and incorporates appropriate sources).	Student frames insightful research question that can be operationalized and is framed within an appropriate research context).
B. Apply conceptual knowledge to:	Student fails to recognize concept;	Student recognizes concept but is	Student recognizes	Student recognizes concept and applies it

* Halx, Mark D. and L. Earle Reybold. “A Pedagogy of Force: Faculty Perspectives of Critical Thinking Capacity in Undergraduate Students” *The Journal of General Education* 54.4 (2006) 293-315.

- identify assumptions - make logical inferences - identify defective logical inferences - reach reasonable conclusions	engages material erroneously.	unable to apply it correctly or logically.	concept; applies it generally or simplistically.	thoroughly and consistently.
C. Apply procedural knowledge to: - unpack complex problems into constituent parts - identify reliable problem-solving methods - accurately apply problem-solving methods	Student fails to recognize nature of problem to be solved and/or procedure necessary to solve it.	Student recognizes necessary procedure but is unable to apply it correctly or logically.	Student recognizes procedure; applies it generally or simplistically.	Student recognizes procedure and applies it thoroughly and consistently.
D. Identify the presence of multiple perspectives and explain the contextual factors that account for these perspectives	Student is unable to identify perspectives other than own.	Student recognizes presence of multiple perspectives, but is unable to articulate them.	Student recognizes multiple perspectives; articulates them generally or simplistically.	Student recognizes multiple perspectives and articulates them clearly and specifically.

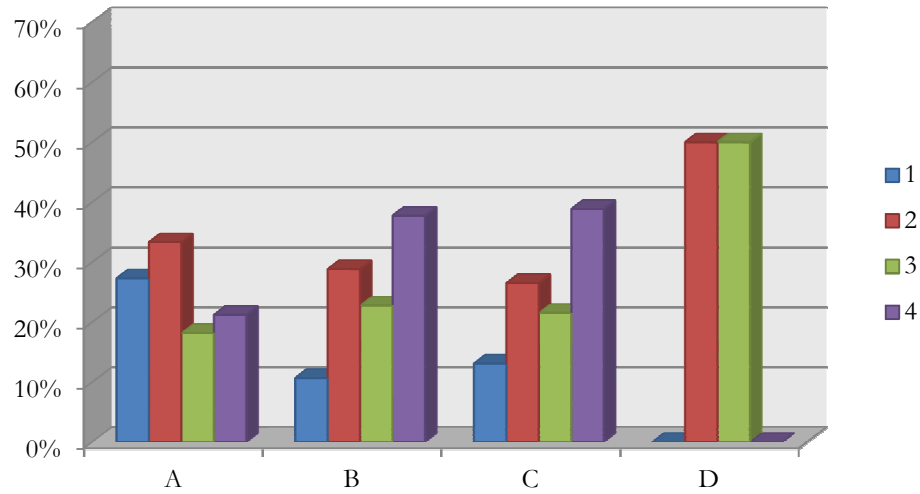
In response to our request, 347 student artifacts from Goal 3 courses were submitted, for a response rate of 22%. Of those 347, only 33 could be assessed for Learning Outcome A and only 2 could be assessed for Learning Outcome D; all 347 were assessed for Learning Outcome B and 283 were assessed for Learning Outcome C. As noted above, this provides ample opportunity for assessment of student learning.

Goal 3 Assessment Data

2012 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Effectively frame a research question, including differentiating among facts, opinions, and inferences by assessing and evaluating sources.	27.27% (9)	33.33% (11)	18.18% (6)	21.21% (7)
B. Apply conceptual knowledge to: - identify assumptions - make logical inferences - identify defective logical inferences - reach reasonable conclusions	10.66% (37)	28.82% (100)	22.77% (79)	37.75% (131)
C. Apply procedural knowledge to:	13.07% (37)	26.50% (75)	21.55% (61)	38.87%

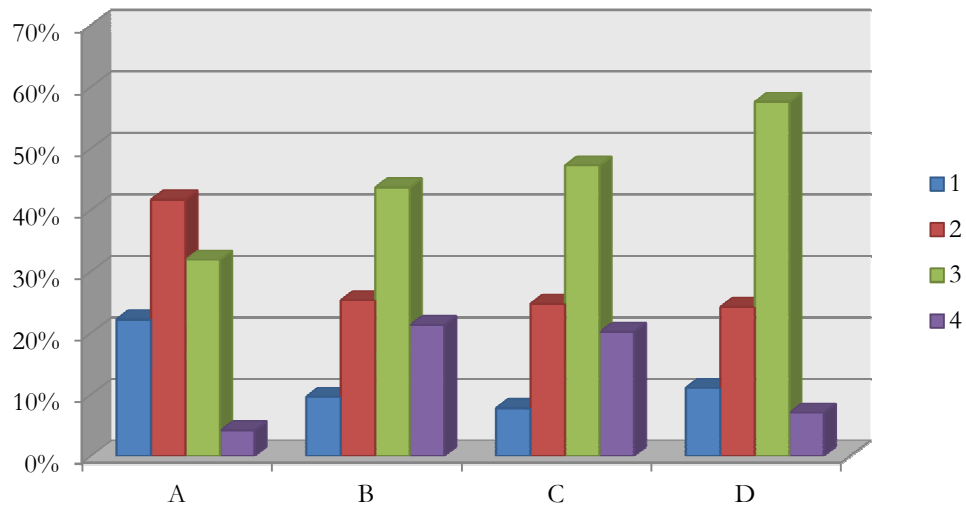
- unpack complex problems into constituent parts				(110)
- identify reliable problem-solving methods				
- accurately apply problem-solving methods				
D. Identify the presence of multiple perspectives and explain the contextual factors that account for these perspectives	0.00% (0)	50.00% (1)	50.00% (1)	0.00% (0)

Goal 3 2012: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome



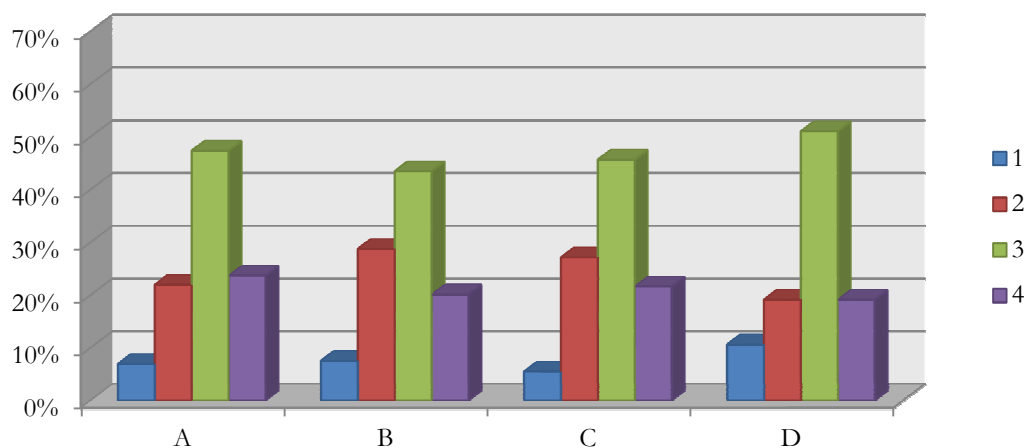
2011 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Effectively frame a research question, including differentiating among facts, opinions, and inferences by assessing and evaluating sources.	22.22% (16)	41.67% (30)	31.94% (23)	4.17% (3)
B. Apply conceptual knowledge to: - identify assumptions - make logical inferences - identify defective logical inferences - reach reasonable conclusions	9.67% (29)	25.33% (76)	43.67% (131)	21.33% (64)
C. Apply procedural knowledge to: - unpack complex problems into constituent parts - identify reliable problem-solving methods - accurately apply problem-solving methods	7.80% (17)	24.77% (54)	47.25% (103)	20.18% (44)
D. Identify the presence of multiple perspectives and explain the contextual factors that account for these perspectives	11.11% (11)	24.24% (24)	57.58% (57)	7.07% (7)

Goal 3 2011: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome



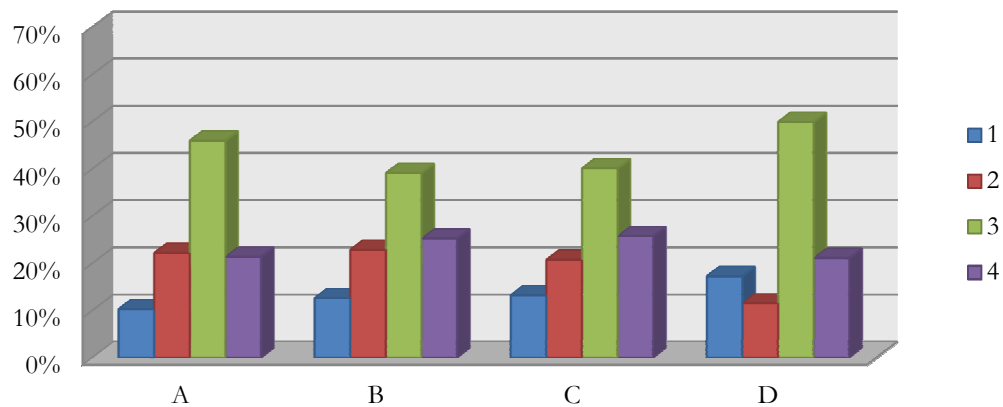
2010 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Effectively frame a research question, including differentiating among facts, opinions, and inferences by assessing and evaluating sources.	6.94% (12)	21.97% (38)	47.40% (82)	23.70% (41)
B. Apply conceptual knowledge to: - identify assumptions - make logical inferences - identify defective logical inferences - reach reasonable conclusions	7.55% (42)	28.78% (160)	43.53% (242)	20.14% (112)
C. Apply procedural knowledge to: - unpack complex problems into constituent parts - identify reliable problem-solving methods - accurately apply problem-solving methods	5.50% (32)	27.15% (158)	45.70% (266)	21.65% (126)
D. Identify the presence of multiple perspectives and explain the contextual factors that account for these perspectives	10.64% (10)	19.15% (18)	51.06% (48)	19.15% (18)

