

ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY 

Pilot Project Reports

Compiled January 2008

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Anthropology Department

Assessment Pilot Project: Report as of 21st December 2007

Part I: The Assessment of Learning Goals

1. Our goal has been to assess two elements of learning goals 3 and 4 that we consider central to the curricular objective to give our students ‘an understanding of diverse cultures’, namely:
 - The extent to which anthropology majors and minors study a foreign language or languages during their years at SLU
 - The extent to which anthropology majors and minors take part in off-campus programs during their years at SLU

2. Our assessment of these goals has proceeded as follows:
 - In April/May 2007 we designed a questionnaire (already made available to your office) which we administered to nine students of the class of 2007; five majors, two combined majors and two minors.
 - The results from this small population showed that the questionnaire seems quick and easy for the students to complete, and the results were quite easy to interpret.
 - We obtained the list, with addresses, of all alumni who majored in Anthropology over the last five years (beginning with the graduating class of 2002). This information was provided to us by the Office of Alumni and Parent Programs, who saw our questionnaire and agreed that we could send it out to our alumni.
 - We mailed out a total of about 58 questionnaires in early October. 6 were returned as undeliverable and so far 12 have been returned complete; a response rate of 23% (excluding the returned questionnaires).
 - The results from these 21 (the 9 from 2007 and the 12 from 2002 through 2006) completed questionnaires have been tabulated: see the attached table.

3. Preliminary evaluation of our findings indicates the following:
 - Foreign language study in high school: all students took at least three years of a language in high school and many of them took more. The most common languages taken were French (15 students) and Spanish (11 students). Other languages reported were Latin, Greek, Russian, German and Portuguese.
 - Foreign language study at SLU: only two students (one member of the class of 2002 and an Anthropology minor from the class of 2007) reported having had no language courses. 9 reported Swahili, 8 reported French, 7 reported Spanish and one reported 4 semesters of Japanese. Five students reported having taken two languages at SLU.
 - Participation in off-campus programs while at SLU: 9 students took the Kenya Semester program and 2 (or 3; the identification is not entirely clear) the Kenya summer archaeology field course. 3 reported Australia, 3 reported France, one had two visits to Japan. There were a number of other locations reported, including Spain, Costa Rica,

Belize, Honduras, Ecuador and London. 4 reported no off-campus program and one reported a short activity (an Outdoor Studies Program canoe trip to Quebec).

- Current professional activities: As might be expected, respondents' jobs ranged widely from business and law to library science, museums, an environmental non-profit, public health. Several of the respondents were in a higher degree program.
 - Plans for the future: Of those who were not already in a higher degree program, several said they were planning on starting one in the near future
 - Contribution of the Anthropology major to current activities or future plans: Only one of the 21 respondents was categorical that Anthropology made no contribution to his/her current or future activities; this was the one who is working as a business development administrator for a chemistry company and plans to go on for the MBA degree. All the others in different ways expressed their sense of their Anthropology major as contributing positively to who they are and what they are doing; see pages 6 - 7 of the attached data summary.
 - Contribution of their foreign language study to current activities or future plans: This was rated positively by 9 of the respondents; see pages 7 – 8 of the attached data summary.
 - Contribution of their off-campus experience to current activities or future plans: Though the future MBA business development administrator felt that her experience in Kenya had not contributed to her current career or future plans, she commented “it was still well worth it”. Other comments included “My experience in Costa Rica was very transformational: I do not understand this fully”; “...Africa remains my passion. Not a day goes by without me thinking of my abroad experience” (this person graduated in 2004); “there isn't enough space here to mention all the ways ... I'm sure I don't even know all the ways”. For further comments, see pages 8 – 9 of the attached data summary.
4. Implications for our findings for the department's teaching and curriculum:
- Our sense of the value of foreign language study for students of Anthropology is confirmed by these results, and we have no plans to change our requirement that all Anthropology majors should take at least two semesters of a foreign language at SLU (certain exceptions apply).
 - We are also heartened by our students' recognition of the value of off-campus experience to their post-SLU lives; as one of them commented “I think an abroad program should be required for anthro. majors”. We intend to continue to encourage all our majors (as well as combined majors and minors) to spend a semester off-campus, though we recognize that this is not always possible for all students for a variety of reasons.

Part II: Assessment of the Pilot Project

- Collecting the data from the graduating class of 2007 was easy, and we will be able to continue to administer such 'exit surveys' each year through the senior seminar that all our majors and most of our minors take. Collecting data from alumni was more difficult. However we are pleased to have had a 23% return rate on our survey, and we plan over the next weeks to do a follow up through emails with an electronic version of the questionnaire.
- Our original idea was to analyze our data using SPSS, and Celia actually went some way towards creating a matrix for this purpose. However with such a small population, it

seemed meaningless; we feel that broad qualitative statements can be made, but it is not worth while trying to draw any statistical inferences from this data.

- Whatever we decide to assess next, we clearly will not be able to go back to alumni with more questionnaires! It is likely that our future assessment plans will be based on data that we obtain on campus, possibly from class observations and analysis of elements of students' written work.

**Anthropology Department Self-Assessment:
preliminary tabulation of data (21st December 2007)**

Year of graduation from SLU

Year	Number of respondents
2002	2
2003	1
2004	5
2005	2
2006	2
2007	9

Gender

Gender	Number of respondents
Male	4
Female	17

Academic program

Program	major	combined major	minor
	14	4	2
1 did not report			

The Anthropology foreign language study requirement

i) What foreign languages did you take in High School?

Respondent	Language	Years	Grades
2002.1	French	3	10-12
2002.2	French	3	9-11
2002.2	Greek	Half year	10
2002.3	French	3	9-11
2002.3	Latin	1	11
2004.1	French	3	
2004.1	Spanish	Native Language	
2004.1	Portuguese	Elementary school – lived in Brazil 2 years	
2004.2	Spanish	6 years	7-12
2004.2	French	3 years	10-12
2004.3	French	5	7-11
2004.3	Latin	2	11-12

2004.4	Spanish	3	9-11
2004.5	French	5 years	8-12 th grade
2004.5	Spanish	2 years	10-11 th grade
2005.1	Spanish	3	9-11
2005.2	Spanish	3	Pre-freshman, 9-10
2005.2	Latin	2	11-12
2006.1	Spanish	4	9-12
2006.2	Spanish	4 years	
2007.1	French	3	9, 10, 12
2007.2	Spanish	5	7-11
2007.3	French	All four years of high school	
2007.4	French	13 years	(kindergarten to Gr. 12)
2007.5	French	6	(finished 2 nd y r. college French)
2007.5	German	1	Junior year
2007.5	Russian	1	Junior year
2007.6	Spanish	3	9-11
2007.6	French	1	Senior year
2007.7	French	4	All 4 years.
2007.8	French	3	Frosh-junior
2007.8	Spanish	3	Soph-senior
2007.9	French	3	8-10
2007.9	Latin	2	11-12

ii) What foreign languages did you take in college?

Respondent	Language	Semesters	Level
2002.1	Swahili	2	100?
2002.2	None		
2002.3	Spanish	7	200/300/400
2004.1	French	1	Intermediate level, 103
2004.2	Spanish	3	100, 200 level
2004.2	French	1	200 level
2004.2	Swahili	2	100 level
2004.3	French		104 Intermediate
2004.3	Swahili		101 Elementary, 103 Intermediate
2004.4	Spanish	1	200
2004.5	Swahili	2	101 and 102
2005.1	Spanish	1	200
2005.2	Spanish	2	100
2006.1	Swahili	4	100/200/300/400

2006.2	Swahili	3	
2007.1	French	Year in France	101/102/202
2007.2	Swahili	1	100
2007.3	Spanish	2	100
2007.4	French	1	French 202
2007.4	Swahili	3	101/102/103 (in Kenya)
2007.5	Japanese	4	(completed level 400)
2007.6	French	1	100 level
2007.6	Swahili	2	101/102
2007.7	French	7	Studied 7 semesters, major, studied in Rouen on SLU's program.
2007.8	French	9 courses	200 level & above
2007.8	Spanish	1	103
2007.9	n/a		

Off-campus programs

What off-campus program(s) did you take while at SLU?

Respondent	Program (where?)	Which semester or summer or winter session
2002.1	Kenya	FALL 2000
2002.2	None	
2002.3	Spain	Fall of junior year
2002.3	Costa Rica	Fall of senior year
2004.1	Summer archaeological	Summer 2002
2004.1	Field school -- Belize	
2004.1	Summer Field School	Summer 2002, 2003
2004.1	Honduras	
2004.2	None	
2004.3	Kenya	Summer 2002 -- Archaeology
2004.3	Kenya	Fall 2002 -- Semester Abroad
2004.4	n/a	
2004.5	Kenya	Fall 2003
2005.1	None	
2005.2	n/a	
2006.1	KSP	Spring 2005
2006.1	Kenya Summerterm	Summer 2004
2006.2	Kenya	Fall 2005
2006.2	Kenya summer	Summer 2005
2006.2	London	Fall 2006

2007.1	Kenya	Summer 2004 (w/ Dr. Barthelme)
2007.1	Ecuador	Backpacking w/ OP Winter 2007
2007.1	France	Academic year 2005-2006
2007.2	Australia	Fall Semester
2007.3	n/a	Summer course '07 → Outdoor Studies Program = Canoe Trip to Quebec
2007.4	Kenya	Spring 2006
2007.5	Japan	Summer 2004
2007.5	Japan	Spring 2005
2007.5	Australia	Spring 2006
2007.6	Kenya	Spring 2007
2007.7	Rouen, France	Fall 2005
2007.8	France/Senegal	Fall Junior Year – 2005
2007.9	Australia	Spring 2006

General questions

- i) What are you doing now, professionally? And what might you be planning to do in the near future (the next 2 – 3 years?)

Respondent	NOW	FUTURE
2002.1	Business Development Administrator (chemistry company)	MBA
2002.2	I am a curatorial assistant at the Harvard University Herbaria. I repair and make plant specimens for study.	I would like to be a curator in an Archaeology Museum
2002.3	I currently frame artwork for a living and plan to earn a teaching credential in the next couple of years.	
2004.1	Working as research at the subdirection of Cultural Heritage of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History. I've worked here since I graduated.	I plan on starting a master's or Ph.D. program in archaeology in Fall 2008, for which I'm applying now, in the U.S.
2004.2	I am earning my Master's Degree in Library Science and I will be looking to find a professional position in an academic or public library.	
2004.3	I am in my last year of law school. I will graduate spring 2008 – hopefully! Then I shall be into the legal world litigating.	
2004.4	I'm working for a financial firm advising in 401k plans for union members.	In the near future I plan on attending culinary school.
2004.5	Working for environmental/educational non-profit, center for Earth leadership.	I plan on continuing in the environmental non-profit field focusing on advocacy

		and policy.
2005.1	Teaching.	Plan to do more with Anthropology in the next 2-3 years.
2005.2	Public Health – Policy and Management	(same)
2006.1	I'm currently working as an Office Assistant in an International Organization.	Applying to Ph.D. programs for Fall '08.
2006.2	I work in Higher Education – Residence Life at U Mass. Amherst. I will have my Master's in Education this year.	Plan on continuing my work in Higher Education and Social Justice Education.
2007.1	I am planning to look for jobs in the media industry, specifically imprint journalism.	
2007.2	Now applying for jobs and setting up interviews for work over the next year and then receiving my masters in Psych.	
2007.3	Searching for a job in the New York City area, specifically Manhattan.	Living in Manhattan for the next 2-5 yrs. – hopefully beginning at Smith Barney (Citigroup: Financial).
2007.4	Looking for a job and working for the next 1-2 years.	Attending graduate school.
2007.5	I will be working in Japan through the JET program for the next 2 years.	Then I might go to graduate school, but I haven't decided yet.
2007.6	I plan on working at home until I make enough money to move to a city, then see where life takes me.	
2007.7	I plan to go to <u>law school</u> in the fall.	
2007.8	I am looking for a job. I hope to go to grad school within the next 2-3 years.	
2007.9	I am planning to go to <u>school</u> for education or history.	

ii) How has your Anthropology major contributed to what you are doing now or plan to do in the near future?

