Indiana University School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI
2012-1013 AY Learning Assessment Report

Introduction

The School of Liberal Arts and the School of Science stand at the heart of undergraduate education. Though there are many, traditional, reasons why this is the case, our contemporary world now demands the habits of mind and the skills engendered by engagement with the arts and sciences for successful navigation in the international context in which we find ourselves. The value of the liberal arts for thinking both critically and creatively, assumed in much of U.S. higher education, has gone global; countries such as China are experimenting with education in the liberal arts in order to help students think in different ways.[1]

To think historically is to understand that people, societies, and cultures adapt over time to changes in environment. To work properly in the discipline of history, one must develop skills of in-depth text (or image, or material culture, etc.) analysis, application of critical principles, and communication proper to the intended audience. The one is the development of a habit of mind; the other, the honing of particular kinds of skills. Both are involved in the most successful history courses (used illustratively here for the broad range of liberal arts). The cumulative effect of a range of liberal arts courses should be, thus, to enable a student to be "more" than she or he was before the course of study--more self-aware, more aware of local, national, and international contexts, more attuned to the nuances of human interaction. Liberal arts, to go back to the notion of "liber," should contribute to a freeing of the mind and to a student's claim on self-efficacy, with not only the habits of mind to support that state but also the skills by which to express and enact it.

The rhetoric pertaining to the importance of the Liberal Arts is, of course, lofty. The question that grounds this report, however, is much more nuts and bolts: how do we know what students have learned? If faculty have aspirations for what students learn in a course, how is the learning to be measured and assessed?

The School of Liberal Arts has nineteen departments and programs. Few, if any, other schools offer such a tremendous range of types of courses to be assessed--statistical methods in Economics is very different, of course, than a poetry class in English; but more than that--a linguistics course in English (very social science oriented, very data driven) requires a mindset and skills that do not help so very much if one is in a creative writing course in English (very arts and humanities oriented, very much centered around explorations of the self). Many of the areas of study in Liberal Arts do not have accrediting bodies that have guidelines for expected student learning outcomes; in fact, some of the professional associations in the Liberal Arts are suspicious of data-driven assessment outcome. So, in addition to a situation in which the expected learning outcomes are so different that intradepartmental help is not always seen as, there is, in fact, some hostility to "assessment" language and methods.

Rhetoric and the reality of assessment. What follows in this report is a summary of some of the good work being done in the School of Liberal Arts in assessment at the

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[1] Gerard A. Postiglione, "China Weighs the Value of American Liberal Arts," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* 31 August 2013, Issue No:285.

departmental level, a look at the school-level data and what it says about learning in the School of Liberal Arts, a short section on next steps in assessment in SLA, and, finally, a conclusion that seeks to bridge the loftiness of rhetoric with the grounded data of assessing student learning.

Department Efforts

In response to a call for information regarding assessment efforts in the 2012-2013 school year, three departments came forward with material related to assessment. Communication Studies, a department that received a PRAC grant, has an extensive report, which is given, in part, below (much of the report has been summarized, though the data charts have been kept in tact). In the Department of English, a particular individual has spent the past year conducting an extensive assessment project. Finally, the Department of World Languages and Culture continued, in 2012-2013, its learning outcomes assessment project. Each department focuses on a distinct assessment strategy, which, hopefully, will lead other departments to think about the variety of ways they can engage in assessment: student and alumni surveys, electronic databases, and capstone analysis.

It should be noted that the Department of History received a PRAC grant last year, and it shall be included in next year's report; indeed, that is the goal: to start with the three departmental programs mentioned above and then move to a rotation wherein three to four departments/programs are highlighted each year in terms of their assessment efforts.

Communication Studies (the material on which this section is based, much of it quoted verbatim or slightly amended, can be found in the Comm Studies Self-Study report of 2013, including more on sample size, demographics, etc.)

The Department of Communication Studies conducted its own assessment of BA alumni and current *undergraduate* students with the support of an internal Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC) grant. The specific project supported by the grant integrated the department's programmatic assessment needs and the pedagogical objectives of its graduate research methods course, COMM C501, wherein students learn to design survey instruments, conduct research interviews, and analyze quantitative data. The end result was a pilot survey that will provide the basis for the department's ongoing undergraduate program assessment efforts.

The department surveyed three audiences in the fall of 2012 to assess undergraduate student learning outcomes: G100 Intro to Comm Studies students, capstone course undergraduate students, and its BA alumni. While the data are preliminary, it does provide the department with a baseline on which to develop future assessment opportunities. The following two tables summarize, comparatively, the data from the three survey groups, with the first related to perceptions of learning outcomes by students and alumni, the second related to perception of the Comm Studies program.

