

2007

University Studies Annual Assessment 2006-2007

Portland State University. University Studies Program

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University Studies 2006-2007 Assessment Report

Executive Summary

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the University Studies program continued to use existing survey instruments to conduct assessment at the Freshman, Sophomore and Senior levels. Prior Learning, Early-, Mid- and End-of-year Surveys were administered in the year-long Freshman Inquiry courses. End-of-term evaluations were administered in Sophomore Inquiry courses and Capstone Student Experience surveys were administered in Capstone courses. In addition to these survey instruments, student learning related to University Studies goals was assessed through student portfolios at the Freshman-level and a pilot assessment of student work samples conducted at the Capstone-level.

From student responses to the End-of-year, End-of-term and Capstone Student Experience surveys it is clear that University Studies goals are being addressed at all levels of the program. Across all of the surveys, students were asked whether they had opportunities to engage in learning related to University Studies goals. On all but two items, students' average agreement rating was 3.9 or higher on a 5-point agreement scale (4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree). In both FRINQ and SINQ students were least likely to agree that they had opportunities to develop skills expressing themselves orally or opportunities to learn how to find and use resources to solve problems. FRINQ and SINQ students agreed that their faculty showed a personal interest in their learning and used a variety of methods to evaluate their performance. Additionally, students agreed that SINQ faculty related course material to real-life situations.

At the FRINQ level, student portfolios were reviewed using the Communication and Diversity rubrics. The Communication goal consists of Writing and Quantitative Literacy which are each evaluated with a separate rubric. The portfolio review suggests that students' learning related to writing and diversity have remained relatively consistent over the last three administrations (2003, 2005, 2007) although writing scores fell slightly and diversity scores increased slightly between 2005 and 2007. The quantitative literacy rubric was adjusted this year to better reflect quantitative reasoning rather than mastery of statistical techniques and language, so comparison with previous years was not possible. This year for the first time, student portfolios were also evaluated using a checklist for each rubric to reflect the types of student work included in the portfolio. That evaluation revealed that most student portfolios include personal narratives and analytical writing, numerical data depicted in charts and graphs, and personal narratives related to diversity. Student portfolios were less likely to include first drafts of writing assignments or writing evaluating the use of quantitative data by others. These data have been provided to faculty teams representing each of the seven FRINQ themes who will use the data to identify areas of focus for the next academic year.

There was no assessment of SINQ courses beyond the End-of-term survey.

Two qualitative assessment projects were conducted by the Capstone program this year. The first compared student comments from early term assessment with student comments from the end-of-term evaluation. Students reported that faculty engaged in a number of teaching techniques that were helpful and students indicated that they broadened their understanding of themselves, their communities, and the needs of diverse groups of people. At the end of the term, when asked for suggested changes for the course, almost all students said, "nothing." For students who had suggestions, those suggestions mirrored student suggestions from the early-term assessment, however, those comments occur with much less frequency at the end of the term. The second assessment was a pilot evaluation of student final projects. The projects were examined for emerging themes as well as scored against the rubrics used for FRINQ portfolios. Generally, Capstone final projects reveal evidence of University Studies goals, but do not meet many of the requirements of the rubrics. While the final projects are very important student work, they may not be appropriate for the assessment of individual student learning. The final projects are produced by groups and allow for little reflection on personal connections to topics or reflection on learning. The Capstone program is exploring other evidence it might use to assess student learning related to University Studies goals and expects to continue that work this year.

University Studies 2006-2007 Assessment Report

FRINQ ASSESSMENT

TOOLS AND METHODS

Prior Learning Survey

Purpose: The Prior Learning Survey asked about students' academic experiences prior to attending PSU, reasons for and concerns about attending college, and early college experiences and plans. The survey results provide information to individual faculty about their students and to the program about the overall preparation and needs of the incoming freshman class.

Method: During the first two weeks of Fall 2006, Freshman Inquiry students completed a Prior Learning Assessment. This on-line survey was administered during FRINQ mentor sessions. 897 students completed the survey for a 72% response rate.

FRINQ End-of-year Survey

Purpose: The FRINQ End-of-year Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their FRINQ course over the 2006-2007 academic year. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in FRINQ.

Method: During the final three weeks of Spring term 2007, FRINQ students completed the End-of-year survey. This on-line survey was administered during mentor sessions. During Spring 2007, there were 920 students enrolled in 38 sections of FRINQ. 667 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 72.5%. 33 (86.8%) of the 38 sections were represented among respondents.

