General Education Program Assessment Plan

The College at Brockport

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Submitted by Nancy Washer on 29 May 2015
I. Introduction

The Mission Statement of The College at Brockport
The College at Brockport, State University of New York:
Is committed to providing a liberal arts and professional education - at both the undergraduate and graduate level - for those who have the necessary ability and motivation to benefit from high quality public higher education;
Has the success of its students as its highest priority, emphasizing student learning, and encompassing admission to graduate and professional schools, employment, and civic engagement in a culturally diverse society and in globally interdependent communities; and
Is committed to advancing teaching, scholarship, creative endeavors, and service to the College community and the greater society by supporting the activities of an outstanding faculty and staff.

General Education at The College at Brockport
General Education is a core mission of The College at Brockport. The General Education Program offers students the opportunity to develop skills, to expand knowledge, and to integrate different kinds of knowledge. It is the common liberal arts core of the Brockport experience. The General Education Program at the College at Brockport includes Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) mandated by SUNY, local requirements approved by majority vote of Brockport’s College Senate, and affirmed by the President of the College.

The College offers three pathways to complete the General Education requirements. The Traditional General Education Program requires students to successfully complete courses that have been determined by the College Senate General Education Committee to meet the SLOs until they all have been fulfilled. The SLOs are listed in Appendix 1. The Delta College Program offers its own sequence of courses that together fulfill all the General Education requirements except for Quantitative Skills and Foreign Language. The Honors College partially combines the requirements of the Traditional Program and Delta College in that Honors College students begin with the Introduction to Honors course that fulfills several General Education requirements, then complete the Traditional Program, but with Honors sections of some courses. The General Education Program at the College underwent a Program Review in 2012.

Current State of General Education Assessment
As part of the planning process, the Committee conducted an informal audit to ascertain what the General Education SLOs are, which ones have been assessed, and how recently they have been assessed. From this audit, the Committee learned that although assessment of General Education SLOs has been taking place, it has not been systematic. There is a published plan and assessment system diagram on the College’s Accountability webpage as well as some closing-the-loop forms. However, the list of courses that fulfill the General Education SLOs included as
part of the published plan was incomplete. In addition, there was no curriculum map for General Education.

An Assessment Plan posted on the College’s Accountability webpage provides a timeline for assessing SLOs from Fall 2012 through Spring 2016, with some SLOs to be assessed yearly, and others over a three-year cycle. The courses to be assessed yearly are:

- Foreign Language, through the Foreign Language Placement exam and 111-level foreign language coursework
- Written Composition in English 112
- Oral Communication in GEP 100 (Academic Planning Seminars)
- Basic Mathematics in MTH 112
- Computer Literacy through the Computer Skills Exam

According to the information listed on the Accountability webpage, Written Composition has been systematically assessed since 2007 and Basic Mathematics was assessed in the 2014 spring semester. Although the Foreign Language Placement Exam and Computer Skills Exam were offered every year to place students in the appropriate courses or waive the requirements, the results do not appear to have been used as a way to assess student learning. Perhaps this is appropriate as the exams reflect learning which took place prior to the students coming to Brockport. Some of the Natural Sciences courses were assessed for the General Education SLOs, but most of the other Knowledge Area courses were not assessed until the 2014-2015 academic year.

Therefore, although a system exists, implementation has not been consistent. Instead, there are pockets of assessment, most notably Written Composition, as part of the freshman writing program. Delta College and the Honors College, in their capacity as General Education pathways, have been systematically assessing General Education SLOs for the past few years, although they are not included in the 2012 plan. Their results are posted on the Accountability webpage under their respective programs, rather than with General Education. The College has also had students complete the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Finally, a few courses in the School of Science and Mathematics were assessed for the General Education Natural Science SLO, but the results were never aggregated.

The 2013 Assessment System Diagram visually underscores some of the problems with the current system. All arrows lead to the Vice Provost, but none leave. This diagram is based upon location in the administrative hierarchy rather than function within the system. As a result, it focuses on how departments collect, analyze, and report data to the Vice Provost, rather than on how the data will be used. There are no boxes for some of the standardized tests (principally CLA and NSSE) that are or could be used to supplement General Education assessment.
In the 2014-2015 academic year numerous General Education assessments were completed as a result of the Middle States Monitoring Report. Specifically, the SUNY SLOs consisting of the four Knowledge Areas, Quantitative Skills, and Foreign Language were assessed in addition to the established cycles in Written Composition and Critical Thinking through the CLA exam. In addition, seniors in the Contemporary Issues courses were assessed for their writing skills as a way to grasp how students improve their writing from Freshman Composition through the completion of their academic career at Brockport.