Comparative Survey Responses Related to Student Learning Outcomes

		G100				CAPSTONE				ALUMNI			
Likert-type Scale: Strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1)	Corresponding Student Learning Outcome	Student Responses (N=47)			Mean	Student Responses (N=5)			Mean	Student Responses (N=11)			Mean
Surveys conducted Fall Semester 2012		Disagree-Strongly Disagree	Un-Decided	Agree - Strongly Agree		Disagree-Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree - Strongly Agree		Disagree-Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree - Strongly Agree	
Questions relate to courses taken in Communication Studies at IUPUI only.													
Courses helped students understand that communication is a process used to achieve an outcome	1.a				4.1				4.4	2	0	8	3.9
Courses helped students understand reflexive nature of communication	1.c	3	12	32	3.7	0	0	5	4.4	2	1	8	4.1
Courses helped students be successful communicator in a variety of contexts	3	2	9	36	3.9	0	0	5	4.4	1	1	9	4.2
Courses helped students understand relevance of context in solving communication problems	1.b	2	10	35	3.9	0	0	5	4.4	1	1	9	4.5
Courses helped students understand the role of cultural differences in creating and interpreting communication messages	2.f	2	8	37	4	0	0	5	4.8	0	1	10	4.2
Courses prepared students to be mindful listeners.	2.a	3	10	34	4	0	0	5	4.6	1	4	6	4.3
Courses taught students importance of nonverbal communication in constructing message meaning.		2	10	35	3.9	0	0	5	5	1	2	8	4.6
Courses prepared students to utilize a variety of research methods for evaluating communication messages.	3.c	1	21	25	3.6	0	1	4	4.2	0	3	8	4.1
Courses helped student become better communicator with peers and co-workers		1	9	37	4	0	0	5	4.4	1	2	8	4.2
Courses provided students with theoretical knowledge to intervene in unwanted communication patterns	3.a, b	5	16	26	3.6	0	1	4	4.2	1	4	6	3.8
Courses prepared students to resolve communication conflict between groups and individuals with diverse backgrounds	2.e	4	15	28	3.7	0	0	5	4.2	1	2	8	4
Courses taught students to be ethical communicators	3.e	2	15	32	3.8	0	0	5	4.8	0	3	8	4.44
Courses taught students theories to predict communication outcomes in a variety of contexts		6	15	26	3.6	0	2	3	4	1	4	6	3.9
Courses helped students define their own communication style	2.c	3	16	28	3.8	1	1	4	4.2	1	2	8	4.2
Courses taught students to consider background and culture of audience in preparing for speeches	2.b	4	11	32	3.9	0	0	5	4.4	0	2	9	4.78
Courses helped students understand the extent to which audience plays a role in creating message meaning	2.b	1	9	37	4	0	0	5	4.6	1	2	8	4.2
Courses helped students understand that the communication style of others is as important as their own	2.d	3	14	30	3.8	0	0	5	5	1	2	8	4.2
Courses helped students become a better communicator with family/friends		1	13	33	3.9	0	0	5	4.6	1	2	8	4.2

In terms of student learning, these preliminary results appear positive. Mean scores improve from G100 to capstone, and they most drop off slightly from capstone to alumni. Given the small number of capstone students and alumni who completed the survey, the department is hesitant to make much of these responses. Yet the positive trend is encouraging. In particular, student learning outcomes (SLO) on the importance of context, on culture, and on ethics are strengths in student learning that students maintained as alumni. The SLO on understanding the communication style of others demonstrated the largest growth in learning from G100 to capstone.

Comparative Survey Results Related to Student Perceptions of our Program

	G100				CAPSTONE				ALUMNI			
Likert-type Scale: Strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1)	Student Responses (N=47)			Mean	Student Responses (N=5)			Mean	Student Responses (N=11)			Mean
Surveys conducted Fall Semester 2012	Disagree-Strongly Disagree	Un-Decided	Agree - Strongly Agree		Disagree-Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree - Strongly Agree		Disagree-Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree - Strongly Agree	
Questions relate to courses taken in Communication Studies at IUPUI only.												
Program will help/helped students secure the job they want after graduation	2	9	36	4.1	0	0	4	4.2	7	1	3	2.5
Program provides/ed students with convenient course offerings	7	4	36	3.9	0	0	5	4.4	3	1	7	3.4
Program provides/ed students with opportunities to interact with faculty	3	7	37	4	0	0	5	4.8	2	1	8	4
Students are satisfied with the faculty in Communication Studies.	2	10	35	4	0	0	5	4.6	3	1	7	3.7
Students are satisfied with the staff in Communication Studies.	0	12	35	4.1	0	0	5	4.4	2	3	6	3.6
Students are satisfied with support staff in other IUPUI departments.	2	14	31	3.8	1	0	4	3.8	2	1	8	3.6
Program provides/ed opportunities for co-curricular activities	2	7	38	4	0	0	5	4.4	2	2	7	3.7
Program provides/ed communication knowledge to be successful in the workplace	1	4	42	4.3	0	0	5	4.8	2	2	7	3.7
Program provides/ed skills to be successful in the workplace	1	7	39	4.1	0	0	5	4.8	2	2	7	3.8
Students are satisfied with the courses in Communication Studies	1	8	38	4.2	0	0	5	5	3	1	7	3.6
Students are satisfied with the choice to major in Communication Studies	1	7	39	4.3	0	0	5	4.6	2	2	7	3.6

In terms of trends, the mean response of every item improved from G100 to capstone, which the department expected. However, the mean of the majority of responses dropped from capstone to alumni, and some rather significantly. In particular, alumni do not perceive that the program helped them secure the job they wanted after graduation. While this could certainly be explained, in part, by the economy, it does suggest a need to do a better job helping students see how their communication studies major prepares them for a variety of careers in the twenty-first century.

The department also gathered some undergraduate students together for focus groups to talk about student learning outcomes. Though the number who participated was small, the department found the discussions encouraging.

The Department of Communication Studies believes, based on this initial assessment, that undergraduate students are learning what the designated SLOs indicate they should. Continuing student perception data and focus group data corroborate this conclusion; continuing students perceive they are effective or very effective in communication-related items, and focus group participants can talk about their communication learning using key word choices which indicate specific learning outcomes have been achieved. Survey data indicates improvement in student learning from G100 to the capstone-level, with a slight decrease as students become alumni. Yet the level of learning retained at the alumni level is still strong, with most item means at 4.0 or higher on a 5-point scale. Though cautious about generalizing too much from this initial effort, given the small number of participants, the department looks forward to continuing the assessment process.

The Comm Studies department also worked to assess graduate learning in the 2012-2013 period. As an extension of the work of COMM G501, one student, in consultation with the department, developed and piloted a survey of MA alumni in October 2012. The survey consisted of 26 questions (demographic data may be found in Appendix 1). The results are summarized in the following table.