FRINQ Portfolio Review

Purpose: The FRINQ Portfolio Review process scores student portfolios against rubrics developed to measure student learning related to University Studies goals. The results provide information to faculty teams about student learning in FRINQ themes and to students' overall learning in FRINQ.

Method: Over the course of FRINQ courses, students develop portfolios representing their work and reflection relating to the four University Studies goals. During Spring 2007, students were asked for permission to evaluate their portfolios as part of program assessment for University Studies. 538 of 920 (58.5%) of students returned consent forms and 370 (40.2%) gave consent. Of these, 210 student portfolios were randomly selected for review representing 30 portfolios for each of the seven FRINQ themes. When electronic portfolios with bad URLs were excluded, we ended up reviewing 198 portfolios. This year, the portfolio review process focused on the Communication goal, represented by Writing and Quantitative Literacy, and the Diversity goal. Each goal was assessed using a 6-point rubric, where 6 is a score expected of a graduating senior. In addition to using the rubrics, each portfolio was assessed against a checklist developed to provide information about the types of assignments included in student portfolios.

ASSESSMENT DATA

FRINQ End-of-year Survey

In the FRINQ course students had the opportunity to...

Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Apply course material to improve critical thinking	3.95	0.870	79.7
Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team	4.01	0.873	79.6
Explore issues of diversity such as race; class; gender; sexual orientation; ethnicity	4.11	0.896	82.0
Develop skills in expressing myself orally.	3.74	0.951	66.3
Develop skills in expressing myself in writing	3.98	0.890	77.5
Learn how to find and use resources for answering or solving problems	3.81	0.910	71.7
Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas; arguments and multiple points of view	3.97	0.882	79.1
Explore ethical issues	4.04	0.892	78.8

The FRINQ Faculty...

Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning	4.01	0.985	77.6
Scheduled course work (class activities; tests; projects) in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work.	3.63	1.123	62.4
Formed "teams" or "discussion groups" to facilitate learning.	3.91	0.970	74.1
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course.	3.55	1.138	58.4
Explained course material clearly and concisely.	3.51	1.176	58.0
Related course material to real life situations	3.78	1.044	67.8
Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them.	3.50	1.071	53.4
Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own.	3.90	1.004	73.7
Provided timely and frequent feedback on test; reports; projects; etc. to help students improve.	3.71	1.061	66.2
Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (office visits; phone calls; e-mail; etc.)	3.82	0.976	67.6
Used a variety of methods-papers; presentations; class projects; exams; etc.- to evaluate student progress.	3.98	0.941	77.7

FRINQ Portfolio Review

Mean Portfolio Scores

	Academic Year					
	2002-2003		2004-2005		2006-2007	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>University Studies Goal</i>						
Writing	3.40	0.71	3.55	0.80	3.28*	0.87
Quantitative Literacy**					2.33	0.81
Diversity	2.48	0.80	2.03	0.79	2.39*	0.94

* Mean score is significantly different than 2004-2005, $p < .05$

** Comparison with previous years are not appropriate because the QL rubric was adjusted this year. The changes contribute to a more comprehensive rubric, but they do not allow for comparison across years.

Percentage of portfolios that included:

	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Evidence Related to Writing:</i>		
Personal Narrative	177	87.2
Analytical Writing	179	88.2
Creative Writing	62	30.5
Reflection on the Writing Process	120	59.1
Assignment Instructions	39	19.2
Outside References Integrated into Writing	155	76.4
Evidence of a First Draft	17	8.4
In text citations	89	43.8
Appropriate use of grammar throughout	153	75.4
<i>Evidence Related to Quantitative Literacy:</i>		
Data represented in charts and graphs	142	70.0
Narrative describing quantitative data	121	59.6
Evaluation of quantitative data	46	22.7
Use of the term mean	27	13.3
Use of the term median	8	3.9
Use of the term mode	2	1.0
Use of the term standard deviation	9	4.4
Use of the term statistical significance	15	7.4
Use of the term correlation	17	8.4
<i>Evidence Related to Diversity</i>		
Personal definition of diversity	109	53.7
Reference to multiple facets of diversity	115	56.7
Personal narrative related to diversity	107	52.7
Reflection related to diversity	133	65.5
Outside scholarship related to diversity	109	53.7

FINDINGS

Prior Learning Assessment

Pre-College Activities

- When students were asked to describe their activities in the year prior to attending PSU, 78.6% indicated that they were in high school. For students who weren't in high school, the most frequently cited activity was working (60%).
- In their preparation for PSU, an overwhelming majority of students reported having written at least one paper that was 5-10 pages in length (94.1%). Over half of the students reported having written at least one research paper that was 10 pages in length or longer (59.5%). 73.8% of students reported having engaged in a drafting process 5 or more times.
- 77.3% of students reported having given an oral presentation 5 or more times.
- 79.6% of the students reported having worked on a group assignment 5 or more times.

