Introduction

As part of program review, the Cascadia learning outcome “Interact” was assessed at the distribution area level in order to inform curricular planning and growth in that area. This was part of a four-year cycle in which all four learning outcomes will be assessed. In fall 2010 faculty formed assessment groups based on general education/core and discipline distribution areas. These groups discussed the results from the summer 2010 outcomes assessment project and made plans to address the recommendations from that project. Timelines were also created for the 2010/2011 assessment cycle. During fall and winter quarters the groups completed work on the learning outcomes that begun in 2009/2010. Groups reviewed all of the learning outcomes at the distribution area level, and revised or created these outcomes as needed. Each group created a rubric for the “Interact” outcome, and developed/chose key performances and assignments to be assessed. During spring of 2011 faculty collected key performances across a wide variety of courses and made them available to the Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC). In summer 2011, an interdisciplinary faculty group gathered to finalize the rubrics, evaluate the key performances and assignments, and make recommendations for changes to curriculum, support structures, and the outcomes assessment process.

Methods

Seven sets of student work were collected during spring quarter, one from each of the GE/Core and discipline distribution areas (see Table 1). For each set, a pair of faculty then worked together to normalize use of the rubric to evaluate the key performances. Copies of the rubrics are available on my.cascadia.

In general, the pieces of student work were selected randomly from the set collected for each area. For each set, both faculty members rated the selected assignments according to the rubric, then discussed their ratings, and made adjustments as needed to gain a reasonable level of consensus. Each rubric used a scale of 0-3 and contained 3-5 criteria. Each rubric used the following scale to rate the criteria: 0 = Absent, 1 = Emerging, 2 = Developed, 3 = Sophisticated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution Area</th>
<th>Reviewers</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Courses Sampled</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed/Core: Foundations for College Success</td>
<td>Catherine Crain, Leslie Bussert and Jessica Ketcham Weber</td>
<td>Group project, most with individual reflection</td>
<td>COLL 101</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed/Core: Communicating andThinking Critically</td>
<td>Jessica Ketcham Weber and Natalie Serianni</td>
<td>Peer review assessments</td>
<td>ENGL&amp; 101 and ENGL&amp; 102</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed/Core: Quantitative or Symbolic Reasoning</td>
<td>Steve Yramategui and Karyn Mlodnosky</td>
<td>Reflections, exams and projects</td>
<td>MATH&amp; 107, MATH&amp; 141, MATH&amp; 142, MATH&amp; 146, MATH&amp; 147, MATH&amp; 148, MATH&amp; 151, MATH&amp; 152, MATH&amp; 163, MATH&amp; 173 and MATH&amp; 264</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Ed/Core: Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Tori Saneda and Li Liu</td>
<td>Various, including posters, discussion, essays, critical reviews, projects and essay exams</td>
<td>CMST 150, CMST 203, ENGL 221, GS 150, HIST&amp; 126, HIST&amp; 127, HIST&amp; 128, HIST&amp; 146, HIST&amp; 147, HIST&amp; 148, HUMAN 150, PSYC 251, SOC 150 and SOC 151</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Louise Spiegler and Paul Glezen</td>
<td>Various, including reflections, discussions, papers, PowerPoints, presentations and exams</td>
<td>ASL 122, CMST 150, CMST 203, CMST 220, ENGL&amp; 245, ENGL 274, GS 150, HIST&amp; 126, HIST&amp; 127, HIST&amp; 128, HIST&amp; 146, HIST&amp; 147, HIST&amp; 148, MUSC 130, MUSC 150 and PHIL 267</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Lindsay Custer and Louise Spiegler</td>
<td>Various, including team evaluations, papers, projects and posters</td>
<td>ANTH&amp; 206, EDUC&amp; 202, POLS&amp; 204, POLS 205, PSYC&amp; 100, PSYC&amp; 180, PSYC&amp; 220 and SOC 150</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>Karyn Mlodnosky and Seve Yrametegui</td>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>BIOL&amp; 213, CHEM&amp; 121, CHEM&amp; 131, CHEM&amp; 139, CHEM&amp; 162, CHEM&amp; 163, CHEM&amp; 243, ENVS 150, ENVS 210 and GEOL&amp; 101</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Observations and Recommendations

Each pair recorded observations during the analysis of the student work and made recommendations for action in the areas of curriculum, support structures and the outcomes assessment process in a distribution area worksheet/report. As these results were discussed in the larger group, common threads emerged, as well as area-specific concerns. The observations and recommendations below were compiled from these worksheets, as well as from the larger group discussions. The distribution area worksheets are available on my.cascadia. Please refer to these for greater detail in specific areas.