MA Alumni Survey Results

Survey Questions (Likert-type Scale, Strongly Agree 5 – Strongly Disagree 1)	Mean	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neutral*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Q.1 My MA in Applied Communication helped me secure the type of job I desired. (1 no response)	3.33	3	1	2	5	4
Q.2 If my goal was to pursue a PhD, the MA program in Applied Communication helped prepare me for PhD study.	4.36	0	1	0	3	6
Q.3 The Applied Communication MA program provided me with opportunities to interact with faculty in and out of the classroom.	4.61	1	0	1	4	10
Q.4 Overall I am satisfied with the faculty in the IUPUI Department of Communication Studies at IUPUI.	4.26	1	2	0	5	8
Q.5 What are the strengths of the faculty in the Applied Communication MA program? (open-ended responses)		Experts in field, creative, community involvement				
Q.6 Overall I am satisfied with the MA advising I received in the IUPUI Department of Communication Studies.	4.05	1	1	0	8	6
Q.7 My advisor was knowledgeable concerning important topics (e.g., comps, thesis requirements, ALP)	4.32	1	0	0	6	9
Q.8 My MA degree in Applied Communication helped prepare me to work successfully with an organization to diagnose communication problems.	3.72	0	1	4	8	3
Q.9 My MA degree in Applied Communication helped prepare me to apply communication theory to assess communication problems.	4.42	0	0	1	8	7

Q.10 The MA program in Applied Communication at IUPUI provided me with the tools to approach communication problems from a variety of methodological perspectives.	4.21	0	0	3	7	6
Q.11 The Applied Communication MA program was academically rigorous.	4.16	0	1	1	8	6
Q.12 My professors respected my ideas.	4.42	0	1	2	3	10
Q.13 The curriculum of the MA program in Applied Communication prepared me for my thesis or ALP.	4.37	0	0	2	5	9
Q.14 The process of Comprehensive Final Exams was a valid learning experience.	3.84	3	2	1	4	6
Q.15 Work on my Thesis or Applied Learning Project (ALP) was beneficial to me.	4.56	0	2	1	3	10
Q.16 I felt comfortable expressing my ideas and opinions in class.	4.53	0	1	1	4	10
Q.17 I developed a sense of community with other students in my program.	4.32	0	1	2	3	10
Q.18 How did the MA program in Applied Communication improve your ability to apply communication theory to solve communication problems? Give an example of an instance in which you applied communication theory to solve a communication problem. (open-ended responses)		11 responses with concrete examples of solving communication problems				
Q.19 If you participated in research activities with faculty while in the MA in Applied. (open-ended responses)		5 responses providing samples of research collaboration with communication faculty				
Q.20 If you presented at conventions while in the MA program in Applied Communication, please list those experiences below. (open-ended responses)		4 graduate students indicated they presented at conferences				
Q.21 If you participated in any applied projects in which you worked with an organization during your time in the MA program in Applied Communication, with which organizations did you work? (open-ended responses)		6 graduate students participated in an Applied Research Project				
Q.22 Overall, I am satisfied with the courses I took in Applied Communication at IUPUI.	4.5	1	0	1	5	9
Q.23 If you were not fully satisfied with all MA classes in Applied Communication, please provide further explanation below. (open-ended responses)		3 students provided comments about graduate courses in the M.A. Communication Studies Program				
Q.24 Overall, I am satisfied with my choice to complete a MA in Applied Communication major at IUPUI.	4.39	1	0	2	2	11
Q.25 If you were not fully satisfied with your choice of MA program, please provide further explanation below. (open-ended responses)		3 students provided negative feedback on major helping them get a job.				
Q.26 What did you like best about the Applied Communication MA program at IUPUI? What are the strengths of the program? (open-ended						

responses)		

Though there were a variety of answers to Question 26 on what students liked about the program, one theme emerged very strongly: faculty members take their responsibility as graduate student mentors very seriously. Whether it is working with graduate students in classes, community projects, grants, presentations or publications, the faculty are very active in the academic lives of students as attested to in the responses of the alumni.

Students indicate that they have learned what the program sets out as learning outcomes. Survey responses and open-ended comments from MA program alumni demonstrate students can apply communication theory, diagnose communication problems, and approach communication situations from a variety of methodological perspectives. It is clear, however, that the responses from the MA alumni that there are opportunities to seek improvement. One-third of alumni did not think the comprehensive exams were valid learning experiences. The survey also suggested (slightly) that the department may want to consider ways to enhance the community collaborations open to students to increase their opportunities for career success upon graduation.

English

Beginning in 2011, André Buchenot began collecting electronic copies of student writing from courses in the English department. As of September 2013, he had amassed over 1,500 documents and organized them into a searchable database. The documents in the database have been "tagged" with meta-data that allows a researcher to compile a targeted group of papers for assessment. For example, a researcher might use the course and year tags to compile student writing produced for L202 over a two-year period and then assess that writing based on the goals of that course. As the data collection continues and the database grows, it will become possible to create more nuanced assessments of student papers. Using tags, a researcher might assess the writing of students admitted in a particular semester over the course of their academic career in English. Such a study would make it possible to see how students' writing changes as she or he moves from W131 to C292 to E450. Such longitudinal assessments enable the English department and the School of Liberal Arts to evaluate student learning in a systematic way. The electronic character of the database also makes it possible to examine student writing through automated computer processes that can "count" textual features within an enormous collection of texts. Are students writing less than they did five years ago? Using the database and some software it is possible to answer this question with a degree of certainty.

Buchenot's technological innovations are a key component in the ongoing assessment efforts of the English department and the School of Liberal Arts generally. Over time, the department plans to capitalize on these innovations to create a robust assessment program.

World Languages and Culture (material taken from WLAC SLO-Assessment 2012-2013)

Within the Department of World Languages and Cultures, the programs that offer majors (French, German, and Spanish) have clearly stated student learning outcomes (SLOs)that address both the IUPUI PULs and the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. SLOs are formally assessed in the capstone courses in the three programs. The focus here will be on the Spanish major.