Reasons for Attending College

- The most important reasons cited for attending college were becoming better informed and gaining a general education with 78.9% and 75.3% of students rating these reasons as very important.
- Students also rated job-related reasons as very important in their return to college. 67% of students indicated they were attending or returning to college to get a better job.
- Students reported that location of the university and academic majors were the top two very important reasons for choosing PSU (67.5% and 48.7%, respectively). The cost of the institution came in third with 41.2% of students reporting that this was a very important factor in choosing PSU over another higher education institution. The least frequently cited reasons for attending PSU were reputation of athletics, a family recommendation or because friends were also attending PSU.

Academic Advising and Education Plan

- The majority of students reported receiving their academic advising for the 2006 fall term from the New Student Orientation in July (49.2%). Of the 456 students who reported that they did not attend Orientation in July, 54% attended an August or September Orientation. 14.7% of students reported receiving academic advising from sources other than university orientations, workshops, or departments (such as coaches, athletic advisors, or family and friends).
- 72% of students indicated that their immediate plans were to earn their bachelors degree from PSU. 33% of students reported the highest degree they expected to receive at PSU was a bachelors degree while 31.5% of students reported the highest degree they expected to receive at PSU was a masters degree.

FRINQ End-of-year Survey

- In general, students agreed that they had the opportunities to address all four of the University Studies goals in their FRINQ courses. Means on these items ranged from 3.74 to 4.11 on a 5-point agreement scale. When looking at the percentage of students that agreed or strongly agreed with those items, over two-thirds of students agreed or strongly agreed with each item.
- Students also generally agreed with statements about their faculty members' teaching practices. All items had means above 3.0 on a 5-point scale. Students were most likely to agree that faculty expressed a personal interest in their learning ($M = 4.01$) and used a variety of methods to evaluate student progress ($M = 3.98$). Students were less likely to agree that faculty inspired them to set and achieve challenging goals ($M = 3.51$), explained course material clearly and concisely ($M = 3.51$) or made it clear how each topic fit into the course ($M = 3.55$).
- Comparisons with Spring 2006 data were impossible because 2006 data were not complete.

FRINQ Portfolio Review

Rubric

- Over the last three reviews, the mean Writing score was consistently between 3 and 4 on a 6-point scale. When compared to scores in 2004-2005, the mean score for 2006-2007 fell significantly ($p < .05$) from 3.55 to 3.28. Mean Writing scores across the seven FRINQ teams ranged from 2.84 to 3.63.
- With a change in the Quantitative Literacy Rubric, comparisons with previous years are inappropriate. This year, the overall mean score was 2.33 on a 6-point scale. Mean Quantitative Literacy scores across the seven themes ranged from 1.87 to 2.64.
- Over the last three reviews, the mean Diversity score was consistently between a 2 and 3 on a 6-point scale. Compared to the mean score in 2004-2005, the mean score for 2006-2007 increased significantly from 2.03 to 2.39. Mean Diversity scores across the seven themes ranged from 2.07 to 2.63.

Checklist

- Almost 90% of students included evidence of personal narrative and analytical writing in their portfolios (87.2% and 88.2%, respectively). About three-quarters of students integrated outside references into their writing and used appropriate grammar throughout the portfolio (76.4% and 75.4%, respectively). Students generally did not include evidence of a first draft of their writing (8.4%), or assignment instructions (19.2%). It should be noted that first drafts and assignment instructions were not required elements of student portfolios.
- A key question related to the Quantitative Literacy checklist was how many QL assignments students included in their portfolios. The mean number of assignments was 1.54, indicating that most students included one or two assignments in their portfolio. In fact, 34.5% included one assignment and 25.1% included two assignments. Another 12% included no assignments related to Quantitative Literacy and 18% included 3 or more. When reviewing the assignments that were included in portfolios, students were most likely to have represented data using charts and graphs (70%) and to have included a narrative description of quantitative data (59.6%). Students were less likely to have included an evaluation of quantitative data used by others (22.7%). There was little evidence of the use of statistical terms such as mean (13.3%), median (3.9%), mode (1.0%), standard deviation (4.4%), statistical significance (7.4%), or correlation (8.4%).
- Over half of the student portfolios reviewed included evidence related to diversity including reflection related to diversity (65.5%), reference to multiple facets of diversity (56.7%), a personal definition of diversity (53.7%), outside scholarship related to diversity (53.7%) or a personal narrative related to diversity (52.7%).

