

2007 General Education Summer Assessment Institute Summary Report

In July 2007, six faculty readers and a faculty coordinator convened to evaluate student artifacts collected from Capstone classes throughout 2006-07. Readers were selected by the General Education Committee from a pool of faculty who had indicated interest in the project. Funds were provided by the LCC Foundation through an Exceptional Faculty grant. Artifacts were evaluated based on rubrics developed by the Capstone Committee. Readers for the Institute included: **Tim Allwine, Terrie Jones, Colleen Lemhouse, Yvette O’Neill, Carrie Pederson and Alex Whitman.** **Klint Hull** served as faculty coordinator. The event was facilitated by Wendy Hall. Approximately eight hours was designated for the evaluation of each outcome including about three hours of group norming and discussion.

Members of the General Education Committee selected Communication and Problem Solving for evaluation in 2007. A summary of findings is below. Please note that the rubrics were not designed for comparisons between individual criteria. Rather, the average scores will serve as indicators of attainment in each area, and will provide a baseline for comparison during the next round of evaluation. Artifacts were evaluated on a scale of 1 (limited) to 4 (exceptional).

COMMUNICATION

Eighty-four artifacts were evaluated based on the Communication Rubric, including two evaluations conducted by the group as part of a norming process and 82 by individual faculty readers. Each artifact was evaluated by a minimum of two and a maximum of six readers. Participants reported that the Communication rubric was clearly written, which resulted in an acceptable level of variance among readers (see “range of variation in scores—individual artifacts,” below). Slight revisions to the rubric were recommended. Criteria #6 was not evaluated due to the fact that all of the artifacts were submitted in written, rather than oral (such as videotape) format.

Communication: *Express* ideas and information in writing and speaking in a manner that is clear and appropriate to the audience, and read and listen effectively.

Criteria #1) Students will write in complete sentences, demonstrating use of grammar, mechanics, and word choice appropriate to context.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.43	1.00 – 3.50

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
4 (5%)	10 (12%)	37 (44%)	33 (39%)	70 (83%)

Criteria #2) Students will compose paragraphs with a single topic and present ideas in a clear and organized manner.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.48	1.00 – 4.00

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
2 (2%)	17 (20%)	32 (38%)	33 (39%)	65 (77%)

Criteria #3) Students will use computer databases, the internet and other technology to gather, process, and communicate information.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.75	1.00 – 4.00

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
0 (0%)	7 (8%)	44 (52%)	33 (39%)	77 (91%)

Criteria #4) Students will include appropriate evidence and document sources to support arguments and research.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.40	1.00 – 4.00

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
1 (1%)	5 (6%)	47 (56%)	31 (37%)	78 (93%)

Criteria #5) Students will comprehend materials from diverse disciplines and applications.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.28	1.00 – 3.50

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
1 (1%)	10 (12%)	45 (54%)	28 (33%)	73 (87%)

Criteria #6) Students will speak in a clear, logically organized and credible manner using effective verbal structure, word choice and delivery.

Since none of the artifacts collected for the project included videotaped oral presentations, criteria number 6 was not evaluated.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Seventy-seven artifacts were evaluated based on the Problem Solving Rubric, including two evaluations conducted by the group as part of a norming process and 75 by individual faculty readers. Twenty-two were determined to be problematic for evaluation due to the expository or narrative nature of the paper and are excluded from the analysis below. Each artifact was evaluated by a minimum of two and a maximum of six readers. Participants reported that the Problem Solving rubric was somewhat challenging to use and criteria #4 was revised prior to the evaluation of artifacts. With the revision, a moderately acceptable level of variation occurred (see “range of variation in scores—individual artifacts,” below). Major revisions to the rubric were recommended.

Problem Solving: *Apply* various techniques and processes using information, data or situations, to produce logical, rational, ethical, and coherent solutions.