The Spanish program has continued to implement their model of assessment in two key points in the curriculum: the entry course to the major (S313-Writing in Spanish) and the capstone course (S498 and S486). In S313, students complete a language proficiency diagnostic test in the areas of reading, writing, listening comprehension, speaking and grammar/vocabulary knowledge. The purpose of this test is to identify students who may not be successful in the courses in the major due to low language proficiency and to provide students with recommendations to help them reach an appropriate level of proficiency for courses in the major. In the last year, we have been able to collect data from beginning majors through two different tests. Last Fall 2012, students in S313 received our in-house diagnostic test. For students who are majoring in Spanish, the results showed that out of thirteen students tested, seven showed a satisfactory language proficiency level in all areas while almost half were given recommendations for improvement in one or more of the areas tested. Thirty-nine non-majors taking the S313 class were also tested. As expected, the percentage of students with a satisfactory level of language proficiency was lower among this group (minors and other non-majors). Twelve of them tested into satisfactory level in all areas while twenty-eight were below the expected level for majors in one or more sections of the test. Thanks to a PRAC grant, this Fall 2013 the program administered an external online test to students in S313. The results of the language proficiency test at the entry level for the major showed that, as expected, a few students placed in the Advanced level, but most placed in the Intermediate Low to intermediate High range of language proficiency, especially in the productive skills (speaking and writing).

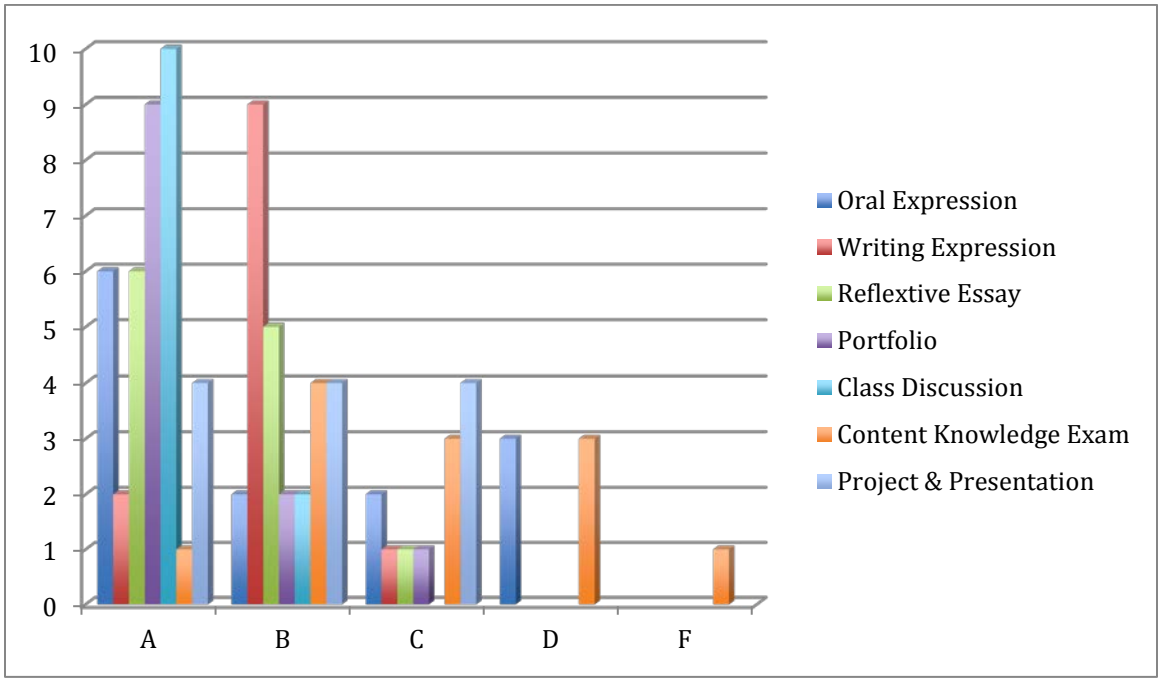
The end point for assessing student learning outcomes in Spanish is the capstone. For this course, students take a content knowledge test and prepare a portfolio which includes a reflection of their learning, sample work from different courses in the major in the areas of linguistics, culture, and literature, and an original research paper or an internship report (depending on which of the two capstone options they have selected). In addition, students give an oral presentation of their research/report to a committee composed of three faculty members who grade the students' work using analytic rubrics. The rubrics assess the students' ability to use the language, orally and in writing, at advanced level (according to our professional guidelines), and their ability to conduct research using appropriate methods of inquiry in Hispanic Studies. After the faculty committee has deliberated on their assessment of the student's abilities, the students receive a letter providing a grade for each category evaluated and a qualitative assessment of the student's strengths and weaknesses, with recommendations for further improvement.

The program has collected data on the capstone since 2008. It is now in the process of analyzing the data for program assessment purposes. For Spring 2013, for example, the following summative data is available:

Content test results Spring 2013:

Overall Grade	Number of Students
A	1
B	4
C	3
D	3
F	1

Capstone Spring 2013: Grades for each component (Results based on 12 students who completed the course)



In Fall 2013 students in the Spanish capstone were externally tested for language proficiency level (funded by a PRAC grant). The results revealed that, for this group, five out of eight students placed in the target Advanced reading level and six out of eight students placed in Advanced listening. In the productive skills, speaking and writing, however, the majority of the students placed in the Intermediate Mid and Intermediate High level, and only one in Advanced.

The program is now in the process of completing the analysis and interpreting the cumulative data from the last five years in order to assess if the curriculum addresses all of our SLOs satisfactorily.

School-Level Data Analysis

This section is based on data from five sources: the results from faculty ratings of student PUL achievement, the School's 2013 continuing student survey, the results from the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement, the retention reports from the Office of Information Management and Institutional Research (IMIR), and credit hour reports from the same office (see "References" at the end of the report). The continuing student survey results will be compared with the results from the 2011 survey, which were featured in the last School of Liberal Arts PRAC report, and the PUL results will be compared with similar results from the same 2011 report in order to identify changes in outcomes relevant to SLA efforts in each area.

