

Planning General Education Assessment

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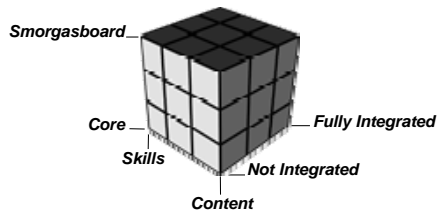
This session...

Things to think about when
assessing general education

- What's my general education program like?
- What should assessment accomplish?
- What methods can I use?

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What's my general education program like?



- Common core or smorgasboard?
- Balance of skills and content?
- Integrated into the curriculum?

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What's my general education program like?

Designing an assessment process

Easier:
Mostly common core

Harder:
Mostly smorgasboard

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What's my general education program like?

Balance of skills and content?

- "Basic skills"
 - Communication, math, critical thinking, computer/information literacy
- Discipline-specific content
 - History, economics, biology, literature, etc
- Social dispositions
 - Social responsibility, ability to adapt to societal changes, etc
- How students use skills & content

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What's my general education program like?

Integrated into the curriculum?

- How do majors deal with gen-ed goals?

Not integrated:
Gen-ed ≠ "real" major courses

Partly integrated:
Majors continue general
education themes

Fully integrated:
The Alverno model

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What should assessment accomplish?

- Accountability
- How do gen-ed courses function?
- How does the gen-ed program function?

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What methods can I use?

- Student self-reports
- National/standardized tests
- Course-based assessments
- Overall student work product

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What methods can I use?

Student self-reports

- Student self-ratings, reflective essays
 - Students' experience with the gen-ed program
- How do questions/prompts fit your program?
- Hard to connect with individual courses
- Should never be the only approach

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What methods can I use?

National/standardized tests

- Overview student performance on some goals
 - How does the test fit your goals and approach?
 - More useful for skills than content
- Benchmarks for interpretation, accountability
- Hard to connect with individual courses

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What methods can I use?

Course-based assessments

- Tells about
 - Individual gen-ed courses
 - Integration with majors
- Portfolios vs. individual assignments
- Must summarize across courses
 - How good is each one's assessment plan?

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What methods can I use?

Overall work product

- Career portfolios, capstone projects/theses
- Provides an overview
 - Assumes some integration with curriculum
- Hard to connect with individual courses
- Must summarize across work samples
 - Work-intensive, requires coordinated review

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How does it fit my program?

Think about...

Your gen-ed assessment activities...

How do they fit:

- Your gen-ed program's structure?
 - Core vs smorgasboard
 - Balance of skills and content
 - Integration with the rest of the curriculum
- What you want assessment to accomplish?
 - Accountability
 - How do gen-ed courses function?
 - How does the gen-ed program function?

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How does it fit my program?

Think about...

- How have these issues come up at your institution?
 - How have you dealt with them?
-

- What would an optimum assessment plan for your general education program look like?
- Why would it be optimum?
- How can you get there from where you are now?

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Finishing up

The handout, with live links, is online at

[http://higheredassessment.com/presentations/
msche08_gened.pdf](http://higheredassessment.com/presentations/msche08_gened.pdf)

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General resources

- *Internet Resources for Higher Education Outcomes Assessment*
 - Large meta-list of links, from North Carolina State University.
 - <http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm> -- or simply Google *outcomes assessment*.
 - The links are annotated, so you can use your browser's (F)ind function to search for entries that include the words "general education."

- M. A. Allen (2006). *Assessing General Education Programs*. Anker, Bolton MA.

- B. E. Walvoord (2004). *Assessment Clear and Simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. See especially the section in Chapter 4 on auditing your general education assessment structure and needs.

- C. A. Palomba & T. W. Banta (1999). *Assessment Essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. Chapter 9 (*General education*, pp. 239-268).

- L. Suskie (2004). *Assessing Student Learning: A common sense guide*. Anker, Bolton MA. The detailed lists of things to do are often relevant to general education assessment – e.g., Chapter 13 (*Selecting a published instrument*, pp. 244-260). *Note*: The 2nd edition will be available from Jossey-Bass in April 2009.

Slide 3: Common core or smorgasboard?

- **Same core for everybody**
 - Fairleigh Dickinson University (<http://www.fdu.edu/academic/ucore.html>): All students take the same set of four cross-disciplinary courses .
 - St. John's College (<http://www.stjohnscollege.edu/academic/main.shtml>) "Great Books" curriculum (an extreme version – the whole curriculum is a "common core").