II. Assessment Principles and Guidelines

What is General Education assessment?
It is a process that measures the effectiveness of the College’s General Education Program through the systematic collection and evaluation of information about student learning.

Why does General Education assessment matter?
General Education assessment is important because it:
- Provides a way to demonstrate the College’s level of success in General Education.
- Allows the College to effectively analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the General Education Program.
- Informs decisions concerning the improvement of the General Education Program.
- Enables the College to better meet students’ educational needs.

MISSION & GOALS
The mission of the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) is to provide leadership and support for the meaningful and sustainable assessment of Brockport’s General Education Program in order to promote student and institutional success.

In order to achieve this mission, the Committee focused on the following goals:
1. Systematically and efficiently collect relevant student learning data.
2. Engage in the analysis of data collected through the assessment process in order to improve the General Education Program.
3. Support faculty in their efforts to develop better strategies to meet the General Education Program’s SLOs.
4. Provide a central site for data, reports, and other materials related to General Education assessment.
5. Effectively communicate the Committee’s procedures and findings to the campus community and outside accrediting agencies.
6. Develop and continually reassess plans for General Education assessment.
7. Support the development of effective and sustainable assessment procedures.
III. Assessment Plan

The General Education Program at the College at Brockport includes numerous SLOs, some mandated by the SUNY System and others that are local requirements. Some SUNY requirements also have local supplements; these are indicated with an asterisk in the list that follows and in *italics* in Appendix 1.

**Summary of General Education SLOs**

**SUNY Requirements**
- Written Composition
- Oral Communication*
- Quantitative Skills
- Information Management
- Critical Thinking
- Foreign Language
- Fine Arts*
- Humanities
- Natural Sciences*
- Social Sciences
- World Civilizations*

**Brockport Local Requirements**
- Diversity
- Perspectives on Gender
- Contemporary Issues

A full list of SLOs is included as Appendix 1.

**Summary Curriculum Map**

As part of the Committee’s informal audit of the General Education Program, the Committee requested Information Technology Services to produce lists of the General Education courses taught in the last three years. While some SLOs had a few courses meeting that SLO, others had more than 100 courses. The Summary Curriculum Map is divided into Basic Skills (ideally mastered first year; all SUNY requirements), Upper Division Skills (mastered later in the General Education Program), SUNY Knowledge Areas, and Brockport Local Requirements. In the Summary Curriculum Map that follows, beyond the Basic Skills, the numbers of courses meeting a particular SLO are listed along with the Departments involved. Full lists will be provided upon request.
Basic Skills:
Written Composition: ENG 112, HON 112, DCC 100

Oral Communication: GEP 100, HON 112, DCC 225

Quantitative Skills: MTH 112

Critical Thinking, Information Management, and Writing: are infused throughout the General Education Program.

Upper Division Skills
Written Composition: ENG 300


Quantitative Skills: 10 courses including Statistics and Calculus in the following departments: Economics, Health Science, Math, Psychology, Sociology

SUNY Knowledge Areas
Fine Arts (with and without Performance): 35 courses in the following departments: African and African-American Studies, Art, Dance, English, Theatre and Music Studies

Humanities: 30 courses in the following departments: African and African-American Studies, Communications, English, Modern Languages, History, KSSPE, Philosophy, Political Science, Women and Gender Studies

Natural Sciences (with and without Laboratory): 31 courses in the following departments: Anthropology, Physics, Biology, Computational Science, Environmental Science, Earth Science, and Psychology

Social Sciences: 23 courses in the following departments: African and African-American Studies, Anthropology, Communications, Economics, History, Political Science, Recreation and Leisure Studies, Sociology, Women and Gender Studies

Foreign Language--Basic: all Foreign Language courses 111

Foreign Language--Advanced Level: all Foreign Language courses 112, 211, and 212
World Civilizations: 15 courses in the following departments: African and African-American Studies, Anthropology, Art, English, History, Theatre and Music Studies, Political Science

Brockport Local Requirements


General Education SLOs Assessment Timeline and Rationale
Yearly assessment: Basic Skills including Written Composition (ENG 112, HON 112, DCC 100), Oral Communication (GEP 100, HON 112, DCC 225), and College Mathematics (MTH 112). These are skills that every Brockport student should develop at a basic level within their first year of college (ENG 112 and GEP 100) so that they can successfully complete the rest of their coursework for their degree requirements. If the Computer Skills Exam is offered again, it could be used to assess the basic computer skills competency.