Criteria #1) Students will identify and define primary problems or issues.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.87	1.50 – 4.00

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
6 (11%)	9 (16%)	25 (45%)	15 (27%)	40 (72%)

Criteria #2) Students will collect relevant information, data, or details concerning problems and issues.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.62	1.00 – 4.00

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
4 (7%)	8 (15%)	21 (38%)	22 (40%)	43 (78%)

Criteria #3) Students will analyze problems or issues using appropriate techniques or processes.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.54	1.00 – 4.00

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
2 (4%)	16 (29%)	20 (36%)	17 (31%)	37 (67%)

Criteria #4) Students will evaluate and implement solutions based on the criteria of logic, ethical principles, and coherence.

Average Score	Range of Scores (among all artifacts)
2.96	1.00 – 4.00

Range of variation in scores (individual artifacts)				
3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points	1 or 0 points
6 (11%)	12 (22%)	20 (36%)	17 (31%)	37 (67%)

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE READERS

- ▶ All participants agreed that it was a good process and found it personally valuable and rewarding.
- ▶ Overall, participants felt that the Communication rubric was easy to understand and apply to assessment of the artifacts. The Problem Solving rubric was a bit more challenging.
- ▶ Readers noted that there was an extremely wide variance in terms of the quality of the writing.
- ▶ Readers noted that most papers were informative or expository rather than argument papers.
- ▶ There appeared to be a lot of inconsistency between assignments, particularly in terms of citation/documentation requirements.
- ▶ Although research papers, many weren't really testing a hypothesis or idea; overall it seemed more like students had an opinion and did selective research to support their opinion (not deductive or unbiased).
- ▶ Many readers considered the tone in some papers to be inappropriate because of the use of "I" or "you."
- ▶ Readers felt that other faculty would benefit from reviewing and discussing examples of high and low scoring papers along with the rubrics.
- ▶ With the Problem Solving rubric, reviewers discovered that it was necessary to read the entire paper to assess accurately.
- ▶ It worked well to read all of the papers for Communication first and then to read the set again for Problem Solving (since the Problem Solving rubric was more difficult to assess.) Readers appreciated being able to see the papers in more depth for the second rubric.
- ▶ In general, participants were disappointed when the Institute was over. Several asked if they could participate in next year's Institute.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE READERS

- ▶ Readers suggested that it might be helpful to develop guidelines for academic writing in Capstone courses, for faculty to use with students. This could be as simple as a one-page sheet with information about the type of writing expected from Capstone students. The Communication rubric could be attached to this; for distribution to all Capstone students and all faculty (including faculty teaching Capstone and faculty not teaching Capstone).
- ▶ Readers suggested that we should definitely pursue the “W” (writing) course requirement—which could be taken prior to or concurrent with Capstone.
- ▶ Readers suggested that the Capstone Committee consider whether all Capstone papers should include elements of Problem Solving; if yes, we should provide professional development opportunities related to developing assignments geared to problem solving.
- ▶ Rubrics should be shared with all faculty and students.
- ▶ Readers suggested that it would be great to have a tutor or group of tutors who are familiar with the General Education rubrics and Capstone requirements. This would be designed to support classes and students who are in Capstone or other classes where the General Education rubrics are or could be applied.
- ▶ Readers recommended that interdisciplinary participation continue to be promoted. This helped to encourage collegiality and understanding throughout the Institute.
- ▶ Readers recommended that the work started in the Institute be continued throughout the year, and that as many other faculty as possible be brought into the process. This could involve conducting professional development workshops on norming and/or using the rubrics.
- ▶ Interdisciplinary faculty groups (for example Capstone) should be encouraged to spend some time evaluating papers/projects. It could be beneficial for the overall value of the student experience.
- ▶ Dialogue on the expectations of the Capstone experience should be encouraged. It’s clear that expectations (and how well papers/projects meet the outcomes) vary tremendously from class to class.
- ▶ It was recommended that in order to better communicate promote the value of this initiative we should strategize ways to document the process as well as the outcome.
- ▶ Readers suggested that we consider methods to assess our assignments/prompts in relation to the outcomes (in addition to assessing student artifacts).