Respondent	
2002.1	No
2002.2	I work with people from around the world and learn about plants that are used by different cultures.
2002.3	I'd say so.
2004.1	It's provided the theoretical and practical base for my day-to-day work here, allowing me to participate in archaeological, anthropological and ethnological projects in all regions of Honduras, while being able to

	maintain an active participation in academic circles through the publication of articles and presentation of papers in professional meetings and conferences.
2004.2	Working in libraries requires a wide knowledge base. The knowledge I gained studying anthropology – especially cultural anthropology courses like Dr. Perry’s Indigenous Peoples – helps me to answer reference questions and in cataloging materials.
2004.3	Professionally not too sure, it certainly helped my writing skills as well critical reading. Archaeology remains my hobby and my interest. I like to keep up, read articles and journals that I have access to.
2004.4	My major contributed to my general knowledge of cross-cultural interactions. In my job I deal with many immigrant participants who have trouble adjusting to American culture.
2004.5	My Anthropology major led me to spend a semester in Kenya. That semester is something I believe shaped who I am today.
2005.1	It has given me a broader understanding of the world and various cultural dynamics.
2005.2	Combined love of anthropology with love of science and education → into MPH → Perfect combo. @ John Hopkins.
2006.1	I’m planning on attending an anthro. Ph.D. program. Currently, my anthro major helped broaden my understanding of other cultures which I experience daily at my job.
2006.2	It has highly! Affected my current work, sense of self, view of the world, and person I wish to be. I attribute the department opening my eyes to alternate views of the world, the importance of inclusive education, and intergroup dialogue.
2007.1	Anthropology has allowed me to recognize cultural differences and analyze the reasons behind these differences. This will help me in a field such as journalism where I will constantly be in new situations with a variety of people and cultures.
2007.2	Provided me with a broader understanding for human society in general.
2007.3	My anthropology major may contribute to my future plans – perhaps museum work?
2007.4	I hope that it will help me in finding a good job!
2007.5	It has given me a well rounded academic background preparing me for my future work in Japan as well as possible future in graduate school.
2007.6	Anthropology has changed the way I look at the world. I have also developed a stronger sense of responsibility for my fellow humans. Even though I do not know what I will do professionally I know it will involve helping people.
2007.7	It has given me a greater understanding of humanity and an ability to think critically.
2007.8	I hope it contributes!
2007.9	I have no plans yet which include anthro., but hope to somehow include it, perhaps if I teach history in high school.

- iii) Has your foreign language contributed to what you are doing now or plan to do in the near future, and if so, how?

Respondent	
2002.1	No
2002.2	No
2002.3	Yes, I was hired because I speak Spanish and live and work in a bilingual setting.
2004.1	Because Spanish was my native language, its importance is explicit in my work. My 'fair' handling of French and Portuguese has helped in providing my access to bibliographic material in their languages, broadening my repertoire of theoretical and empirical knowledge.
2004.2	It could be useful if I find a job cataloging foreign language materials. Otherwise, it has not helped me directly at work.
2004.3	Unfortunately Kiswahili helped me in that it is interesting and for when I go back to Kenya.
2004.4	My Spanish and Tagalog are used almost everyday at work. Having a second and third language is a very useful skill in the work force.
2004.5	no
2005.1	Not really – I wish I'd given it more of a chance/had put more effort in.
2005.2	In terms of cultural appreciation otherwise, only helps when traveling.
2006.1	Currently my Swahili has not helped, however, I hope to get involved in research in grad school where I can use it.
2006.2	My experiences abroad, in the department at SLU, and my current work are all so tightly linked. Having a glimpse into another's "world" and sense of reality through language is a key understanding in my field and anthropology.
2007.1	Study abroad in France gave me the confidence to use my French, but the language itself will likely be most useful as a platform for learning Spanish. Learning Spanish is something I feel is important in our increasingly bilingual society.
2007.2	no
2007.3	After studying French my entire life, and learning Spanish my senior year of college, I will apply my knowledge of these languages in my travel plans in the future.
2007.4	Yes, I use French when I go back to Canada and I am definitely planning on going back to Kenya in the future so Swahili will be beneficial for that.
2007.5	Yes. My Japanese will help me adjust to living and working in Japan. My other background in language learning will also help me in my position as an English teacher.
2007.6	No.

2007.7	It may in the future, though now I'm only using it for communication in Canada. I hope to work abroad or for the UN where my French may be useful.
2007.8	Not sure yet...
2007.9	n/a

- iv) How has your off-campus experience contributed to what you are doing now or plan to do in the near future?

Respondent	
2002.1	No, but it was still well worth it.
2002.2	No
2002.3	My experience in Costa Rica was very transformational. I do not understand this fully. I enjoy being bilingual and purposefully seek out the opportunity to live in linguistically and culturally diverse settings.
2004.1	Archaeological field schools are the backbone of my archaeological field experience, which was a requirement for my work.
2004.2	n/a
2004.3	As into my work, no not at the moment however Africa remains my passion. Not a day goes by without me thinking of my abroad experience.
2004.4	n/a
2004.5	It has led me to view everyday actions as global decisions I choose to make. Every action has a negative and positive effect on the global community.
2005.1	n/a
2005.2	n/a
2006.1	My off-campus experience has influence a great deal what I want to study. I think an abroad program should be required for anthro. majors.
2006.2	There isn't enough space here to mention all the ways...I'm sure I don't even know all the ways. I am highly interested in international programs education and social justice education initiatives. I feel that an abroad experience is essential to my work now and in the future.
2007.1	My off-campus experiences encouraged me to follow my own path and give me the confidence to go out alone. This is a skill essential for any journalist.
2007.2	Expanded my appreciation for differences in human societies.
2007.3	n/a
2007.4	Yes, as I am planning on going back to Africa (Kenya) in the future.
2007.5	Yes, it helped me to grow as a person and prepared me to live abroad more permanently.
2007.6	I am considering returning to Africa (somewhere) for volunteer work – possibly within the next 2-3 years.
2007.7	It has made me “worldly” given me a greater ability to understand world affairs.

2007.8	I hope to travel in the future and (maybe) teaching English as a foreign language – the experience and excitement of being abroad has fueled these plans.
2007.9	I hope to go back to Australia. In the future to live/work and possibly continue my education there.

- v) Would you be willing to be a contact person for SLU undergraduates interested in your field? If so, please provide us with your contact information.

Respondent	
2002.1	No
2002.2	Yes. Jennifer Cole – jen-fonda@yahoo.com
2002.3	After I earn my teaching credential.
2004.1	Yes! Email: osuale@yahoo.com Phone: (504) 99-50-7308
2004.2	Jennifer Bunton Forgit – Library Science 2004 – Jennifer.forgit@gmail.com
2004.3	If I can be of service I would be glad to. Tristan W. Statler 440-552-2129 tstat19@yahoo.com
2004.4	Yes. Maria Bayona email: mbayona81@yahoo.com
2005.1	Not at this time, but perhaps in the future.
2005.2	Yes. Christine N. Williams (New York, NY) chrwilli@jhspk.edu 802-363-0500
2006.2	Absolutely! More than willing!! 315-244-1783 – joshuanelsonj@ad.com – Joshua Nelson, 368 Northampton Rd. APC, Amherst, MA 01002
2007.1	Yes. Jessi Burg. jessi.burg@gmail.com
2007.2	Yes. aewebb03@stlawu.edu
2007.3	Yes. Lindsay Arthurs. ljarth03@stlawu.edu
2007.4	Yes, I would. laclar03@stlawu.edu
2007.5	Amanda Carr amcarr03@stlawu.edu or Amanda Carr Carr_85@hotmail.com
2007.6	No.
2007.7	Yes, absolutely. Ann Dargie. 315-244-1829—cell – aedarg03@gmail.com -- email
2007.8	Yes – Stephanie LaBonte – 315-854-0785 – smlabo03@stlawu.edu

Biology

Guidelines for Assessment Reports

Fall 2007

Part I: The Assessment of Learning Goals

What learning goal(s) did your project assess?

We decided to assess our department's first learning goal of "Biology students learn fundamental concepts in three major areas: cell and molecular biology, organismal biology, and ecology and evolution." This learning goal is central to what we expect students to achieve in our department. This knowledge provides the foundation for designing, conducting and interpreting the results of independent and SYE research. In addition, many of our students will be required to demonstrate this knowledge on entrance exams, such as the MCAT, DAT, and GRE.

What did you do to assess the goal?

To assess this learning goal, we used two approaches. In the first approach we conducted a transcript analysis with the assistance of Christine Zimmerman to determine the number of courses our graduating Biology majors take in cell and molecular biology, organismal biology, and ecology and evolution. The courses within each of these areas are listed in both the catalog and webpage. Within the biology major, we strongly advise students to not focus on only one specific area of biology, but to obtain a breadth of knowledge, taking courses in each of these three areas.

The second approach was to have students take a standardized test called the GRE Major Field Test which is administered by ETS. The Major Field test provides us with an outcomes assessment on our students' basic knowledge in biology and their ability to solve problems and interpret data, including graphical representations. We plan use this data to benchmark and follow trends in student performance.

Briefly summarize your findings.

Our initial transcript analysis indicates that over the last 15 years between 19 and 74 percent of biology majors graduated with course credits in all three major areas of biology (fig. 1). The breakdown of trends within each of the major areas of biology over the past 15 years are shown in figure 2. This data indicates that between 80 and 100% of our biology majors who have graduated have taken coursework in cell and molecular biology. However, a smaller percentage of each graduating class has taken courses in ecology and organismal biology. Over the past two years, the percentages of students who have taken courses in both organismal biology and ecology and evolution have increased.

Last spring we had 17 volunteer students take the Major Field Test in Biology. Of these 17 students, 1 was a senior, 9 were juniors, 3 were sophomores, and 4 were freshman. Only 8 of the students had declared biology as a major. Of the remaining students, 3 had declared a

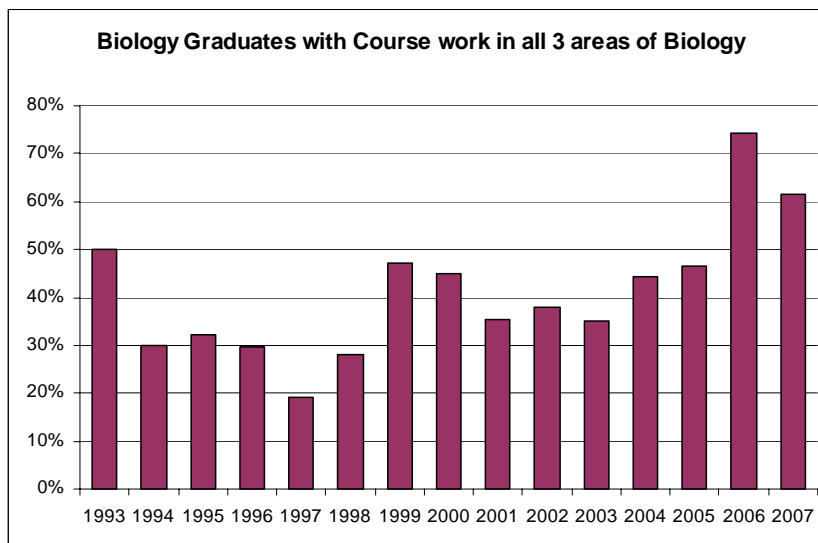


Figure 1. Biology graduates who took classes in all three major areas of biology at or above the 200 level.