Direct Measure: Faculty Ratings of Student PUL Achievement

As in the 2011-2012 Academic Year Assessment Report for the School of Liberal Arts, one direct measure for this report is faculty evaluation of student achievement of the various PULs. This evaluation is contained in the IMIR report IUPUI Faculty Ratings of Student Performance on Principles of Undergraduate Learning: Report for School of Liberal Arts (2013). As was true of its predecessor, referred to in the 2011-2012 assessment report, the 2013 PUL report breaks out results by PUL and by course level. Thus, for each PUL, a separate table has been prepared showing results for each course level (from 100 level to 400 level) and for each category of evaluation (from Not Effective to Very Effective). While the 2013 report was based on five semesters, Spring 2010 to Spring 2012, the 2013 report is based on those five semesters plus Fall 2012 and Spring 2013.

The results show, first, that the means (the number of respondents to each item) were up from the previous report as might be expected, although, in some areas, the response level remains low, as was pointed out in the previous SLA report. As was true in the 2011-2012 report, faculty assessed the majority of SLA students at the Effective or Very Effective level, with the exception of Integration and Application of Knowledge (PUL 3) at the 100 level, and Quantitative Skills and Information Skills (PULs 1B and 1C respectively) at the 200 level. Noteworthy gains occurred for PUL 1B, Quantitative Skills, at the 100 level; Quantitative Skills, Integration and Application of Knowledge (PUL 3), and Understanding Society and Culture (PUL 5) at the 200 level; Written, Oral, and Visual Communication Skills (PUL 1A) at the 300 level; and Written, Oral, and Visual Communication Skills (PUL 1A) and Integration and Application of Knowledge (PUL 3) at the 400 level. The gains in written communication and integration of knowledge are important in that, at this point in their careers, students are working with information in their majors, and the achievements here suggest that faculty are having an important impact on students as they complete their majors.

A more specific comparison reveals some positive trends in the evaluation for students. (Note: what will be reported here are trends for the "PUL with Major Emphasis" tables of the report). For example, slight gains occurred for PUL 1a, Written, Oral, and Visual Communication, and PUL 1B, Quantitative Skills, at the Very Effective level in the table reporting results from 100 level courses. Declines are noted for PULs 2 through 6 (Critical Thinking, Integration and Application of Knowledge, Intellectual Depth, Breath, and Adaptiveness, Understanding Society and Culture, and Values and Ethics) in the same

table. At the 200 level, gains occurred in PUL 1B, PUL 3, and PUL 5, with drops occurring for PULs 1A, 1C, 2 (a slight drop), and 6. Data for PUL 4 do not appear to have been updated. At the 300 level, gains occur for PULs 1A and 6, while drops or slight drops occur for 1C, 2, 3, 4, and 5. (The data for 1B do not appear to have been updated or were not available for the 2013 report.) At the 400 level, gains occur for PUL 1A and 3, while drops occur for 2, 4, and 5.

The faculty ratings tables can be seen below:

Faculty Ratings of School of Liberal Arts Student Performance on PULs with Major Emphasis (100 Level & Lower)

PUL – Major Emphasis	Mean [2]	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Total
1A. Written, Oral, & Visual Communication Skills	9,087 3.07	833 9.2%	1315 14.5%	3317 36.5%	3622 39.9%	9,087 100.0%
1B. Quantitative Skills	2,277 3.19	188 8.3%	265 11.6%	753 33.1%	1071 47.0%	2,277 100.0%
1C. Information Resource Skills	72 2.94	2 2.8%	16 22.2%	38 52.8%	16 22.2%	72 100.0%
2. Critical Thinking	3,271 2.95	372 11.4%	535 16.4%	1257 38.4%	1107 33.8%	3,271 100.0%
3. Integration and Application of Knowledge	1,749 2.68	215 12.3%	474 27.1%	719 41.1%	341 19.5%	1,749 100.0%
4. Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness	524 3.01	77 14.7%	59 11.3%	172 32.8%	216 41.2%	524 100.0%
5. Understanding Society and Culture	9,880 3.06	952 9.6%	1714 17.4%	2986 30.2%	4228 42.8%	9,880 100.0%
6. Values and Ethics	870 3.30	62 7.1%	101 11.6%	221 25.4%	486 55.9%	870 100.0%
Total [1]	27,730 3.04	2701 9.7%	4479 16.2%	9463 34.1%	11087 40.0%	27,730 100.0%

[1] Combined number of student ratings in all 100-level courses sampled in Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013. A student may be evaluated more than once if he or she is taking more than one 100 level course.

[2] Scale: 1 = "Not Effective", 2 = "Somewhat Effective", 3 = "Effective", 4 = "Very Effective"

Faculty Ratings of School of Liberal Arts Student Performance on PULs with Major Emphasis (200 Level)

PUL – Major Emphasis	Mean [2]	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Total
1A. Written, Oral, & Visual Communication Skills	3,132 3.26	163 5.2%	329 10.5%	1186 37.9%	1454 46.4%	3,132 100.0%
1B. Quantitative Skills	706 2.67	111 15.7%	211 29.9%	187 26.5%	197 27.9%	706 100.0%
1C. Information Resource Skills	48 2.48	9 18.8%	17 35.4%	12 25.0%	10 20.8%	48 100.0%
2. Critical Thinking	1,549 2.96	143 9.2%	301 19.4%	575 37.1%	530 34.2%	1,549 100.0%
3. Integration and Application of Knowledge	641 2.74	112 17.5%	103 16.1%	266 41.5%	160 25.0%	641 100.0%
4. Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness	100 3.23	6 6.0%	14 14.0%	31 31.0%	49 49.0%	100 100.0%
5. Understanding Society and Culture	3,902 2.89	465 11.9%	684 17.5%	4568 40.2%	1185 30.4%	3,902 100.0%
6. Values and Ethics	361 3.11	22 6.1%	67 18.6%	123 34.1%	149 41.3%	361 100.0%
Total [1]	10,439 2.99	1031 9.9%	1726 16.5%	3948 37.8%	3734 35.8%	10,439 100.0%

[1] Combined number of student ratings in all 200-level courses sampled in Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013. A student may be evaluated more than once if he or she is taking more than one 200 level course.