Goal 3 2010: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome



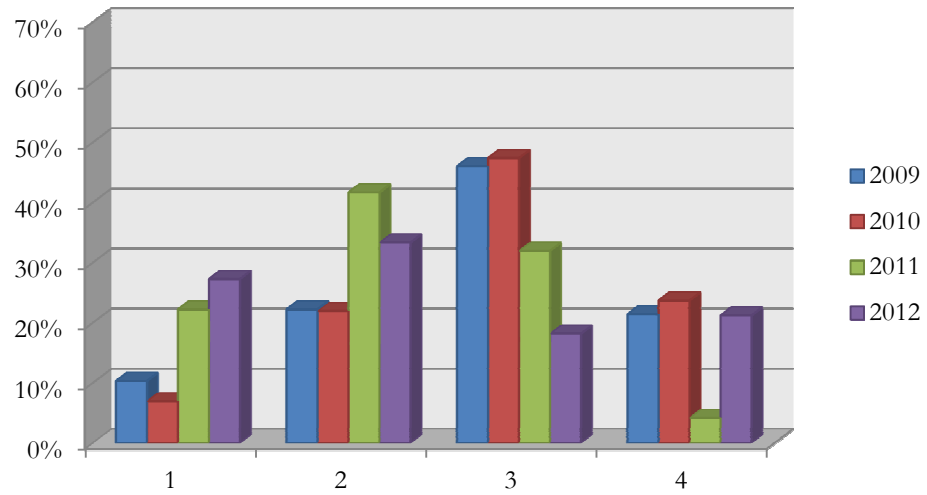
2009 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Effectively frame a research question, including differentiating among facts, opinions, and inferences by assessing and evaluating sources.	10.32% (13)	22.22% (28)	46.03% (58)	21.43% (27)
B. Apply conceptual knowledge to: - identify assumptions - make logical inferences - identify defective logical inferences - reach reasonable conclusions	12.65% (42)	22.89% (76)	39.16% (130)	25.30% (84)
C. Apply procedural knowledge to: - unpack complex problems into constituent parts - identify reliable problem-solving methods - accurately apply problem-solving methods	13.26% (37)	20.79% (58)	40.14% (112)	25.81% (72)
D. Identify the presence of multiple perspectives and explain the contextual factors that account for these perspectives	17.31% (18)	11.54% (12)	50.00% (52)	21.15% (22)

Goal 3 2009: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome

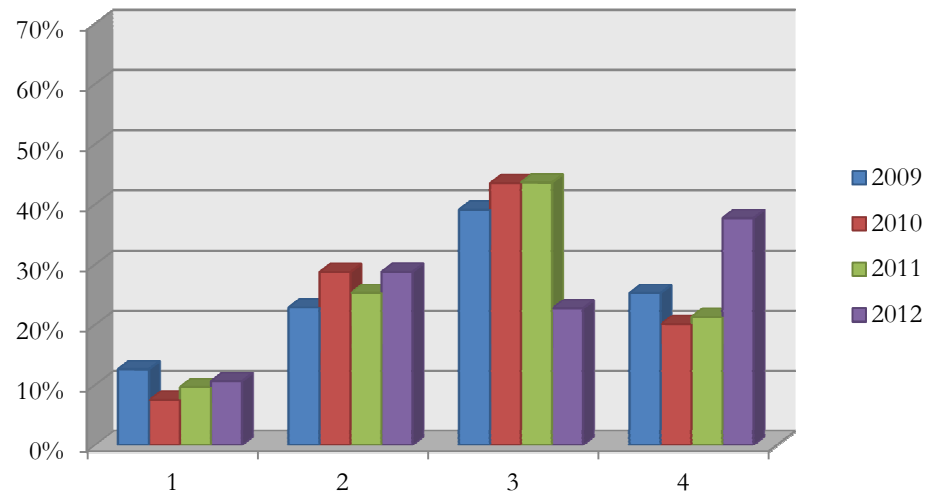


Comparison of results for learning outcomes by year of assessment

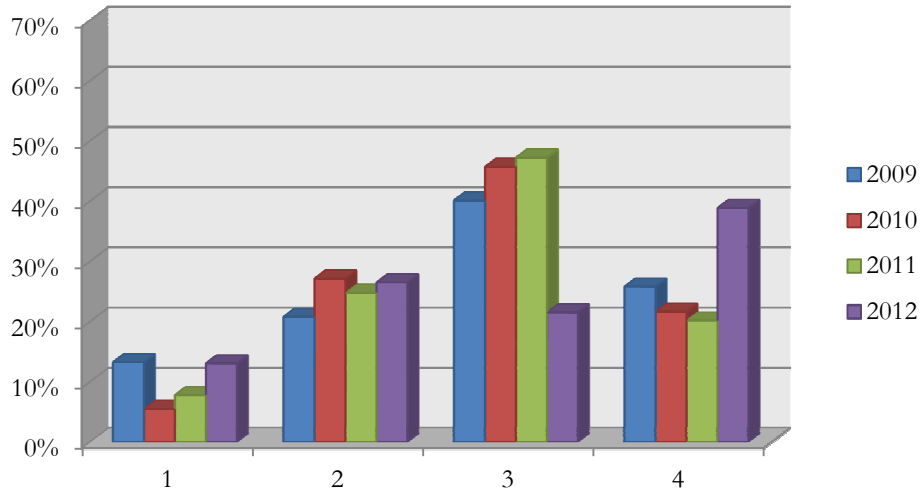
Goal 3 Learning Outcome A: Effectively frame a research question



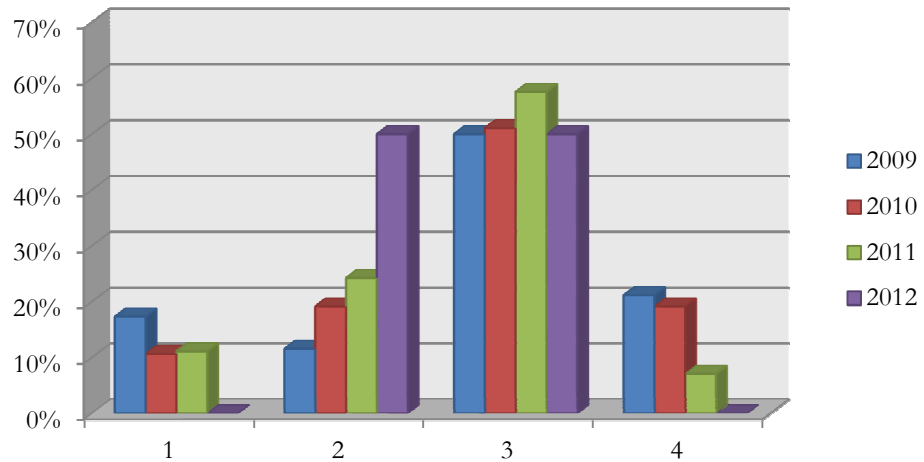
Goal 3 Learning Outcome B: Apply conceptual knowledge



Goal 3 Learning Outcome C: Apply procedural knowledge



Goal 3 Learning Outcome D: Identify and account for multiple perspectives



Key Findings and Resulting Action Items: Goal 3 Assessment

- Learning Outcome A experienced a slight increase in the number of artifacts scoring 3 or 4, moving from 36% to 40%, as seen in the graph above.
- Learning Outcomes B, C, and D experienced decreases over last year’s scores, some of which are dramatic. Learning Outcomes B and C were particularly striking, showing a decrease of 10 percentage points or more.
- Action Item: The General Education Committee will discuss the results of the four-year data and develop a plan for the future. There may be multiple variables evident in the results, including

- Differing assessment teams, with different combinations of science/social science faculty and faculty from other fields
 - *In general, the Gen Ed Assessment teams do not undergo a rigorous, scientifically-based training for inter-rater reliability. This may be most evident with regard to this goal, but present in others and affecting data across the board.*
- Differing quality of artifacts for assessment; data gathered earlier in the process reflected the involvement of the most assessment-friendly faculty, whereas more data in years 3 and 4 came from faculty who were more resistant to assessment, and thus may have submitted artifacts of generally lower quality, or artifacts that did not take the desired learning outcomes into consideration
- All of the following should be analyzed: the assessment plan’s focus on Science and Social Science courses, the Goal 3 rubric, the courses selected for assessment, and the limitations that come from only collecting student artifacts that can be easily photocopied and disseminated.
 - *For instance, the low numbers of assessable artifacts for Learning Outcomes A and D may simply reflect the predisposition of faculty to submit product-oriented artifacts (in the case of Learning Outcome A) or to focus on analyses with concrete answers, rather than “multiple perspectives” (in the case of Learning Outcome D).*

In addition to the data provided from the analysis of artifacts using the rubric, data from the NSSE survey are provided for some key questions that relate to this General Education goal.[†]

NSSE Item	2008		2010		2012	
	First Years	Seniors	First Years	Seniors	First Years	Seniors
During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?	74%	61%	70%	65%	76%	64%
• Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods:	77%	82%	80%	88%	82%	86%
• Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory:	66%	74%	66%	78%	66%	77%
• Synthesizing and organizing ideas:	70%	69%	66%	76%	69%	72%
• Making judgments about value of information:	75%	80%	72%	86%	76%	83%
• Applying theories or concepts:						

[†] CAPC would like to thank Dr. Idna Corbett for her contribution to this element of the report. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is a survey that provides annual snapshot data of student engagement in programs and activities.

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

81% 84% 81% 88% 84% 86%

- Thinking critically and analytically

Goal 4 Assessment

As discussed in last year’s report, participation in assessment for Goal 4 in Spring 2011 was limited by a number of factors, one of which was the decision to collect student work only from Arts courses. In Fall 2011, we chose to collect additional artifacts from students in Interdisciplinary courses, both to follow the assessment plan more faithfully and to supplement the low number of artifacts we gathered in the Spring. The data from both semesters are included in this section, treated as one set, and referred to as “2012,” and includes 79 student artifacts. This is still quite a low number in terms of faculty participation.

Goal 4, in 2011-12, said that “West Chester University strives to give students the abilities to demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person educated in the liberal-arts tradition.” However, as noted in last year’s Gen Ed report, the assessment plan linked the Distributive requirement in the Arts with the Interdisciplinary requirement, thus creating a difficult marriage between courses that seek to *represent a discipline* and courses that seek to *critique the idea of disciplinarity itself*. As a result of the assessment data, then, the Gen Ed Committee proposed a revision of Goal 4, which was approved by CAPC and the Provost. The new Goal 4 says that West Chester University students should “demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries.”

The new Goal 4 was approved in May 2012. However, because the collection of student artifacts took place in Fall 2011, the Assessment team decided that the artifacts could not be assessed according to a goal that hadn’t existed when they designed syllabi, created assignments, or collected artifacts. The rubric developed for the “old” Goal 4 was used. Therefore, the data for the 2012 assessment of Goal 4 is of limited interest, and, in particular, is not helpful as a guide for the future. A new rubric for Goal 4 is being developed by the Gen Ed Committee and will be used when Goal 4 next occurs in the assessment plan (2016). The data for the “old” Goal 4 is presented here in the interest of clarity and loop-closing.