Observations of Student Competency and Outcomes Assessment Process

**Gen Ed – Foundations for College Success:**
- Most students fell between 1 (Emerging) and 2 (Developed), which seems appropriate for students at this level.
- A rating of 0 (Absent) was rarely given because it seemed to stark.
- There was a lot of variation among sections, probably based on how explicitly the assignment asked students to reflect on their role in the group, their learning and the collaborative process.
- Some assignments did not ask for reflections and some groups did not have complete sets of individual reflections. Students scored better if instructors had asked them to think about their own learning and role in the group.
- Average scores for sections were 1.71, 1.57 and 1.33.

**Gen Ed – Communicating and Thinking Critically:**
- It was difficult to distinguish between 2 (developed) and 3 (sophisticated).
- The third criterion – “recognizes conflict as a necessary part of discourse and respects individual ways of arriving at answers while critically analyzing models and ways of thinking” was particularly difficult to assess because conflict was not always present or visible in the key assessment.
- Course, distribution and college-wide outcomes were all found to be well aligned.
- Peer reviews, which are common in composition courses, varied widely across sections. Those with simple yes/no type questions used to evaluate a peer’s paper were unassessable because they only provide a window into one side of the interaction.
- The average ranking for 101 students was 1.71, and the average ranking for 102 students was 1.64, both above 1 (emerging) but not yet to 2 (developed). This may be a reflection of the key assessment and varied assignments and not necessarily of student performance.
- Weaknesses seemed similar across the board: students were able to synthesize but not always evaluate how they wrote about and enacted interaction, not could they always make meaning about interaction in larger contexts outside the classroom.

**Gen Ed – Quantitative Reasoning:**
- We were not able to evaluate all student work submitted. In some cases there were no names associated with the student work and in other cases the work collected didn’t address the criteria of the rubric.
- For some assignments, only part of the rubric could be used to assess the student work. In these cases, the student received a 0 (absent) for that part of the rubric because the readers were not able to evaluate it. However, the outcome might very well have been met, but it was not possible to quantify from the assignment collected.
Overall, the 4-point scale used worked well for QR. It was reasonable to distinguish between the different ratings.

For those courses that used the reflection assignment provided by the OAC lead for QR, some students were able to provide feedback that allowed the readers to assess the outcome, while others were not. In many cases, instructors that used other reflections or assignments did not provide assignments that were acceptable for use in assessing the outcome.

*Gen Ed – Cultural Knowledge:*

- Some faculty provided explicit instructions that would lead students to meet the CKR “Interact” outcome, while other faculty did not. In assignments where students were specifically asked to examine CKR themes, there was more consistency in the articulation of the CKR “Interact” outcome – students were more prepared to identify connections between cultural difference and social inequities.
- The first two criteria on the rubric are too similar. For the most part, the score the student received on the first criterion determined what they received on the second criterion.
- The CKR “Interact” outcome is not clearly present in the course description, content and/or course “Interact” outcomes in many of the CKR courses.
- Overall, the percentages of students receiving each rating were as follows: 0 (Absent) = 28%, 1 (Emerging) = 45%, 2 (Developed) = 22% and 3 (Sophisticated) = 4%. These results were as expected for one reader, but the other reader expected a higher percentage of students to fall into the developed range. For students in the 150s courses, which were specifically designed to introduce students to concepts of social inequities, these higher expectations were surpassed.

*Humanities:*

- Student competency was fairly consistent within classes, so that in most cases a certain assignment seemed to elicit either low or high competency nearly across the board.
- Student achievement was highest for the first criterion – which assesses how well the students were able to be aware of “…diverse and complex viewpoints and interpretations.” Students were more challenged by the second criterion “Awareness of their own perspective as they engage with the perspectives of others”. The outcome was clearly met for these two criteria, with most students at the emerging or developed level.
- The third criterion - “They have taken responsibility to interact with others to further learning in the classroom and in group work” was often hard to ascertain. It was hard to rate group work unless individual work was clearly shown – as in a discussion board or a self-evaluation of learning in a group.

*Social Science:*

- The average scores for the second dimension – “Demonstrates an understanding of ethical standards and professionalism in the social sciences” is noticeably lower than the other dimensions. Additionally, the average score the the third dimension – “Reflects on how their own attitudes and beliefs are different from those of others” is below the emerging level. The other three dimensions have averages slightly above the emerging level. However, the averages are quite low for some individual courses.
- Most assignments do not address all dimensions of the outcome, indicating the importance of collecting a variety of types of student work.
- Low ratings in some cases may be due to the brief nature of the assignment.
There is some difficulty in assessing group work around the first and fifth dimensions. Some team members may be very affective while others are not. This isn’t really captured when we are assessing team projects and looking at individual evaluations.

