

CORE 210 Assessment – 2014-15 Report



Dr. Phyllis Bolin
Dr. Brenda Bender

In order to assess outcomes 1.1A¹, 1.1B², 1.1C³, 1.2A⁴, 1.2B⁵, 1.3A⁶, and 1.3B⁷ from the QEP document, the CORE 210 research artifact was collected. From a set of 840 enrolled students, 820 papers were collected (97.6%). A random sample of 75 papers was selected from CORE 210 sections delivered in fall 2014 and spring 2015.

The assessment team consisted of the same 5 faculty members from the previous year – Dr. Brenda Bender (Communication Disorders), Dr. Joshua Brokaw, (Biology), Dr. Jason Holland (Mathematics), Mr. J. Scott Self (Alpha Academic Services), Dr. Jeanine Varner (Language and Literature).

Each paper was rated by 2 members of the assessment team. The scores from rater 1 and rater 2 were averaged for each SLO for each paper in the sample. These averages scores were used to calculate the total average score for each SLO, the number of papers meeting the acceptable target and the composite scores. Composite scores were calculated by adding the rubric scores for each SLO (e.g., 1.1.A + 1.1.B + 1.1.C). Percentages of papers meeting acceptable target scores were calculated by dividing by the number of papers in the sample.

Two assessments were conducted in 2014-2015, one for students enrolled in fall courses and one for students enrolled in spring courses. This was done in order to allow time for adjustments in curriculum or pedagogy.

SLOs assessed in 2014-2015:

- ¹ Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
 - ² Students will access the needed information effectively and efficiently.
 - ³ Students will use information ethically and legally.
 - ⁴ Student will describe theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case or problem.
 - ⁵ Students will describe findings and interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem.
 - ⁶ Students will evaluate information and its sources critically.
 - ⁷ Students will use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
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Background

CORE 210 courses were developed to target specific skills and outcomes that linked to the fundamental understandings found in the foundation of the general education curriculum approved by faculty in 2007. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Strong analytical, communication, quantitative, and information skills;
- Deep understanding of and hands-on experience with inquiry practices that explore the natural, socio-cultural, aesthetic, and religious realms and habits of mind that foster integrative thinking; and
- Ability to transfer skills and knowledge from one setting to another.

Throughout the many changes and modifications to the CORE sequence and the CORE 210 course, the finds of the assessment team indicate CORE 210 is targeting the stated goals and outcomes in the QEP initiative.

Results

SLO 1.1.A

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In 2014-15, 74.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; meeting the acceptable target and approaching the ideal target for this SLO. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a slight drop in this SLO for this year.

	Obj. 1.1.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
ONE	Determine Information Needed	Score > 2.5	63.6%	75.0%	74.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Met	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Approaching	Approaching
		Average of all samples	2.67	2.63	2.71

SLO 1.1.B

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In 2014-15, 72% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; meeting the acceptable target for this SLO. The ideal target is not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

TWO	Obj. 1.1.B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Access and Use Information	Score > 2.5	No assessment	61.7%	72%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	No assessment	Approaching	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	No assessment	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	No assessment	2.45	2.59

SLO 1.1.C

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In 2014-15, 66.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the acceptable target and ideal target for this SLO were not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates an increase in this outcome for this year.

THREE	Obj. 1.1.C	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Information Use Strategies	Score > 2.5	70.5%	61.7%	66.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	MET	Approaching	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.63	2.5	2.66

SLO 1.1 Composite

The QEP report calls for a composite score for 7.5 for SLOs ONE, TWO and THREE. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 62.67% of sampled papers received a rubric

rating of 7.5 or higher; the acceptable target and the ideal target were not met for this SLO. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a slight increase for this year.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.1	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Total > 7.5	63.6% (total > 5.0)	60.0%	62.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Not met	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	5.29 (total > 5.0)	7.59	7.96

SLO 1.2.A

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In fall of 2014-15, 62.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the SLO is approaching the acceptable target score; the ideal target score is not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

FOUR	Obj. 1.2.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Score > 2.5	63.6%	41.7%	62.67%
	Describe Relevant Theories	Acceptable Target (70%)	Approaching	Not met	Approaching
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.5	2.16	2.54

SLO 1.2.B

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

FIVE	Obj. 1.2.B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
	Analysis Applied to Situation	Score > 2.5		63.6%	48.3%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)		Approaching	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		2.53	2.27	2.41

SLO 1.2 Composite

The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLOs FOUR and FIVE. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In 2014-15, 56% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 5.0 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.2	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
		Total > 5.0		59.1%	36.7%	56%
		Acceptable Target (70%)		Not Met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		5.03	4.44	4.96

SLO 1.3.A

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

SIX	Obj. 1.3.A	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Evaluate Information	Score > 2.5	50%	40%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.27	2.15	2.36

SLO 1.3.B

The QEP report calls for an **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In 2014-15, 70.67% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; the acceptable target is met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

SEVEN	Obj. 1.3B	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	Use Information for a Purpose	Score > 2.5	65.9%	55.0%	70.67%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Minimally Met	Not met	Met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.67	2.4	2.54

SLO 1.3 Composite

The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLOs SIX and SEVEN. An **acceptable target** of 70% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher and an **ideal target** of 80% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In 2014-15, 57.33% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 5.0 or higher; target scores for this SLO are not met. A comparison with 2013-2014 data indicates a substantive increase for this year.

