

**General Education Assessment Pilot Group Survey of Participants
Detailed Summary of Findings**

Compiled by Marilee J. Bresciani, Ph.D.

Director of Assessment

Division of Undergraduate Affairs

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 detailed summary of the results follows.

Part I

1. In what ways did the workshops and your work on GER assessment benefit you as a teacher? (If there were no benefits, write "None.")

Summary of Responses:

- **The workshops and faculty's work on GER assessment helped them improve their teaching.**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- The exercise in thinking of the connections among objectives, outcomes, assessment instruments, assessment report was helpful, and especially helpful to hear other faculty reporting on their sets of ooiar.
- Mostly, in helping me to think more systematically about my teaching. To make sure that my course goals were well thought out and that I was doing a fair and appropriate job of assessing students on those goals.
- It helped me to focus more clearly on my objectives and to better tailor what I do in my class to meet those objectives.
- This pilot project allowed me to more fully understand:
 1. Assessment processes.
 2. How better to align class outcomes with the stated GER Objectives.
 3. The paradigm shift that has taken place from "what is the teacher teaching" to what students should receive from enrolling in the class.

- Provided an efficient, logical means of organizing course objectives, goals, and outcomes. Helped me identify (and discards some) themes, topics, and activities, based on whether they promoted course outcomes or not. This training will carry over into revising and structuring all my courses. Such “overtness” and explanations are especially important in the two online courses that I teach.
 - Provided a good “tune-up” for course objectives
-

2. *In what ways did the workshops and your work on GER assessment benefit your students? (If there were no benefits, write “None.”)*

Summary of Responses:

- **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.**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- I think the clearer links between the outcomes stated in the syllabus and the assignments helped students to know “what I was looking for” in the assignments, and to know better what to expect on the final exam.
 - I think it benefited my students in that I perhaps took a slightly different focus on some of the material than I would have otherwise in ways that would be beneficial beyond just the substance of PS 201. I think my means of assessment were also able to provide a fairer measure of their learning.
 - I think that it improved the quality of all of the assignments that I wrote (not just the ones that met a GER objective) as I applied the same process to the others as well. That not only made it easier for them to figure out what they needed to do each time, but it also increased the likelihood that they actually got something of significance out of the exercise in the first place.
 - This process enabled me to objectively present grading parameters to students, which previously only had existed in my head.
 - Made the course structure more logical and transparent to students. With overtly stated and operationalized objectives, students could see exactly what they were to learn. I believe that by revealing the logic behind various assignments, students better engaged and accepted them. Based on mid-semester self-assessments, students better understood where they had made progress and where they needed to focus more energy.
-

3. *In what ways did the workshops and your work on GER assessment improve your GER course? (If there were no improvements, write “None.”)*

Summary of Responses:

- **See summary of response to questions 1 & 2.**
- **The workshops helped faculty focus the design of the courses toward meeting the GER objectives and helped them understand whether students were learning what was expected of them.**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- It provided a useful format for me to use in thinking about specific assignments and classroom strategies because it helped me to identify which assignments should be deleted, which should be modified, and which should be left alone for a while.
- I do not think I can really answer this question separately from the previous two.
- None really, beyond what I have written elsewhere. It is nice to know that you are actually doing what you should be doing....
- This process provided students a focus for the class, since objectives and outcomes were placed in the syllabus and discussed in class. Evaluative processes were also clarified.
- The course has a greater unity and intellectual cohesion—a more solid, identifiable core than it did before. By tying what I do in this course to wider History GER objectives, I better relate the course specifics to broader issues generic to the study of history. Thus when students take another history course, they should have a good grounding in how to think, read, and write historically.
- Updated test materials

4. *What improvements would you recommend for the procedure designed to train you for GER assessment? Please include any comments about the workshop content, the timing and pacing of the workshops, the workshop presenter, location, etc.?*

Summary of Responses:

- **The workshops very well run – great job by Mike Carter.**
- **The overall pace of the workshop could be increased.**
- **There was a mixed review of whether workshops should be cross disciplinary or only offered by discipline.**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- Pacing seemed a little slow.
- Perhaps the best part was the cross-disciplinary part—hearing and seeing my colleagues in other areas struggling and succeeding with my questions. I got a lot of pointers from them.
- Generally speaking, I was very pleased with the workshops. They covered matters in appropriate detail, but were not overly long. Mike Carter did a great

job with the presentations. If this program were to be expanded, I think an expedited version of the sessions would be important, though. I was more than happy to participate, in part, because I received financial compensation. If this time commitment was simply required, I likely would have been resentful. Also, if the program is more widespread, it might help to have the groups involved come from a common college. For example, I am not entirely sure how useful it was for myself, a Political Science instructor, and a Physical Education instructors to be assisting each other.

