

General Education Performing and Interpreting the Arts Assessment

May 2015

In 2014-2015, the General Education Committee facilitated the assessment of the Performing and Interpreting the Arts (PIA) GE area. The assessment efforts were devoted to reviewing the area syllabi; revising the certification criteria and interpretive statement; and evaluating student learning in relation to the area outcome that reads, "*Students will demonstrate appropriate techniques and critical awareness in an artistic production.*"

Indirect Assessment

In the fall of 2014, the GE Committee reviewed all 8 syllabi of the PIA area offered that semester. The syllabus review confirmed that the majority of courses appear to fulfill the certification criteria; however, only 50% of them followed the syllabus template. Half of the syllabi could have articulated course learning outcomes more clearly. It was not clear from the ART-001: Principles of Art and ART-015: Drawing 1 syllabi whether these courses sufficiently meet the certification criteria that read, "In thinking, speaking, and writing students will use

- 1) correct language and terminology for varying artistic types, forms, movements;
- 2) appropriate methods and processes for analyzing, interpreting, and enjoying artistic production, including with respect to the Christian faith."

Based on this phase of assessment, it was decided that that appropriateness of ART-001 and ART-015 for this GE category will be discussed in the 2015-2016 academic year.

Direct Assessment

Methods and instruments

In Spring 2015, faculty members from three departments embedded direct assessment in the selected courses, including ART-010: Design 1; MU-120: History of Western Music 1; MU-123: Survey of World Music; and TA-010: Acting. In each course, two different but comparable signature assignments were administered, and the faculty collected and compared two sets of student data. In the ART-010 course, students critiqued the art piece selected by the instructor and an art piece of their choice; in MU-120, students responded to their own performance and to the local symphony orchestra performance; in the MU-123 course, students responded to two different performances; and in the TA-010 course, students reviewed two different theatre productions. 71 samples of student critiques were collected for the Assignment 1, and 69 samples were collected for the Assignment 2. Student artifacts were not randomly selected; however, the 70 students whose artifacts were assessed comprise 29% of all students who earned PIA GE credit in Spring 2015 or 17% of all students who fulfilled the PIA requirement in the fall, spring, and Mayterm semesters in the 2014-2015 academic year. Since there is no prerequisite for the GE PIA courses, first-year, sophomore, junior and senior students participated in this assessment. Due to the limited number of the Livetext student licenses purchased for that academic year, it was impossible to engage more students in assessment.

All student artifacts collected for both assignments were assessed by the same locally developed five-level scoring [rubric](#). The assessment of student results was conducted by the course instructors. In May 2015, two assessment sessions were focused on analyzing

student performance results and developing recommendations; the participants included the ART-010; MU-120; MU-123; and TA-010 course instructors, Chair of the Theatre Arts Department and a GE Committee member, Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness, and LiveText Coordinator. Scoring consistency was discussed at the assessment session.

Results

Overall, all instructors expressed satisfaction with the progress made by their students. The aggregated results of the PIA assessment are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Assignment 1 student results scored by the rubric

n=71	Highly Developed (4 pts)	Developed (3 pts)	Emerging (2 pts)	Initial (1 pts)	Below Standards (0 pts)	Mean	Mode	Stdev
Structure and Organization	<u>10</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	2.789	3.000	0.786
Argument and Analysis	<u>13</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	2.676	3.000	0.885
Use of Evidence	<u>14</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	2.732	3.000	0.919
Style and Mechanics	<u>19</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	2.901	3.000	0.891

Structure and Organization	10 (14%)	41 (57%)	16 (22%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)
Argument and Analysis	13 (18%)	29 (40%)	22 (30%)	7 (9%)	0
Use of Evidence	14 (19%)	33 (46%)	15 (21%)	9 (12%)	0
Style and Mechanics	19 (26%)	32 (45%)	14 (19%)	6 (8%)	0

Legend: ■ Highly Developed ■ Developed ■ Emerging ■ Initial ■ Below Standards

Table 2: Assignment 2 student results scored by the rubric

n=69	Highly Developed (4 pts)	Developed (3 pts)	Emerging (2 pts)	Initial (1 pts)	Below Standards (0 pts)	Mean	Mode	Stdev
Structure and Organization	<u>22</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	3.029	3.000	0.868
Argument and Analysis	<u>21</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	3.014	3.000	0.843
Use of Evidence	<u>25</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	3.087	3.000	0.880
Style and Mechanics	<u>23</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	3.043	3.000	0.875

Structure and Organization	22 (31%)	32 (46%)	10 (14%)	5 (7%)	0
Argument and Analysis	21 (30%)	32 (46%)	12 (17%)	4 (5%)	0
Use of Evidence	25 (36%)	30 (43%)	9 (13%)	5 (7%)	0
Style and Mechanics	23 (33%)	31 (44%)	10 (14%)	5 (7%)	0

