Central Washington University  
Assessment of Student Learning  
Department and Program Report

Academic Year of Report: 2011 - 2012  
College: College of the Sciences  
Department: Geography  
Program: B.A.

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year and why?

As part of the continuing assessment of General Education-related goals, the Department of Geography assessed reading. In accordance with the specific outcomes, the three outcomes assessed were:
- "how effectively students read course material"
- "how clear the course material is in the minds of our students"
- "how well our students can summarize and demonstrate their understanding of what they read"

2. How were they assessed?

A. What methods were used?

The original intent for the department was to assess students in a 100-level course (Geog 108) and our senior capstone course (Geog 489). However, in AY 2011-2012 we only assessed reading in the senior capstone course. Students were given a short passage from a peer-reviewed Geography journal and were required to write an essay in response to the reading. These essays were then evaluated to determine mastery based on the College of the Sciences Reading Assessment guidelines for reading rate and summary of details, summary of discipline-specific vocabulary, and summary of author's intent.

B. Who was assessed?

The senior capstone class is comprised of majors who are in their last two quarters of their undergraduate career. Given the generally high number of students that declare a major in geography after two or even three years of enrollment at Central, it is not unusual for students to require several classes for completion of the major while enrolled in the capstone course. Enrollment in this course for spring quarter 2012 was 26, consisting of 10 non-native (i.e. transfer) students and 16 native students.

C. When was it assessed?

We assessed our senior capstone course in spring quarter, 2012.

3. What was learned?

Students generally had difficulty with focused reading and being able to summarize particularly authorial intent. They were asked to read a fairly rigorously argued scientific paper and many students found it difficult to understand on first read.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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>7/43%</td>
<td>5/50%</td>
<td>9/57%</td>
<td>5/50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary (Details)</td>
<td>9/56%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
<td>8/44%</td>
<td>3/30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary (Discipline Specific Vocabulary)</td>
<td>12/75%</td>
<td>8/80%</td>
<td>4/25%</td>
<td>2/20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary (Author Intent)</td>
<td>4/25%</td>
<td>3/30%</td>
<td>12/75%</td>
<td>7/70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What will the department or program do as a result of this information?

Assessment information will be made available to department faculty, and the department will also make efforts to incorporate more reading assessment in our lower-level core (also General Education) courses. This will improve our understanding of student reading development in the major and also contribute to our programmatic assessment efforts. The key is to make “reading across” the Geography curriculum a part of the general Geography degree.

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year's assessment information?

The department is discussing ways to enhance and improve the writing comprehension component of our core and upper level courses.