Perhaps as an artifact of the types of assignments submitted, or the strong emphasis on group work at Cascadia, the students were strongest around the dimensions of the outcome focused on collaborative skills. Students do not show evidence of receiving training on following appropriate social science standards regarding interacting with the community (either in the capacity of data collection or service learning, both key interactions in social science).

**Natural Science:**

- The rubric was reasonably effective. The rating scale mostly worked well for us, however there were no cases where we used the rating of 3 (sophisticated).
- Students scored highest (just above the emerging level) on the first and third criteria: “Demonstrates responsible and effective group interactions.” And “Extrapolates understanding to their interaction with the natural world.” They scored lowest (well below emerging) on the fourth criterion – “Evaluates scientific concepts within a global context.” However, scores varied widely from assignment to assignment, as many of the assignments did not address all dimensions of the outcome.
- In general, students scored higher when the assignment specifically asked them to address the outcome. The readers also had more confidence in the results when the students were asked to provide more in-depth reflection on learning and interaction.

**Recommendations**

**Outcomes:**

- Several distribution areas, Communicating and Thinking Critically, Cultural Knowledge, Humanities and Social Science need to review and possibly revise their distribution area level outcome for “Interact”.
- The bullet points listed in the catalogue for the college-wide outcomes should be evaluated and revised as needed to ensure that they are clear, active and measurable.
- Program level outcomes need to be written if we are to be able to evaluate the distribution area outcomes in terms of individual programs.
- Course level outcomes need to be reviewed, and revised as needed, in order to be aligned with the revised distribution area level outcomes. This could be done during the five-year COG reviews, or could be done sooner. A plan needs to be made for this, since there are a large number of COGs involved.

**Key Performances/Assignments:**

- In all areas the key performances or assignments were not generally well aligned with the rubrics. The rubrics will be given to the faculty that are collecting student work ahead of time to allow those faculty to make better choices of assignments to collect. Faculty will be asked to indicate how each criterion of the rubric is represented in the assignment to help ensure that instructors are selecting/creating assignments that clearly represent the selected outcome.
Broad Issues:

- More clarity needs to be achieved in terms of what the goals are for the results obtained from the outcomes assessment. Expectations should be determined by the faculty work groups and if possible should include differentiation between the 100- and 200-level courses.
- Professional development activities need to be provided for faculty, such as workshops that ask instructors to reflect on learning outcomes and draw explicit connections between these outcomes, their assignments and the curriculum. Workshops should focus on specific tools and best practices, rather than theory. Instructors should share assignments they feel meet specific outcomes well.
- Associate faculty need to be funded to attend multiple discipline meetings throughout the year so that they can be effectively involved in the outcomes assessment process.
- We should develop more effective ways to assess posters, presentations and discussions.
- The rubric rating scale should be evaluated and revised if needed. For example, it should be determined if it’s important to distinguish between work that did not meet certain criteria because the student did not address those criteria and work that didn’t meet the criteria because it wasn’t addressed in the assignment.
- All faculty members should be required to provide student work for outcomes assessment. This will require changes to the collective bargaining agreement.

Area-Specific Issues:

Gen Ed – Foundations for College Success:
- College 101 faculty and English faculty need to explore the idea of having College 101 be a prerequisite for English 102.

Gen Ed – Communicating and Thinking Critically:
- Composition faculty needs to look at the third rubric criterion and reconsider the wording in the distribution area outcome and look at how that corresponds with the COGs for English 101 and English 102.
- English discipline needs to dedicate time and funding for Associate Faculty for a discussion on current best practices and challenges in interaction in the composition classroom and a follow-up workshop on best practices in designing and implementing peer review assessments that allow for student reflection in the peer review interactions and practices that they engage in. The TLA could possibly assist.
- English discipline needs to develop a document that articulates the genres of writing taught in English 101 and the genres of writing taught in English 102. To do this, there will likely need to be coordination with a faculty representative from Developmental English and College 101, and the librarians.
- The Communicating and Thinking Critically OAC lead needs to have a conversation with the Dean for ETSP-Business Emphasis, ETSP-Technology Emphasis, Applied Science-Network Tech (Transfer), Applied Science-Programming (Transfer) and Applied Science-Web Emphasis (Transfer) to determine whether or not a technologically-focused or similarly designated 102 might be a good addition to any of those degree programs, particularly the transfer programs.
Gen Ed – Quantitative Reasoning:

- The same assignment should be collected across all sections of a course.
- The reflection assignment to be sent out to QR faculty needs to be modified to include more detailed instructions so that the students will expand more on their answers, rather than just list items. The reflection needs to require a deeper reflective process on the part of the student.
- The assessment results need to be discussed by the QR faculty to determine if any curricular changes are needed.