REFLECTION

- Data from the 2005 and 2006 administrations of the FRINQ Prior Learning Assessment reveal that almost half of the freshmen who entered each year are first-generation college students, that is neither of their parents graduated from college. The program is examining ways in which to offer more targeted support to these students.
- While the Prior Learning Assessment has provided the University Studies program with important data on its entering class each fall, the survey instrument and administration can be improved so that it can be used more fully as a program assessment tool. In the next academic year, students' responses on the Prior Learning Survey will be paired with their responses from the FRINQ End-of-Year survey providing a way to examine change over the course of the year.
- Each faculty team received a summary report of their aggregate end-of-year evaluations as well as the portfolio review. They were asked to review the data as a team before the fall retreat and come prepared to discuss one aspect of their team that was successful and one issue they'd like support on from the program.

- The checklists gave good program evidence of the type of work students were including in their portfolio and allowed us to look at some discrepancies between student work, the rubrics and the connected goals. Part of the discrepancy appears to derive from the portfolio assignment itself, which may or may not reflect an issue in the curriculum. In writing, the portfolio asks students to include final copies of their best work, while in the rubric students are evaluated based on their use of drafts and the inclusion of assignment instructions. In quantitative literacy, the goal statement remains vague but the rubric asks for students to demonstrate an ability to write and critically analyze statistics and incorporate numeric charts into their own analysis.
- In order to address these discrepancies the portfolio assignment is being evaluated and suggested changes will be presented to the faculty for comment and discussion at the fall 2007 retreat. In order to better understand the writing goal and how to address it in the classroom, the goal statement will be distributed to the faculty, the portfolio results will be discussed and then strategies for incorporating more prewriting and revision steps into the curriculum will be reviewed. Moreover, the Writing Center, in collaboration with Prof. Joel Bettridge has put together a writing handbook for students in frinq which offers strategies for understanding writing as a recursive process and an instructor's manual will be distributed at the retreat. Finally, workshops on quantitative literacy and writing will be held at the retreat. Faculty have been asked to bring at least one relevant assignment for each team. Workshop facilitators will be faculty experts in these fields.

University Studies 2006-2007 Assessment Report

SINQ ASSESSMENT

METHODS AND TOOLS

SINQ End-of-term Survey

Purpose: The SINQ End-of-term Survey asked students to rate their experiences in their SINQ course. Students responded to questions about the course format, faculty pedagogical practices, and mentor contribution to the course. The results provide information to individual faculty about their course and to the program about students' overall experience in SINQ.

Method: During the final three weeks of each term during 2007, SINQ students completed the End-of-term survey. This on-line survey was administered during mentor sessions. 2271 students responded to the survey.

ASSESSMENT DATA

SINQ End-of-term Survey

In the SINQ course students had the opportunity to...

Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Apply course material to improve critical thinking	4.01	0.934	78.0
Acquire skills in working with others as a member of a team	3.90	0.970	72.9
Explore issues of diversity such as race; class; gender; sexual orientation; ethnicity	3.95	1.075	72.2
Develop skills in expressing myself orally.	3.73	1.005	64.2
Develop skills in expressing myself in writing	3.93	0.964	74.2
Learn how to find and use resources for answering or solving problems	3.76	0.967	65.9
Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas; arguments and multiple points of view	4.03	0.950	77.8
Explore ethical issues	4.01	1.000	75.9

The SINQ Faculty...