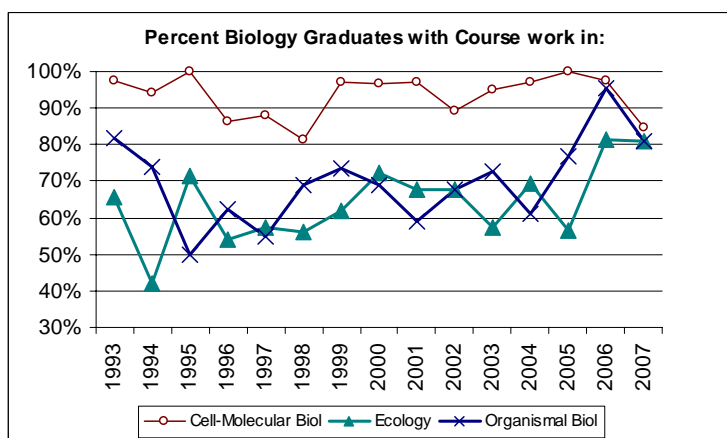


Figure 2. Percent of biology graduates who took classes in cell and molecular biology, organismal biology, or ecology and evolution at or above the 200 level.

neuroscience major, 2 had declared a biology-environmental studies combined major, 1 had declared a chemistry major, and 3 had not yet declared a major. A transcript analysis of these 17 students revealed that only one student had taken at least one course at the 200 or above level in all four major areas of the Majors Field Test; cell biology, molecular genetics, organismal biology, and ecology and evolution. Six of the students (4 freshman, 1 sophomore, and 1 junior) had taken only the General Biology course sequence (BIOL101 and 102).

The overall percentile scores (defined as the percentage of students nationally who scored lower than your score) for the 17 students ranged from 10 to 90, with an average of about 53 ± 24 . The student who scored in the 90th percentile was a freshman and the two students who scored in the 80th percentile were sophomores. We have analyzed the data from many perspectives and the

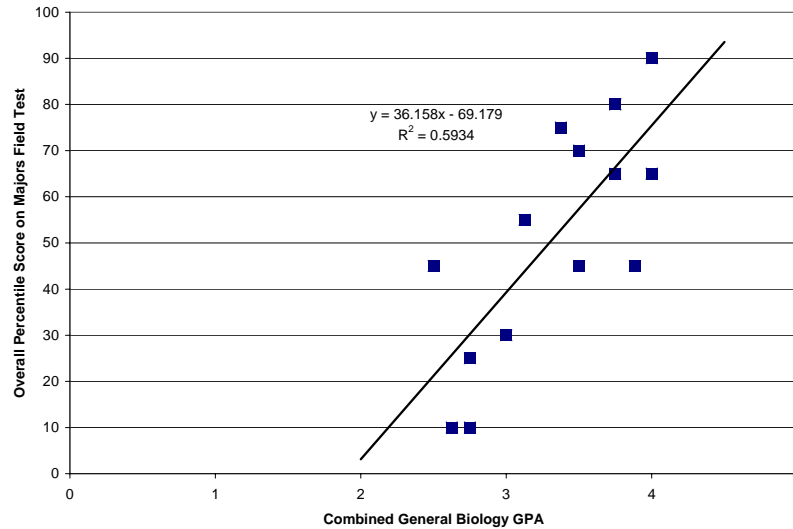


Figure 3. Overall percentile score on Majors Field Test compared to the average grade students achieved in General Biology 101 and 102.

best correlation we found was between overall percentile score and performance in General Biology (fig. 3).

What are the implications of your findings for your department or program’s teaching and curriculum?

First, we must continue to advise our biology majors to take courses in all three major areas of biology. Students often do not want to follow this advice because it requires them to take courses that are outside of their comfort zone. However, we believe that it is essential for our majors to be well rounded biologists when they graduate.

Second, our General Biology courses seem to be providing an adequate foundation for students who major in biology. Over the past eight years, we have modified our introductory courses to better help our students develop their knowledge of biology and the scientific method. The data from the Majors Field Test seems to indicate that students who applied themselves in the General Biology courses did well on the Majors Field Test, even if they hadn’t taken upper level courses in biology.

Part II. The Assessment of the Pilot Project

Briefly assess the methods of assessment you used and the extent to which these yielded useful information. How will what you learned in this round of assessment impact what you plan to assess next and the methods you will use to carry out this work?

We believe the two approaches we used yielded useful information. However, we recognize two problems with our methods of assessment. First, in order to conduct the transcript analysis, we had to flag courses as belonging to a particular area of biology (i.e., cell and molecular, organismal, or ecology and evolution). This identification was easily accomplished for courses that had their own course number. However over the last 15 years, our graduating biology majors earned between 41 and 56% of their biology units in either special topics courses or courses in abroad programs. Due to time constraints, we were not able to appropriately flag these courses for the transcript analysis. Consequently, special topics courses and abroad program courses were not included in the analysis. Christine Zimmerman has created a list of these courses for us and we can now flag them appropriately. We will work with Christine to rerun the transcript analysis so that we have a historical baseline. In the future, we will continue the transcript analysis as part of our review of student transcripts for graduation.

Second, we only had one senior take the Majors Field Test last spring. As we developed our assessment plan, we decided that it was better to have some data from the Majors Field Test than no data. Consequently, we asked for volunteers to take the test and did not limit participation to only graduating seniors. Clearly, in order to assess our entire program, it would be better to have a large pool of senior majors take the exam. In the future, we plan to encourage more seniors to take the exam and at some point we may make it part of our senior year experience.

Chemistry Department

Assessment Report
December 2007

Part I: Assessment of Learning Goals

What learning goals did our project assess?

In our “Department of Chemistry Pilot Project Assessment Plan: The Senior Year Experience” that we submitted during the spring semester of 2007, it was stated that, “[w]e consider our Senior Year Experience an ideal capstone to the major.” For that reason we chose to focus our pilot project on this aspect of our program. The pilot project has already provided useful data and pointed us toward some new actions. As detail below, the data indicate that we are generally meeting our SYE learning goals, however, we should reexamine how our seniors are approaching and learning about the field’s primary and secondary literature. Initiating this pilot project inspired the creation of the *SYE Handbook* to more clearly explain the faculty expectations to our students. In addition, new student-faculty interaction components have been implemented, or are being designed, in order to augment the SYE for our students.

As we prepared our pilot project focused on the SYE, we considered how the 20 departmental learning goals (Appendix A) that had been submitted to the Middle States Self-Report group in 2006 were addressed within the context of the SYE. In our assessment plan we stated that chemistry majors will:

- Have completed a faculty-mentored research project and effectively communicated the nature of their investigation, its context and significance, and progress towards its completion in two oral seminars and a final written research report. [Learning Goal 19, with project dependent incorporation of Learning Goals 16 & 17]
- Be able to assimilate large amounts of data, present it clearly and make well reasoned and supported conclusions based upon it in formal reports of varying formats. [Learning Goal 15]
- Be familiar with the scope, structure and content of the primary and secondary literature and possess a facility with some of the tools utilized to access it. [Learning Goal 18]
- Understanding how structure relates to both physical properties and chemical reactivity. [Learning Goal 2, with project dependent incorporation of Learning Goals 1 & 3]
- Appreciate scientific inquiry and the tools and practices of that endeavor, specifically how chemists devise and test theories which seek to explain the how and why, rather than just the what, of chemical reactivity and chemical structure.

[Learning Goal 5, with project dependent incorporation of Learning Goals 3,4, 6-14]

- Appreciate the applicability and relevance of chemical concepts, tools, and investigative methods to the solution of a wide variety of social and scientific problems. [Learning Goal 20]

The SYE only overtly addresses six of our departmental learning goals regardless of a student's project. An additional twelve of our departmental learning goals may be specifically addressed through project specific content. This is clearly indicated in the bulleted text above. However, we do believe that our SYE students draw upon an entire body of knowledge developed throughout their prior chemistry and biochemistry coursework. Those experiences are obviously rooted in our complete set of departmental learning goals.

What did we do to assess the learning goals?

As part of the SYE experience, students report their findings in both oral and written formats. In our pilot project, assessment tools were developed to evaluate learning goals through the written and oral reports of the student's SYE (see Appendices B & C). **Students were given a copy of these forms in a newly created SYE Handbook.** At present, the assessment sheet for oral presentations has been tested. For each presentation, learning goals were assessed by at least four members of the departmental faculty. Evaluation of the assessment sheet for the written portion will occur in the spring semester when students provide final written reports of their work. The learning goals addressed by the student's written work will be assessed by the student's research mentor and one additional faculty member.

What are the implications of our findings?

Findings

Between four and six faculty members evaluated five student presentations in the spring of 2007 that summarized their SYE efforts and results and eight students in the fall of 2007 that presented material and results to introduce their projects to the department. Six students will present in the last two weeks of the fall 2007 semester.

The table summarizes the average rating given by faculty from a four point scale, four is Excellent and one is Poor. Assessment questions that deviate from average values are bolded. Questions highlighted in blue were consistently above average (1, 3, 8, 10 & 12), while the questions highlighted in red were identified as consistently below average (2 & 13).

Abbreviated Question	Learning Goal	Spring 2007 Five Students		Fall 2007 Eight Students	
		Avg.	s	Avg.	s
1. Communicated nature or design of investigation	19	3.3	0.5	3.1	0.6
2. Communicated context & significance	19	2.9	0.7	2.8	0.7
3. Overall organization	19	3.2	0.5	3.1	0.6

4. Avoided distracting mannerisms	19	3.1	0.6	3.1	0.7
5. Showed interest and enthusiasm	19	3.0	0.5	3.4	0.5
6. Used voice to emphasize key points	19	2.8	0.4	3.1	0.5
7. Used visual aids well	19	3.1	0.5	3.0	0.6
8. Able to assimilate data	15	3.2	0.4	3.1	0.4
9. Able to make well reasoned conclusions	15	3.0	0.6	3.1	0.6
10. Devise and test theories to explain how and why	5	3.3	0.3	3.3	0.6
11. Able to apply concepts, methods	20	3.1	0.3	3.1	0.5
12. Uses field appropriate language, tools, symbols	1	3.3	0.6	3.3	0.5
13. Demonstrates familiarity with primary & secondary literature	18	2.8	0.5	2.7	0.7
Total	---	3.1	0.5	3.1	0.6

Implications

Students would benefit from changes in our curriculum that improve their ability to understand the context and significance of their research by review of primary and secondary literature. Presentation skills are well developed. Students are also accomplished in experimental design, applying knowledge of chemistry, and data analysis. The elements of our current curriculum that support these learning outcomes should be identified and sustained.

Part II. Assessment of the Pilot Project

What did we learn about our methods?

The pilot study has already helped our program in a direct way. After developing the assessment tools, we recognized a need to clearly articulate the expectations and deadlines of SYE to students. During the summer of 2006, the chemistry faculty developed an *SYE Handbook*. The handbook provide the SYE students with information on research deadlines, the practices of good record keeping, departmental safety guidelines, ethics in science, and copies of the assessment sheets for written work and oral presentations. The handbook clarifies expectations for students and faculty, who can then better advise their SYE researchers. During our discussions to create the handbook, we identified record keeping in a scientific notebook as critical to the success and reproducibility of student work. We have implemented two Notebook Expos per semester to help students learn record keeping skills. At our first two meetings students exchanged notebooks and were asked to summarize key results and methods from a peer's notebook.

The new handbook and Notebook Expo meetings also benefit our program by cultivating a sense of community that extends beyond the faculty advisor/mentor and SYE student relationship. It is important that science majors do not view their work or field as an isolated process. Thus, the Notebook Expo is a forum in which the students are able to share their experiences, increase peer support, and sew the seeds for informal conversations about research. We also anticipate that this sense of community will enhance research productivity, because our students will want to share their latest results with each other.

What do we plan to do next?

With respect to the question, “what do we wish to assess next, or plan to do next?”, we wish to forge ahead with our pilot project and to collect spring 2008 data for both oral and written presentations. After we have a data set for one full SYE year and two sets of data from spring oral presentations, we will then decide how to proceed with respect to continuing an SYE focus or selection of new assessment target. In the interim, however, we are considering the implications of the data that we have already gathered. In particular, we are focusing on those questions detailed in the table above for which the averages are lower or higher than 3.0 or questions with a larger standard deviation.

