As the relatively new General Education program has matured (this year will see the first class graduate under the revised program), so have the program objectives. Additionally, program objectives have been modified in response to campus-wide influences. The original goals appropriately related to student perception and experience of the then new General Education program. Subsequently, the General Education Committee was assigned the task of college-wide assessment related to the Learning Standards. The task of college-wide assessment has since shifted elsewhere and the General Education Committee is once again working on objectives, including understanding and appreciation, more specifically related to the General Education program itself.

At present, we are in the process of defining specific outcomes for each of the GE areas. Specifically, we have a schedule by which objectives will be rolled out and used for review in each of the GE areas over the next five years. This schedule can be found at http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/provost/curriculum/GE/ProgramReviewReports/2007/Schedule%20of%20Reviews.pdf.

The work of aligning GE objectives to more global, institutional objectives has been put on hold until the task of modifying the college’s mission statement has been completed.
CLA Assessment

Goal:
Students are versatile thinkers, able to use appropriately the tools provided by different disciplinary methodologies and to understand that each discipline implies a particular epistemological orientation. Critical interdisciplinary thinking requires students to combine a variety of discipline-specific reasoning abilities in attempts to solve problems or answer questions. It also requires them to have the ability to frame appropriate questions; to think abstractly; to test definitions of key terms and categories of analysis, and to examine one’s own assumptions. (Learning Standards)

Criterion for Success: The criterion for success is that the CLA scores in this area are at or above those of schools with a similar academic profile. (From the June 2005 report)


Interpretation:
- Westmont students scored at the 7th decile for value added. In other words, the improvement shown by our students from year 1 to year 4 is greater than the corresponding at least 60% of all participating schools.
- From graphs included in the report, it seems that only about seven schools (6% of 115) had raw scores better that those of our incoming students. Even after accounting for predicted differences in CLA scores related to SAT scores, Westmont’s average incoming-student score was in the top 20%.
- After accounting for differences due to SAT scores, Westmont’s average graduating-senior CLA score was in the top 10%. Only one institution had a higher raw score.
- Our incoming students had a deviation score of 1.4 (i.e. top 10%) and our seniors had deviation score of 2 (top 2.5%) on the performance task part of the exam. The value added (or improvement) for this score places Westmont in the top 30%. Given the high starting values, this improvement is impressive.
- On the make-an-argument task, incoming students had a deviation score of 0.5 (top 40%) while seniors had a deviation score of 0.9 (top 20%). The difference (or value added) for this score places Westmont College in the top 35%.

This information was reviewed and discussed at length in the GE Committee. In addition, it has been disseminated to the entire faculty in a summary memo which can be viewed at http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/provost/curriculum/GE/ProgramReviewReports/2007/2007-CLA.pdf.
Using the Results: The CLA results do not indicate any need for change. Rather, they indicate the college is successful in teaching reasoning skills and very successful in teaching interdisciplinary, problem-solving skills.

Next Steps: The CLA will be administered again in the 2007-2008 academic year. The plan is to use the instrument in alternate years to monitor our work and verify that students continue to achieve at the same level.

Ongoing Cohort Study

Goal: Students will increase in their understanding and appreciation of the goals of a Liberal Arts education and the role of the General Education program in their education.

Criterion for Success: In the course of responding to other prompts, 25% of cohort students will articulate a specific example which demonstrates that they understand and/or appreciate the value of the General Education courses they have taken.

Data: The data consists of a set of 23 and 12 paragraph-long responses to the respective questions:

What specific experiences this semester (in advising, the classroom, or other contexts) have been most influential/helpful in shaping your understanding of the goals and purposes of the GE program?

What comments about the General Education program (positive or negative) have you heard from your peers?


Interpretation:

The GE Committee reviewed and discussed the contents of the essays. Several themes were identified in the responses.

- Our students are finding/noticing many connections between their General Education classes as well as connections to major courses.
- Although they have not always wanted to take GE courses, they are appreciative of the courses once they are in them and speak highly of the Liberal Arts experience. Cohort students compare the Liberal Arts character of a Westmont education very favorably with the types of education that their peers are receiving in other schools.
- While advisors generally were helpful in selecting courses, some advisors did not seem secure in what they were doing. In general, advisors were not a strong source for understanding the goals and philosophy of the overall GE program.
• Cohort students were appreciative of the connections between the individual GE courses and the overall GE curriculum that were made in syllabi and in the initial class sessions. Many wish, however, that connections were more sustained throughout the semester.

• The strongest and most persistent complaint in the lack of sufficient breadth of opportunity for students to fulfill Serving Society; Enacting Justice. This complaint seems to be directed especially toward the lack of opportunities within the major.