Ratings made on a scale of 1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

Displayed a personal interest in students and their learning	4.13	.965	81.0
Scheduled course work (class activities; tests; projects) in ways which encouraged students to stay up to date in their work.	3.92	1.057	74.7
Formed "teams" or "discussion groups" to facilitate learning.	3.98	1.038	74.3
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course.	3.94	1.030	75.1

Explained course material clearly and concisely.	3.81	1.090	70.1
Related course material to real life situations	4.13	.955	80.2
Inspired students to set and achieve goals which really challenged them.	3.63	1.077	59.6
Asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own.	3.99	1.020	74.7
Provided timely and frequent feedback on test; reports; projects; etc. to help students improve.	3.75	1.100	67.1
Encouraged student-faculty interaction outside of class (office visits; phone calls; e-mail; etc.)	3.76	1.020	64.1
Used a variety of methods-papers; presentations; class projects; exams; etc.- to evaluate student progress.	3.98	0.990	75.8

FINDINGS

SINQ End-of-Term Evaluation

- In general, students agreed that they had the opportunities to address all four of the University Studies goals in their SINQ courses. Means on these items ranged from 3.73 to 4.01 on a 5-point agreement scale. When looking at the percentage of students that agreed or strongly agreed with the ‘goal’ items, over two-thirds of students agreed or strongly agreed with each item.
- Students also generally agreed with statements about their faculty members’ teaching practices. All items had means above 3.6 on a 5-point scale. Students were most likely to agree that faculty expressed a personal interest in their learning ($M = 4.13$) and related course material to real life situations ($M = 4.13$). Students were less likely to agree that faculty inspired them to set and achieve challenging goals ($M = 3.63$).
- Comparisons with 2006 were impossible because 2006 data were not complete.

REFLECTION

Perhaps the most troubling of the data are those that tell us that their SINQ course did not “inspire them to set and achieve challenging goals.” It is not clear whether these are responses from students who had taken Freshman Inquiry and found SINQ courses to be less challenging or whether this is a more general view. The data continue to point up the questions that routinely generate low scores. It’s a reasonable guess that these scores point to aspects of SINQ course design (less opportunity for oral presentations, less explicit attention to academic research processes and tools) that move away from the design of a typical FRINQ course.

The program is exploring collecting student identifiers with the End-of-term survey. If we move in that direction, it will allow us to see whether some of the questions we pose (especially those with relatively low scores) are being responded to in a bi- or multimodal fashion. In particular it will be important to compare responses of those who have taken FRINQ with those who have not, and to see whether responses change as students take their second and third SINQs.

CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT

METHODS AND TOOLS

Capstone Student Experience Survey

Purpose: The Capstone Student Experience Survey asked about students' experiences in UNST Capstone courses as well as instructor pedagogical approaches and course topics. The survey results provide information to individual faculty about their courses and to the program about the overall student experience in Capstones.

Method: Students enrolled in Capstone courses complete paper-based course evaluations in class at the end of their course. During the 2006-2007 academic year, 1651 students completed surveys for a response rate of 51.8%

Comparison of Capstone Mid Quarter Qualitative Feedback Data with End of Term Qualitative Feedback Data

Purpose: Each year the Capstone Office analyzes the comments from the mid-term qualitative feedback sessions and does a separate analysis of the end of term qualitative comments. This year it was proposed to conduct the same qualitative analysis for the two data sets, but also to examine if we could see any patterns between the two data sets.

Method: Consistent with previous years, the Capstone Office conducted the qualitative data analysis in accordance with Creswell, 1994 (p. 155). This is a standard form of thematic analysis for qualitative data. The data was analyzed from 30 of the mid quarter feedback sessions. A random sample of 250 end-of-term course evaluations were analyzed looking at students qualitative comments.

Capstone Final Student Project Assessment

by Molly Gray and Heather Petzold, Capstone Faculty

Purpose: The Capstone Office is very interested in using student work samples to assess student learning. In Capstones, students are given the opportunity to explore and combine their knowledge and skills that have developed throughout their University experience with their interests (both academic and personal) and connect them with the larger context of their communities. Capstone courses incorporate the four University Studies Goals (CT, AP, SR, C) into a community-based collaborative learning environment offering students a more holistic approach to recognizing and understanding their role as active, engaged citizens. The evaluation of Capstone final projects sought to answer the following questions: Are students recognizing this connection? What can we really surmise about these learning communities? What meaning are our students making of their capstone experience? What evidence can we find to support that our students are conceptualizing, recognizing, or making personal connections with these goals? And, how best do we assess these student-learning outcomes?

Method: Using two different methods, Creswell's qualitative procedure (1994), and the University Studies Rubric (2007), we examined a sample of final work products and analyzed them for themes related to student learning outcomes and scored them using rubrics developed for each of the University Studies goals. An examination of each of the following student work products resulted in the discovery of themes related to student learning as well as a score for each on the existing University Studies rubrics.