An example of our current analysis is exemplified by question number 2 in the table above entitled, “Communicated context & significance”. The standard deviation of this item is the highest in the table (± 0.7). This standard deviation is the result of faculty differing in their evaluation of the indicated learning goal at each presentation. At a CTL workshop in May 2007, entitled “The Terms of Assessment: Creating Rubrics and Protocols for Portfolio and Essay Review”, the value of defining the attributes that constitute “excellent”, “very good”, “adequate”, and “poor” was made clear. Through the clarification process, it *may* be possible to decrease the amount of deviation of the above stated learning goal. We are considering creating such definitions to aid our assessment plan.

In conclusion, we have actively pursued our SYE focused pilot assessment project. Although we look forward to completing a full year of data during the spring 2008 semester, the data gathered to date have already proved enlightening. Our analysis of the spring 2006 data instigated the creation of a more standardized document for the SYE, the *SYE Handbook*. Furthermore, our data suggest that we are generally meeting the learning goals described for the SYE, and that **we have identified at least one area for improvement with respect to our students’ facility with scholarly literature**. To help students better incorporate primary and secondary literature into their projects, we are considering substituting one or more Notebook Expo meetings with a literature based meeting. One possible format for this meeting might be a “*speed dating*” approach where students would describe an important article in their field in two minutes or less to several listening partners. Whatever the approach, we will seek engaging, group based pedagogies.

Appendix A

Department of Chemistry Learning Goals From the Academic Program Learning Goals Report-Spring 2006 Compiled by the Dean of Academic Affairs

(<http://www.stlawu.edu/acadaffairs/access/revised%20learning%20goals%20compiled.pdf>)

The following material is found on pages 6-10 of that document:

Chemistry Department Curricular Objectives with Student Learning Goals Revised and Abridged

Overarching disciplinary and course specific learning objectives have been formulated to serve six student cohorts; 1) those intending to fulfill requirements of the American Chemical Society for degree certification, 2) chemistry majors who do not opt for ACS certification, 3) biochemistry majors, 4) environmental studies-chemistry combined majors, 5) minors and 6) non-science students. We construct the curriculum in accordance with guidelines promulgated by our professional accrediting body, the American Chemical Society's Committee on Professional Training. These establish a curricular framework which, in turn, informs specific learning goals. CPT emphasizes and requires attention to the following points which provide the basis for comprehensive 5-year recertification reviews we must submit to CPT for accreditation:

- Problem solving and laboratory experience reinforce the study of essential content.
- Chemistry should be made accessible to all students seeking a liberal education.
- Problem solving also lends itself to teamwork.
- Effective communication through writing and speaking.
- Core curriculum taken by certifiable chemistry graduates includes a minimum of 28 semester credit hours of basic instruction with comparable emphasis on the areas of analytical chemistry, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, and calculus-based physical chemistry. At least three semester credit hours of biochemistry must also be part of the undergraduate curriculum for all certified graduates. The 28 semester credit hours of study shall include a minimum of 7 semester credit hours (300–350 contact hours) of laboratory instruction.
- Six semester hours of advanced courses that include sufficient laboratory work to bring the **total number of laboratory contact hours to 500** are dictated for certified degrees.
- Principles of chemical safety, current health and safety issues must be integral.
- Historical perspective as well as references to current developments in chemistry.
- Real-world problems, early introduction to instrumental and computational techniques.
- Laboratory instruction should include practical experience with instrumentation for spectroscopy, chemical separations, and electrochemical methods. It should give students hands-on experience with chemistry and the self-confidence and competence to-
 - keep legible and complete experimental records;
 - synthesize and characterize inorganic and organic compounds;
 - perform accurate and precise quantitative measurements;
 - use and understand modern instruments, particularly NMR, FT-IR, and UV-vis

spectrometers; GC, GC-MS, and HPLC instruments for chemical separations; and electrochemical instruments;

- interpret experimental results and draw reasonable conclusions;
- analyze data statistically and assess reliability of results;
- anticipate, recognize, and respond properly to hazards of chemical manipulations;
- design experiments;
- plan and execute experiments based on searching and using the literature;
- communicate effectively through oral and written reports; and
- work effectively in small groups and teams.
- Biochemistry must be part of the curriculum for all certified majors.
- Undergraduate research can integrate the components of the core curriculum

Students must learn how to retrieve specific information from the enormous and rapidly expanding chemical literature.

Common and Overarching Departmental Learning Goals For Majors

Students of serious purpose upon completing a major in chemistry, biochemistry, or environmental studies-chemistry should be expected to:

- 1) Understand atomic and molecular level structure (including bonding), how structure is determined experimentally, and how it is depicted using a variety of symbolic representations.
- 2) Understand how structure determines both physical properties and chemical reactivity.
- 3) Understand the organization of the periodic table and periodic trends of atoms.
- 4) Appreciate the nature of intermolecular bonds and their impact on properties; solubility, boiling point, non-covalent interactions between molecules etc.
- 5) Appreciate how chemists devise and test theories which seek to explain the how and why, rather than just the what, of chemical reactivity and chemical structure.
- 6) Have both a qualitative and quantitative understanding of acid/base concepts and their utility in explaining chemical reactions of many types.
- 7) Have both a qualitative and quantitative understanding of redox concepts and their utility in understanding a large family of chemical transformations.
- 8) Understand the factors which impact on rates of reaction (kinetics).
- 9) Understand the factors which impact on relative stabilities of chemical species and the position of various chemical and physical equilibria (thermodynamics).

10) Appreciate how chemical and physical properties can be measured and quantified; to include error analysis and statistical treatment of data.

11) Understand the quantum mechanical description of the atom.

12) Appreciate why certain molecules should be synthesized and how this can be done; to include familiarity with synthesis planning strategies and methodology.

13) Have familiarity with some of the important tools for separating mixtures of compounds with an emphasis on modern chromatographic methods.

14) Have a solid understanding of the theory and practice of spectroscopic methods based upon the interactions of electromagnetic radiation with matter and how to utilize the resulting data for structural elucidation.

15) Be able to assimilate large amounts of data, present it clearly and make well reasoned and supported conclusions based upon it in formal laboratory reports in a variety of formats.

16) Feel confident in the laboratory environs based in part of significant hands on experience with a wide range of sophisticated instrumentation.

17) Appreciate the imperatives of chemical safety and environmental stewardship including proper handling and disposal of chemicals and wastes and safe laboratory practices.

18) Be familiar with the scope, structure and content of the primary and secondary literature and possess a facility with some of the tools utilized to access it.

19) Have completed a faculty-mentored research project and effectively communicated the nature of their investigation, its context and significance, and progress towards its completion in two oral seminars and a final written research report. Students receiving honors designation will have presented the final written report in the form of an undergraduate thesis and successfully defended in front of a committee of three faculty.

20) Appreciate the applicability and relevance of chemical concepts, tools, and investigative methods to the solution of a wide variety of social and scientific problems.

Appendix B

Assessment Sheet for Oral Presentations

SYE

Student: _____

Date: _____

Abbreviated Title: _____

Communication [Learning Goal 19]

	Excellent	Very good	Adequate	Poor
1. Effectively communicated the nature or design of their investigation	4	3	2	1
2. Effectively communicated its context and significance	4	3	2	1
3. Overall organization	4	3	2	1

Aspects of Delivery

4. Avoided distracting mannerisms	4	3	2	1
5. Showed interest and enthusiasm	4	3	2	1
6. Used voice to emphasize key points	4	3	2	1
7. Used visual aids well	4	3	2	1

Chemistry related

8. Able to assimilate data [Learning Goal 15]	4	3	2	1
9. Able to make well reasoned conclusions [Learning Goal 15]	4	3	2	1
10. Demonstrates knowledge of scientific inquiry and the tools and practices of that endeavor, specifically how chemists devise and test theories which seek to explain the how and why [Learning Goal 5]	4	3	2	1
11. Able to apply chemical concepts, tools, or investigative methods to the solution of their social or scientific problem [Learning Goal 20]	4	3	2	1
12. Uses field appropriate language, terminology, and symbols [Learning Goal 1]	4	3	2	1

Literature

13. Demonstrates familiarity with primary and secondary literature [Learning Goal 18]	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Notes: _____

Appendix C

Assessment Sheet for Written Work

SYE

Student: _____

Date: _____

Abbreviated Title: _____

Introduction

	Excellent	Very good	Adequate	Poor	NA
14. Presentation of background and significance	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Theory and statement of objective clearly defined	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Procedure

16. Procedure is clearly described and reproducible	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	---	---	--------------------------

Data analysis/Results

17. Original data properly recorded	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Data is properly analyzed	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Data is properly summarized	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Appropriate use of figures and tables	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Titles (and/or labels) of Tables or Figures are appropriate	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Key trends in data, those that support the objective, are summarized	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion

23. Make well reasoned conclusions from summarized results [Learning Goal 15]	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Demonstrates knowledge of scientific inquiry and the tools and practices of that endeavor, specifically how chemists devise and test theories which seek to explain the how and why [Learning Goal 5]	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Able to apply chemical concepts, tools, or investigative methods to the solution their social or scientific problems [Learning Goal 20]	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Literature

26. Demonstrates familiarity with primary and secondary literature [Learning Goal 18]	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Use of appropriate sources and proper citations	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Elements of Written Work

28. Reads free of grammatical and other sentence level concerns	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Paragraph organization	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Overall organization	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Education Department

Progress Report (January 4, 2008)
Departmental Goals and Assessments

Part I. The Assessment of Learning Goals

What learning goals did your department assess?

The Department of Education chose to address the learning goals for the Graduate Program in Educational Leadership for 2007-2008. As stated in our report on September 15, 2007, these goals were developed and refined during a week-long summer conference in July 2007 and vetted with the entire faculty (full-time and adjuncts) in August 2007, and then with participating school administrators in September 2007.

The goal of the Graduate Program in Educational Leadership is to prepare highly qualified school leaders for institutions of learning within the state, across the nation and around the world with a focus on recommended learning standards and student achievement. By **highly qualified**, the department means that students will be able to:

- A. Develop and implement an educational vision, or build and sustain an existing one, for assisting all students to meet State learning standards
- B. Collaboratively identify goals and objectives for achieving the educational vision, seeking and valuing diverse perspectives and alternative points of view, and building understanding through direct and precise questioning.
- C. Communicate and work effectively with parents, staff, students, community leaders, and other community members from diverse backgrounds, providing clear, accurate written and spoken information that publicizes the school's goals, expectations, and performance results, and builds support for improving student achievement.
- D. Lead comprehensive, long-range planning, informed by multiple data sources, to determine the present state of the school, identify root causes of problems, propose solutions, and validate improvements with regard to all aspects for the school including but not limited to:
 1. Curriculum development
 2. Instructional strategies
 3. Classroom organization and practices
 4. Assessment
 5. Student support services, including the provision of services to students with disabilities and students who are English language learners
 6. Professional support and development
 7. Succession planning
 8. Student, family, and community relations
 9. Facilities development
 10. Planning with colleges for providing curricula and experiences for college students preparing to become educators that will enhance their learning and the learning of the school's students
- E. Effect any educational change through ethical decision-making based upon factual analysis, even in the face of opposition.
- F. Meet all requirements for initial/professional administrative certification in New York State (and/or all reciprocating US states and Canadian provinces), including competency testing.

What did you do to assess your goal?

Assessment of the goal is intimately tied to the pilot program for 2007-2008. The pilot is essentially to put the new requirements in place and assess their effectiveness. Three aspects have demanded our particular attention throughout the Fall 2007 semester, two of which are being assessed against the goal:

1. An evaluation rubric was drafted and published in the new Educational Leadership Handbook in September 2007, and it is being piloted throughout the 2007-2008 academic year.
2. New curricular requirements for state-required fieldwork were inserted into all of the graduate courses in Educational Leadership to comply with the new regulations, and their effectiveness is being assessed by the instructors involved and cooperating school administrators involved.
3. (Course proposals for two new courses in the program were submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee for approval. These will contribute to achieving the goals, but they are not being assessed against the goal...)

Briefly summarize your findings

At this point (January 2008), any findings are incomplete.