The rubric for Goal 4 (in 2011-12) identifies the following student learning outcomes:

Learning Outcome

1

2

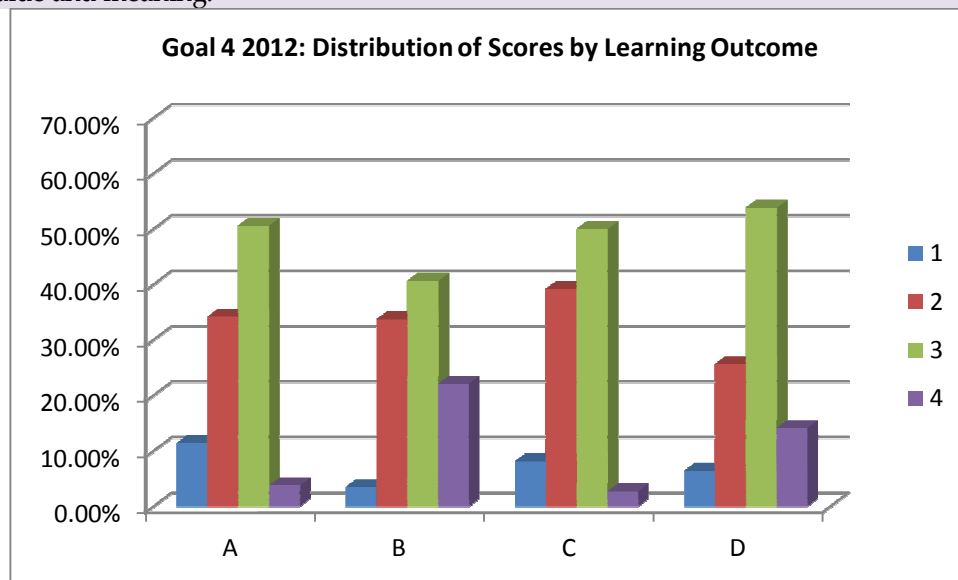
3

4

<p>A. Demonstrates an understanding of the arts and humanities with reference to the artistic contributions of people from diverse periods, movements, and cultures</p>	<p>Student fails to demonstrate an understanding of the arts and humanities in light of the artistic contributions of people from diverse periods, movements, and cultures</p>	<p>Student demonstrates a simplistic understanding of the arts and humanities with an incomplete consideration of the artistic contributions of people from diverse periods, movements, and cultures.</p>	<p>Student articulates an informed understanding of the arts and humanities and demonstrates knowledge of the artistic contributions of people from diverse periods, movements, and cultures.</p>	<p>Student articulates a nuanced or sophisticated understanding of the arts and humanities; demonstrates knowledge of the contributions of people from diverse periods, movements, and cultures in a way that is advanced for the course level.</p>
<p>B. Identify, evaluate, and apply conceptual approaches such as style, form and/or aesthetic quality in a given discipline</p>	<p>Student fails to identify, evaluate, or apply any conceptual approaches to the arts and humanities.</p>	<p>Student attempts to identify, evaluate, and apply some discipline specific conceptual approaches to the arts and humanities.</p>	<p>Student adequately identifies, evaluates, and applies discipline specific conceptual approaches to the arts and humanities.</p>	<p>Student demonstrates an understanding of discipline specific conceptual approaches and effectively applies them to the arts and humanities.</p>
<p>C. Compare and contrast interdisciplinary contexts such as scientific or fact based models, predictive theories, philosophical principles, and criticism (value based writings)</p>	<p>Student cannot differentiate between factual knowledge, philosophical principle and art or humanity based criticism</p>	<p>Student demonstrates a simplistic understanding of the differences between factual knowledge, philosophical principle and art or humanity based criticism</p>	<p>Student satisfactorily differentiates between factual knowledge, philosophical principle and art or humanity based criticism</p>	<p>Student demonstrates an informed understanding of the differences between factual knowledge, philosophical principle and art or humanity based criticism</p>
<p>D. Responds to the arts and humanities with a liberal arts sensibility and demonstrates an ability to interpret and articulate awareness of value and meaning.</p>	<p>Student fails to respond with a liberal arts sensibility and cannot interpret or articulate an awareness of the qualitative value of arts and humanities</p>	<p>Student occasionally responds with a liberal arts sensibility and inconsistently interprets and/or articulates an awareness of the qualitative value of arts and humanities</p>	<p>Student responds with a liberal arts sensibility. Student both interprets and articulates an awareness of the qualitative value of arts and humanities</p>	<p>Student responds with a sophisticated liberal arts sensibility and/or articulates an awareness of the qualitative value of arts and humanities.</p>

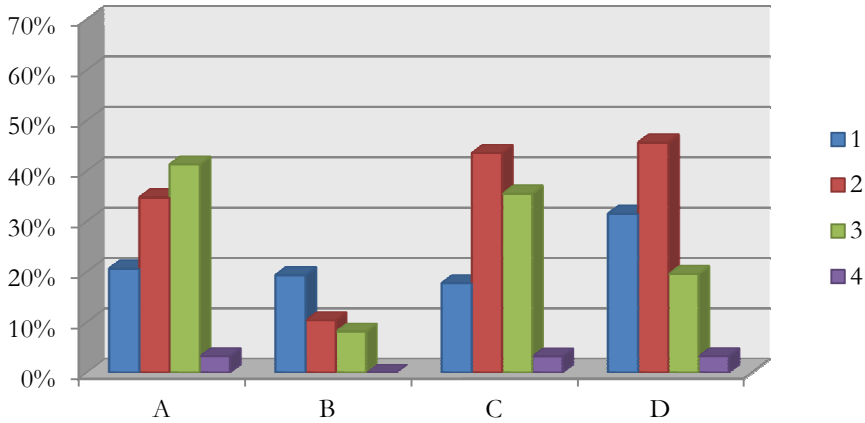
Goal 4 Assessment Data

2012 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Demonstrates an understanding of the arts and humanities with reference to the artistic contributions of people from diverse periods, movements, and cultures	11.4% (9)	34.17% (27)	50.63% (40)	3.8% (3)
B. Identify, evaluate, and apply conceptual approaches such as style, form and/or aesthetic quality in a given discipline	3.49% (3)	33.72% (29)	40.7% (35)	22.09% (19)
C. Compare and contrast interdisciplinary contexts such as scientific or fact based models, predictive theories, philosophical principles, and criticism (value based writings)	8.11% (6)	39.19% (29)	5.0% (37)	2.7% (2)
D. Responds to the arts and humanities with a liberal arts sensibility and demonstrates an ability to interpret and articulate awareness of value and meaning.	6.41% (5)	25.64% (20)	53.85% (42)	14.1% (11)



2010 Results: Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Demonstrates an understanding of the arts and humanities with reference to the artistic contributions of people from diverse periods, movements, and cultures	20.65% (19)	34.78% (32)	41.30% (38)	3.26% (3)
B. Identify, evaluate, and apply conceptual approaches such as style, form and/or aesthetic quality in a given discipline	19.35% (12)	45.16% (28)	35.48% (22)	0.00% (0)
C. Compare and contrast interdisciplinary contexts such as scientific or fact based models, predictive theories, philosophical principles, and criticism (value based writings)	17.74% (11)	43.55% (27)	35.48% (22)	3.23% (2)
D. Responds to the arts and humanities with a liberal arts sensibility and demonstrates an ability to interpret and articulate awareness of value and meaning.	31.52% (29)	45.65% (42)	19.57% (18)	3.26% (3)

Goal 4 2010: Distribution of Scores by Learning Outcome



Key Findings and Resulting Action Plans: Goal 4 Assessment

- Last year the N for these results was too small to be considered reliable. While the number of artifacts returned this year remained small (66), we can at least begin to see that for all Learning Outcomes, half or more in each Learning Outcome scored a 3 or 4. Because of the issues with sample size from previous years, it is not reliable to try and make comparison in terms of student performance over the period of assessment.
- Action Item: The General Education chair will work with the CAPC General Education Committee examine the utility of the Goal 4 rubric and consider making recommendations to adjust the assessment plan to take into account the concerns noted above.

REVIEW AND REVALIDATION

The Review and Revalidation of approved General Education courses is the result of a previous Middle States report, and in direct response to a Middle States concern that courses appeared to have “life long approval.” Based on this finding, West Chester University instituted a “review and revalidate” process several years ago. Various iterations of this process failed to produce outcomes consistent with the spirit of the Middle States recommendation. Since its initiation in 2008, the Review and Revalidation process has now become an important institutional mechanism for ensuring that General Education courses remain connected to the General Education curriculum goals and requirements.

WCU has a university-wide program review process that is mandated by PASSHE, and, in this sense, carries the weight of Harrisburg behind it, compelling departments to respond. Our plan continues to link the CAPC Review and Revalidation process to the PASSHE program review cycle in an attempt to minimize the impact of multiple processes on departments.

The university Program Review Officer continues to collect, as part of their normal data collection from departments under review, syllabi for all courses that fall into the recommended distributive areas, "I", "J" and "W" categories. For the 2011-2012 Academic Year, the CAPC Program Review Chair assisted in the data collection process by confirming the list of syllabi that needed to be submitted for Review and Revalidation and enlisted the help of the Program Review subcommittee in evaluating the syllabi for their compliance with Review and Revalidation guidelines for General Education courses. Chairs are notified of courses needing revision and CAPC establishes an appropriate timeframe for revision and resubmission of revised materials.

Moving forward, this process will be slightly different given the recent adoption of revised CAPC bylaws. For the 2012-2013 Academic Year, the CAPC General Education Committee will have primary responsibility for the Review and Revalidation of General

Education courses. This shift in responsibilities is one part of our efforts to more closely align the approval and revalidation process for WCU's General Education curriculum. Under this new model, the committee responsible for the initial approval of General Education courses will also be involved in the review and maintenance of the General Education curriculum. We believe this new approach will allow the General Education committee to have better information on how the General Education curriculum has been evolving and implemented.

Courses Reviewed and Results of Review

The past few program review cycles have been among the heaviest in terms of the sheer number of General Education courses associated with the programs going under review in each of the respective years. One need only look to the last few reports to be reminded that in 2009-2010, 105 courses were put on probation for the 2010-2011 academic year. Of the 105, four were academic foundations courses, 14 were recommended (distributive) courses, 59 were writing emphasis courses, eight were diverse communities courses, and 20 were interdisciplinary courses. At the end of the 2010-2011 program review cycle, of those 105 courses placed on probation, 82 were revalidated, three are still pending and 16 lost their General Education designation. The following academic year (2011-2012), 44 courses were reviewed for revalidation of their respective General Education designation. Of those reviewed, 4 courses were put on probation and one course was removed from the list of approved General Education courses.

For the 2011-2012 academic year, four programs were reviewed as part of the PASSHE mandated program review cycle. Of those, only one program had General Education courses needing to be reviewed (Kinesiology). The department had two courses (KIN 246 Sport, Culture and Society & KIN 254 Psychosocial Aspects of Physical Disability) with General Education attributes that needed to be revalidated. KIN 246 had both the interdisciplinary and diverse communities designation, while KIN 254 Psychosocial Aspects of Physical Disability had the diverse communities designation. KIN 246 was revalidated for both of its attributes and KIN 254 was placed on probation per the department's request. The department asked for an additional year as the faculty member who is typically assigned to the course was away on sabbatical and unable to participate in formulating a response to CAPC's request for changes to the course.