- A Manual For Tutors Enhancing Youth Literacy
- Classic Crust Café and Bakery (Public Relations Campaign)
- IRAQ (work designed to inform IRCO volunteers about the country and its people)

- Planting Seeds for a Sustainable Community (CD ROM)
- Urban Agriculture (Asset Mapping)
- Farmers Markets (Asset Mapping)
- Girl Power (Zines)
- Understanding Esophageal Cancer (CD ROM)
- Youth In Transition: JobCorps
- Indian Power (Oral Histories)

ASSESSMENT DATA

Capstone Student Experience Survey

2006-2007 Capstone Course Evaluations

Capstone Learning Experience	04-05	05-06	06-07
The community work I did helped me to better understand the course content in this Capstone.	3.95	4.28	4.39*
I feel that the community work I did through this course benefited the community.	4.18	4.27	4.36*
I felt a personal responsibility to meet the needs of the community partner of this course.	4.19	4.15	4.36*
I was already volunteering in the community before taking this course.	3.06	3.12	3.02
I improved my ability to solve problems in this course	New q	3.83	3.84
My participation in this Capstone helped me to connect what I learned to real life situations.	4.01	4.14	4.33*
This course enhanced my communication skills (writing, public speaking, etc.).	New q	3.96	4.00
This course helped me understand others who are different from me.	New q	4.23	4.29*
This course enhanced my ability to work with others in a team.	New q	4.07	4.09
This course explored issues of diversity (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation).	New q	4.13	4.26*
In this course I improved my ability to analyze views from multiple viewpoints.	New q	4.14	4.20
I will continue to volunteer or participate in the community after this course.	3.82	4.00	3.98
The syllabus clearly described how the course content connected to the community work.	3.76	4.05	4.26*
I believe this course deepened my understanding of local political issues.	3.46	3.92	3.81*
I believe this course deepened my understanding of local social issues.	3.86	4.24	4.26
I now have a better understanding of how to make a difference in my community.	3.90	4.15	4.25*

* 06-07 score is significantly different than the 05-06 score, $p < .05$

Course design question: Within your Capstone, what forms of learning did the instructor use?	04-05	05-06	06-07
Reflective journals	73.7%	76.0%	79.1%
Required class attendance	77.1%	80.8%	80.6%
Collaborative projects	72.3%	82.7%	82.4%
Readings on racial and ethnic issues	51.8%	51.7%	59.4%
Extensive lecturing	30.7%	20.7%	18.4%

Evidences Collaboration Among Students (C)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Analyzes a Problem (CT)		X			X			X		X
Strategizes Community Solutions (CT)		X			X			X		X
Synthesizes Complex Information (CT)		X			X		X	X		X
Presents to a Defined Audience (C)	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Presentation of a Final Product (C, SR)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reflects Diverse Community Membership (D)	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Bridges Students with Diverse Populations (D, C)	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Engages Multicultural Methodologies in Problem Solving (D, C)	X	X						X		
Integration of Multiple Social Perspectives (D, C)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Represents Marginalized Voices (D, C)	X				X	X		X	X	

Results of University Studies Rubric (2007)

Capstone:	Youth Literacy	Classic Crust	Iraq	Planting Seeds	Urban Agriculture	Girl Power	Esop. Cancer	Job Corps	Indian Power	Farmer's Market
Goals:										
Critical Thinking	*	4	*	*	3	*	4	4	*	5
Appreciation of Diversity	2	3	3	1	3	3	1	4	4	3
Social Responsibility	1	2	1	2	2	*	*	3	*	3
Communication:										
-Quantitative Literacy	1	1	1	1	1	*	3	2	*	5
-Writing	5	5	5	3	5	*	5	5	*	*

*Cannot score student work product with certainty
See page 7-14 for the University Studies Rubric Scoring Guide

FINDINGS

Capstone Student Experience Survey

- When compared with data from previous years, the Capstone students continue to agree that their courses emphasize the university studies goals and help them become aware of and committed to community issues.
- Specifically when compared to data from the 05-06 academic year, student ratings in 06-07 improved significantly in areas related to the community service aspects of the course. Students were more likely to agree that the community service component helped them understand the course content, that the community service benefited the community, that they felt a personal responsibility to the community partner, that the course helped them to connect learning to real life situations, and that the syllabus clearly described how the course content connected to the community work.
- Students also reported on pedagogical techniques used and course topics covered in capstone. Overall, the percentage of students reporting the use of particular techniques or readings remained stable or increased. There was a decrease in the use of extensive lecturing and final exams. Students reported that more faculty used readings on racial and ethnic issues, women's or gender issues, civic responsibility, and social and ethical issues.