Four-year cycle: Brockport’s General Education Program combines four broad Knowledge Areas (Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences) with different ways of viewing the world, so it makes sense to assess one Knowledge Area per year, combined with another SLO closely aligned with it. For example, in the 2017-2018 academic year, the plan would be to assess the Natural Sciences as the Knowledge Area along with more advanced Quantitative Skills, an integral part of many Natural Sciences. The plan would also continue to assess Critical Thinking using the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) standardized test on a four-year cycle.
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<tr>
<th>Academic Year 2014-2015 (current)</th>
<th>Academic Year 2017-2018</th>
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<td>Freshman composition</td>
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<td>Contemporary Issues: Seniors</td>
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<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>Quantitative Skills (advanced)</td>
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<td>College Mathematics</td>
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<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<td>Fine Arts with Performance</td>
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<td>Foreign Languages</td>
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**Faculty Teams**

To ensure that faculty are engaged in and understand General Education Assessment, the Committee proposes that Faculty Teams of 4-6 members be formed to develop and implement the assessments for a given year. The teams will be selected from the departments involved in the yearly assessments. Normally, the teams will be selected the fall semester of the year prior to the assessment. This will allow time for the Office of Accountability and Assessment, in collaboration with the Deans’ offices, to provide training for the teams and for the teams to determine which particular courses will be assessed, the tools or methods of assessment, and the appropriate benchmarks for evaluating SLOs during the spring semester of the academic year prior to the assessment. Throughout the process the teams will communicate and work with those faculty doing the assessment for the General Education SLO in their classes. The teams will collect and compile the data from multiple courses to upload to the Repository and submit a written report to the General Education Assessment Committee. These teams will remain in place throughout the duration of that academic year’s assessment process.
Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

To ensure assessment results are useful for reflection, making conclusions and finally future suggestions and decisions, there will be two important factors in the data collection and analysis of assessment data:

1) Random samplings will be used to create a representative proportion of the students enrolled in a particular General Education SLO.

   A random cluster sampling will be done to determine 20-30% of the courses designated by a particular SLO to be included in the assessment. Once these courses are chosen, a stratified sampling will be done to ensure a representative sample of students to be assessed.

2) Faculty teams consisting of faculty from departments that have courses with designated SLOs will be able to make the best possible conclusions and suggestions. The faculty teams will work together with the General Education Assessment Committee on the overall analysis of assessment data gathered.

The data will then be aggregated by the Office of Research, Analysis, and Planning. Once the data has been aggregated, the Office of Accountability and Assessment will coordinate and arrange meetings with all of the following groups:

- Office of Accountability and Assessment
- General Education Assessment Committee
- Faculty Teams

The aggregate data will then be analyzed with consistent communication made among all of these groups.

Assessment System Diagram and Explanation

Figure 1 shows the system for assessment that the Committee is proposing. At the base of the system is the data collected primarily by faculty in their courses and secondarily through standardized and institutional tests. Standardized and institutional test data will be submitted directly to the Repository. The faculty will submit a simple form to the Faculty Teams who will aggregate the results of multiple courses and upload the data to the Repository. Throughout the process faculty will also be guided by the faculty teams. The review process begins with the General Education Assessment Committee who will report on all assessment activity to the Assessment Director, who will review the information further and submit a report to the Provost. This is where the actions taken as a result of assessment will begin. The Provost will share information with the Vice Provost (responsible for the General Education Program), the College Senate General Education Committee (responsible for maintaining the curriculum), the Deans, and Departments.
Assessing the Assessment/Modifications to the Plan
In the informal General Education Assessment Audit that the Committee completed as part of the planning process, the Committee learned that this is the first time the College has proposed systematically assessing the General Education SLOs. The Committee will conduct a formal audit after year one of this plan (2016) to find out what assessments were successfully completed, how well the proposed assessment worked, and the quality of the assessment data collected. The Committee will provide the Faculty Teams with a standardized form to complete that will enable the Committee to gather the following information:

Presence
Which planned assessments were completed?
What stage are the incomplete assessments in?
What can we do to move them along?