Since 2008, a number of lessons were learned as WCU implemented the Review and Revalidation processes relating to the General Education curriculum. Two, however, are worth noting here in the annual assessment report. Programs that are accredited by a specialized external accrediting agency have been exempt from the PASSHE program review process for quite some time. As a result, those General Education associated with the externally accredited programs were not being reviewed as part of the program review process. Thus, our first lesson is that we need to notify departments that the exemption from the program review process does not also exempt their General Education courses from the Review and Revalidation process. CAPC will be working with programs to provide them with information on this change in procedure so as to ensure that all General Education courses are included in the Review and

Revalidation process.

Another issue that arose over the past few program review cycles is the significant unevenness that exists in terms of workload from one year to the next when reviewing General Education courses for compliance with existing curricular and academic policies. The current program review cycle is based purely on the total number of programs needing to be reviewed on a five year cycle. Thus, without regard for which programs have greater numbers of General Education courses (i.e. English, Anthropology and Sociology, etc.), there are years where General Education intensive programs are on the same cycle. At the same time, there are years, like this previous one, where only two courses were up for review despite this being an even year when compared simply to the number of programs being reviewed. The connection of Review and Revalidation to Program Review cycles will have to be rethought in order to address this problem.

OVERVIEW OF THE 2012-2013 ASSESSMENT PLAN

As noted in the detailed discussion above, General Education is assessed through two processes:

General Education courses: Any course identified as part of the Academic Foundation (WRT, MAT and SPK), “recommended” in the distributive areas, or the “attribute” courses (I, J, W).

- I. The General Education program is assessed as a whole by the CAPC General Education committee
 - Each year, two of the six General Education goals are assessed through a process of gathering “artifacts” (key assignments) that have been designed to assess student learning of the respective goal. (Email request comes from the CAPC General Education chair.)
 - The sample of students is drawn from all students enrolled in classes related to the applicable goals.
 - A team of faculty across the colleges gathers for several weeks in the summer to evaluate the artifacts via a rubric that has been developed to measure learning outcomes.
 - The scorers participate in training to ensure inter-rater reliability and meetings are held throughout the process to compare results.
 - Rubrics are revised based on the work of the committee and revisions are submitted to the Gen Ed committee in the Fall.
 - A report is written and posted on the AVP website and announced at the fall CAPC meeting.
 - One or two members of the Gen Ed committee meet with departments to discuss the findings and to discuss departmental plans to help the university

better meet the applicable Gen Ed goal. The associate dean and/or the college liaison to the University Assessment Advisory Committee may participate in this meeting to assist the department in planning based on the results (revisions, changes, etc.).

- At the end of the Spring semester or beginning of summer, the CAPC Gen Ed chair asks the department chair for feedback on any changes or revisions made to Gen Ed courses throughout the year for inclusion in the annual Gen Ed report.

II. General Education course assessment is linked to the Program Review cycle (every program is required by Board of Governor's Policy to undergo Program Review every five years).

A. Review and Revalidation of course syllabi

- University Program Review requires submission of all department/program syllabi. Copies of syllabi for General Education courses will be turned over to the chair of the CAPC Gen Ed committee. [In those programs with external accreditation that offer General Education courses, the same 5-year cycle will be implemented independent of the external accreditation.]
- Syllabi are reviewed to ensure that each continues to reflect the standards of a General Education course (i.e., the General Education goal is prominent and integrated into course objectives, readings, and assignments).
- Courses that do not meet standards are discussed with relevant department chair(s); changes are identified to bring the courses into compliance (within the current academic year).
- If courses are not appropriately revised during the current academic year, they are put on probation with a deadline provided for changes to be made (currently December 1) of the following academic year. Courses that do not make the necessary revisions within this time are removed from recommended General Education status.

B. Departmental assessment of student learning outcomes

- Departments/Programs that offer any course in the General Education curriculum are notified at the beginning of their Program Review cycle (every five years) that they will need to assess their General Education courses. (Programs with external accreditation with General Education courses will be placed on a five year cycle to assess their courses and will be notified accordingly.)
- The Chair of the CAPC General Education Committee, or designee, will contact the Department chair(s) to discuss the assessment plan and to share appropriate rubrics. The department will then proceed to implement the course assessment plan(s) for two of the next three semesters.
- An assessment report (results and action plans) will be submitted to the Chair of the CAPC General Education Committee the following year.

- The Chair of the CAPC General Education Committee follows up with each department within the year to discuss the assessment findings. The associate dean and/or the college liaison to the University Assessment Advisory Committee may participate in this meeting to assist the department in planning based on the results (revisions, changes, etc.).

General education courses that are also embedded in a program’s student learning outcomes will be assessed according to the department/program assessment plan.

Long Range Plan

The following revised schedule reflects our assessment plans for the next several years. It is important to note that AY 2011-2012 was the final year in which we will need to pilot a goal, so the chart below reflects the strategy of assessing each goal across two years on a rotating schedule.

Goal	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
1	Assess	Assess					Assess
2	Assess					Assess	Assess
3			Assess	Assess			
4					Assess	Assess	
5		Assess	Assess				
6				Assess	Assess		

PREPARING FOR THE 2013 MSCHE REPORT

Preparations for the MSCHE follow-up include

- multiple information-gathering sessions with the campus community to learn how Gen Ed assessment has affected teaching and learning
- research into what a MSCHE follow-up report looks like; what kind of information is needed, how long it should be, etc.
- plans to attend MSCHE conference in Philadelphia in December, where a session on follow-up reports is being offered
- a timeline for completion, with responsible personnel noted, as follows:

November-December 2012

Workshops/focus groups, interviews with Gen Ed Assessment participants (summer assessment team members, Associate Deans, Assessment Coordinators, Gen Ed Committee members), Survey (through Survey Monkey). These workshops/focus groups/interviews are meant to gather anecdotal evidence as well as to uncover leads to documented changes in teaching/curriculum (*Mader, Gen Ed Committee, UAAC*).

December 2012-January 2013

Gather evidence and documentation for MSCHE Report appendix—student artifacts, aggregated data, changes to curriculum in the form of policy changes, revised Gen Ed goals, revised rubrics, etc. Begin to organize/analyze/request follow-up. (*Mader, UAAC*).

February 2013

Writing of First Draft of MSCHE (*Mader*). Share with Bernotsky, Gen Ed Committee, Heinerichs (*UAAC/TLAC*), summer assessment team members for feedback.

March 1: Send draft to Provost and President for comments and suggestions (*Mader, Bernotsky, Lamwers, Weisenstein*).

Friday, March, 29: Send report to MSCHE.

As we discuss at the beginning of this report, both the MSCHE follow-up and the Strategic Planning Process signify that we are at a turning point for General Education at WCU. The Strategic Planning Process may produce a significant overhaul of General Education, an outcome that this report, and those before it, would indicate is warranted.

We believe such a change is necessary. Many of our prior recommendations should be recalled in light of such a significant revision. A revised Gen Ed program should:

- build in assessment practices from the ground up
- be sustainable in terms of values, personnel, and funding
- not penalize departments that run small classes in order to achieve Gen Ed goals
- integrate Gen Ed goals with Program, Departmental, and College goals across the university

The MSCHE follow-up report offers an opportunity for us to reflect on a decade of assessment efforts and to document our responses to the results of those efforts. We hope the Strategic Plan will enable us to put the lessons we've learned to good use, and truly close the loop on Gen Ed Assessment.

Standard 12: General Education

The General Education Program at WCU is designed to provide students with the knowledge, perspectives, and competencies expected of them as citizens of the state and world. The program prescribes study in the liberal-arts traditions in order to prepare students to think and communicate as professionals, understand the social and global contexts of their lives, transfer knowledge and skills from one setting or career to another, recognize the ethical implications of professional practice, and balance the various dimensions of their personal and professional lives. Specifically, West Chester University has defined the following competencies as its general education goals:

1. Communicate effectively.
2. Employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods.
3. Think critically and analytically.
4. Demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person educated in the liberal-arts tradition.
5. Respond thoughtfully to diversity.
6. Make informed decisions and ethical choices.

The program structure consists of academic foundations (oral and written communication, quantitative skills, interdisciplinary requirements, and a diverse-communities requirement), distributive-area requirements (natural science, behavioral and social science, the humanities, and the arts), and writing-emphasis courses.

All general education courses are developed by faculty and reviewed and approved by faculty through a shared-governance process within the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC). The CAPC General Education Committee is chaired by a CAPC member who sits on the CAPC Executive Council. The General Education Committee also includes the chairs of the general-education-area subcommittees (Writing Emphasis, Diverse Communities, Interdisciplinary, and Distributive Areas). Curricular actions are forwarded by CAPC to the provost as recommendations for final approval.

For most programs, students have flexibility in deciding which general education courses to take. For other programs, specific general education courses are stipulated in order to meet the learning goals of the academic degree program and/or meet accreditation or certification requirements. In other circumstances, the “free” general education electives are prescribed as specific classes. In addition, departments have developed program-specific attribute courses (writing-emphasis, diverse-community, and interdisciplinary courses) in order to meet multiple program requirements with fewer courses, as well as to facilitate the integration of general education goals into programs.

General education goals and requirements are listed in the undergraduate catalog and on the university website. In addition, departments develop advising sheets/checklists to advise students on all major and general education requirements. In general, majors with a high number of required classes have very detailed checklists (e.g., nursing, chemistry, education programs), often specifying courses to be taken each semester. For majors that include fewer required classes and more electives (e.g., English, history), departments tend to have a checklist of course categories within which students have significant options. Most departments make their advising

sheets easily available to students both in print format and online through the department’s web page. Since these documents are produced for the various majors, the departmental—rather than general-education—requirements are typically the focus.

PROGRAM EVOLUTION SINCE 2001 REACCREDITATION

The 2001 Middle States review suggested that West Chester University place the “highest possible priority” on action concerning general education. The review team identified three specific aspects of the General Education Program to be addressed: 1) coherence, 2) recognition of diversity, and 3) assessment. Progress in each of these areas was addressed in the 2006 Periodic Review Report (PRR) and has continued since that point.

Coherence

In May 2004, CAPC passed a motion to assign a required general education goal to each general education course to support program coherence.¹ Table 12.1 summarizes the results of the change:

Table 12.1: General Education Areas and Goals

General Education Areas (Foundation and Distributive)	General Education Goals
Academic Foundations:	
English Composition/WRT	Communicate effectively
Mathematics	Employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods
Communication	Communicate effectively
Diverse Communities	Respond thoughtfully to diversity
Interdisciplinary	Demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person educated in the liberal-arts tradition
Distributive Requirements	
Science	Think critically and analytically
Behavioral and Social Sciences	Think critically and analytically
Humanities	Make informed decisions and ethical choices
Arts	Demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person educated in the liberal-arts tradition
Writing Emphasis	Communicate effectively

Consistency is further supported by the dissemination of general education information through department handbooks and electronic information posting.²

Recognition of Diversity

As reported in the 2006 PRR, the General Education Program now includes a requirement for a diverse-communities course (designated as a “J” course). A diverse-communities course is defined as a course that educates students about historically marginalized groups (based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexuality), provides a theoretical framework

for an analysis of structural inequalities, fosters understanding of difference, and furthers the goal of graduating students who are committed to creating a just and equitable society.