- I thought that the workshop was very well run. What was (and will be) most important from the standpoint of implementation are the examples/templates for instructors to follow from disciplines similar to their own. In addition, having "testimonials" from pilot participants in the future may help to increase the likelihood of initial buy-in, allowing faculty to spend less time grumbling and more time constructively involved in and making the most of the process.
- I have no suggestions for or complaint about the procedure. I thought it was very effective.
- The workshops progressed logically—I found the mix of faculty from a variety of disciplines a big plus in hearing how others in vastly different fields applied their GER objectives.
- Workshops were fine – Mike Carter was well-organized and prepared for each session. Time commitment was OK.

5. What changes would you recommend for the broader process of GER course-based assessment?

Summary of Responses:

- **See suggestions made in number 4.**
- **GER assessment needs to be presented in a non-threatening manner since some GER course instructors do not know what it is nor do they understand the need for assessment.**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- Looks like I got ahead of myself and answered this in the preceding question.
- Nothing beyond what I have said above.
- Dissemination of information is the problem(?):
 - 1) Many GER course instructors do not know (my sense) why assessment is necessary.
 - 2) Instructors and department heads do not feel either the need or have the time to participate, in what seems to be, a laborious non-essential process (see first bullet).
 - 3) The process (schedule and implementation) needs to be presented in a non-threatening manner so department heads and individual faculty "buy into this."

- While I do see cross-disciplinary issues (need to improve writing, critical thinking, provide speaking opportunities, etc.), I think that the department remains the key focus in credible assessment. Departments should develop a range of suggested, testable assessment tools. For example, obviously a public speaking course in Communication would require a far different type of assessment from an English lit course. Thus I would caution against any attempts at “mega-assessment.” The classroom and the department are the appropriate fields of inquiry.
- Explain how this will impact departments and individual instructors.

6. *What advice would you have to give to others who are preparing to evaluate their GER courses?*

Summary of Responses:

- **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.**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- Don't be afraid of the process. It looks daunting, but one gets the hang of it quickly. In other words, come on in; the water's fine.
- Not really sure of any particular advice, other than that the workshops were very helpful.
- Take it seriously -- use it as an opportunity to reflect meaningfully on what you do and how you do it and on whether your goals and objectives are truly aligned with what your students can and should be able to do given the nature and structure of the course and the means of assessment.
- You don't have to re-invent the wheel; it's not as cumbersome and time-consuming as it may first appear to be.
- - First, reconsider the overall course. Less is more. Most classes choke students with too much information. Select a few key concepts and themes and make certain that students learn those well. GER courses should be foundational, not attempt to summarize an entire field in a single intro course.
 - Less is more applies also to assignments. Students judged (correctly in my view) that they had to complete far too many assignments (one or more virtually every class). I will cut down and diversify assignments in the future.
 - With a more focused course, more meaningful evaluation becomes possible. Second, use the evaluation process, along with student feedback, to revise the course.
- Listen-all courses should have some types of review process

7. Would you say that, on the whole, the benefits of the whole GER assessment process were worth the time you spent on it?

- A) Yes*
- B) No, why not?*

Summary of Responses:

All Yeses

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- Yes – absolutely
 - Yes
 - Yes
 - Yes - It's what we should be doing anyway.
 - YES
 - Yes – yes, both classroom and online teaching/learning have benefited.
-

Part II – Note that one participant did not complete this section

1. Once you engaged in the assessment workshop training, how many hours/week on average did you devote to creating student learning outcomes for your GER course?

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *All 0 to 5 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours - - -- more than 20 hours every week on this one thing????
The question seems so absurd that I suspect I am misunderstanding something
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours – I had done a good deal of prior work through the Hewlett Continuation program.
-

2) *Once you engaged in the assessment workshop training, how many hours/week on average did you devote to identifying means of evaluating outcomes for your GER course?*

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *Almost all - 0 to 5 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours - More than 20 hours ridiculous!!
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 6 to 10 hours

3) *Once you engaged in the assessment workshop training, how many hours/week on average did you devote to writing the GER assessment report?*

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *Almost all - 0 to 5 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 16 to 20 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours

4) *Once you engaged in the assessment workshop training, how many hours/ week on average did you devote to refining your GER course?*

- A) 0 to 5 hours*
- B) 6 to 10 hours*

- C) 11 to 15 hours*
- D) 16 to 20 hours*
- E) More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- **Almost all - 0 to 5 hours**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours

5) Prior to the GER assessment workshop series, how many how many hours/ week on average would you normally spend creating student learning outcomes for your GER course?