Process
Good points of the plan--what to keep
Problems that arose--what to modify, reconsider

Quality
How well did the students do in relation to the benchmark?

The Committee will conduct similar assessment audits every year, although the goals will change somewhat as General Education assessment becomes part of the Brockport campus culture. The Committee will modify the plan as needed based on assessment of the Process.
Figure 1. General Education Program Assessment System Diagram

- **Data: Course-based**
  - Collection and Initial Analysis: Faculty Teams
    - Repository: Institutional Research
      - Action: College Senate
        - Action: General Education Assessment Committee
          - Review/Comment: General Education Assessment Committee--Report and Recommendations
            - Action: Deans
              - Action: Departments
                - Report
                  - Action: Provost
                    - Action: Vice-Provost
                      - Review/Comment: Assessment Director
                        - Action: Provost
                          - Report
                            - Form
                              - Data: Standardized Tests
                                - Data: Institutional Tests
                                  - Computer Skills
                                    - Foreign Language
                                  - Action: College Senate
                                    - General Education Assessment Committee
                                      - Action: Provost
                                        - Action: Vice-Provost
                                          - Review/Comment: Assessment Director
                                            - Action: Provost
                                              - Report
                                                - Form
                                                  - Data: Course-based
Appendix 1. General Education Learning Outcomes

BASIC SKILLS

Written Composition
- Produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms.
- Demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts.
- Research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details.

Oral Communication
- Develop proficiency in oral discourse.
- Evaluate an oral presentation according to established criteria.

Quantitative Skills
- Interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematic.
- Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically and verbally.
- Employ quantitative methods such as, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, or statistics to solve problems (sic).
- Estimate and check mathematical results for reasonableness.
- Recognize the limits of mathematical and statistical methods.

Information Management
- Perform the basic operations of personal computer use.
- Understand and use basic research techniques.
- Locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

Critical Thinking
- Identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or other’s work.
- Develop well-reasoned arguments.

KNOWLEDGE AREAS

Fine Arts
- Students will demonstrate understanding of at least one principle form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.
- Students will demonstrate competence in the analytical tools used to interpret that form.

Fine Arts with Performance
- Students will demonstrate understanding of at least one principle form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.
- Students will demonstrate competence in the analytical tools used to interpret that form.
- Students will actively participate in artistic activities specifically related to one or more artistic form.
Humanities
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the Humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas in the General Education curriculum.
- Students will demonstrate competence in analyzing texts in the humanities.

Natural Sciences
- Students will demonstrate understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical analysis.
- Students will explore nature and natural phenomena in the context of a science discipline dealing with at least one of the following; matter, motion, and energy; the behavior of materials and interaction between substances; the formulation, evolution, and behavior of celestial objects; the formation and evolution of Earth’s environment; biophysical and biochemical principles of life; the relationship of living things to each other and their environment.
- Students will show competence in at least two of the mathematical skills identified in MTH 112.
- Students will demonstrate application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.

Natural Sciences with Laboratory
- *Students will acquire and analyze scientific data through laboratory experiences in one of the natural sciences.*
- Students will demonstrate understanding of the methods scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical analysis.
- Students will explore nature and natural phenomena in the context of a science discipline dealing with at least one of the following; matter, motion, and energy; the behavior of materials and interaction between substances; the formulation, evolution, and behavior of celestial objects; the formation and evolution of Earth’s environment; biophysical and biochemical principles of life; the relationship of living things to each other and their environment.
- Students will show competence in at least two of the mathematical skills identified in MTH 112.
- Students will demonstrate application of scientific data, concepts, and models in one of the natural sciences.
Social Sciences

- Students will demonstrate understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the Social Sciences.

Foreign Language

- Basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a foreign language
- Knowledge of the distinctive features of culture(s) associated with the language they are studying

World Civilizations

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of either a broad outline of world history OR the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society and culture of one non-Western civilization
- Students will compare the perspective of at least one non-Western, third world or developing society with their own.

LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

Perspectives on Gender

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of scholarship on women within a relevant knowledge area, with such scholarship constituting a central or major theme of the course, as opposed to a peripheral or occasional consideration. Scholarship on women is defined as a critical awareness of gender issues within the knowledge area.

Diversity

- Students will analyze social conflicts, prejudices, and/or intolerance relevant to a contemporary setting, and arising from such issues as racism, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, class, etc. These concerns shall constitute a major or central theme of the course, as opposed to a peripheral or occasional consideration.

Contemporary Issues

- Students will analyze a major issue with contemporary and enduring human significance, bringing in perspectives that have an important bearing on the issue(s) from more than one of the following Knowledge Areas: Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences.
- Students will recognize and articulate relationships between different Knowledge Areas.
- Students will locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to develop and defend well-reasoned arguments.
Appendix 2. General Education Assessment Timeline

Transition Years

Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

Assessments taking conducted:
Written Composition
   Freshman composition
   Contemporary Issues: Seniors
Social Sciences
Humanities
Fine Arts
Natural Sciences
Foreign Language
Quantitative skills
Critical Thinking (CLA)

Spring 2015

General Education Assessment Plan Prepared
   Sent to Provost on May 27
General Education Assessment Website Launched
Faculty Teams for 2015-2016 General Education Assessments Selected

Summer 2015

Training for faculty teams for 2015-2016 Assessments
   Develop detailed assessment plans for fall and spring
General Education Assessment results from 2014-2015 submitted

Fall 2015

Assessments: Written Communication in English 112
   Oral Communication in GEP 100
   Quantitative Skills in MTH 112
   Selection of courses in four-year rotation
Faculty teams for 2016-2017 assessments selected

Spring 2016

Assessments for rotation courses continue
Faculty teams for 2016-2017 trained and develop detailed plans
Completed Fall 2015 assessments due to faculty teams--February
   Closing the loop
Faculty teams review completed fall assessments
   Data to repository
   Report to General Education Assessment Committee
Regular Schedule
Academic Year 2016-2017
Fall 2016
Assessments: Written Communication in English 112
Oral Communication in GEP 100
Quantitative Skills in MTH 112
Selection of courses in the four-year rotation
Completed Spring 2016 Assessments due to faculty teams--September
Closing the loop
Review of AY 2015-2016 assessments by faculty teams
Report to General Education Assessment Committee--December
Faculty teams for 2017-2018 selected
Assessment Audit for Academic Year 2015-2016

Spring 2017
Assessments for rotation courses continue
Faculty teams for 2017-2018 trained and develop detailed plans
Completed Fall 2016 Assessments due to faculty teams--February
Closing the loop
Faculty teams review completed fall assessments
Data to repository
Report to General Education Assessment Committee

Academic Year 2017-2018
Fall 2017
Assessments: Written Communication in English 112
Oral Communication in GEP 100
Quantitative Skills in MTH 112
Selection of courses in the four-year rotation
Completed Spring 2017 Assessments due to faculty teams--September
Closing the loop
Review of AY 2016-2017 assessments by faculty teams
Report to General Education Assessment Committee--December
Faculty teams for 2018-2019 selected
Assessment Audit for Academic Year 2016-2017
Spring 2018
Assessments for rotation courses continue
Faculty teams for 2018-2019 trained and develop detailed plans
Completed Fall 2017 Assessments due to faculty teams -- February
Closing the loop
Faculty teams review completed fall assessments
Data to repository
Report to General Education Assessment Committee

Academic Year 2018-2019 (end of first four-year cycle)
Fall 2018
Assessments: Written Communication in English 112
Oral Communication in GEP 100
Quantitative Skills in MTH 112
Selection of courses in the four-year rotation
Completed Spring 2018 Assessments due to faculty teams -- September
Closing the loop
Review of AY 2017-2018 assessments by faculty teams
Report to General Education Assessment Committee -- December
Faculty teams for 2019-2020 selected
Assessment Audit for Academic Year 2017-2018

Spring 2019
Assessments for rotation courses continue
Faculty teams for 2019-2020 trained and develop detailed plans
Completed Fall 2018 Assessments due to faculty teams -- February
Closing the loop
Faculty teams review completed fall assessments
Data to repository
Report to General Education Assessment Committee