1. Assessment of the evaluation rubric. Unfortunately, SLU has only two administrative interns in 2007-2008, and both of them are involved in year-long internships. The evaluation rubric for the internship (which comprises assessment of each of the sub-parts of the program goal) was first utilized at the end of the Fall 2007 semester. While it has proved to be useful, we have yet to analyze any feedback from this initial use. More complete formative feedback must wait until May, 2008 when the interns complete their entire internship.
2. Assessment of the fieldwork requirements. An assessment survey form has been developed to administer to the instructors in the Fall 2007 semester. Because many of the forms have not been returned yet, this assessment is also inconclusive. Once again, it will make much more sense after a full year of the pilot has been concluded since courses in Educational Leadership are only taught once each year (either in Fall or in Spring).

What are the implications for your department's program?

No implications can be drawn, other than to continue with the pilot.

Part II. The Assessment of the Pilot

Briefly assess the methods of assessment you used and the extent to which these yielded useful information.

The department planned the following during 2007-2008:

1. Distribute validation surveys to participating faculty and school administrators for the Internship Evaluation Rubric, the Portfolio Requirements, and Portfolio Evaluation Rubric.

2. Hold orientation sessions with participating school administrators in North Country counties (superintendents and principals in school districts with whom the University partners to prepare prospective educational leaders.
3. Hold orientation sessions with current (and new) students to assure that they are aware of the news requirements and evaluation instruments.
4. Submit New Course Requests to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty for three new courses developed to meet the Regents' mandates.
5. Collect data from the first uses of the handbook (requirements and rubrics) in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008.
6. Confer with participating faculty and school administrators to get feedback regarding the effectiveness of the assessment system during the pilot year.
7. Send a team to the 2008 Summer Constructivist Design Conference (to be held at SLU in July 2008) to analyze results of the pilot and the suggestions of the participants. Draft any changes to the documents in the Handbook accordingly. Convert the documents to electronic form for use with LiveText – the online resource used by SLU for data collection and analysis.
8. Present the results of the team's work to faculty and participating administrators in August 2008.

Of these numbers 1, 5, and 6 represent the assessment methods chosen for the pilot throughout 2007-2008.

To date, numbers 1-4 have been completed, number 5-6 are underway, and numbers 7-8 are planned for next summer. At this juncture (January 2008), any information received is only partially useful. It will be considered in detail beginning in June 2008. A copy of the validation instrument for the rubric (Step 1) is appended.

How will what you have learned in this round of assessment impact what you plan to assess and the methods you will use to carry out this work?

Because we have learned little at this juncture, we will continue to follow the steps outlined above as the 2007-2008 academic year continues. More broadly, the department will modify the current "Survey of Alumni and Employers" currently used for graduates of the teacher education program so that it can be useful to analyze the long-term effectiveness of the Graduate Program in Educational Leadership. We will begin distributing this form in Fall 2008.

Appendix 1.

Validation Survey Internship Evaluation Rubric

To assess the validity of the new SLU Internship Evaluation Rubric, we are asking all stakeholders – students, cooperating administrators, superintendents, and University faculty – to complete this brief survey. If necessary, please refer to a copy of the rubric (all eight standards!) in Appendix VIII of the University’s *2007-2008 Educational Leadership Handbook*.

Please use the following rating scale to respond to each of the questions listed below:

- | | Fully
5 | Almost fully
4 | Somewhat
3 | Little
2 | Not at all
1 |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 2. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 3. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 4. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 5. | | | | | |

Comments and suggestions for improvement to the rubric:

(Your detailed comments are encouraged and welcomed. Continue on reverse side and other pages if needed.)

Results of this validation study will be tabulated and reported to the University’s design team at the 2008 Summer Constructivist Design Conference for modification of the rubric as appropriate for next year. Let us know if you would like to receive a copy of the results.

Many thanks!

Please return to Department of Education, St. Lawrence University by Oct. 15, 2007.

Appendix 2.

Validation Survey Educational Leadership Portfolio Rubric (new)

To assess the validity of the new Portfolio Evaluation, we are asking all University instructors in Educational Leadership to complete this brief survey. If necessary, please refer to a copy of the portfolio rubric (all eight standards plus the intro and overall sections!) in Appendix IX of the *2007-2008 Educational Leadership Handbook*.

Please use the following rating scale to respond to each of the questions listed below:

- | | Fully
5 | Almost fully
4 | Somewhat
3 | Little
2 | Not at all
1 |
|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ 1. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 2. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 3. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 4. | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| _____ 5. | | | | | |

Comments and suggestions for improvement to the rubric:

(Your detailed comments are encouraged and welcomed. Continue on reverse side and other pages if needed.)

Results of this validation study will be tabulated and reported to the University's design team at the 2008 Summer Constructivist Design Conference for modification of the rubrics as appropriate for next year. Let us know if you would like to receive a copy of the results.

Many thanks!

Please return to Department of Education, St. Lawrence University by Oct. 15, 2007.

English Department

Assessment Preliminary Report

The English Department's preliminary assessment report is divided into three subjects of evaluation to which we have given our attention: the English major, the assessment survey, and the assessment portfolio.

THE ENGLISH MAJOR

The department's most important achievement in assessment this fall was not self-consciously initiated as an assessment project, although, in retrospect, we would argue that it very much turned into one: the evaluation of our major. (The November Chairs meeting encouraged us to develop the assessment process that best fulfills department needs, and this issue turned out to be at the top of the English faculty's list for the semester.)

Members of the department had for some time been raising questions about the effectiveness of the "five concentration major" (5CM) that we implemented in 2000. (In this model, all majors enrolled in a series of five introductory English courses, and then completed five more courses in one of five concentrations: British Lit, American Lit, Writing, Postcolonial and Anglophone Lit, and Gender). Responses from FYP advisors over the intervening years indicated that they found the five major concentrations complicated and difficult to negotiate, and members of the department had also begun to suspect that we'd constructed a major that was excessively prescriptive and one which, in addition, we weren't actually able to staff. In creating the 5CM major, we paid insufficient attention to the obvious fact that SLU faculty tend to move around a good bit, and thus just as the new major was being introduced, we lost two major players in the Anglophone/Postcolonial concentration to administrative positions outside the department. Assessment lesson #1: a major cannot be predicated on the presence of specific faculty remaining in the department.

We had also noticed a significant decline in the number of majors we attracted during the 2005-6 academic year. Surveys of students in English classes on the general question, "what do you think of majoring in English?" elicited a pattern of positive responses as well as more critical reactions asserting that the major is too complicated, that it's not practical in terms of future employment, and it requires too much reading—more reading than any other major. We clearly can't justify reducing the reading in a major largely focused upon literary texts, and our learning goals already include an objective of changing student perceptions of the career practicality of the major; consequently, at this point the next step was to address the negative assessment of the 5CM.

We began by putting together a subcommittee on the major, comprised of Professors Alden, Singer, and Gates, to assess the 5CM. The committee requested that the Registrar's office provide them with transcripts for all English majors graduating in the years 2006 and 2007, and the examination of these data disclosed the alarming fact that, because of the requirements outlined in the concentrations, many of our students were able to fulfill their requirements for the major by taking as few as one or two 300-level courses. The realization that students could—and did—legally fulfill all major concentrations while taking this few specialized courses became the primary provocation for the revision of the major the department then undertook, and discussion of the subcommittee's alternative model dominated department meetings over the next few weeks, leading up to the October 29 deadline for submission of catalog copy to Advancement.

As has been the case in past discussions of the English major within the department's memory, the significance and centrality of historical literary surveys was the most contentious issue, and the prevailing major model reduced the current survey requirement from two to one. The revised major eliminates the five concentrations in favor of "The English Major in Literary Studies" and "The English Major in Writing." In an effort to bridge those two majors more effectively than we did in the pre-2000 two-track major, the revision allows Literary Studies students to include two creative writing courses within their major, while all majors must take a minimum of three 300-level literature courses. This process of curricular revision effectively renders the major more accessible to students and advisors, while simultaneously insuring that all our majors take a minimum of three 300-400 level courses in literature. That latter change will have the consequence of raising the level of literary study students will be expected to undergo in the majors, while also remedying the 5CM-driven problem the department has experienced in recent years of under-enrolled 300-level classes.

The revision of the majors is only a first step the department is taking in addressing a larger issue that will very certainly preoccupy us for years to come: the evidence that the numbers of English majors are declining at many institutions, and the related difficulty of filling classes in early literature that once regularly drew healthy numbers of students. These issues will be very much at the forefront of our discussions as we expand our assessment program.

Consequently, we have to discover not only whether students are learning what we expect them to learn, and thereby fulfilling our stated learning goals; we also have to decide whether the apparent decline in enrollments in English reflects a change in student culture that the department must address.

SURVEY

The department met on October 31 to discuss strategies for assessing what and how students are learning in the English major. The first step in our assessment process consisted in the conducting of a survey of students in our SYEs last spring. The results, though based on a limited number of responses (about a third of our total senior majors), indicate that our majors are convinced that they did learn as English majors, especially in terms of the capacity to interpret texts, critical thinking, and literary history, but that in one of the areas in which we would have expected them to grow intellectually through our courses, they did not: a minority believed that their political awareness was increased by their English major. (Statistical tabulation of the survey results is attached.)

The survey will be conducted again this spring, with the likelihood of revisions to its questions. At the October 31 meeting, the department discussed the relationship between our stated learning goals and the survey questions we posed to seniors last spring, and a new member of the department--a veteran of the assessment wars at other institutions--was enlisted to propose a set of questions that might better reflect our learning goals while prompting student responses about the quality of their learning. Bruce Danner offered this list of questions, which will be vetted by the department and added to the survey according to the department's consensus. (A copy of the new questions under consideration and the current survey are attached.)

Surveys will be administered every spring semester during the next-to-last week of classes in our three SYE seminars, amongst students completing independent and honors projects, and in classes that regularly attract large numbers of seniors.

PORTFOLIO

At the department meeting on 31 October, we discussed an additional part of the original Department of English Assessment Plan and Pilot Project: student portfolios. Our primary question was how those should be created and assessed.

- The process begins with a letter from the department chair in December to all majors describing the form that our assessment will take. Students will be told that they will be provided by the department with binders which will be distributed to them by their academic advisors.
- Advisees will be responsible for including in that portfolio six pieces of writing. To ensure a sampling over time, we would require that students submit at least one piece of writing from each semester after declaring the major. The advantage to this is that we could assess progress, not just results.
- Faculty in all English classes will be encouraged to remind students to save their best course work for the portfolio.
- Advisors would help students with their progress. The original assessment plan specified including a form to allow the student and advisor to "to review and assess the particular student's progress toward these goals." The student and advisor will meet once near the end of each semester to discuss the student's progress in meeting the above learning objectives and to note the results of their discussion in the portfolio.
- Faculty teaching SYE seminars will provide an additional checkpoint, making work on the final portfolio part of their courses.
- The portfolio will be considered a graduation requirement. Students will turn it in several weeks before the end of the senior spring semester.
- A team of portfolio reviewers will assemble to assess those portfolios. (One suggestion was that the portfolio reviewers be comprised of those department members not serving as readers on honors projects, which would be getting evaluated at the same time.) The evaluation process for the portfolios will be modeled on that used by the FYP. That is, we will meet one day and go through the portfolios together, with two people evaluating each portfolio according to a rubric. In case of substantially different evaluations, a third reader would review the portfolio. We will need to construct a rubric to ensure uniformity.

The department expressed little enthusiasm for the numerical rating of portfolios, and the rubrics (non-numerical) remain a work in progress. Rubric models provided at last summer's portfolio workshop facilitated by Hillory Oakes will be consulted in arriving at our final portfolio assessment tool.

Peter Bailey
Chair and Piskor Professor, English Dept.

Caroline Breashears
Associate Professor, English Dept.

Attachments:

- A-1 Statistical Tabulation of English Major Survey, April, 2007
- A-2 English Major Survey, April, 2007
- A-3 Danner Revision to Survey, currently under discussion

A-1
Statistical Tabulation of English Major Survey, April, 2007

As part of the process of assessing and improving the English major, we're surveying seniors on the quality of their experience with us. Thanks for participating in the survey.

