

General Education Assessment Pilot Group Survey of Participants Executive Summary of Findings

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Purpose of the Survey

The purpose of this survey was to explore among faculty who participated in the pilot study for GER assessment perceptions of the benefits of and time invested in conducting GER assessment. The results will be used to inform others of the perceptions of the benefits and disadvantages of engaging in GER assessment.

Participants and Methodology

This survey was sent to the 12 participants of the GER assessment pilot study in January 2004. Faculty in the pilot group were trained in GER assessment in spring 2003 and taught their courses in fall 2003. Six faculty responded to the survey for a response rate of 50%. Descriptive statistics were run on the survey. A summary of key findings follows.

Key Findings

- The workshops and faculty's work on GER assessment helped them improve their teaching.
- The workshops and faculty's work on GER assessment helped them improve the way they framed questions on assignments and exams and thus lead to better performance by the students because of a better understanding on the students' part of what was expected of them.
- The workshops helped faculty focus the design of the courses toward meeting the GER objectives .
- The workshops helped faculty understand whether students were learning what was expected of them.
- GER assessment needs to be presented in a non-threatening, efficient manner since some GER course instructors do not know what it is nor do they understand the need for assessment.
- Assessing GER courses is not as hard as it seems. The difficulty can be overcome by attending the workshops, which are very helpful and/or taking a systematic approach.
- The benefits of the whole GER assessment process are worth the time spent on it.
- Three out of the five faculty reported spending 0-5 hours per week on average on the entire process of evaluating student learning, including documentation, while 2 out of the 5 reported spending 6-10 hours per week on average. These statistics are very similar to what these faculty reported to spend each week on service. Less time was reported to be spent each week on grant-writing, advising, and evaluation of teaching. More time was reported to be spent each week on research, department meetings, department administrative duties, course preparation and refinement, and classroom or lab teaching.
- Most faculty report that they will spend less time the next time they evaluate their courses since they now know how to evaluate their courses.