General Education Assessment
2012-13

Arts

University in the High School Program

The University at Albany, SUNY

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Background

In 2012-13 the University at Albany assessed the degree to which students were achieving student learning outcomes in the Humanities and Arts General Education categories. As with previous assessments, the assessment of General Education courses offered through the University in the High School (UHS) program were conducted at the same time. A representative sample of classes from the Arts category was selected by IRPE and the General Education Committee. The UHS sample was chosen to be generally representative of the Arts category rather than strictly random. The UHS office provided materials electronically, and IRPE redacted instructor information.

There were a total of 13 courses offered through UHS in 2012-13 that met the Arts General Education requirement. Five of those courses were selected for the sample, with respondents noting enrollments ranging from 0 to 19. Three of the instructors sampled responded. All 3 respondents returned the beginning of semester forms with indications of class activities, as well as submitting a syllabus, and end of semester quantitative data. The data contained in this report represents 3 classes, with a total enrollment of 34 students. We caution readers against drawing firm conclusions based upon such a small sample size.

Figure 1: Aggregated Performance on Arts Learning Objectives

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1 While courses with no enrollment are not reflected in the final tally, the sampling is conducted before the courses begin and thus we do not know enrollment at the time of sampling, so the existence of those course sections influence the way the sample is conducted.
Arts courses enable students to demonstrate:

1. an understanding of the history and/or practice of one form of artistic expression;
2. an understanding of the function and meaning of form;
3. that they have the vocabulary they need to continue to learn about how art is made and interpreted;
4. depending on the nature of the course, recognition of the difference and overlap between creative and critical thinking;
5. depending on the nature of the course, an understanding of how art works are embedded within different cultures at different times and places.

**Figure 2: Arts Learning Objective 1**

**Figure 3: Arts Learning Objective 2**
3) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate that they have the vocabulary they need to continue to learn about how art is made and interpreted.

4) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate depending on the nature of the course, recognition of the difference and overlap between creative and critical thinking.
In excess of 80% of assessed students either met or exceeded expectations in all five learning objectives in this category. Taken as a whole, these figures are slightly lower than performance in the 2009 General Education Assessment in this category, although performance was higher in two individual categories (Objectives 3 & 5).
Figure 8: Comparison of Results for Arts Learning Objective 1, 2009 & 2013

1) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the history and/or practice of one form of artistic expression.

Figure 9: Comparison of Results for Arts Learning Objective 2, 2009 & 2013

2) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the function and meaning of form.
3) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate that they have the vocabulary they need to continue to learn about how art is made and interpreted.

![Comparison of Results for Arts Learning Objective 3, 2009 & 2013](image)

Figure 10: Comparison of Results for Arts Learning Objective 3, 2009 & 2013

4) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate depending on the nature of the course, recognition of the difference and overlap between creative and critical thinking.

![Comparison of Results for Arts Learning Objective 4, 2009 & 2013](image)

Figure 11: Comparison of Results for Arts Learning Objective 4, 2009 & 2013
In the Arts category, comparisons of performance between the UHS and On-campus populations appear skewed when looking only at the “Exceeded” and “Met” numbers separately (this is likely attributable to the small sample size). When students who “Exceeded” and “Met” expectations are combined, the percentage of on-campus population matches UHS students in one category (objective #1), and trails slightly behind in the other 4 categories, with a range between 3 and 13 percentage points.

In all 5 categories, the number of UHS students who “did not meet” the learning objectives is 6% or less, while in the on-campus population, this number was between 4% and 7%.
1) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the history and/or practice of one form of artistic expression.

Figure 14: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Arts Learning Objective 1

2) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the function and meaning of form.

Figure 15: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Arts Learning Objective 2
3) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate that they have the vocabulary they need to continue to learn about how art is made and interpreted.

![Figure 16: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Arts Learning Objective 3](image)

4) Arts courses enable students to demonstrate depending on the nature of the course, recognition of the difference and overlap between creative and critical thinking.

![Figure 17: Comparison of Results for UHS and On-campus Populations on Arts Learning Objective 4](image)
It is important to note that the majority of students who enroll in University in the High School courses tend to be highly motivated and high performing. In fact, only juniors and seniors with an overall average of B or better are allowed to enroll in UHS classes. One could reasonably expect students who have a high average overall to perform well in these classes. Additionally, on-campus students taking courses meeting this General Education requirement may be doing so only to fulfill the General Education requirement, and that is a potential explanation of any differences in performance that may exist across these populations.

We also recognize that the UHS courses cover the same material as the on-campus offerings, but do so in a year-long format rather than the standard semester format. Additionally, the typical UHS course meets every day, not a few times a week. Both of these could be contributing factors to explain the high performance of UHS students relative to their on-campus counterparts.

Recommendations:

1) IRPE needs to work closely with UHS to improve the quality of the data submitted by instructors. Sample videos and an online FAQ document that outline the General Education Assessment process and the use of the assessment forms have been created and will be rolled out for use in the 2013-14 academic year. Use of these will hopefully lead to better data from instructors.

2) It is possible that UHS instructors are transposing the high school grades into the General Education Assessment forms rather than keeping 2 grade books—one with the “high school” grade, and one with the “college” grade. Moreover, review of the assessment materials appears to show that instructors need to pay more attention to separating out the performance of students in the class by learning objective. Most have simply inserted the same numbers into each category. IRPE recommends that the UHS office issue a memo each year explaining the process.
and directing instructors to the UHS produced videos and FAQ for more information.

3) Next time this General Education category is assessed, IRPE should re-example the potential sample, and if it is as small as it was during this assessment, should consider sampling the entire population to provide more robust data.
Process notes

- This year the UHS office collected all the requested materials and scanned the sample documents into .PDF format before sending them to IRPE electronically. The names of the instructors were redacted from the forms, which were then coded. While this was a labor intensive endeavor for the IRPE office, it saved a substantial amount of paper, as well as additional copying time and paper when the material is be made available to the General Education Assessment Committee. IRPE has developed forms in PDF format that instructors can submit through our website, and they will be encouraged to use this method in the future.