1. When did you declare English as your major? (check one)

- _6_ before my second semester sophomore year
- _12_ in my second semester sophomore year
- _0_ at a later time, to replace another major
- _1_ at a later time, as a second major

2. Why did you declare English as your major? (check one)

- _8_ I came to SLU wanting to study English
- _1_ I was introduced to English through my FYP
- _9_ I was drawn to English by an English course I took at SLU
- _2_ for some other reason

3. What is your major concentration? See Attachment

4. How many courses have counted toward your English major? (check one)

- _3_ Ten (10)
- _9_ Eleven (11) to Twelve (12)
- _6_ More than Twelve (12)

5. Have you participated in an Off-Campus Study program? (check any that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> Denmark | <input type="checkbox"/> _1_ Japan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Austria | <input type="checkbox"/> _7_ England | <input type="checkbox"/> _3_ Kenya |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canada | <input type="checkbox"/> France | <input type="checkbox"/> Spain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China | <input type="checkbox"/> India | <input type="checkbox"/> Trinidad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costa Rica | <input type="checkbox"/> _1_ Italy | <input type="checkbox"/> United States |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Student Exchange Program | <input type="checkbox"/> _1_ Other | |

6. If you checked any, to what extent did your off-campus experience(s) familiarize you with:
(circle one each)

A. literary history?	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	A great extent
Answers:		(3)	(1)	(5)	(3)	(1)	
B. how to interpret texts?	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	A great extent
Answers:		(4)	(0)	(5)	(1)	(2)	
C. an understanding of diversity?	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	A great extent
Answers:		(0)	(0)	(4)	(2)	(6)	

6. To what extent has your overall English major experience familiarized you with: (circle one each)

A. literary history?	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	A great extent
Answers:		(0)	(0)	(4)	(6)	(9)	
B. how to interpret texts?	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	A great extent
Answers:		(0)	(2)	(1)	(3)	(15)	
C. an understanding of diversity?	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	A great extent
Answers:		(0)	(1)	(3)	(10)	(5)	

7. Thinking about your SYE (senior year experience), please indicate your agreement or disagreement on the scale provided. (check one answer per statement)

My SYE:	Strongly		Neutral	Strongly	
	Agree	Agree		Disagree	Disagree
A. was a rewarding experience.	_10_	_7_	_1_	___	___
B. completed a project of which I am proud.	_8_	_7_	___	_1_	_1_
C. turned out to be fun to do.	_8_	_8_	_1_	_1_	___
D. was something on which I wish I had worked harder.	_1_	_7_	_6_	_2_	_4_
E. was not worth the effort.	___	___	_1_	_3_	_11_

8. For each of the following statements please indicate your agreement or disagreement on the scale provided. (check one answer per statement)

My English major has improved:	Strongly		Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
	Agree	Agree			
A. my analytical skills	_7_	_10_	_1_	___	___
B. my writing skills	_8_	_5_	_1_	___	___
C. my speaking skills	_4_	_10_	_5_	_1_	___
D. my understanding of literary history	_6_	_10_	_2_	___	___
E. my ability to interpret texts	_12_	_9_	___	___	___
F. my understanding of diversity	_2_	_13_	_3_	_1_	___
G. my research skills	_3_	_12_	_2_	_1_	___
H. my political awareness	_1_	_5_	_9_	_4_	___
I. my global awareness	_3_	_10_	_4_	_2_	___
J. my critical thinking	_10_	_8_	_1_	___	___

Breakout of #6: What is your major concentration?

Writing	7	
Creative Non-Fiction		3
Fiction Writing	2	
Writing and Environmental Studies		2
British Literature	2	
American Literature	1	
Screenwriting	1	
Non-Fiction	1	

Survey of Graduating English Majors

As part of the process of assessing and improving the English major, we're surveying seniors on the quality of their experience with us. Thanks for participating in the survey.

1. When did you declare English as your major? (check one)

- before my second semester sophomore year
- in my second semester sophomore year
- at a later time, to replace another major, which was _____
- at a later time, as a second major; my other major is _____

2. Why did you declare English as your major? (check one)

- I came to SLU wanting to study English
- I was introduced to English through my FYP
- I was drawn to English by an English course I took at SLU
- for some other reason; please specify the reason: _____

3. What is your major concentration? _____

4. How many courses have counted toward your English major? (check one)

- Ten (10)
- Eleven (11) to Twelve (12)
- More than Twelve (12)

5. Have you participated in an Off-Campus Study program? (check any that apply)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia | <input type="checkbox"/> Denmark | <input type="checkbox"/> Japan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Austria | <input type="checkbox"/> England | <input type="checkbox"/> Kenya |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canada | <input type="checkbox"/> France | <input type="checkbox"/> Spain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China | <input type="checkbox"/> India | <input type="checkbox"/> Trinidad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costa Rica | <input type="checkbox"/> Italy | <input type="checkbox"/> United States |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Student Exchange Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Other**** | |

****Please specify where: _____

If you checked any, to what extent did your off-campus experience(s) familiarize you with:
(circle one each)

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| A. literary history? | Not at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | A great extent |
| B. how to interpret texts? | Not at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | A great extent |
| C. an understanding of diversity? | Not at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | A great extent |

6. To what extent has your overall English major experience familiarized you with: (circle one each)

- A. literary history? Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 A great extent
- B. how to interpret texts? Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 A great extent
- C. an understanding of diversity? Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 A great extent

7. Thinking about your SYE (senior year experience), please indicate your agreement or disagreement on the scale provided. (check one answer per statement)

My SYE:	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
A. was a rewarding experience.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. completed a project of which I am proud.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
C. turned out to be fun to do.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. was something on which I wish I had worked harder.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
E. was not worth the effort.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. For each of the following statements please indicate your agreement or disagreement on the scale provided. (check one answer per statement)

My English major has improved:	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
A. my analytical skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. my writing skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
C. my speaking skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. my understanding of literary history	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
E. my ability to interpret texts	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
F. my understanding of diversity	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
G. my research skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
H. my political awareness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I. my global awareness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
J. my critical thinking	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

9. Please feel free to offer any further comments on the English Department's efforts.

Danner Revision to Survey, currently under discussion

Alternative Survey Questions

Do you see writing as an integral part of your personal and professional future? How has your coursework developed your outlook on writing?

Has your coursework exposed you to a wide range of cultures, authors, and texts? If so, how has exposure to these texts shaped your approach to thinking and writing?

Has your coursework given you greater confidence as a writer? What skills do you feel have contributed most to increasing your confidence in writing?

Is writing a means of personal expression? Has your coursework helped you to define and refine your individual “voice” as a writer?

What area in your English skills do you feel most in need of improvement? Was this aspect challenged enough in your coursework?

If you entered St. Lawrence as a somewhat devoted reader, has your experience in the English major increased the likelihood of your continuing to read literature after graduation? Has it increased or decreased your enthusiasm about reading literature overall?

What advice would you give to an incoming freshman about pursuing a degree and career in English?

Were you able readily to find courses in English to complete the major? Was the variety of courses sufficient for your needs?

Literature

How do you approach interpreting a literary work? To what degree has your exposure to historical periods, genre, literary concepts and theory influenced your approach to interpretation? You may consider specific examples from your portfolio in your response.

Creative Writing

How do you approach the task of creative writing? To what degree has your exposure to literary models, periods, and authors influenced your approach to your own creativity? You may consider specific examples from your portfolio in your response.

Global Studies Department

Global Studies Pilot Assessment Report: December 1, 2007

As we had planned the global studies department decided to test how well students were learning one of the department's goals for its majors. The goal was

Positionality and ethics: Students will engage in a sustained process of self-reflection designed to locate themselves as active members of the global community and recognize the ethical responsibilities that derive from their particular social locations.

As stated in our plan for the pilot project, we picked this goal because it is somewhat unique to our major and something especially critical as students stand poised to leave the university and move out into the world as adults. It is also central to the appropriate exercise of knowledge in our program. IE, if a student is researching a topic like the trafficking in women in Thailand or sweatshops in Indonesia it is crucial that he/she know that the knowledge he/she is consuming and producing is relative to various places of knowing. The "facts" might look very different to the villager seeking a job in a factory and to an American getting a good deal at Walmart. Furthermore with SLU's involvement in the Core Commitments grant project, this particular goal is highly relevant to what may become larger university discussions of personal and social responsibility. As a global studies department we are particularly concerned that students have the knowledge of global processes and inequalities that would provide the ground for their reflections on their own practices in every day life and in scholarship.

Methodology: We used the oral presentations of the students' required senior projects to assess whether and how well they could demonstrate their learning of this goal. Using the rubric below, each member of the department was given a sheet to fill out after each student's presentation, rating with a scale of 1-3 the presence of the criteria in the rubric in the students' presentations. 1 meant "strongly present"; 2 meant "present"; 3 meant "not present." The rubric was as follows,

1. Description of Social, Geographical, Class, Gender, Race, and other relevant attributes of position from which the research and conclusions in the project are drawn.
2. Description of alternative viewpoints, especially those directly involved in and affected by the topic under consideration. Acknowledgement of multiple perspectives within the locality under consideration.
3. Acknowledgement of ethical implications of the methodology used and the conclusions drawn.
4. References to personal changes and developments gained in the process of learning and research for the project and/or to the implications of the research for personal behavior and commitments.

Analysis and Interpretation: We met as a department and discussed our findings on three occasions, once in late summer, once in late September, and once in November. We did not do any kind of quantitative analysis of the results, in part because they were incomplete. I did not receive a full set of scoring sheets from the faculty. We had two visiting faculty out of five in the department last year and the visiting people participated unevenly in the assessment process and then did not hand in the scoring sheets. One regular member of the department was on leave at the time. There were eight 10-minute presentations and two 30-minute presentations, two students having graduated in the fall previously.

What we found in general from the oral presentations was that students did poorly on the first criterion, *“Description of Social, Geographical, Class, Gender, Race, and other relevant attributes of position from which the research and conclusions in the project are drawn”* and on the final one, *“References to personal changes and developments gained in the process of learning and research for the project and/or to the implications of the research for personal behavior and commitments.”* They did very well on the second one, *“Description of alternative viewpoints, especially those directly involved in and affected by the topic under consideration. Acknowledgement of multiple perspectives within the locality under consideration.”* And they showed some references to the third, *“Acknowledgement of ethical implications of the methodology used and the conclusions drawn.”*

We did not do any analysis of the written theses.

In our first discussion we simply went over the scoring sheets and our own impressions in order to gather a consensus on what we actually observed during the presentations, coming to the conclusions noted above. We all realized that although the concepts of positionality and situated knowledge are taught in GS 102 and Research Methods, GS 290, when we are supervising individual projects we are not sufficiently emphasizing the learning goals.

At our next discussion we probed further into why the students are not sufficiently demonstrating self-reflexiveness and personal reflections on their own ethical commitments in their presentations. We concluded that such personal reflection runs counter to standard academic practice and that students have to overcome much of what they have been taught about objectivity and neutrality in order to meet this goal. We all talked about how difficult it is for us to do this in our own writing.

In our most recent recapitulation of the results and discussion of where to go from here, we reaffirmed our commitment to the goal and talked about how to help students achieve it in the future. Our first recognition was that our increased awareness of this goal through the pilot assessment process is causing us to emphasize it more in all our classes. We are now paying considerable attention in each of the five core courses to the GS learning goals, and building outcomes assessment of them into our course papers and exams. In GS 302 the students are consistently critiquing readings in relation to how they demonstrate or ignore the positionality of the researcher.

We especially realized that we need to emphasize the learning goals as we organize the senior projects with our students.

Assessment of the Pilot Project

We received extremely useful information from the pilot project. It would have been more systematic had everyone done the scoring sheets and had 2/5 of the faculty not been visitors. It would have been better to have looked at the written papers as well as the oral presentations. We realized that in 10 minutes students might omit important features of the written paper. We decided that we would probably try to assess all the learning goals the next time around.

Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics Department

Patti Frazer Lock, Chair

December 1, 2007

The pilot assessment project turned in by our department as requested last March 1st contained two parts: the first involved assessing the goal “Be able to construct a valid argument” while the second involved assessing the goal “Be an effective oral presenter.” While the assessment plan submitted at that time followed the guidelines and was endorsed by the Assessment Committee, there was not a great deal of enthusiasm for it within the department. As we prepared to implement the pilot projects described in that report, the lack of enthusiasm increased even further. In the meantime, we hired two new tenure-track faculty members in our department and it was obvious that both would bring a great deal to the table in conversations about program and learning goals assessment. For all of these reasons, we decided at the start of this year (in September) to take a step back and look at program assessment more broadly. We wanted to think creatively about the most effective way for us to move forward in our goal to accurately assess the learning in our department.

We started the conversation this year by having a broad discussion on how we envision most effectively assessing our program long-term. We developed a multi-stage plan, detailed below. Rather than assessing individual learning goals at this stage, it made sense to us to begin by developing a clearer picture of our current practices. Our hope is that this will enable us to ask the right questions as we move forward. This thinking is informed by reading some of the papers provided by the “Supporting Assessment in Undergraduate Mathematics” project supported by the Mathematics Association of America. (See <http://www.maa.org/saum/cases/welcome.html>.)

We are still in the initial stages in thinking about assessment and the plan detailed below is a dynamic plan that will change as our understanding deepens and as our knowledge expands. Nonetheless, it will give you a sense of our current thinking. We believe it is an ambitious plan.

Stage 1: Develop a faculty questionnaire to be completed by the faculty members in the department. The questionnaire is designed to obtain some information about what we are currently doing in our classes to address certain aspects of our departmental learning goals. In particular, we are gathering information on writing, oral presentations, collaboration, and multiple forms of technology use. A copy of the questionnaire is attached.

Timeline: The questionnaire has been finalized and the data has been collected. We are in the process of analyzing the results, and these results will form the basis of a departmental discussion either late this semester or early next semester.

Stage 2: Design a questionnaire to be given each year to all senior majors. There will probably be at least two different questionnaires: one for math and one for CS, with many overlap questions. The results of the faculty questionnaire described in Stage 1 will inform the design of this questionnaire.

Timeline: We hope to design the survey during the Spring semester and administer it for the first time in May 2008 to majors in the current senior class.

Stage 3: We believe that the SYE is a very integral part of our learning goals assessment. We have just this year moved to a required SYE of all senior math majors. (An SYE has always been required

of all CS majors.) We are discussing a plan to hold a departmental retreat in May to have a broad discussion about the Senior Year Experiences we offer our students, and to talk about how to make the experience even more valuable for the students and how to enable us to use the SYE as a better assessment tool for program assessment and learning goals assessment.

Timeline: Retreat is tentatively scheduled for May 2008.

Stage 4: After completing the faculty questionnaire and the senior exit survey, we hope to design a survey instrument to send to our alumni majors who are perhaps 2 – 4 years out. We feel that this is an additional critical piece of the puzzle that will inform our discussions about how to make our program even better.

Timeline: Possibly design the survey instrument next year.

Step 5: Our Math 280 course titled A Bridge to Higher Mathematics is a required course for all math and CS majors. It is a key course in the development of our students, and is a course that tries to balance content and process. We have talked about having a retreat to talk in some depth about this course and how it currently fits in with our learning goals and other ways that it might possibly fit in with our learning goals and our aspirations for the department.

Timeline: Not yet scheduled.

Further thoughts:

1. Other than through surveys, we have not yet talked in any substantive way as a department about how to engage students in this process of program assessment. The department will likely discuss this question at a future meeting. For example, might we routinely share the department learning goals document with our students in Math 280?
2. Our assessment discussions thus far have centered primarily on our departmental majors. Our learning goals document, however, explicitly also addresses our 100-level service courses. Future department assessment conversations are likely to focus on assessing the effectiveness of our introductory and service courses in the department.

APPENDIX: Faculty Questionnaire. See next page.

Questionnaire for Department Faculty
Dept of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics

In the top row of the table below, please list courses you have taught in the last 3 years. (Use a second page if you have taught more than seven different courses in the department in the last three years.) Please turn in by the end of the day Friday, November 16, 2007.

Fill out the table as described here:

1. Presentations: “Formal” presentations are those in which the student knows he or she will be presenting specific material and is expected to prepare in advance. “Informal” refers to any other time when a student is at the front of the room presenting material to the class. In the space provided below, list the number of presentations of that type that a student in the class is graded on during the semester.

2. Written assignments: “Investigative reports” refer to relatively long papers where the student does some research on a topic. “Descriptive reports” are papers where a student describes something (such as data analysis projects) but where library research is not expected. “Essays” are short graded essays. “Other graded writing assignments” refers to any other work collected in which the students are required to use complete sentences, such as proofs or program descriptions. List the number of writing assignments of that type that a student in the class is graded on during the semester.

3. Collaboration: Say Yes or No to each.

4. Software use: Indicate Req. (required), All. (allowed), or No (Student use not a part of the class.)

5. Student access to materials: Means relevant items are available to the student outside of class through the t:drive, Angel, or a webpage. Please indicate which of these three you use or say No.

Name: _____

1.a. Formal oral presentations							
b. Informal oral presentations							
2.a. Investigative reports							
b. Descriptive reports							
c. Other graded writing assignments							
3.a. Collaboration required out of class							
b. Collaboration required in class							
c. Collaboration actively encouraged							
4. a. Scientific word processing							
b. Statistics software							
c. CAS math software							
d. CS software							
e. Graphing calculators							
5. Student access to materials							

Add any additional comments here or on the back:

Performance & Communication Arts

TO: Valerie Lehr, Dean of Academic Affairs
 Kim Mooney, Chair of Assessment Committee
FROM: Kirk W. Fuoss
RE: PCA Assessment Committee
DATE: 7 January 2008

I. Description of PCA Assessment Project

Mapping the Learning Goals onto the Department's Curriculum

Departmental faculty completed a rubric for each departmental course they taught between the fall of 03 and the spring of 07. More specifically, the rubric asked them to rate the extent to which the course provided opportunities for students to work on the department's twelve learning goals (0 = "not at all," 1 = "very little," 2 = "somewhat," and 3 = "quite a bit"). When more than one faculty member taught the same course, their scores were averaged to arrive at a single raw score for each learning goal in each course. These scores were then used to map the learning goals onto the curriculum more broadly, noting the extent to which introductory and advanced courses in each of the department's two tracks (as well as the departmental curriculum as a whole) afforded students opportunities to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Intro Rhetoric/Communication Studies Courses					
	111	126	127	221	Total
meaning attribution	2	3	2	3	10
creative prob-solving	2	1	2	3	8
creative expression	2.5	2	1.5	2	8
inquiry/research	2	1	1.5	3	7.5
situated knowledge	1	1	3	3	8
analyze/adapt to aud.	3	2	1.5	3	9.5
solo project	3	2	2	3	10
collab. w/ others	2	2	3	1	8
assess others' work	2	2	1	3	8
assess own work	2	1	2.5	2	7.5
ethics of others	1.5	2	2	3	8.5
own ethics	1.5	0	2	3	6.5

Advanced Rhetoric/Communication Studies Courses											
	211	216	222	313 .1	313 .2	315	322	329	331	430	Total
meaning attribution	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	26
creative prob-solving	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	2.5	21.5
creative expression	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	1	2.5	24.5
inquiry/research	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	2	3	3	25
situated knowledge	2	1	3	3	3	3	2	1	0	2.5	19.5
analyze/adapt to aud.	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	2	2.5	22.5
solo project	2	3	1	3	1	1	0	2	2	3	18
collab. w/ others	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	.5	20.5
assess others' work	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	16
assess own work	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	2	15
ethics of others	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	.5	19.5
own ethics	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	0	0	1	16

313.1 Rhetoric in Popular Culture
 313.2 Sex Talk

All Rhetoric Communication Studies Courses				
	Introductory Courses	Advanced Courses	Total	Rank
meaning attribution	10	26	36	1
creative prob-solving	8	21.5	29.5	4
creative expression	8	24.5	32.5	2
inquiry/research	7.5	25	32.5	2
situated knowledge	8	19.5	27.5	9
analyze/adapt to aud.	9.5	22.5	29.5	4
solo project	10	18	28	7
collab. w/ others	8	20.5	28.5	6
assess others' work	8	16	24	10
assess own work	7.5	15	22.5	11
ethics of others	8.5	19.5	28	7
own ethics	6.5	16	22.5	11

Introductory Theatre/Performance Studies Courses									
	100	103	107	113	125	215	223	255	Total
meaning attribution	0	0	2	3	3	3	3	3	17
creative prob-solving	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	21
creative expression	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	21
inquiry/research	3	2	1.5	1	3	3	2	3	18.5
situated knowledge	1	1	.5	0	2	2	0	3	9.5
analyze/adapt to aud.	3	2	1.5	1	2	2	2	2	15.5
solo project	0	0	2.5	3	3	3	3	0	14.5
collab. w/ others	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	1	20
assess others' work	2	0	2.5	3	2	2	3	0	14.5
assess own work	2	1	3	2	1	1	3	1	14
ethics of others	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	5
own ethics	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	4

Advanced Theatre/Performance Studies Courses																			
	200	203	207	209	213	309	312	312	313	313	313	313	322	323	327	333	355	430	Total
LG1	0	0	2	2	0	3	3	3	1	3	2	.5	3	3	3	3	3	3	37.5
LG2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2.5	2	1	1	1	0	2.5	43
LG3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	0	2.5	43.5
LG4	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	1.5	1	0	1	3	3	3	3	3	38.5
LG5	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	2	3	3	3	3	2.5	28.5
LG6	3	2	2	2	3	2.5	3	2	3	2	2	1.5	1	0	1	0	0	2.5	32.5
LG7	0	2	3	3	0	2.5	0	2	0	3	2	2.5	0	0	0	0	2	3	25
LG8	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2.5	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	.5	42
LG9	2	0	3	3	2	3	3	0	3	2	2	2.5	1	1	2	1	0	2	32.5
LG 10	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	0	3	1.5	2	1.5	2	2	1	2	1	2	36
LG 11	0	2	1	1	0	1.5	2	0	2	2.5	1	.5	1	0	0	0	3	.5	18
LG 12	0	2	1	1	0	1.5	2	0	2	1.5	1	.5	2	0	0	0	0	1	15.5

- 213.1 Intro to Jazz Dance
- 312.1 Devising Scripts
- 312.2 August Wilson & the Blues
- 313.1 Children's Theatre in the Schools
- 313.2 Performance Art: History & Practice
- 313.3 Performing Poetry
- 313.4 Spectacles in the Making

All Theatre/Performance Studies Courses				
	Introductory Courses	Advanced Courses	Total	Rank
meaning attribution	17	37.5	54.5	4
creative prob-solving	21	43	64	2
creative expression	21	43.5	64.5	1
inquiry/research	18.5	38.5	39.5	8
situated knowledge	9.5	28.5	38	10
analyze/adapt to aud.	15.5	32.5	48	6
solo project	14.5	25	39.5	8
collab. w/ others	20	42	62	3
assess others' work	14.5	32.5	47	7
assess own work	14	36	50	5
ethics of others	5	18	23	11
own ethics	4	15.5	19.5	12

	Rhet/Comm St		Th/Perf St.		All Courses	
	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank
meaning attribution	36	1	54.5	4	90.5	3
creative prob-solving	29.5	4	64	2	93.5	2
creative expression	32.5	2	64.5	1	97	1
inquiry/research	32.5	2	39.5	8	72	7
situated knowledge	27.5	9	38	10	65.5	10
analyze/adapt to aud.	29.5	4	48	6	77.5	5
solo project	28	7	39.5	8	67.5	9
collab. w/ others	28.5	6	62	3	90.5	3
assess others' work	24	10	47	7	71	8
assess own work	22.5	11	50	5	72.5	6
ethics of others	28	7	23	11	51	11
own ethics	22.5	11	19.5	12	42	12

While the mapping process yielded total scores for each learning goal, because the number of courses in each category (e.g., intro rhetoric/ communication studies, intro theatre/performance studies) differed, the total score was ultimately less important than the ranking of the various learning goals. Put differently, the mapping project revealed the extent to which the different components of our curriculum emphasize the various learning goals. However, because no student takes all departmental courses or even all offerings within a particular curricular category, we also undertook a second mapping exercise--namely, mapping the learning goals onto the actual educational experiences of the sixteen majors who graduated in the spring of 07.