COMPOSITE	Obj. 1.3	CORE 210	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		Total > 5.0	50%	43%	57.33%
		Acceptable Target (70%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (80%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	4.94	4.55	4.91

Factors to consider for the 2014-2015 assessment:

Significant Changes to Assessment Rubric. Looking back at the history of the course, the CORE 210 rubric was significantly revised for the YEAR 3 assessment. The first major revision occurred in SLO 1.1.A and 1.1.C following the changes made by the CORE 110 assessment team. Each of these rubric items assessed more than one skill; therefore, the two skills/outcomes were rated separately and the two ratings were averaged to determine the rubric score for each item. This change allowed for a more specific rating of each skill for SLO 1.1. In addition, the term “theories” in SLO 1.2.A and 1.2.B was very difficult to apply to the assignments generated from CORE 210. This year the language of these SLOs was revised to “...theories or perspectives” to allow for a broader application of the SLO especially as the BCOR 310 assessment team launched this year. When you understand these changes, Year 4 shows an improvement from the previous year, a large step in the right direction.

Improvements found in CORE 110--Cornerstone. If adaptations and pedagogical improvements are considered, the CORE 210 assessment data may be on the verge of a major improvement in the assessment data. If you compare the data from CORE 110—Cornerstone, assessment results have taken about 3 years of “closing the loop” and using assessment results to improve the assignment prompt, the pedagogy of faculty, and the learning strategies in order to show significant improvements in assessment results. Cornerstone results from 2014-2015 were outstanding, so it is hoped that similar improvements in assessment results will occur for CORE 210 in 2015-2016.

Observations:

The data indicate:

- Students are meeting the criteria for SLO 1.1; determining the nature and extent of the information needed, accessing the needed information effectively and efficiently, and using information ethically and legally.
 - Objective 1.1.C continues to be an area where papers fall short of the acceptable target rating. The assessment team observed students struggle with providing citations consistently – frequently not citing a source for information of a factual nature in introductory information and when giving their opinion. In addition, paraphrase and/or summary information was frequently too broad.
- Students are not meeting the criteria for SLO 1.2; describing theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case or problem and describing findings and interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem. However, substantive increases in performance were noted between 2013-14 and 2014-15; a 20% increase was observed in the composite score for this SLO.
 - The substantive increase in this SLO is attributable in part to the availability of the writing prompts to the assessment team. When the writing prompt is available, the team is able to assess the paper based on the expectations set forth by the instructor. The assessment team was able to match the rating level on the rubric to the content of the paper through the lens of the writing prompt.
- Students are not meeting one of the two criteria for SLO 1.3; evaluating information and its sources critically. However, students did meet the criteria of using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose for this SLO. A substantive increase of 17% was noted in the other SLO, evaluating information between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

The Assessment Team had access to the writing prompts from the sections of CORE 210 taught in the fall and spring which was extremely helpful in determining how well the paper met the expectations for the assignment. In particular, assessment of a paper meeting the intended purpose was facilitated by having the writing prompt.

Commendations:

Thesis statements were readily identifiable in the majority of papers. This is noted in the improvements for SLO 1.1. The CORE 210 faculty are clearly helping students know the importance of the thesis statement. In addition, several writing prompts that were available to the assessment team were very detailed and assisted the team in understanding the expectations of the paper when applying the rubric.

The papers assessed this year made significant improvements in describing the theories or perspectives relevant to the thesis statement [SLO 1.2.A]. This is another area where the CORE 210 faculty should be commended. It is the opinion of the assessment team that this observation is attributable to the specificity of many of the writing prompts coupled with the improvements in defining the scope of the thesis statement.

Suggestions:

The assessment team continues to encourage the CORE 210 faculty to refine the writing prompts to assist students in knowing specific expectations of this paper. In addition, incorporating particular pieces of the EXPLORE II Rubric into the specific expectations of the writing prompt would benefit the student as well as the instructor. Suggested objectives from the rubric to address in the writing rubrics include Objectives 1.1.C, 1.2.A, 1.2.B and 1.3.A.

In SLO 1.1, the area of most concern is citing information ethically and legally. Most papers had evidence of the legal aspect of citations – a source was cited for some of the information in the paper. The ethical use of information continues to be problematic. In particular, citing sources in introductory paragraphs and when presenting an informed opinion. The team acknowledges the sophisticated nature of this skill; however, the team encourages CORE 210 faculty to provide students feedback on this specific skill on drafts and the final paper.

Assessment rubric – limitations:

The assessment team continues to work through the tension of the differing expectations across the rubric levels for each objective. In particular, the team struggled to differentiate between the competent and emerging levels of Objective 1.2.B – the difference between these two levels is the use of professional language. Each semester the team has to identify a working definition of professional language during the norming process. Often, it is defined by what professional language is not – colloquial terms, poor grammar – as opposed to what it is.

In objective 1.3.A there is a significant amount of tension between the levels of competent, emerging and unacceptable. Interpreting and evaluating information is targeted. These three levels on the rubric refer to identifying assumptions and relevant contexts when presenting a position. If the writing prompt does not define the position or positions the paper is to address the team is left to assess this very broadly. The differences between rubric levels is indicated by non-specific referents such as “...several relevant contexts...” and “...some assumptions...” and “emerging awareness of present assumptions”.