Legend: ■ Highly Developed ■ Developed ■ Emerging ■ Initial ■ Below Standards

Interpretation

The team used different methods of data interpretation. At the outset, faculty compared Assignment 1 and Assignment 2 average scores for all four categories of the rubric. This comparison suggests that students have improved in all four categories of the rubric even though the scope of their improvements varies from category to category (Table 3). Given that the error margin of value-added scores is about twice as large as that of the scores themselves (Suskie, 2009, p. 241), the gain may be perceived as discouragingly small. Therefore, in addition to comparing the average scores in both assignments the participants also compared the results to the newly established standards of performance requiring that in all four categories of the rubric 70% of students will perform at “highly-developed” and “developed” levels (Table 4). This method of analysis demonstrates modest growth in the *Structure and Organization*, *Use of Evidence*, and *Style and Mechanics* categories and a noticeable improvement of student learning in the *Argument and Analysis* category. The latter was identified by the team as one of the two most important categories of the rubric.

Table 3: Summary of student gain results compared to the standards of performance

Category	Assignment 1: score averages	Assignment 2: score averages	Improvement
Structure and Organization	2.789	3.029	0.24
Argument and Analysis	2.676	3.014	0.338
Use of Evidence	2.732	3.087	0.355
Style and Mechanics	2.901	3.043	0.142

Table 4: Summary of student results compared to the standards of performance

Dimension	Assignment 1: Performance at highly- developed and developed levels	Difference between expected and actual results	Assignment 2: Performance at highly- developed and developed levels	Difference between expected and actual results	Improvement
Structure and Organization	71%	1%	77%	7%	6%
Argument and Analysis	47%	-23%	76%	6%	29%
Use of Evidence	65%	-5%	66%	-4%	1%
Style and Mechanics	71%	1%	77%	7%	6%

For the most part, the team was satisfied with the students' ability to organize and structure their essays, and their mastery of style and mechanics. They concluded, though, that further improvements could be made in the development of an argument and, especially, in the use of evidence, since in this category the results fell short of the established standard. Faculty weighed student performance in these two categories of the rubric higher than in *Structure and Organization* and *Style and Mechanics*.

The team discussed possible pedagogical strategies that may improve students' usage of evidence in their responses to artistic productions and performances. The process of evaluating the students' works also prompted the conversation about the relationship between creativity and criticism. As a result, faculty have proposed renaming the category *Working Artistically*, largely to emphasize that GE students should learn to see how production informs interpretation and vice versa. Students will not only be expected to analyze artistic productions of others, but will be asked to reflect on how their own art emerged out of discovery, experimentation and observations.

Faculty teaching the GE PIA courses agreed to continue evaluating student critique pieces by using the refined version of the rubric. Assignments that teach students to use evidence accurately and thoughtfully and provide insightful responses to artistic productions need to be designed and used in all area courses. These assignments may include small group discussions, one-to-one conferences, draft critique, student peer reviews, and others.

Recommendations:

1. In all area courses, faculty will focus their attention on teaching students how to use evidence and provide good responses to artistic productions.
2. The rubric shall to be revised to become more versatile, user-friendly, and compact. It should incorporate more nuanced distinctions between the specific skills and aesthetic sensibilities. It was also suggested that a five-level rubric should be replaced by a four-level one with the following levels of student performance: "highly-developed," "developed," "emerging," and "initial." Two categories of the rubric, *Argument and Analysis* and *Use of Evidence* shall be weighted up to 30% each; while *Structure and Organization* and *Style and Mechanics* will be weighed down to 20% each.
3. It was recommended that the title of the GE area should be changed from "Performing and Interpreting the Arts" to "Working Artistically."
4. The refined certification criteria for this GE area shall read as follows:

Students will:

- 1) *Use correct language and terminology for varying artistic types, forms, and movements;*
 - 2) *Use appropriate methods and processes for analyzing, interpreting, and engaging artistic production;*
 - 3) *Employ creative and interpretive approaches for artistic production and realization.*
5. The refined area SLO shall read as follows:

Students will respond to an artistic production, demonstrating critical understanding of form, content, and process.

6. The performance standard for this area shall read as follows:
In all four categories of the rubric, 70% of students will perform at the highly-developed and developed levels.
7. It was recommended that the faculty teaching the courses in this area modify the Interpretive Statement at their next assessment session in August 2015.
8. In the 2015-2016 academic year, the decision will be made regarding the suitability of ART-001: Principles of Art and ART-015: Drawing 1 courses for fulfilling this GE area requirements.

Reference

Suskie, L. A. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.