Mapping the Learning Goals onto the Educational Experiences of 07 Graduates

A chart was created for each graduating major that listed the departmental courses taken in the order in which they were taken and that drew on the scores from the learning goals rubric the faculty had completed. Two caveats are in order. First, the rubric forms were completed only by members of the PCA department. Accordingly, we do not have learning goals scores for courses in the major that were cross/dual-listed with other departments or were taken as part of the London Program. Additionally, rubrics were not completed for PCA 101 (Production Credit), for PCA 480 (Independent Projects), or PCA 489/90 (Sr. Projects). Second, the rubric scores represent an indirect form of assessment. They provide a snapshot of the extent to which courses provided opportunities for students to *work on* each learning goal, not the extent to which the student actually *accomplished* these learning goals. The following is an example of a chart completed for one graduating major.

Marc Amigone

other courses: 490 (Sr. Project)

	215	107	111	127	216	313 .3	329	313 .4	Total	Rank
meaning attribution	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	.5	15.5	6
creative prob-solving	3	3	2	2	2	3	1	2.5	18.5	4
creative expression	3	3	2.5	1.5	3	3	1	3	20	1
inquiry/research	3	1.5	2	1.5	2	1	2	0	13	8
situated knowledge	2	.5	1	3	1	1	1	0	9.5	11
analyze/adapt to aud.	2	1.5	3	1.5	2	2	1	1.5	14.5	7
solo project	3	2.5	3	2	3	2	2	2.5	20	1
collab. w/ others	3	3	2	3	2	2	1	3	19	3
assess others' work	2	2.5	2	1	2	2	2	2.5	16	5
assess own work	1	3	2	2.5	1	2	0	1.5	13	8
ethics of others	0	1	1.5	2	2	1	3	.5	11	10
own ethics	0	1	1.5	2	2	1	0	.5	8	12

After completing charts like this for each graduating major, these results were then utilized to create a snapshot for all graduating majors. The rows represent the learning goals, and the columns represent each individual graduating major. (The letters at the top of each column are students' initials.)

	MA	BB	EC	AC	AF	SG	FJ	AL	AM	ER	MH	TH	YM	MP	SP	MS	Total	Rank
LG1	15.5	18	9	19	13	15	15	23	15.5	22.5	20	26.5	23	24	23	20	302	6
LG2	18.5	26	17	16	18	23	18	25	17.5	30.5	16.5	26	25.5	27.5	25.5	19.5	350	2
LG3	20	24	16	18	17.5	21.5	19	26.5	17	28.5	18.5	26	25.5	27	25.5	20.5	351	1
LG4	13	21.5	15.5	13.5	12.5	16.5	15.5	19.5	14	21	18.5	24	24	31	24.5	19.5	304	4
LG5	9.5	12.5	9	7.5	10.5	10.5	15	8.5	12.5	15.5	16.5	23.5	21	20.5	17	15.5	225	10
LG6	14.5	19.5	16.5	12.5	13	16.5	15.5	22	15.5	24	20	22.5	24.5	26.5	22	19	304	4
LG7	20	17.5	9	13.5	14.5	16	11	19	17	19.5	19	21.5	21.5	21	15	19	274	7
LG8	19	25	18	18	19.5	23.5	18	25	18	30	20	25	22.5	26.5	22.5	19.5	350	2
LG9	16	15.5	12	17.5	9.5	15.5	7	21.5	14	22	15	19.5	18.5	15	16.5	15	250	9
LG10	13	17	12.5	14	12	17	13.5	23	14	24	13.5	20.5	20.5	21	18	12.5	266	8
LG11	11	13	9.5	6	10.5	9	13.5	14	10	16	15	17.5	17	14	11.5	14	201.5	11
LG12	8	8	6.5	6	9.5	8	12.5	11	10	16	13.5	14	17.5	9.5	9	9.5	168.5	12

	Total	Rank
meaning attribution	302	6
creative prob-solving	350	2
creative expression	351	1
inquiry/research	304	4
situated knowledge	225	10
analyze/adapt to aud.	304	4
solo project	274	7
collab. w/ others	350	2
assess others' work	250	9
assess own work	266	8
ethics of others	201.5	11
own ethics	168.5	12

	All Rhetoric/Communication Studies Courses		All Theatre/Performance Studies Courses		All Departmental Courses		Composite Based on Courses Taken by 2007 Graduates	
	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank	Total	Rank
meaning attribution	36	1	54.5	4	90.5	3	302	6
creative prob-solving	29.5	4	64	2	93.5	2	350	2
creative expression	32.5	2	64.5	1	97	1	351	1
inquiry/research	32.5	2	39.5	8	72	7	304	4
situated knowledge	27.5	9	38	10	65.5	10	225	10
analyze/adapt to aud.	29.5	4	48	6	77.5	5	304	4
solo project	28	7	39.5	8	67.5	9	274	7
collab. w/ others	28.5	6	62	3	90.5	3	350	2
assess others' work	24	10	47	7	71	8	250	9
assess own work	22.5	11	50	5	72.5	6	266	8
ethics of others	28	7	23	11	51	11	201.5	11
own ethics	22.5	11	19.5	12	42	12	168.5	12

II. Findings and Implications of these Results

Because this project was not completed until after the fall semester ended, the department has not yet had a chance to reflect on the results collectively and determine what curricular changes (if any) are warranted by the results. I will, however, highlight four findings that surprised me and that I hope the department will want to consider more fully.

First, I was struck by the discrepancy between the ranking of research/inquiry in the rhetoric/ communication studies courses and theatre/performance studies courses. While research/inquiry ranked as the second most important learning goal for rhetoric/communication studies courses, it ranked eighth in theatre/performance studies courses.

Second, I have always considered us to be a department that stresses empathy and the ability to view situations from multiple perspectives, especially the perspectives of others. Accordingly, I was somewhat shocked that “understanding knowledge as situated as shaped by structures of power” ranked as low as it did. While the ability to empathize/view situations from multiple perspectives and “understanding knowledge as situated” are not identical, they are not unrelated either.

Third, I was struck by the relatively low rankings across the board of assessing one’s own and others’ work. While these skills are rated as slightly more important in theatre/performance studies courses (5th and 7th respectively) than in rhetoric/communication studies courses (10th and 11th), the eighth and ninth place ranking of these skills in the composite based on the actual coursework of all 2007 graduates struck me as contrary to my own sense of the emphasis our department places on these skills.

Fourth, I was taken aback by the low rankings associated with “the ability to analyze and evaluate the ethical implications of one’s own and others’ communicative behaviors/performances.” While the ability to analyze and evaluate the ethical implications of others’ behaviors ranked slightly higher in rhetoric/communication studies courses as a whole, this did not translate into any higher rankings of these learning goals in the composite based on the actual course experiences of our graduating seniors. Apart from shock over how low analyzing one’s own and others’ ethics ranked, I was also shocked (and saddened) that assessing one’s own ethics ranked even lower than assessing the ethics of others.

III. Next Steps

As noted above, the department still needs to reflect collectively on the results of this pilot project and, on the basis of this reflection, determine what concrete steps (if any) need to be taken. Regardless of the outcome of these conversations, however, when the department undertakes its next assessment project, it strikes me as imperative that we include direct assessment measures as well as indirect. One possible step would be to collect all final papers associated with this year's senior projects, as well as the final research papers of students in this year's senior seminar, and to create a rubric to score the extent to which these papers demonstrate competence regarding the department's twelve learning goals. Such a project would help us to place the findings of the current assessment project in a clearer context. After all, it is possible that our students are adept at even those skills that ranked lowest in the current project. On the flipside, it is also possible that are students are "lacking" even in those skills areas that this pilot project suggests we currently emphasize most.

Psychology Department

Part I: The Assessment of Learning Goals

What learning goal(s) did your project assess?

One of our educational objectives is for psychology majors to acquire information about how relevant topics can be understood from multiple perspectives, and to communicate this understanding along with adequate depth and relevance of knowledge for the particular topic.

What did you do to assess the goal?

We implemented a pilot project, largely to assess the adequacy of a scoring rubric that was developed to assess students' essays. Seven senior majors were given a choice of topics and 30 minutes to write an essay. One faculty member completed the task, too, and given a 15-min time limit. They were instructed to use two different perspectives (e.g., biological, cognitive, or social, among others) and were aware that the essays would also be scored on depth and relevance of knowledge. Four psychology faculty members (blind to the authorship of the work) independently judged the essays, using 5-point Likert Scales, on each of the three dimensions: multiple perspectives, depth, and relevance.

Briefly summarize your findings.

We worked at a 95% confidence level in our statistical tests. The ratings from the four judges were first assessed with correlational techniques, and ratings from one of the judges were discarded because of significant negative correlations with each of the other three judges. Essay ratings from the remaining three judges were then examined with analyses of variance which revealed that the judges reliably detected differences among the eight essays on each of the three rating scales, relative to the rater x essay interaction variance which served as the error term. Next, a two-way scales x essays analysis, with raters as cases, again showed the significant effect of essays, but there was no significant differences among the three scales nor was there a significant scale by essay interaction. These findings provide no reliable evidence to suggest that essays which were strong on one scale were weak on another. In other words, essay scores on the three scales were significantly and highly correlated in a positive direction.

What are the implications of your findings for your department or program's teaching and curriculum?

The psychology department appears to have a reliable measuring instrument with which to assess the strength of extemporaneous student essays in the discipline. Strength on the essay task reflects the use of relevant disciplinary content from multiple perspectives.

Part II. The Assessment of the Pilot Project

Briefly assess the methods of assessment you used and the extent to which these yielded useful information.

The assessment methods look good. The rating scales are significantly more sensitive to essay quality than to random variation from differences in evaluation among faculty. The implication is that the essay task has the potential to yield useful information about the value-added contribution of psychology courses to the student's ability to analyze a topic with multiple perspectives, including deep and relevant knowledge. The department will collect follow-up data over the next few weeks.

How will what you learned in this round of assessment impact what you plan to assess next and the methods you will use to carry out this work?

Once certain that the present assessment technique is effective, we can then move toward the development of additional techniques with which to assess the other educational goals of the psychology department. The assessment of various aspects of information literacy provides several possibilities.

Second, a straightforward method to validate assessment tasks and scores on dimensions such as depth and multiple perspectives has emerged in our thinking. One can simply vary task instructions, for example, by asking students to analyze a topic either deeply or with multiple perspectives, and then look for corresponding variation on the judge's rating scales.

We have included two Appendixes: copies of the rating scales and the essay instruction sheet for the pilot assessment described above.

Appendix 1

Multiple Perspectives on Psychological Topics

One aim of our Psychology Department is to emphasize the importance for students to be able to see things from multiple perspectives. One example might be when a student learns about a similar topic in two different courses. Another example comes from introductory psychology textbooks when they discuss various approaches to psychology, including psychoanalysis, behavior theory, neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and social approaches.

In order to assess how well the department is meeting this aim, you and a number of your fellow students are being invited to demonstrate how well you can take two different perspectives in a 30 - minute essay on one of the following topics.

At least three members of the psychology faculty will read and rate your essay in terms of multiple perspectives, as well as its depth and relevance of knowledge.

Please word-process a 30-min essay related to one of the following topics. Then, email your essay to me as an attachment at rsigmundi@stlawu.edu. I will remove your name and then share the essay with other instructors.

Sincerely,
Ronald A. Sigmundi, on behalf of the Curriculum Committee

Choice of Topics

1. Hunger and eating
2. Depression
3. Advertising
4. Aggression
5. Abnormal behavior
6. Psychological therapies
7. Cognition and information processing
8. Emotions
9. Consciousness
10. Drug dependence
11. Motivation