[2] Scale: 1 = "Not Effective", 2 = "Somewhat Effective", 3 = "Effective", 4 = "Very Effective"

Faculty Ratings of School of Liberal Arts Student Performance on PULs with Major Emphasis (300 Level)

PUL – Major Emphasis	Mean [2]	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Total
1A. Written, Oral, & Visual Communication Skills	1,469	56	139	482	792	1,469
	3.37	3.8%	9.5%	32.8%	53.9%	100.0%
1B. Quantitative Skills	45	1	4	17	23	45
	3.38	2.2%	8.9%	37.8%	51.1%	100.0%
1C. Information Resource Skills	275	15	47	111	102	275
	3.09	5.5%	17.1%	40.4%	37.1%	100.0%
2. Critical Thinking	1,387	98	186	556	547	1,387
	3.12	7.1%	13.4%	40.1%	39.4%	100.0%
3. Integration and Application of Knowledge	1,321	112	219	405	585	1,321
	3.11	8.5%	16.6%	30.7%	44.3%	100.0%
4. Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness	537	31	45	155	306	537
	3.37	5.8%	8.4%	28.9%	57.0%	100.0%
5. Understanding Society and Culture	3,917	275	444	1063	2135	3,917
	3.29	7.0%	11.3%	27.1%	54.5%	100.0%
6. Values and Ethics	165	8	14	26	117	165
	3.53	4.9%	8.5%	15.8%	70.9%	100.0%
Total [1]	9,116	596	1098	2815	4607	9,116
	3.25	6.5%	12.0%	30.9%	50.5%	100.0%

[1] Combined number of student ratings in all 300-level courses sampled in Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013. A student may be evaluated more than once if he or she is taking more than one 300 level course.

[2] Scale: 1 = "Not Effective", 2 = "Somewhat Effective", 3 = "Effective", 4 = "Very Effective"

Faculty Ratings of School of Liberal Arts Student Performance on PULs with Major Emphasis (400 Level)

PUL – Major Emphasis	Mean [2]	Not Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Total
1A. Written, Oral, & Visual Communication Skills	263	8	26	104	125	263
	3.32	3.0%	9.9%	39.5%	47.5%	100.0%
1B. Quantitative Skills	11	1	1	8	1	11
	2.82	9.1%	9.1%	72.7%	9.1%	100.0%
1C. Information Resource Skills	2	1	0	1	0	2
	2.00	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2. Critical Thinking	257	17	20	106	114	257
	3.23	6.6%	7.8%	41.3%	44.4%	100.0%
3. Integration and Application of Knowledge	741	45	54	260	382	741
	3.32	6.1%	7.3%	35.1%	51.6%	100.0%
4. Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness	286	16	33	89	148	286
	3.29	5.6%	11.5%	31.1%	51.8%	100.0%
5. Understanding Society and Culture	1195	74	123	356	642	1195
	3.31	6.19%	10.3%	29.8%	53.7%	100.0%
6. Values and Ethics	8	1	2	2	3	8
	2.88	12.5%	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	100.0%
Total [1]	2,763	163	259	926	1415	2,763
	3.30	5.9%	9.4%	33.5%	51.2%	100.0%

[1] Combined number of student ratings in all 400-level courses sampled in Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013. A student may be evaluated more than once if he or she is taking more than one 400 level course.

[2] Scale: 1 = "Not Effective", 2 = "Somewhat Effective", 3 = "Effective", 4 = "Very Effective"

Indirect Measure: Continuing Student Survey

In their report to the School of Liberal Arts, 2013 Continuing Student Survey: Summary Report for the School of Liberal Arts (2013), Steven Graunke and Rachel Tomasik identify areas of strength as well as areas of opportunity. Areas of strength include foreign language coursework, and areas of opportunity include use of technology in the classroom and quality of specially equipped classrooms (Table 5).

Of interest as well are comparisons between the "Mean" results of the two surveys. As one compares the 2011 results with the 2013 results, one sees a rise in the Mean results in the category identified as "Knowledge and Skills." Within this category are listed the PULs and below them descriptions of skills associated with each. So, for example, under "Core Communication and Quantitative Skills," one description reads, "Read and understood book, articles, and instruction manuals." Below it, a second one reads, "Formally communicate ideas and information." One can see similar descriptions reported in the 2011 SLA report (in the continuing student survey section), and comparisons between the results there and in the present 2013 survey show improvements in the mean values. For example, for the description, "Read and understood book, articles, and instruction manuals," the 2011 SLA report identifies the mean value as 3.44. In the 2013 IMIR Continuing Student Survey, the same description has a mean value of 3.62. This increase in the mean can be seen for other descriptions except "Recognize which ideas or materials need to be fully acknowledged to avoid plagiarism" (under Core Communication), "Analyze different ideas and proposed solutions" (under Critical Thinking), "Discuss challenging problems with peers to develop a solution" (under Critical Thinking), "Deal with Conflict among Coworkers and Friends" (under Understanding Society and Culture), "See the relationships among local, national, and global issues" (under Understanding Society and Culture), and "Understand and appreciate the arts" (under Values and Ethics).