- **Some common core plus smorgasboard**
 - Columbia College (http://www.columbiacollegesc.edu/academics/gened/general_ed_req.asp).
 - Bowling Green State University's common core is limited to English Writing (http://www.bgsu.edu/catalog/Acad_policies/Acad_policies19.html). Other institutions include basic math and/or computing/information literacy in the common core.

- **Full smorgasboard**
 - West Virginia University (<http://www.arc.wvu.edu/courses/GECdetails.html>).

Slide 5: Balance of skills and content

- **"Basic skills"** – communication, math, critical thinking, computer/information literacy
 - See Arizona Western College's descriptions (http://www.azwestern.edu/learning_services/learning_support_services/assessment_program_review/general_education.html).
 - The *Internet Resources* meta-list has links to general education assessment methods in the section on *Assessment of Specific Skills or Content*.

Resources & References

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- **Content & dispositions**

- **Cultural knowledge/sensitivity**

- Longwood College (<http://www.longwood.edu/catalog/2004/GeneralEducation.htm>), especially *Goals 4, 7-9, 11*.

- **Social dispositions**

- Niagara University (<http://www.niagara.edu/firstyearniagara/Mission.htm>, *Skill 4*).

- **Spiritual/religious dispositions**

- Duquesne University (<http://www.aloa.duq.edu/dimensions.html>, *Ethical, Moral, & Spiritual Development*)

Slide 6: Integrated into the curriculum?

- **Partly integrated**

- York College's *Writing Across the Curriculum* program (<http://york.cuny.edu/wac/resources>).
- The senior-level component of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's portfolio assessment process (<http://www.uwec.edu/assess/plan/general.htm>); see especially *Appendix C*.

- **Fully integrated**

- Alverno College (http://www.alverno.edu/about_alverno/ability_curriculum.html and <http://depts.alverno.edu/saal/>).

What methods should I use?

- **Slide 9: Student self-report**

- **Locally-developed surveys:** Some of the individual institutions' assessment websites available from the *Internet Resources* meta-list have examples.
- **National surveys** that include self-rating of general education accomplishments and student engagement with the learning environment:
 - **CSS** (*College Senior Survey*, previously called the *College Student Survey*, <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/cssoverview.php>).
 - For example, The University of California, San Diego uses the CSS (<http://studentresearch.ucsd.edu/sriweb/Surveys/css.html>).
 - **CSEQ** (*College Student Experiences Questionnaire*, http://cseq.iub.edu/cseq_generalinfo.cfm) & **CCSEQ** (*Community College Student Experiences Questionnaire*, <http://coe.memphis.edu/CSHE/CCSEQ.htm>). For example:
 - Truman State University uses the CSEQ (<http://assessment.truman.edu/components/CSEQ.asp>; the reports are *pdf* files).
 - Normandale Community College uses the CCSEQ (http://www.normandale.project.mnscu.edu/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={459E2A01-8818-4709-8958-2A827DB2FAA5}); the topic-specific reports are *Powerpoint* files & *Word* documents).