- A) 0 to 5 hours*
- B) 6 to 10 hours*
- C) 11 to 15 hours*
- D) 16 to 20 hours*
- E) More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- **All 0 to 5 hours**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours – closer to zero as I gave the issue little thought

6) Prior to the GER assessment workshop series, how many how many hours/ week on average would you normally devote to identifying means of evaluating outcomes for your GER course?

- A) 0 to 5 hours*
- B) 6 to 10 hours*
- C) 11 to 15 hours*
- D) 16 to 20 hours*
- E) More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- All 0 to 5 hours

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
-

7) *Prior to the GER assessment workshop series, how many how many hours/ week on average would you normally devote to writing the GER assessment report?*

- A) *0 to 5 hours*
- B) *6 to 10 hours*
- C) *11 to 15 hours*
- D) *16 to 20 hours*
- E) *More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *All 0 to 5 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - N.A.
 - 0 to 5 hours – we had no prior mandate to assess, so zero.
-

8) *Prior to the GER assessment workshop series, how many how many hours/ week on average would you normally devote to refining your GER course?*

- A) *0 to 5 hours*
- B) *6 to 10 hours*
- C) *11 to 15 hours*
- D) *16 to 20 hours*
- E) *More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- Almost all - 0 to 5 hours

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 0 to 5 hours
 - 6 to 10 hours I can do so more efficiently now thanks to the training.
-

9) *What other activity did you not do because you were evaluating your GER course? (Please select only one)*

- A) *Research*
- B) *Service*
- C) *Grant-writing*
- D) *Advising*
- E) *Department Meetings*
- F) *Department Administrative Duties*
- G) *Other* _____

Summary of Responses:

- *Mixed*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- Research
 - Some Department Administrative Duties were delayed
 - Research
 - Service
 - 2 people did not select a response
-

10) *How many hours/week on average do you normally spend on the following activities?*

- A) *Research*
 - i. *0 to 5 hours*
 - ii. *6 to 10 hours*
 - iii. *11 to 15 hours*
 - iv. *16 to 20 hours*
 - v. *More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *Varied responses*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 0 to 5 hours

- More than 20 hours
- 0 to 5 hours

B) Service

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- **3 – 0 to 5 hours**
- **2 - 6 to 10 hours**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 6 to 10 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours

C) Grant-writing

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- **All 0 to 5 hours**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours

D) Advising

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *Almost all 0 to 5 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 11 to 15 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours

E) Department Meetings

- i. 0 to 5 hours**
- ii. 6 to 10 hours**
- iii. 11 to 15 hours**
- iv. 16 to 20 hours**
- v. More than 20 hours**
- vi. Greater than 20 hours**

Summary of Responses:

- *3 –0 to 5 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 6 to 10 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 11 to 15 hours

F) Department Administrative Duties

- i. 0 to 5 hours**
- ii. 6 to 10 hours**
- iii. 11 to 15 hours**
- iv. 16 to 20 hours**
- v. More than 20 hours**

Summary of Responses:

- **Varied responses**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 11 to 15 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- More than 20 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours

G) Course Preparation or Refinement

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *3 - 6 to 10 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 6 to 10 hours

H) Classroom or Lab Teaching

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *3 - 6 to 10 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 6 to 10 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 11 to 15 hours
- More than 20 hours

I) Evaluation of Student Learning

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *3 – 0 to 5 hours*
- *2 - 6 to 10 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 6 to 10 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 6 to 10 hours
- 6 to 10 hours

J) Evaluation of Teaching

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- *All 0-5 hours*

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours

K) Other _____

- i. 0 to 5 hours*
- ii. 6 to 10 hours*
- iii. 11 to 15 hours*
- iv. 16 to 20 hours*
- v. More than 20 hours*

Summary of Responses:

- **All 0-5 hours, where two faculty did not indicate what other was and one faculty indicated consulting.**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours
- 0 to 5 hours

11) Do you think you will spend less time the next time you evaluate your course since you now know how to evaluate your course?

A) If yes, how much less?

B) *If no, why not?*

Summary of Responses

- **Most answers - reduce time by 10-50% less; more efficient**
- **One response- knowing to do better means spending MORE time on it!**

Individual Responses – Direct Quotes:

- No, knowing how to do it better will justify spending MORE not less time on it. Twice as much on all the categories above.
- 10-20% less
- Not in a place to answer since I haven't evaluated all outcomes yet. Would guess that it would be approximately the same time for the next evaluative cycle.
- Yes, I will refine the instrument, but the process will be more efficient.
- Yes, 50%