Sample tabulation results from the two continuing student surveys follow. The first is from the 2013 survey:

SECTION 1:
OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION WITH IUPUI

Knowledge and Skills

Table 2
Knowledge and Skills [ab]

	N	Mean	STD	Standard Error	IUPUI Mean	Effect Size
Please indicate how effectively you can perform each of these skills…						
Core Communication and Quantitative Skills						
Read and understand book, articles, and instruction manuals	159	3.62	0.62	0.05	3.46	0.24
Formally communicate ideas and information	159	3.53	0.67	0.05	3.41	0.19
Write a final report	159	3.50	0.71	0.06	3.37	0.19
Communicate with a team to solve problems	159	3.37	0.77	0.06	3.44	-0.10
Solve mathematical problems	159	2.93	0.93	0.07	3.06	-0.16
Use mathematics in everyday life	159	2.94	0.93	0.07	3.08	-0.16
Understand a statistical report	159	2.73	0.96	0.08	2.83	-0.12
Support and argument using quantitative data	159	3.03	0.88	0.07	3.08	-0.05
Identify sources of information that are most appropriate for a project	159	3.44	0.88	0.05	3.35	0.13
Recognize which ideas or materials need to be fully acknowledged to avoid plagiarizing	158	3.53	0.69	0.06	3.43	0.14
Use computer software	158	3.41	0.71	0.06	3.43	-0.02
Evaluate the quality and accuracy of information found on a website	158	3.46	0.70	0.06	3.39	0.10
Critical Thinking						
Analyze different ideas and proposed solutions	158	3.47	0.69	0.06	3.42	0.09
Systematically review your own ideas about how to approach an issue	158	3.45	0.70	0.06	3.37	0.12
Generate new ideas about how to approach an issue	158	3.41	0.70	0.05	3.33	0.12
Generate new ideas about how to improve things	158	3.46	0.68	0.05	3.36	0.14
Discuss challenging problems with peers to develop a solution	157	3.31	0.78	0.06	3.34	-0.03

The second is from the 2011 survey, as reported in the 2011-2012 Academic Year Assessment:

Core Communication and Quantitative Skills

PUL		Mean	STD	SE	IUPUI Mean	Effect size
1(2)	Read and understand books, articles, and instruction manuals	3.44	0.69	0.06	3.38	0.09
1(1)	Formally communicate ideas and information	3.44	0.70	0.06	3.37	0.11
1(1)	Write a final report	3.41	0.70	0.06	3.28	0.18
1(1)	Communicate with a team to solve problems	3.32	0.75	0.07	3.37	-0.08
1(4)	Solve mathematical problems*	2.64	0.88	0.08	3.05	-0.48
1(4)	Use mathematics in everyday life*	2.74	0.93	0.08	3.06	-0.37
1(4)	Understand a statistical report	2.64	0.89	0.08	2.75	-0.13
1(4)	Support an argument using quantitative data	2.98	0.88	0.08	3.01	-0.04
1(5)	Identify sources of information that are most appropriate for a project	3.39	0.73	0.06	3.32	0.09
1(5)	Recognize which ideas or materials need to be fully acknowledged to avoid plagiarizing*	3.56	0.60	0.05	3.39	0.25
1(5)	Use computer software	3.36	0.69	0.06	3.43	-0.10
1(5)	Evaluate the quality and accuracy of information found on a website	3.45	0.67	0.06	3.32	0.19
	N=132-133					

[a]Scale: 4 = "Very Effective", 3 = "Effective, 2 = "Somewhat Effective", 1 = "Not at all Effective" * Denotes effect size greater than 0.2 or less than -0.2

Critical Thinking

PUL		Mean	STD	SE	IUPUI Mean	Effect Size
2(2)	Analyze different ideas and proposed solutions*	3.49	0.61	0.05	3.35	0.21
2(4)	Systematically review your own ideas about how to approach an issue	3.37	0.68	0.06	3.30	0.10
2(4)	Generate new ideas about how to approach an issue	3.36	0.75	0.07	3.28	0.11
2(4)	Generate new ideas about how to improve things	3.31	0.80	0.07	3.32	-0.01
2(4)	Discuss challenging problems with peers to develop a solution	3.33	0.81	0.07	3.30	0.05
	N=131-132					

Scale: 4 = "Very Effective", 3 = "Effective, 2 = "Somewhat Effective", 1 = "Not at all Effective"
* Denotes effect size greater than 0.2 or less than -0.2

Indirect Measure: Results from the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement

Data from NSSE 2012 concerning learning gains underscored areas of strength for SLA as well as areas for concern.

Seniors enrolled in SLA identified Writing as an area of strength. Given the commitment of our writing program faculty, along with the writing intensive assignments in many of the Liberal Arts courses, it would be surprising if this was not an area of strength. Varied Experiences was also an area of strength, one that again lines up with the goals of a Liberal Arts education. Finally, SLA seniors highlighted General Education as a strength in SLA. Given the emphasis on general education on the campus level, with all the work that has been done to establish a general education framework for the campus and coordinated with the transferable core of general education courses state wide as mandated by the Indiana legislature, this strength speaks to SLA's role in contributing to a robust general education for students at IUPUI.

The survey also pointed out assets to protect; that is, learning gains that, perhaps with work, could be developed into strengths. These included the overall categories of Academic Challenge, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Gains in Personal and Social Skills.

SLA needs to be mindful, according to the survey, of Active Collaborative Learning, Information Technology, and Supportive Campus Environment. Part of what the survey points toward is the need for SLA to think through ways to fold more collaborative learning into its courses as appropriate. In addition, recognizing the need for greater computer literacy, SLA has, in Spring 2013, passed a new set of BA requirements that has computer literacy as a benchmark for its students, a new addition to the degree requirements.

Finally, the survey suggests a number of areas that present SLA with opportunities for improvement. Of these, the school is taking steps especially to help students with gaining so-called Practical Skills. One way the school is addressing this issue is through the development of a course for SLA students that helps students understand, articulate, and apply the skills they gain from courses in the Liberal Arts. In addition, SLA is exploring a number of collaborative efforts with other schools that would combine training in the Liberal Arts with majors, minors, certificates, and coursework in the professional schools. A few of these are already in place; more, hopefully, will be developed over the next few years.

The relevant data from the NSSE survey of learning gains is provided in the table below, courtesy of IMIR.