To date, 59 courses from 26 departments and programs have been approved as diverse-communities courses.³ Each year, CAPC makes a call for examples of “best practice” within a selected theme, and the Executive Committee selects four or five for presentation at general assembly meetings. Several of these presentations have focused on the “J” course, and there have been numerous forums and opportunities for peer dialogue about diverse-communities courses and goals. Finally, service-learning opportunities in the curriculum enrich students’ learning about diversity through engagement in the community. For the academic year 2009-10, 118 courses included a service learning component.⁴

Assessment

The 2001 Middle States review team expressed concerns about general education assessment on both the micro and the macro level. On the micro level, the team noted that many courses at the University had a “lifelong course approval,” which raised concerns about the legitimate verification of course goals and content over time. On the macro level, no assessment plan was in place to evaluate the program as a whole. Each concern will be discussed separately below.

Micro Level: Review and Revalidation of Courses. In response to the last Middle States review, CAPC developed a process for regularly reviewing the syllabi of all general education courses. This process has gone through several iterations to improve the method and produce outcomes consistent with the spirit of the Middle States recommendation.

Each year, from six to ten academic departments without external accreditation engage in a program-review process mandated by a PASSHE Board of Governors policy.⁵ One component of this process includes submitting all course syllabi for review of the courses’ relationship to the academic program’s student-learning goals. CAPC now capitalizes on this process by having the CAPC Program Review Committee (PRC) simultaneously review the syllabi for all general education courses taught by the department under review to ensure compliance with the review and revalidation guidelines.⁶ The chair of the CAPC PRC forwards the results of the review to the General Education Committee, whose members determine whether the courses can be revalidated or need revisions. Chairs are notified of courses needing revision and given clear revision expectations and deadlines for resubmitting syllabi (within one academic semester). If the deadline for submitting the revised syllabi is not met, the courses lose their status as recommended general education courses. For the general education courses taught within programs that have external accreditation, a similar process ensures course review.

During 2008-09, 61 general education courses were reviewed; 54 were revalidated, and 7 were placed on probation in April 2009. All probationary courses were reinstated within the following semester by revising the syllabi appropriately. In 2009-10, 156 courses were reviewed; 51 were revalidated, and 105 were placed on probation in April 2010.

Macro Level: Program Assessment. The 2001 Middle States review provoked rich dialog about the assessment of WCU’s General Education Program, and in 2004, CAPC recommended and the provost approved the General Education Program Assessment Plan. This framework mapped out specific measurable sub-goals in each major goal area and identified appropriate types of data to collect, points of data collection, and timelines for the collection and synthesis of data and for the reporting and implementation of findings. At that time, elements of information

literacy were identified and linked directly to general education goals and/or sub-goals. This framework was discussed among the faculty at large, and assessment according to the plan commenced in spring 2006 with a pilot that focused on goal 1, effective communication.

In fall 2006 following this first round of pilot assessment, the General Education Committee consulted with a known national expert in assessment, Dr. Trudy Banta. It was determined that while the original plan was comprehensive, it was unwieldy and required excessive work on the part of department chairs. Further, the assessment tools employed were uneven across colleges and departments, and the results were course specific. These factors led to a significant revision of the assessment plan beginning in 2007 to improve effectiveness through program-level measures of general education competencies (as opposed to course-level assessment) and to enhance efficiency by centralizing the data collection and analysis with the General Education Committee.

With this revision, the assessment process each year includes these elements:

1. Pilot at least one new goal.
2. Assess the goal(s) piloted in the previous year.
3. Create a random sample of students enrolled in the goal-specific courses.
4. Contact instructors of the courses associated with the goals; provide rubrics, and request completion of a survey of instructor-related data (years of experience, number of times teaching the course, and questions about the rubric provided).
5. Have instructors return one ungraded copy of the selected students' work along with the assignment's directions to the General Education Committee.
6. Convene an independent group of faculty to discuss the rubric(s) and complete exercises to ensure inter-rater reliability.
7. Within this group, use the rubrics to assess the student artifacts for achievement of the respective goal(s).
8. Through group discussions, also generate some overall suggestions for future assessments.
9. Write the assessment report (prepared by the chair of the General Education Assessment Committee), submit it to the provost and the associate provost, and discuss it at the first CAPC meeting each fall.
10. Post the report on the associate provost's website.
11. Have two members of the general education assessment team meet with the departments that participated in the most recent assessments to discuss results, offer suggestions, and share raters' feedback. (Rater reflections and critical feedback, as well as examples of very good assignments with respect to their ability to be assessed, will be available in the evidence room.) Departments are then expected to share the information provided with the faculty.

Ultimately, the schedule of assessment includes two goals per year, and the cycle repeats every three years.

The schedule to assess the general education goals is depicted in Table 12.2:

Table 12.2: Schedule of Assessment for WCU’s General Education Goals

Goal	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
1	Pilot	Assessment of assessment with consultant				Assess		
2					Pilot	Assess		
3			Pilot	Assess	Repeat Assess		Assess	
4				Pilot	Assess			Assess
5			Pilot	Assess			Assess	
6				Pilot	Assess			Assess

Assessment Results

Assessment of results since 2006-07 provides evidence that the general education curriculum contributes to college-level proficiency in the key competency areas addressed by the General Education Program. A brief summary of each goal follows. (Full reports will be available in the evidence room at the time of the site visit.)

Goal 1: Communicate effectively. Although the assessment plan changed after the first round of assessment in 2006, the pilot assessment of goal 1 produced strong results regarding student learning. In that round, two departments, Communication Studies and English, were selected to participate because each of these departments offers academic-foundation courses that support two means of effective communication, oral and written.

In the Communication Studies course, Public Speaking (SPK 208), speeches were evaluated utilizing a rubric to assess organization, content, and delivery. In addition, questions embedded in course tests measured students’ understanding of concepts in these areas. Table 12.3 summarizes the results of the pre-test and final-exam questions:

Table 12.3: Pre/Post-test Results: Effective Communication

Question Topic	Pre-test Results (% correct)	Final-Exam Results (% correct)
1. Transition	89%	91%
2. Thesis	80%	90%
3. Support	87%	89%
4. Testimony	44%	61%
5. Delivery	71%	82%
6. Eye Contact	89%	93%

Questions related to “support” and “testimony” were also designed to capture important elements of information literacy. Although not as strong as other factors measured, the greatest learning from pre-test to final exam occurred in understanding the difference between testimony and hearsay. This result is very important for this foundation-level course.

In the writing (WRT) courses, the English Department’s Composition Committee used a case-study approach to assess the writing portfolios required of all students in WRT 120 and WRT 200. A sample of portfolios was collected and evaluated using an assessment rubric to evaluate student performance in five areas—genre, content, expression, organization, and

correctness. Results reveal that well over 70% of students at both levels of the program met or exceeded baseline expectations.

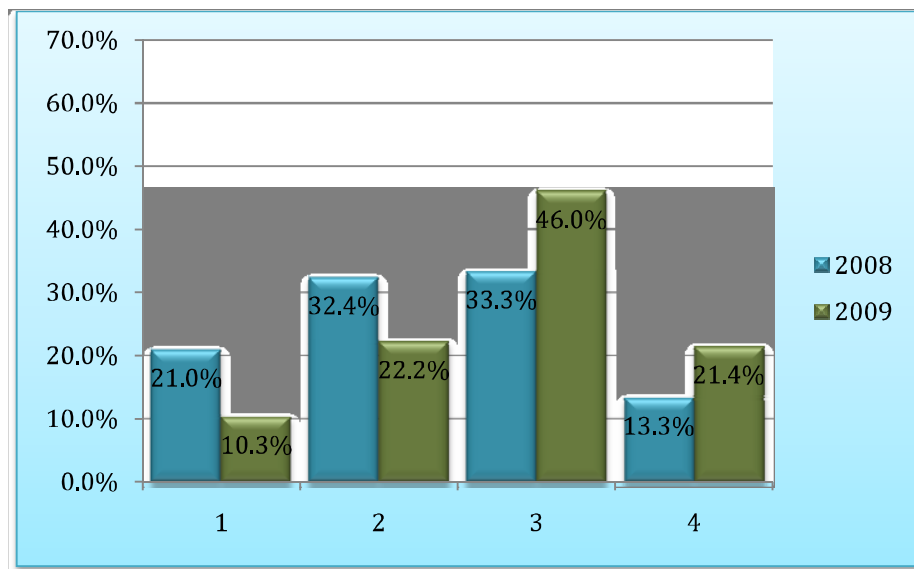
Goal 2: Employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods. Goal 2 is scheduled for its pilot assessment in spring 2011. A rubric is being developed and will be finalized in fall 2010. (Note: Pilot testing methods include generating a university-wide sample and asking faculty to submit assignments, “ideal” answers, and student artifacts for the students in the sample, just as in the full assessment.)

Goal 3: Think critically and analytically. Assessment of goal 3 was piloted in spring 2008 and fully implemented in 2009-10. The rubric was refined as a result of the pilot assessment as it became clear that the rubric did not sufficiently address “analytical thinking.” The new rubric focuses on two types of knowledge—conceptual and procedural—in order to apply equally to the natural, social, and behavioral sciences. In spite of the changes made to the rubric, there was enough consistency in the two rubrics to measure change in four areas: differentiation among facts, opinions, and inferences in the framing of a research question; identification of assumptions; application of problem-solving methods; and identification of multiple perspectives.

The results show improvement in all four areas, reflected in the higher rating of artifacts in 2009 (scores of 3s and 4s) as compared to 2008. Results for the first construct are reflected in the graph below:

Outcome: *Effectively frame a research question—including differentiating among facts, opinions, and inferences—by assessing and evaluating sources.*

Table 12.4: 2008 and 2009 Comparisons: Critical and Analytical Thinking (Percentages of students earning 1-4 ratings; 1=low; 4=high)



Goal 4: Demonstrate the sensibilities, understandings, and perspectives of a person educated in the liberal-arts tradition. Goal 4 was piloted in spring 2010 and will be fully assessed in 2010-11. The initial rubric was evaluated by the 2010 summer assessment team and will be revised for use in the full assessment in 2010-11.

Goal 5: Respond thoughtfully to diversity. Goal 5 was piloted in 2008-09 and assessed in 2009-10. A comparison of the data reveals that scores have improved slightly overall. (Detailed

tables, graphs, rubrics, and full assessment data will be available in the evidence room.) The slight improvement appears related to raters developing more clarity about appropriate answers for each category following the pilot. It also became apparent that the quality or clarity of assignments to assess this goal varied greatly. This analysis has been the focus of feedback to faculty teaching courses to support goal 5.