Using the Results:
• A memo was circulated to faculty outlining the findings.
• Consultants from the Wabash Center were invited to give a workshop on service learning. To boost attendance, stipends were offered to faculty.
• An additional seven courses or programs were approved for Serving Society; Enacting Justice since the students originally wrote their responses.
• Continuing faculty will be invited to use advisor training workshops for new faculty as a refresher experience.

Next Steps:
• A study of student progress toward fulfilling the Serving Society; Enacting Justice component of the GE will be conducted by the registrar’s office to try to pinpoint potential capacity problems.
• The cohort will be surveyed two more times in this academic year and will be asked reflect back on the totality of their experience.
• At the end of the four-year study, student comments will be gathered into single documents for each GE area ordered by year. These documents will be reviewed to get a sense of student experience by area.

Area Assessment: Thinking Globally

Goal: Students have the understanding and skills to engage people unlike themselves—both individuals and groups—in ways that affirm others as persons created in God’s image. Students are able to approach others respectfully—avoiding the natural tendency to deal with differences by vilifying, romanticizing, or victimizing. (Learning Standards)

Students are equipped to be informed agents of redemption and justice in the world. Such a perspective entails encountering and understanding various “ways of thinking” (other world views) that are different from the student’s own, and exposure to a range of methodologies that extend beyond Western/North American approaches. (GE Document)

Criterion for Success: Classes offered to fulfill Thinking Globally will have average scores of 1.5 when the assessment essays are scored against the rubric. A score of 1.25 for more demanding category of “Contingency of Knowledge” will be considered successful.
**Data:** Students in each of the Spring 2007 classes (n = 8) approved to fulfill *Thinking Globally* wrote an essay in response to the prompt

*Giving particular attention to this course, in what ways and to what extent has your Westmont education to this point equipped you to think globally? Please provide specific examples from your experience and study which have contributed to your intellectual development in this area. What do you foresee as resultant impacts on your future choices and actions?*


**Interpretation:** After several sessions devoted to refining the rubric and inter-rater reliability training, 10 essays were randomly selected from each class and 2 essays were given to each committee member. The results were tabulated and reviewed by class. While some classes demonstrated maturity in their responses, the essays from other classes were quite weak as is evident from the summary data below. (Maximum possible score is 3.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge &amp; skill</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills of heart</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency of Knowledge</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Action</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The GE Committee found strong evidence that classes took the assignment with varying degrees of seriousness. The prompt seems to have been administered under a wide range of conditions. The committee also found that some students seemed to misunderstand the question as an invitation to rate the instructor or the course.

**Using the Results:** Course specific feedback has been provided to each of the instructors and a general meeting of area instructors was held to discuss the results and plan for next steps. At this point we are unsure whether the observed problems lie in the assessment instrument or in the educational experience provided in the courses. We suspect the former, but are ready to ask for changes or decertify courses should this prove to be appropriate. The prompt has been rewritten to make the goals of the assessment more clear and to better align the prompt with the rubric by which the essays are scored. The revised prompt can be found at [http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/provost/curriculum/GE/ProgramReviewReports/2007/TG-promt.pdf](http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/provost/curriculum/GE/ProgramReviewReports/2007/TG-promt.pdf).

**Next Steps:** The rubric and revised prompt have been distributed and all instructors offering courses that fulfill *Thinking Globally* during the 2007-2008 academic year have been asked to use the revised instrument. In order to remove variability of administration, they have been asked to use the prompt as an “at home” writing assignment. The results will be reviewed in the fall of 2008 and additional action taken as appropriate.
**Other Area Objectives**

**Goal:** Each General Education area has area-specific objectives and an assessment plan for ongoing assessment of the degree to which the objectives have been achieved.

**Criterion for Success:** By spring 2013, each area will have a set of objectives under which at least one round of assessment has been carried out. Until this has been achieved, objectives will be established and data gathered for at least four additional areas per year.

**Data:** A timeline for (1) developing assessable objectives, (2) conducting a pilot study, and (3) conducting a full review has been developed. The schedule can be accessed at [http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/provost/curriculum/GE/ProgramReviewReports/2007/Schedule%20of%20Reviews.pdf](http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/provost/curriculum/GE/ProgramReviewReports/2007/Schedule%20of%20Reviews.pdf).

**Next Steps:**
In addition to the work identified in *Thinking Globally*, initial objectives have been identified and pilot studies using the assessment instrument will be conducted fall 2007 in four areas: World History, Exploring the Physical Sciences, Performing and Interpreting the Arts, Physical Education. Preliminary studies in two additional areas, Reasoning Abstractly and Exploring the Life Sciences, are planned for spring 2008.