TABLE 2
BENCHMARK, SCALELET, AND LEARNING GAINS SCORES FOR SENIORS ENROLLED IN THE SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	IUPUI Mean	Effect Size
Level of Academic Challenge[1]*	121	58.3	14.5	1.30	56.7	0.11
Writing[a]	115	48.2	16.6	1.53	44.4	0.23
Higher-Order Thinking Skills	118	68.4	17.8	1.62	67.6	0.04
Course Challenge[c]	118	62.7	14.8	1.35	63.9	-0.07
Active and Collaborative Learning[c]	123	49.2	17.5	1.56	52.4	-0.17
Active Learning	117	53.3	19.7	1.80	53.4	-0.00*
Collaborative Learning [d]	118	45.6	19.4	1.76	51.4	-0.29
Student-Faculty Interaction	119	40.1	20.7	1.87	39.8	0.01
Course Interaction	117	51.7	21.7	1.98	50.7	0.04
Out-of-Class Interaction	115	28.2	26.8	2.47	28.4	-0.01
Enriching Educational Experiences [b]	119	43.2	19.5	1.77	39.8	0.19
Varied Experiences[a]	112	36.6	20.6	1.93	32.3	0.22
Diversity [b]	117	59.6	25.7	2.35	55.8	0.14
Information Technology[c]	114	74.7	19.0	1.76	77.7	-0.16
Supportive Campus Environment[c]	119	54.3	20.5	1.86	57.0	-0.14
Support for Student Success[c]	118	41.8	24.4	2.22	42.9	-0.05
Interpersonal Environment[d]	119	66.4	21.2	1.93	71.0	-0.23
Gains in General Education[a]	119	77.5	23.1	2.09	72.8	0.20
Gains in Personal and Social Skills [b]	115	57.1	26.3	2.43	54.9	0.09
Gains in Practical Skills [d]	118	64.9	27.3	2.49	72.5	-0.32

'"Area of strength"
[b] "Asset to protect"
[c] "Issue to be mindful of
[d] "Opportunity for Improvement"
*** Effect size between -0.005 and 0.00**

Indirect Measure: Retention Reports

One-year retention rates have been trending up for the School. In the five-year period 2007-2008 to 2011-2012, rates among freshmen have climbed from 70% to 78%. In the same period, rates among juniors and seniors climbed from 78% to 82%, and rates for all Liberal Arts undergraduates in the School trended up from 75% to 81%. In comparison, rates for the campus went up for freshmen from 70% to 74%, for juniors and seniors from 83% to 85%, and for all

undergraduates from 77% to 80%. These comparisons show that the School of Liberal Arts had increases in rates of retention that were greater than for the campus as a whole, attesting to faculty efforts to make student experience meaningful.

The relevant charts from the IMIR web site appear below:

Liberal Arts

ONE -YEAR RETENTION RATE - FALL TO FALL SEMESTER	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12
Freshmen/Sophomore (%)	70	75	75	76	78
Junior/Senior (%)	78	80	82	80	82
All Undergraduates (%)	75	78	80	79	81

IUPUI Indianapolis only

ONE -YEAR RETENTION RATE - FALL TO FALL SEMESTER	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12
Freshmen/Sophomore (%)	70	74	75	74	74
Junior/Senior (%)	83	85	86	85	85
All Undergraduates (%)	77	80	81	80	80

Next Steps

Much of the literature in assessment refers to "closing the loop." Of course, in some cases, "starting the loop" may be most appropriate. In a school as diverse as Liberal Arts, there is a diversity of engagement with formal assessment language and methods. Some departments are rather far along; others, less so. The same holds true for individual faculty.

Within the next semester, the school will form a working group on assessment, pulling together the faculty who already have invested time and effort into formal assessment work. There is a core of people in SLA--the writing program, world languages and culture, and communication studies spring to mind as sources for participants and are well represented in this report--who are interested in assessment issues. There are others who are curious. Meetings will be a place to share best practices, design strategy, and learn from others on campus. While departments will always have to think about how to assess specific disciplinary knowledge and methods, the PULs and the new general education framework should provide common ground for creating at least some sort of overarching assessment goals for SLA.

Departments will be encouraged to expand on the assessment of learning in their yearly departmental reports. This could be a good way for departments to incremental develop material for their program reviews. One place to start would be for a department to examine the assessment of student learning sections of previous program reviews and see how they have developed (or not) over time.

Departments and programs will be invited to send representatives to a meeting to begin to examine the capstone experiences in the departments and programs. Anecdotally, many departments appear to be disappointed to some degree in the capstone courses, in the sense that students sometimes are not able to do what is required by the capstone as well as faculty think they should. The above example from Spanish is one example. The question is: why are the students not performing at the level an instructor expects? If it turns out that it is not a matter of unrealistic expectations, then it is a matter of curriculum; what has not happened in the major that should have, and how does one go about thinking

through a solution to address that situation. In other words, here is an opportunity for majors to think about what is expected in the capstone, and then reverse engineer, so to speak, the expected learning outcomes for lower level courses. Indeed, perhaps the desire to create the best capstone experience possible will lead to an engagement with the assessment of learning process that naturally benefits the curriculum at all levels of undergraduate learning.

The survey work performed in the Department of Communication Studies could be a model for other departments to follow as a building block in the assessment of graduate learning. Though an indirect means of assessment, such survey work could lead a department to think about ways direct assessment could be more advantageously undertaken.

Conclusion

The School of Liberal Arts is composed of faculty who have devoted themselves to studying, creating, and communicating knowledge about ways of being human, whether in literary expression, social groupings, or economic patterns and activity. This report started with an introduction that questioned how the lofty rhetoric involved in explicating the value of the Liberal Arts could be tied to the down-to-earth realities of assessment. It is, of course, a false dichotomy. Rhetoric, even that which elevates, is still, at heart, about communicating the knowledge of things. There is a reason that it stood, for centuries, at the heart of western education as part of the trivium--grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

In the coming year, the School of Liberal Arts will continue to think through how best to grapple with assessment strategies that work for Liberal Arts courses. In some ways, the skills set part of the equation is the easiest to assess; the habits of mind part, perhaps more difficult to assess. But both are important, and it is important to assess how well students learn and embody the skills and disciplines of thought. The more and better we can actually understand and express our assessment of student learning, the closer our rhetoric will be to our students' reality.

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