Goal 6: Make informed decisions and ethical choices. Academic year 2009-10 was the pilot year for goal 6, which has proven to be the most difficult to assess to date. A number of faculty teaching these courses were not aware that their courses addressed general education goal 6, indicating some weakness in the communication process. Thereafter, faculty were engaged to discuss and refine the rubric, creating an educational experience that will likely bring increased participation in the 2010-11 assessment cycle. (Results of the pilot will be included in the evidence room.)

ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO ASSESS WCU'S GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

A number of other assessments measure constructs within the WCU General Education program, providing an opportunity to triangulate the data from the foundation-level general education courses discussed above.

NSSE and General Education

The NSSE includes items related to communication, critical thinking, and diversity, as depicted in Table 12.4:

Table 12.5: General Education and NSSE

WCU General Education Goal	NSSE Item	2008		2010	
		First Year	Senior Year	First Year	Senior Year
1: Communicate effectively	How often have you made a class presentation (often, very often)?	40%	62%	33%	63%
3: Think critically and analytically	During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following mental activities?				
	• Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods	74%	61%	70%	65%
	• Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory	77%	82%	80%	88%
	• Synthesizing and organizing ideas	66%	74%	66%	78%
	• Making judgments about value of information	70%	69%	66%	76%
	• Applying theories or concepts	75%	80%	72%	86%
	To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	81%	84%	81%	88%
	During the current school year, how often have you examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue?	44%	54%	44%	56%
5: Respond thoughtfully to diversity	During the current school year, how often have you tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective?	53%	59%	57%	68%
	During the current school year, how often have you had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own (often, very often)?	56%	51%	50%	54%

In general, results show that between their first and senior years, students perceive increased opportunities to engage in these skills. One area of concern is that fewer students are engaging in serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than we would expect given the general education diversity goal. This result, as well as the results of the Campus Climate Survey (discussed below), has led to the development of new programming and recommended action steps to begin in spring 2011.

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)

The CLA comprises a performance task and an analytical writing task that assess critical thinking, analytical reasoning, problem solving, and written communication, all goals of the General Education Program at WCU. WCU engaged in a pilot assessment of the CLA in 2009-10 and has initiated a full implementation in 2010-11. The pilot results show that WCU's graduating seniors are performing as expected (according to SAT scores) as well as showing modest evidence of "value added." However, graduating students scored above expectations in the performance task, which asks students to synthesize, analyze, and evaluate information from multiple sources—key features of information literacy competence.⁷

The results of the Collegiate Learning Assessment were brought to the Assessment Advisory Committee for discussion in early fall 2010, and additional analysis of the data is underway. As a participant in the Voluntary System of Accountability, WCU will post CLA scores on the College Portrait website.

Campus Climate Survey

The Campus Climate Survey, referenced earlier in the self-study, included several items related to diversity experiences inside and out side of the classroom and provides yet another method of assessment for goal 5 (Respond thoughtfully to diversity.). More than half of all students and faculty felt the curriculum includes materials, perspectives, and/or experiences of people based on 14 of 18 provided demographic characteristics (the exceptions included immigrant status, marital/partner status, parental status, and veteran/military status).⁸ Once again, since all students must take a diversity course, we would expect this percentage to be higher.

Closing the Loop

As stated above, the last step of the process for the General Education Committee (GEC) assessment team is to meet with departments following assessment to discuss results, offer suggestions, and share raters' feedback. How departments have used assessment data to make changes has not been captured to date, though the GEC has created a process to check back in with departments in the semester following the discussion of results to capture and report these actions. This approach will begin in 2010-11.

In addition, on November 9, 2010, the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment organized a forum for faculty, staff, and students that presented an integrated summary of key results from the NSSE, Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), general education assessment, and the campus climate survey results in relation to critical thinking, information literacy, engagement, diversity, and advising.⁹ Participants were asked to generate action steps suggested by the data and prioritized advising, study abroad, the integration of diversity content into more courses, and stronger connections among library and classroom faculty to support information literacy.¹⁰ This presentation was also shared with the Academic Affairs Council and President's Council.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Closing the Loop

As acknowledged in the 2010 General Education Assessment report,¹¹ while there is communication back to departments about the general education assessment results, creating a way to support revisions and/or changes in courses that may be indicated by the results is difficult because the General Education Committee can only provide feedback to departments and does not have the authority to influence how results are used. The GEC is discussing ways to engage departments that teach the courses to realize the full potential of the data to improve general education.

While the November 2010 forum engaged faculty, staff, and students in thinking about the integration of several key assessment results and generated good discussion about possible ways to strengthen student learning and engagement, no structure exists to ensure that any changes are made, nor is there a structure in place for the regular review of integrated assessment results.

Benchmarks

A necessary next step in the assessment of general education will be the establishment of benchmarks. Each goal will have been fully assessed by the end of 2011-12, allowing for analysis of the whole in determining what is reasonable to expect and what to aspire to in meeting general education goals in the foundation-level courses.

Sustaining a Culture of Assessment for General Education

In order to meet overall class-size targets, some departments have chosen to increase the general education class sizes in order to protect major program classes. Larger class sizes are also a way to reduce the number of temporary faculty to meet the 25% cap on temporary faculty (see Standard 10). In addition, the majority of general education courses are offered within the College of Arts and Sciences (two-thirds of general education course sections in the last five years). This fact places a larger burden on the College of Arts and Sciences in the assessment process. Finally, temporary faculty have taught a disproportionate percentage of general education courses (43.2% over the last five years).¹² If temporary faculty members are shouldering the largest portion of the responsibility for teaching general education, this situation raises questions about the ability of WCU to respond adequately to assessment results and to implement changes. All three factors create challenges in sustaining assessment efforts and influence the use of assessment results to effect change.

Transfer Legislation

In 2006, the Pennsylvania Department of Education began implementing Article XX-C of the Public School Code of 1949,¹³ which stipulates that all PASSHE institutions accept 30 community-college transfer credits as general education credits. While awarding these 30 credits was largely already well established in our institutional transfer-equivalency matrices, more recent legislation stipulates that all students transferring in with an associate degree are to be accorded 60 transfer credits—i.e., “junior standing.” Given the possibility that students will graduate having taken no general education at WCU, this policy challenges the institution’s ability to ensure that all WCU graduates achieve the competencies of the General Education Program. Furthermore, it will create challenges for program assessment.

Linking Academic Program Goals and General Education Goals

Currently, assessment of general education goals takes place through the assessment of competencies achieved in the defined general education courses. As we move forward, creating a link between the general education goals and the student learning outcomes of academic programs will provide more meaningful ways to assess the development of competency over time, as well as to see how each competency applies to the discipline/profession. A recent analysis revealed that a number of programs articulate (and assess) goals consistent with the general education goals.¹⁴ Linking general education courses to higher-order learning as applied in the majors provides an opportunity to strengthen achievement of the University's general education goals.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The General Education Program and its assessment processes have made considerable progress since the Periodic Review Report in regards to micro-level and program assessment. Evidence shows that the general education curriculum contributes to college-level proficiency in the key competency areas addressed by the General Education Program. Linking academic-program student learning outcomes with general education competencies will provide more overall coherence and assist in the assessment of competency achievement.

While a process has been established to communicate assessment results to departments teaching the classes, no structure is in place for ensuring the use of assessment results to influence program or curricular change. In addition, no current structure exists for the regular review of integrated assessment findings, or for the process of ensuring that results are used to effect change.

Ongoing assessment will demonstrate whether possible threats to the integrity of the general education program and its assessment (class size, temporary faculty teaching a disproportionate number of general education classes, and transfer legislation) are having a negative effect and whether adjustments will need to be made.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAM QUESTIONS

The following sample assignments or exam questions were submitted by faculty and are provided, with permission, to serve as examples of assignments that are useful for the rubric-based assessment process that the General Education assessment is based upon.

Goal 3

Sample 1

ESSAY I. (20 points)

Today the U.S. economy suffers from recession, but many people are worried that inflation will be a problem next year because the banks might start lending their excess reserves to the public. If the Federal Reserve decides to decrease the inflation rate, then how could it use its three major policy tools: reserve requirements, lending, and open market operations? Be specific, and explain your reasoning.

From the instructor:

A "good answer" might be as follows:

U.S. banks today have unprecedented amounts of excess reserves, cash balances beyond what the banks are required to have. If the banks decide to lend these reserves to the public, then there will be a huge increase in the quantity of money in circulation. Such an increase in the money supply has the potential to cause a tremendous inflation.

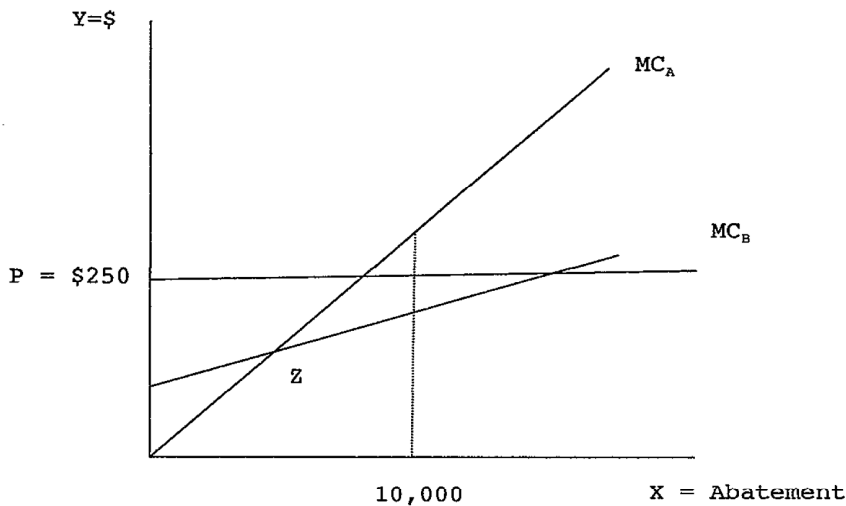
If the Federal Reserve decides to prevent inflation from rising to excessive levels, then it can use its three major policy tools: reserve requirements, discount window lending, and open market operations. First, reserve requirements can be increased to convert excess (lendable) reserves into required (not lendable) reserves. Second, the Fed can stop lending additional reserves to banks through the discount window. Finally, the Fed can sell some of its vast holdings of securities to the public on the open market. When the public pays the Fed for those securities, money would be taken out of circulation.

All three of these policies can be used to limit any increase in the quantity of money in circulation and the consequent increase in the cost of living.

(n.b., During the depression the Fed did something very similar to this pre-emptive strike on inflation. They doubled reserve requirements in 1936-37. As a result 1938 was nearly as bad as 1933.)

Sample 2 (with answers provided by instructor)

3. Consider the following diagram of two firms, A and B. Each firm has increasing marginal costs of pollution abatement, and each firm has been issued 10,000 tradable pollution credits. The current market price for a credit is \$250:



A. Should firm A buy or sell credits? Explain your reasoning, noting how and why the decision affects the profitability of the firm.

