Academic Year of Report: 2011-2012
College or Support Area: College of the Sciences
Department of Program: Environmental Studies

This assessment covers all undergraduate degree programs

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?
For the General Education Related Goal, we assessed reading in a general education course called Energy and Society (ENST 310). This was assessed as a requirement for the College of the Sciences’ commitment to the CWU General Education Program.

Our program assessed ENST Student Learning Outcome #6: Students possess oral and written communication skills. This outcome was chosen because it coincided with the Assessment of General Education Related Goal, and it allowed a comparison of ENST majors to general education students.

2. How were they assessed?
A) What methods were used?
   Reading skills were assessed using the protocol outlined in the CWU Reading Assessment.

B) Who was tested?
   Reading skill was assessed on 17 majors within the ENST program taking the capstone course ENST 444, and for the General Course, 56 students were assessed in two sections Energy and Society (ENST 310), each with enrollment caps of 30.

C) When was it assessed?
   ENST 310 was assessed in Fall 2011 whereas ENST 444 was assessed in Spring 2012.

3. What was learned?
General Education Related Goal
ENST 310.01
Quarter: Fall 2011
Instructor: Dr. Clay Arango
Enrollment: 30 with a cap of 30
During this course, students received a 523-word reading from an introduction of a chapter from an alternate text book. I mistakenly asked them to read for 3 minutes (instead of 1. Students who finished the entire article received a wpm score of 175, which underestimates reading speed because most students finished the reading well before the end of the 3 minute interval. Seven students did not finish after 3 minutes, which places them firmly in the insufficient category. Students then wrote a summary for three minutes. Transfer students were not assessed separately from native CWU students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Element</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Rate</td>
<td>Mis-assessed, but 7 students certainly failed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary-Details</td>
<td>12/43%</td>
<td>16/57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary-Discipline-specific vocabulary</td>
<td>18/64%</td>
<td>10/36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary-Author’s intent</td>
<td>19/68%</td>
<td>9/32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ENST 310.02**
Quarter: Fall 2011
Instructor: Holly English
Enrollment: 26 with a cap of 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Element</th>
<th>Pass Native</th>
<th>Pass Transfer</th>
<th>Non-Pass Native</th>
<th>Non-Pass Transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Rate</td>
<td>20/67%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>11/33%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Details</td>
<td>19/61%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12/39%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Vocab</td>
<td>23/74%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3/26%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Intent</td>
<td>12/39%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>19/61%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Education Related Goal Summary:** The fraction of general education students passing varied somewhat between the courses, but it is difficult to compare the WPM rubric element because it was not tested properly in ENST 310.01. However, roughly 2/3 of students passed the standard for reading speed. Between the two sections, students seemed to have little trouble using discipline-specific vocabulary, but they seemed to have problems in recalling details or understanding the author’s intent. Some of the inconsistencies between the sections can be attributed to the judgement of the different instructors and/ or the difference in reading materials.

**Program Assessment**
**ENST 444.01**
Quarter: Spring 2012
Instructor: Clay Arango
Enrollment: 17 with a cap of 24
When native and transfer students are combined, roughly half of students passed all of the elements in the reading rubric, with similar fractions of native and transfer students passing. This pass rate seems low for a majors course, but it is difficult to know how this rate compares to other programs, and it is impossible to control for differences in judgment among the professors evaluating the results.

4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?
Effective reading skills are clearly required for the goals of the General Education and ENST Program. Pass rates seem low for both groups of students we assessed: general education students and ENST majors. The inherent variability in how the samples are evaluated makes it difficult to draw a reliable conclusion, and we are not recommending a program change at this time. However, the low pass rate seems worthy of more analysis, so a two-prong approach may be useful to continue monitoring reading outcomes. First, ENST 310 and ENST 444 both have many reading assignments, so we will recommend to the teaching faculty that they include study questions to help guide student reading effort during the assignments. Second, the ENST advisory committee will meet to standardize how the reading rubric is evaluated to help reduce variation in how the results are evaluated.

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?
The prior assessment from AY 2009-2010 recommended increasing admission standards. Although this approach was not implemented, some faculty who teach in ENST have voiced concerns that the majors courses ENST 210 and ENST 304 should become more rigorous. As these courses have evolved over the years, they have continued to become more quantitative, and the advisory committee agrees that this has probably helped student performance in the major overall. The program was also updated to include the collection of a portfolio of student writings from ENST 210, ENST 304, and ENST 444 as a standard of mastery for Student Learning Outcome #6: Students possess oral and written communication skills. Portfolios have been collected for two years, but many students do not keep their papers from previous classes, making it difficult to have a thorough and reliable assessment. The ENST advisory committee is meeting to recommend ways to tighten this process so that we can more thoroughly assess this learning outcome.
6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning as Central Washington University:
None currently