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- NSSE (*National Survey of Student Engagement*, <http://nsse.iub.edu/>) & CCSSE (*Community College Survey of Student Engagement*, <http://www.ccsse.org/>)
 - Ferris State University uses NSSE (<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/assessment/NSSE/>).
 - Kingsborough Community College uses CCSSE (<http://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/IRAP/>; under *Assessment*, see the *pdf* file *Assessment of MGO*).
 - FSSE (Faculty Survey of Student Engagement: <http://fsse.iub.edu/>) gathers faculty opinion about many NSSE/CCSSE topics. The University of South Carolina Upstate uses both NSSE and FSSE (http://www.uscupstate.edu/about_upstate/planning/assessment/default.aspx?id=10030; scroll to the bottom of the page for a combined *pdf* report).
- YFCY (*Your First College Year*, <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/yfcyoverview.php>)
 - St. John's University uses YFCY as well as NSSE, FSSE, and CSS (<http://www.stjohns.edu/about/ir/surveys/yfcy>; the summary report is a *pdf* file).
- ICSSIA's *Assessment Instrument Project* (<http://www.icssia.org/research/index.cfm>) has overviews of some national surveys and standardized tests. *Measuring Quality: Choosing among surveys and other assessment of college quality*. (<http://www.airweb.org/images/measurequality.pdf>) and the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement's *Inventory of Higher Education Assessment Instruments* (http://www.stanford.edu/group/ncpi/unspecified/assessment_states/instruments.html) have more details but are older; some survey names and details have changed since these reports were published.
- **Slide 10: National/standardized tests**
 - ETS's MAPP (Measure of Academic Proficiency & Progress: <http://www.ets.org/> -- this is the successor to ETS' *Academic Profile*)
 - California State University-Los Angeles (<http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/aa/ugs/geassess/geplan.htm>) uses both MAPP and a locally-developed/ scored junior-level Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE) (<http://www.calstatela.edu/centers/testctr/wpe.htm>).
 - College BASE (<http://arc.missouri.edu/index.php?p=/CB/CBhome.htm>).
 - The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay uses BASE (http://www.uwgb.edu/assessment/assessment/gea_base.html).
 - ACT's CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency: <http://www.act.org/caap/>)
 - The College of DuPage uses CAAP (<http://www.cod.edu/Dept/Outcomes/AssessmentBook.pdf>).
 - Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA, http://www.cae.org/content/pro_collegiate.htm)
 - Rhode Island College (<http://www.ric.edu/assessment/collegiate.php>) and the University of Wyoming (<http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/assessment/CLA/>) illustrate two approaches to using the CLA.
 - The resources in the last bullet for *Slide 9* (above) include information about standardized general education instruments. Other overviews are:
 - ETS's *A Culture of Evidence: Critical Features of Assessments for Postsecondary Student Learning* (http://www.ets.org/Media/Resources_For/Higher_Education/pdf/4418_COEII.pdf).

Resources & References

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- NPEC’s sourcebooks of information about standardized instruments for:
 - Critical thinking, problem solving, writing (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2000/2000195.pdf>).
 - Communication, leadership, information literacy, quantitative reasoning and quantitative skills (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005832.pdf>).
 - From the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, a project of the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). *Note*: Some survey names and details have changed since the sourcebooks were published.
 - The AASCU/NASULGC *Voluntary System of Accountability* includes general education and survey data (*VSA/College Portrait*, <http://www.voluntarysystem.org/>, in *About the College Portrait / Detailed Descriptions of College Portrait Data Elements*, scroll down to *Page Four Data Elements* and *Page Five Data Elements*).
 - And – see T. Banta, Can assessment for accountability complement assessment for improvement? *Peer Review*, Spring 2007, http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-sp07/pr-sp07_analysis2.cfm.
 - Chapter 3 in Allen’s *Assessing General Education Programs* has examples of using a **course*outcomes matrix** to evaluate a general-ed program’s cohesiveness (pp 91-96).
- **Slide 11: Course-based assessments**
 - San Jose State University (<http://www.sjsu.edu/ugs/ge/assessment/>), especially the overview (under *Issues and Reports*) and the *Model Summaries* from individual courses. (These are *Word* documents & *pdf* files.)
 - Southern Illinois University-Carbondale’s centrally-reviewed course portfolios (<http://www.siu.edu/%7Ecorecurr/assessment.html>). In addition to this overview, see the *specifications for core-curriculum course portfolios*.
 - Saginaw Valley State University (<http://www.svsu.edu/genedcommittee/ge-assessments.html>) has guidelines for developing and reporting course-specific general education assessments.
 - **Rubrics** for evaluating student work products and exam responses
 - See the *Internet Resources* meta-list section on *Assessment Rubrics*
 - Books on rubric-based grading & assessment
 - M. E. Huba & J. E. Freed (2000). *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses*. Allyn & Bacon, Boston.
 - B. E. Walvoord & V. J. Anderson (1998). *Effective Grading: A Tool for Learning and Assessment*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
 - **Slide 12: Overall work product** (career portfolios, capstone projects/theses)
 - East Stroudsburg University uses centrally-reviewed portfolios from students who have completed general education requirements (<http://www.esu.edu/oa/>)
 - Truman State University’s Portfolio Project (<http://assessment.truman.edu/components/portfolio/>) adds students’ end-of-career reflections to their general education portfolios. See annual reports (*pdf* files), *Instructions for Students*, and *Faculty Guidelines*.
 - Portfolios are often mixed with other methods. The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire uses career portfolios plus ACT-CAAP writing & math subtests, standardized student opinion surveys (NSSE, ACT SOS), and exit interviews (<http://www.uwec.edu/assess/plan/index.htm>).