BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
IN GENERAL EDUCATION REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR – 2016-2017

SUBMITTED BY

University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Assessment Category: Physical Activity/Wellness/Both

Date: Spring 2018
Introduction: The assessment subcommittee was asked to review 39 course portfolios collected since the Fall 2010 semester with various general education designations of Y, S, or B. There were 5 courses with a Y designation, 13 courses with an S designation and 21 courses with a B designation, requested from 6 departments across campus. The last Assessment Report for the Y/S/B category was filed in Spring 2004. This report prioritizes the more recent portfolios made available and separates out the 3 categories by distinction. Recommendations are underlined in the main report, and summarized at the end.

I. Student Learning Outcome(s)

For the purposes of assessment, it is useful to identify the courses with only the Physical Activity, Wellness or Both designation in separate groupings. Each designation will be defined below.

The General Education (Gen Ed) Learning Outcomes for Physical Activity (Y) courses state:

Students in Y courses will devote at least 50% of their time to the performance of physical exercise. Courses in Physical Activity are designed to develop one or more of the following attributes: neuromuscular skill, muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility.

The General Education (Gen Ed) Learning Outcomes for Wellness (S) courses state:

Students in S courses will focus on developing a healthy lifestyle, rather than on simply providing information about the human body. Courses in Wellness deal with such topics as diet and nutrition, physical development, substance abuse, human sexuality, relaxation, or physical, mental and emotional fitness.

The General Education (Gen Ed) Learning Outcomes for Both (B) courses state:

Students in B courses will fulfill the requirements for both S and Y courses.

The other interesting fact to mention is that these courses are taught as 1, 2 or 4 credit hour courses. Depending upon the department that the courses are from, each department seems to stretch the definition of each of the Gen Eds to meet their own requirement/assumed definition.

II. Plan/Methods/Measures Used in this Assessment

The portfolios submitted for this assessment normally include a course syllabus, a written explanation of how the course fulfills the Learning Outcomes, a reflective statement discussing students’ achievement of the Learning Outcomes, a tabular Outcomes Assessment Report, and samples of relevant assignments given to students were available from earlier submissions.

However, instructors submitting portfolios were not consistent in following these guidelines, as they changed over the timeframe that the reports were requested. The main inconsistencies are as follows:

- The Gen Ed’s were not listed on the course syllabi in earlier semesters.
- The Learning Outcomes were often not listed or mixed in with the overall course objectives.
- Some reports included a narrative of assessment techniques used while the later submissions completed a chart format. This made comparative analysis of the reports difficult.
III. Findings

There was great variation in the presentation of data in the course portfolios this committee collected. As a result, deeper analyses were not possible. However, this committee quantified several of the variables through estimation based upon the data presented. We interpret these findings with this qualification in mind.

This committee divided the methods of assessment of student achievement of the YSB learning objectives in sampled courses into three categories: substantive assessment (tests, papers, presentations, etc.), indirect (instructor estimation, participation, etc.), and none. All courses included substantive assessment measures with the exception of two courses in the Gen Ed Y category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods of Assessment of Student Achievement</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantive</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This committee also rated the level of incorporation of learning objectives on a 3-point ordinal scale: substantial incorporation, limited incorporation, and no incorporation. All sampled courses had substantial incorporation of the learning objectives in the course content for both the Gen Ed Y and the Gen Ed S (where each was relevant).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Incorporation of YSB Objectives into Course Content</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substantial</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Incorporation</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Finally, this committee estimated the proportion of students in each class that attained the learning objectives by aggregating the levels of attainment reported by professors. All courses reported that at least 60% of the students in the course met the learning outcomes. For both the Gen Ed Y and the Gen Ed S, a majority of these courses reported high (80-100%) attainment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Student Attainment of YSB Learning Objectives</th>
<th>% Met</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80-100%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-79%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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IV. Course Syllabi

A review of the Course Syllabi revealed that the learning outcomes for the Gen Eds were not consistently included in syllabi in the early semesters. They were often mentioned in the official write up but were often stretched to meet the classification to ensure future enrollment in the course. There was disregard specifically in regard to the “developing a healthy lifestyle” phrase in regards to the Wellness Gen Ed. There was also little evidence that certain courses were “designed to develop one or more of the following attributes: neuromuscular skill, muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility” in the Activity courses from certain departments.
V. Discussion of Strengths and Weaknesses of the Assessment

In general, instructors do not seem to fully recognize the purpose of the assessment process. This difficulty extends from their syllabi inconsistencies and the lack of Gen Ed outcome measurement in their courses. While part of the problem can be attributed to the fact that many of these courses were offered prior to the syllabi requirements, more recent courses were also involved. More detail is warranted regarding the evaluation of student’s attainment of learning outcomes. Instead of just listing various assignments and evaluative measures, faculty need to note the specific course elements used to evaluate students’ attainment of the Gen Ed learning outcomes. The subcommittee recommends more interaction between faculty teaching Gen Ed courses and the UUCC or OIR, as well as more comprehensive instructions, to enhance faculty understanding of the assessment process.

VI. Evidence of Improvements since Last Assessment Cycle

Since 2004, there has been much change in the way these courses are administered and many new courses and departments added to the assessment category. This makes a true comparison to the former report insignificant.

VII. Recommendations:

1. Should instructors be required to include the Gen Ed learning Outcomes verbatim in their syllabi, they should be made aware that this refers to the goals of the Gen Ed program, not the goals of their courses.

2. An improved assessment process warrants:
   a) Clear written instructions for faculty; perhaps a downloadable file for ease of reference.
   b) Workshops for faculty, with a recommendation that content is recorded and retrievable to faculty for review.
   c) Additional consultation time with UUCC or OIR representatives and specific to the assessment process may be helpful. The goal would be to improve portfolios, and the process could be via meeting, email or webinar.

Chief Academic Officer: ___________________________ Date: 1-8-19