Gen Ed – Cultural Knowledge:

- CKR faculty need to clarify the language for the new CKR “Interact” outcome. The first two criteria on the rubric need to be more clearly differentiated and what is meant by “engage” needs to be better defined.
- Faculty teaching CKR need to really understand the CKR “Interact” outcome and embed it within their curriculum. Some training and/or larger-group discussion among CKR faculty is needed.
- A document should be created that more completely explains the CKR outcomes – something that can be given to faculty to encourage them to frame assignments to not only identify differences, but explain them and compare cultures, racial differences, gender differences, etc.
- It may be beneficial to compile a group of sample assignments from a variety of disciplines and formats (posters, research papers, etc.) that fulfill the CKR requirement and put them in an accessible place such as on MyCascadia.
- The COGs for all CKR courses need to be reviewed and updated to include all the new CKR outcomes (see CKR summer 2011 worksheet for details on specific courses).

Humanities:

- Humanities faculty need to clarify the language in the humanities “Interact” outcome. Particularly the portion that says “…creating a community of inquiry that values ambiguity to expand our collective knowledge of the human experience in all its forms.”
- The course “Interact” outcomes need to be reviewed and possibly revised for several humanities courses (see the humanities summer 2011 worksheet for details on specific courses).
- More student self-evaluations of group work need to accompany student work. Classroom observations may also be useful.
- It would be beneficial to bolster the teaching of literature, or at least integrate literature into more courses.

Social Science:

- Social science faculty should review the social science “Interact” outcome and discuss possible revisions to the wording. In particular, they should consider revising dimensions three and four and/or combining these two dimensions.
- Social science faculty should discuss whether or not the second dimension is adequately being addressed in social science courses. They might consider whether or not this is an outcome that they expect to be met in both 100 and 200 level courses, and if so, what types of assignments might more effectively address this outcome.
**Natural Science:**

- Natural Science faculty should evaluate the results of this assessment and determine if any curricular changes are needed. In particular, it should be discussed whether or not the fourth criterion is not being met, or just isn't represented in the assignments collected.
- Natural science faculty should clarify expectations for the different dimensions of the outcome, and discuss whether assignments are giving students the tools to achieve those expectations. We should consider course sequencing and expected progress from the 100 to 200 level.
- The course level “Interact” outcomes need to be reviewed, and revised as needed, in order to be aligned with the revised Natural Science “Interact” outcome.
- Natural science faculty should explore the relevance and appropriateness of having math courses as part of the natural science distribution. These courses are unlikely to meet all dimensions of the natural science distribution area outcomes.

**Outcomes Assessment Process and Timeline for 2011/2012**

In order to complete evaluation of all of our programs (where a “program” is a degree or certificate) within a reasonable time cycle, we have decided that outcomes assessment will focus on one college-wide learning outcome per year, and assess all programs at the same time for that outcome. We selected “Learn Actively” from the four outcomes to assess this year. In planning for key assessments and assignments, groups should consider that student work collected from a given course might be used to assess more than one program. It remains to be determined if a single set of distribution area outcomes and rubrics will work for all programs. Below is the overall timeline for the outcomes assessment work to be completed for program review over the next year.

| Pre-Fall 2011: | • Faculty form assessment groups based on distribution areas.  
• Faculty explores, and expands upon, findings from the previous year and makes recommendations for actions.  
• Each group makes a documented assessment plan for the year. |
| Fall 2011: | • Each group completes a rubric for the “Learn Actively” outcome.  
• Groups select courses from which to collect assignments.  
• Assignments are embedded/selected by faculty in alignment with the rubrics.  
• Assignments, along with an analysis of how the assignments will provide evidence of the various dimensions of the outcomes, are collected and conveyed to the OAC. |
| Winter 2012: | • Key performances are collected and conveyed to the OAC. |
| Spring 2012: | • Key performances are collected and conveyed to the OAC.  
• Assessment groups make a report to the OAC on actions taken in response to recommendations based on outcomes assessment. |
| Summer 2012: | • An interdisciplinary faculty work group assesses key performances, and a report is generated by the OAC, including recommendations for curricular and/or structural changes.  
• The summer assessment group plans pre-fall activities for fall 2012. |