Firm A should buy credits because the marginal cost of abatement is greater than the price of the credit. Each time the firm buys a credit, it must pay the price of \$250, but it reduces its abatement costs by an even greater amount, saving the firm money and increasing profits.

B. Should firm B buy or sell credits? Explain your reasoning, noting how and why the decision affects the profitability of the firm.

Firm B should sell credits because the marginal cost of abatement is less than the price of the credit. Each time the firm sells a credit, it must pay the additional abatement cost, but it increases revenue by an even greater amount (since the price from the sale is greater than marginal cost), increasing profitability.

C. A colleague suggests that the two firms will trade credits until point the intersection point, Z, where the marginal costs are equal. Is this correct? Explain your reasoning.

It is true that the firms will trade to a point where their marginal abatement costs are equal because at this point there are no further gains from trade.

It is false that this outcome is achieved at point Z. As long as the price remains \$250, firms A and B will cease trading when their marginal costs equal \$250.

At this point, neither firm has any trade to offer that will interest the other firm. B will not offer to sell below \$250, and A will not buy at a price above \$250.

Goal 4

Sample 1

Assignment:

- Find five strong examples of Neoclassical architecture on West Chester University campus, in the city of West Chester and elsewhere in the region.
- Record the name of the building (if identifiable) and the address (or nearest cross streets). If possible provide photographs or illustrations.
- Identify the order of the buildings. List the architectural elements that define the building as neoclassical (see diagrams).

Lastly, in two to three paragraphs, discuss the reasons why you think many American architects (such as the one who designed these buildings) imitated Classical architecture.

- Do the buildings have anything in common (e.g. public buildings, private buildings, government or religious buildings)?
- Do you think there is a connection between the purpose of the building and the architectural style?
- What sort of message do you think the architect was trying to convey by using a classical architectural style?

From the instructor:

GRADING CRITERIA

In this assignment, I expect the student to demonstrate the ability to recognize Neoclassical architecture (found on WCU's campus and in West Chester) and to identify the key architectural elements that define it as such.

Additionally, students are expected to:

- Associate the style with the tradition of ancient Greek and Roman architecture
- Demonstrate an awareness of the prevalence of the Neoclassical style in public buildings (e.g. civic, banks, churches etc.)
- Discuss the symbolic importance of the Neoclassical style as a vehicle to transmit ideas such as stability, tradition and order.
- Equate the style with the contributions of the classical world: law, democracy and education.

Sample 2

Write one or two paragraphs in answer to the following questions:

1. Discuss the role that music plays in the context of Mozart's historical period. Identify specific musical events in the movie and discuss their meaning/purpose, and then comment on the importance of such events from the viewpoint of contemporary culture.
2. Choose two pieces of music to analysis (either background music or music from question #1). Identify, to the best of your ability, aspects of timbre, time, melody, texture, and harmony.
3. Does the movie's depiction of Mozart's music affect your understanding and/or opinion of his music? Consider and comment on two of the following scenes: 1) Salieri's description of the music he sees on the page before he concludes that God has given this genius to someone who is unworthy; 2) Mozart's description of the opening of the Marriage of Figaro when he is trying to convince the emperor to allow him to finish it; and 3) the scene near the end when Salieri is writing down the music from the Requiem that Mozart is singing to him.
4. What is your overall impression of the movie?

NOTES for CAPC's General Education Assessment Committee:

1. In a good answer, I looked for a demonstrated understanding of the elements of music as presented in the course, evidence of a thoughtful analysis of the movie, and a full answer to each of the assignment's questions.

Goal 5

Sample 1

Our premise this semester has been that women have always contributed to and felt empowered by writing, around the world and from the earliest times—even when the historical, political, and social context worked to suppress their literary participation. When you answer the questions, please keep this in mind. Write clear, well-organized essays, using specific examples from the texts to back up your arguments. Do not discuss any given writer in more than one question, unless specifically permitted to do so. Please note: you may choose between questions 6 and 7.

1. Take the theme of education and trace it through several centuries and geographic regions, using at least four writers we've read this semester, from four different periods and places. Demonstrate commonalities and differences in the authors' approaches. If you use Sor Juana, please do not duplicate your response in question # 5. (20)
2. What poetic and narrative forms have women writers experimented with? Invented? Adapted? Please give at least three examples (different than those in your other answers) and describe specifically what they've done and how. (15)
3. Using two writers not discussed elsewhere in this exam, including one mystic and one from the ancient time period, demonstrate how women have claimed authority through the use of the written word. (10)
4. What specific contributions have the novels *The Tale of Genji* and *Northanger Abbey* made to narrative prose fiction as a genre? What are their most important themes? To what extent does each reflect a woman-centered consciousness? (20)
5. Several writers we have read this semester demonstrate an awareness of women's history, and of its role in their own intellectual development. Discuss this awareness in two writers read this semester, including Sor Juana and one other, not discussed elsewhere in your exam. (15)
6. We have read works in unusual genres this semester; including Sei Shonagan's *Pillowbook* and Flora Tristan's *Peregrinations of a Pariah*. Describe two in terms of its genre and discuss the contributions of each to women's literature. (10) OR
7. This semester, we have read quite a bit of love poetry: Discuss the themes and images evident in two poets from different time periods and places. (One should be Colonna, Labé, or Stampa). (10)

Sample 2

Part III. Essays.

1. Provide a detailed response to ONE of the following essay questions. Consider the position and arguments of at least two figures we've read in your response. Complete sentences are required. (5 points)

- (i) Should the federal government legalize same-sex marriage?
- (ii) Is it always wrong to lie?
- (iii) Is eating meat unethical?
- (iv) Do we have an obligation to assist those who live in absolute poverty?
- (v) Can a just society allow inequalities in rights and/or income?

2. Ethical perspectives can be assessed not only in terms of their reasonableness or truth, but in terms of their function or power-effects. We can ask if a view can be or has been used, wittingly or unwittingly, to legitimate or perpetuate oppression. Explore the connection between ethical theory and oppression by describing three ethical perspectives in detail and explaining their relationship to the oppression of specific groups. (7.5 points)

Sample 3

4. Feminist Analysis (200 points)

Since one of my goals for this course is that you be able to apply concepts from the course to the content of your lives; this assignment asks you to take a critical look at an everyday or text (and a contemporary one). Specifically, you will conduct a feminist analysis of some lecture, film, tv episode, poem, advertisement, interaction, style, technology, document or website (or something else that you run by me) that is CURRENT (happened within the last six months). Your task is to "unpack" the text – looking at the ways that it does; and does not; support the equality of women and other historically marginalized groups. In addition to analyzing the "text" itself; you'll want to analyze the context in which it exists (how is it framed, advertised, and attended, etc.?) and you'll want to pay attention to the reception of the event or text by audience members or attendees. I urge you to select the event or text carefully. Don't pick something that is obviously offensive to women; or something that you think embodies feminism completely. Most things are more complicated than that; and the power of sexism lies in its ability to conceal itself. Challenge yourself. You'll have more fun; and learn more; if you pick a text that is outside of your "usual" range – because that will mean that your "work" for the project will be both internal and external (you'll need to examine your own choices while analyzing the event itself.) You will need to bring in ideas from the readings for this course (and outside readings if you find them appropriate) and to provide specific evidence to support your argument about the object of analysis. 6-8 pages.

Goal 6

Sample 1

Guidelines for Response Papers:

Two response papers or reflective essays are due at various points throughout the semester. The due dates are listed on the syllabus. Each paper must be submitted in two ways: 1) electronically through Turnitin, and 2) in the form of a 'hard copy' in class on the paper is due. *No late papers will be accepted.*

Each response paper should be 1-2 pages in length, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font.

Each response paper should contain:

- a brief summary of the article
- an attempt to identify the argument
- personal reflection on the ethical theory proposed or discussed in the article
- personal reflection on how the article and/or ethical theory presented may apply to issues faced by historically marginalized populations

Topic for Response Paper #1: The topic for the first response paper is either "Oppression" by Marilyn Frye or "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The assignment is to write a reflective essay that contains the criteria listed above. An attempt should be made to integrate something you learned in our in-class 'diversity workshop' into the part of the essay that deals with historically marginalized populations.

Topic for Response Paper #2: The topic for the second response paper is a news article of your choice. The article should be from a legitimate news source, and should be relevant to something we discussed in class. For example, the article can relate to a moral dilemma, a breach of ethics in the news, an ethical theory, or an ethical issue that is currently affecting a historically marginalized population. Be sure to include all of the criteria listed above.

By 'historically marginalized populations,' I mean people who have historically been discriminated against on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, religion or disabilities.

Sample 2

1. Although it appears women are represented in subsidiary positions in *Gilgamesh*, *Mwindo Epic*, *The Art of War*, *Oresteia*, and *The Tale of Genji* in reality women constitute the forte, the actual source of power in these books. Is this statement a valid interpretation of the role of women in these literary works? Use illustrations from at least three primary works.

OR

2. What elements of social justice are privileged in *Gilgamesh*, *Mwindo Epic*, *The Art of War*, *Oresteia*, and *The Tale of Genji*? What kinds of resolution do these elements foster? You may discuss such details as determinateness, fairness, consensus, legitimacy, reconciliation and resolution, **pathei mathos** (complementarity/reconciliation of opposite) rather **pathein ton erksanta** (like for like; revenge; an eye for an eye).

Sample 3

Modern Civilization: King Leopold's Ghost,
by Adam Hochschild

FROM THE SYLLABUS:

Written Assignment:

During the semester, each student will write a 2-3-page reaction paper to the (2) supplemental books. These are *not* book reports (or simply a summary of the author's main points), but a critical evaluation of the authors' handling of some aspect (or theme) of their books. As the semester progresses, I will hand out a list of possible questions that could be addressed in your reaction papers. These reaction papers will have the same weight as an exam grade.

Choose only one of the following questions/imperatives:

- 1) Consider Hochschild's story through the eyes of King Leopold II, noting how this imperialist effort affected him.
- 2) Consider Hochschild's story through the eyes of "Henry Morton Stanley," noting how this imperialist effort affected him.
- 3) Consider Hochschild's story through the eyes of the peoples of the Congo, noting how this imperialist effort affected them and their land.

- double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins
- Offer a separate title page (choose your title)
- Offer an introductory paragraph to your paper
- Offer a concluding paragraph to your paper

CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Avoid passive voice
- ✓ Spell check / Grammar check
- ✓ No slang (unless used by book's author)
- ✓ Be careful of singular and plural pronoun use
- ✓ Does each paragraph have a topic sentence
- ✓ Is there a good transition from paragraph to paragraph
- ✓ Read final paper aloud / Make changes (do this more than once)
- ✓ Hand in on time
- ✓ SEEK HELP if you have questions (writing center, tutors, professor,)

APPENDIX C: REVISED GOAL 1 RUBRIC

“Students graduating from West Chester University will be able to communicate effectively”

Subgoal (Student Learning Outcome)	1	2	3	4
<p>A. Content Students will demonstrate the ability to present a persuasive speech or essay, including a clear thesis with adequate support.</p>	<p>The paper or speech fails to make a claim, present a controlling idea, or state a thesis, OR it does so but fails to provide details or evidence in support of the idea, claim, or thesis.</p>	<p>The paper or speech attempts to state claims, controlling ideas, or theses, but the results are vague or not compelling. Details or evidence provide insufficient support.</p>	<p>The paper or speech consistently states clear claims, theses, or controlling ideas, AND supports them with adequate details or evidence.</p>	<p>The paper or speech consistently states clear claims, theses, or controlling ideas, AND supports them with adequate details or evidence. The result is an especially convincing or compelling argument.</p>
<p>B. Form Students will demonstrate control over formal properties of effective communication as appropriate to spoken or written communication in an academic context.</p>	<p>Formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are inadequate.</p>	<p>Some formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are adequate, while others are not.</p>	<p>Formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are adequate.</p>	<p>Formal properties such as vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, dynamics, tone, expression, gestures, volume, and/or speaking rate are excellent.</p>
<p>C. Organization Students will produce organized essays that effectively lead their audience through their arguments.</p>	<p>The speech or paper does a poor job of guiding the audience, with a weak introduction and conclusion, and inadequate transitions and/or signpost words.</p>	<p>The speech or paper does an inadequate job of guiding the audience, missing one or more of the following elements: a strong introduction, a strong conclusion, or effective transitions and/or signpost words.</p>	<p>The speech or paper does an adequate job of guiding the audience with an appropriate introduction or conclusion, and suitable transitions and/or signpost words.</p>	<p>The speech or paper does an excellent job of guiding the audience through a strong introduction and conclusion, and effective transitions and/or signpost words.</p>
<p>D. Audience Students will produce persuasive speeches or essays on topics that are appropriate and engaging to their audience.</p>	<p>Overall, the speech or essay fails to offer a compelling argument to its audience. There is nothing to engage the interest of the audience in terms of content or delivery.</p>	<p>Some aspects of the speech or essay indicate an attempt to engage the audience, but the essay or speech as a whole is not compelling or interesting.</p>	<p>The speech or essay successfully engages the audience in terms of content and delivery.</p>	<p>The speech or essay very successfully engages the audience in terms of content and delivery, offering a compelling, interesting argument.</p>

APPENDIX D: REVISED GOAL 2 RUBRIC

“Students graduating from West Chester University will be able to employ quantitative concepts and mathematical methods”

Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Understand and use mathematical symbolism	Student fails to identify, or misidentifies, mathematical symbols used in statements or formulas.	Student correctly identifies mathematical symbols but fails to use them correctly in computation or argument.	Student correctly uses given mathematical symbols.	Student correctly applies new mathematical symbols as appropriate for a calculation or argument, or in a new or unfamiliar situation.
B. Employ calculations correctly to draw mathematical conclusions	Student calculates incorrectly.	Student performs simple calculations correctly but cannot put them together into a larger computation.	Student calculates correctly but fails to draw appropriate conclusions consistent with calculated results.	Student calculates correctly and draws appropriate conclusions.
C. Understand the nature and use of mathematical arguments	Student fails to recognize or understand mathematical arguments.	Student can answer some questions about the nature of some mathematical argument.	Student shows understanding of arguments but cannot independently apply them.	Student understands and can apply mathematical arguments.
D. Understand how mathematics is used to gain insight into nature and as a tool in the world of human affairs	Student shows little awareness of a connection between mathematical symbolism, calculations, and arguments and their use outside mathematics.	Student often responds incorrectly to questions about previously discussed examples of applications of mathematics.	Student can respond appropriately to questions about previously discussed examples but cannot deal successfully with new applications.	Student shows understanding of how mathematics is used and can work new examples of applications.

APPENDIX E: REVISED GOAL 3 RUBRIC

“Students graduating from West Chester University will be able to think critically and analytically.”

Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Effectively frame a research question, including differentiating among facts, opinions, and inferences by assessing and evaluating sources.	Student cannot frame research question, uses sources inappropriately.	Student frames an incorrect or ineffective research question (cannot be operationalized, inconsistent appropriate use of sources).	Student frames adequate research question (can be operationalized and incorporates appropriate sources).	Student frames insightful research question that can be operationalized and is framed within an appropriate research context).
B. Apply conceptual knowledge to: - identify assumptions - make logical inferences - identify defective logical inferences - reach reasonable conclusions	Student fails to recognize concept; engages material erroneously.	Student recognizes concept but is unable to apply it correctly or logically.	Student recognizes concept; applies it generally or simplistically.	Student recognizes concept and applies it thoroughly and consistently.
C. Apply procedural knowledge to: - unpack complex problems into constituent parts - identify reliable problem-solving methods - accurately apply problem-solving methods	Student fails to recognize nature of problem to be solved and/or procedure necessary to solve it.	Student recognizes necessary procedure but is unable to apply it correctly or logically.	Student recognizes procedure; applies it generally or simplistically.	Student recognizes procedure and applies it thoroughly and consistently.
D. Identify the presence of multiple perspectives and explain the contextual factors that account for these perspectives	Student is unable to identify perspectives other than own.	Student recognizes presence of multiple perspectives, but is unable to articulate them.	Student recognizes multiple perspectives; articulates them generally or simplistically.	Student recognizes multiple perspectives and articulates them clearly and specifically.

Note: The terms “conceptual knowledge” and “procedural knowledge” from Randall Knight’s text, “Five Easy Lessons.” In it Knight categorizes knowledge into three forms:

- Factual Knowledge – Knowledge of specific events and situations. Defining redshift (astronomy), listing checks and balances in government (political science), etc.
- Conceptual Knowledge – Knowledge of (physical) principles, knowledge that provides a unified understanding of many pieces of factual knowledge. Conceptual knowledge is

generally thought of as having explanatory or predictive power. Reading supply/demand curves (economics), describing chemical reactions (chemistry), etc.

- Procedural Knowledge – Knowledge of how to apply factual and conceptual knowledge to specific problem-solving situations; knowing how to *use* what you know. Creating models, evaluating poll data, etc.

APPENDIX F: REVISED GOAL 5 RUBRIC

“Students graduating from West Chester University will be able to respond thoughtfully to diversity”

Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Examine assigned issues from a diverse communities perspective	Student fails to analyze issues in light of a diverse communities perspective.	Student uses terms or ideas consistent with a diverse communities perspective without demonstrating a clear understanding of underlying issues.	Student applies terms or ideas consistent with a diverse communities perspective, demonstrating a clear understanding of underlying issues.	Student applies terms or ideas consistent with a diverse communities perspective in a way that is original, sophisticated, or advanced for the course level.
B. Demonstrate a reasoned openness to diversity	Student does not demonstrate openness in their thinking about diversity.	Student demonstrates some openness in their thinking about diversity, but in a way that is not detailed or convincing.	Student demonstrates a reasoned openness in their thinking about diversity.	Student demonstrates an active curiosity in their thinking about diversity in a way that is original, sophisticated, or advanced for the course level.
C. Evaluate the ideological, historical and cultural causes of structural inequality	Student does not indicate any awareness of the ideological, historical and cultural causes of structural inequality.	Student indicates some awareness of the ideological, historical and cultural causes of structural inequality.	Student adequately connects ideological, historical or cultural causes of structural inequality to their resulting conditions.	Student connects ideological, historical or cultural causes of structural inequality to their resulting conditions in a way that is original, sophisticated, or advanced for the course level.
D. Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives of historically marginalized groups	Student does not demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives of historically marginalized groups on a given issue.	Student demonstrates a simplistic understanding of the perspectives of historically marginalized groups on a given issue.	Student articulates an informed understanding of the perspectives of historically marginalized groups on a given issue.	Student articulates a nuanced or original analysis of the perspectives of historically marginalized groups on a given issue in a way that is original, sophisticated, or advanced for the course level.

Key terms:

diverse communities perspective: A perspective that includes sensitivity to the historical, cultural, and ideological sources of structural inequality and of unequal privilege, as well as the ability to understand a situation or issue from the perspective of someone in a historically marginalized group. This includes but isn’t limited to the ability

to understand the modes and practices of resistance and negotiation by those marginalized peoples to the prevailing concepts or practices that are determined by the dominant culture.

historically marginalized groups: those groups of people who have been historically and systematically excluded from advantage, or oppressed by a dominant group. Categories of marginalization have included race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical ability, and immigrant status.

structural inequality: a process and a set of institutional relationships by which groups are historically and systematically excluded from advantage or oppressed by a dominant group. These inequalities are established and maintained by the dominant group, which results in the marginalization of other peoples and their concepts or practices. These marginalized groups in turn negotiate and contest the status and meaning of the concepts and practices of the dominant group.

reasoned openness: an attitude that includes acknowledging the viewpoints of others, approaching them with objectivity, and understanding the factual bases of differences in power between dominant and marginalized groups. In addition, a reasoned openness to diversity includes valuing the experiences and perspectives of historically marginalized peoples.

APPENDIX G: REVISED GOAL 6 RUBRIC

“Students graduating from West Chester University will be able to make informed decisions and ethical choices”

Learning Outcome	1	2	3	4
A. Identifies and summarizes ethical problem at issue	Does not correctly identify and/or summarize the problem or its underlying ethical issues	Identifies the main problem and some of the subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem and its underlying ethical issues	Identifies the main problem and many subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the problem and its underlying assumptions and ethical issues	Identifies not only the basics of the issue, but recognizes nuances of the issue. Analyzes the validity of key assumptions and the underlying ethical dimensions of the issue
B. Identifies other perspectives and positions	Deals only with a single perspective, possibly a personal one, and fails to identify other salient perspectives	Partially identifies other perspectives but remains within the scope of the personal or those alternatives presented in the course	Identifies other salient perspectives, including those drawn from outside information	Addresses and analyzes salient perspectives drawn from outside information
C. Examines quality of evidence	Merely repeats information provided, taking it as truth or denies evidence without adequate justification	Unevenly examines the evidence and source of evidence, questions its accuracy, precision, relevance, and completeness	Examines the evidence and source of evidence, questions its accuracy, precision, relevance, and completeness	Observes cause and effect and addresses existing or potential consequences. Clearly distinguishes between fact, opinion, and acknowledges value judgments
D. Considers conclusions, implications and consequences	Fails to identify and discuss conclusions, implications and consequences	Partially identifies and discusses conclusions, implications and consequences	Identifies and discusses conclusions, implications and consequences	Identifies and discusses conclusions, implications and consequences, and reflects upon own assertions

Please note: The General Education Committee would like to make a distinction between the knowledge of ethical theories and the ability to make ethical decisions. Our goal is the latter. While some familiarity with the great ethical thinkers or texts may be useful to the student in making decisions, this is not to be regarded as sufficient to meet the goal. The best student artifacts will show active and informed decision-making rather than a summary of ethical theories.