Capstone Mid/End of Quarter Qualitative Assessment

The **mid quarter** feedback asks two primary questions: What is helping students learn the materials and what would students change to improve the course.

Six themes emerged that summarize students' responses to what was helping them learn (in order of frequency) :

1. Informative readings
2. Helpful faculty (expertise and high quality feedback and facilitation)
3. Class Discussions
4. Class Activities
5. Community Resources (site visits and guest speakers)
6. The community work required of the course

Four themes emerged which summarized what students **suggest could be improved** (in order of frequency):

1. More direction from the faculty member related to the final product including EXAMPLES of final products
2. More time at the community partner site and/or more communication directly with the community partner
3. More time to complete the final product
4. Great clarity on grading criteria for assignments

The **final course evaluation** asks two primary questions: what was your most important learning and what could be improved in the course?

Seven themes emerged detailing students' **most important learning** (in order of frequency). Out of 250 surveys, there were 260 comments. Some students wrote more than one response.

1. New knowledge of a social issue including knowledge of a community partner's work with that issue. (87 responses)
2. New understanding of social responsibility (40)
3. Deepen understanding of "self" (25)
4. Awarenesses attributed to relationship with faculty or faculty feedback (24)
5. New skills and insights from working in groups with peers (24)
6. "Real Life" experiences (working on a "real project", "project management") (23)
7. New awareness around issues of diversity and awareness of various populations (18)

Six themes emerged detailing students' **suggestions for changes** in the course (in order of frequency). Out of 250 surveys, there were 190 comments.

1. Out of 190 comments 102 of them stated that no changes were needed. This is five times as many responses as any other suggestion.
2. Reducing workload (less readings or reflections) (20 responses)
3. Better communication around expectations of final products (15)
4. More time at the community partner site and more direct communication with the community partner (14)
5. Better communication around logistics of partnerships (14)
6. More specific directions for assignments and clearer grading criteria (6)

Capstone Final Project Assessment

- After thematizing the work product samples and compiling lists, we have discovered that we can indeed find evidence of at least one University Studies Goal in each of the product samples. However, these goals seem to be inherent in the works design and purpose and not extrapolated from students personalized comments. Only in one of the ten work product samples did we recognize an articulated personal connection with a University Studies goal.
- Using the University Studies Rubric we discovered the majority of the work samples produced a score of three or lower on any of the four goals, aside from writing. We can conclude from this that these work samples show to some degree use of terminology surrounding the goals and demonstrated a basic working knowledge of theories and concepts but only in a limited way.
- So, are final work products a viable resource to assess student-learning outcomes with regards to the four University Studies Goals? Yes, to a point evidence supports that the goals are being represented.
- Are the final work products a viable resource to assess whether our students are conceptualizing, recognizing, or making personal connections with these goals? From what we have gathered in the research and exploration of these work samples, the answer is no. There was not enough evidence to support this connection.
- We propose this is not due to the failure of capstone instruction or course facilitation rather, these products:
 - are not a forum for personal expression/observation
 - are written as a unified group voice
 - are geared towards works purpose, not individual student experience
 - are geared towards community partner needs
 - do not reflect process
 - do not reflect student identity
 - do not represent or summarize entire course content

REFLECTION

Capstone Student Experience Questionnaire

The results from the 06-07 Capstone end of term course evaluations affirm that Capstone courses are consistently addressing the university studies goals at greater levels annually. Capstone faculty are clearly demonstrating principles of good practice as students report that these courses are using experiential community work to deepen students understanding of academic course content. It is impressive that quality of syllabi across such a wide breadth of Capstones still remains high. We attribute this stability in syllabi score and the rising score in connecting community work with academic content to a newly established faculty development procedure whereby the faculty development coordinator in the Center for Academic Excellence reviews a "checklist" that Capstone faculty follow in order to develop syllabi, as well as think through active learning and partnership issues. The checklist operates as a rubric of best practices for the faculty, requires faculty to state the connection between the academic course content and the community work, and promotes the explicit demonstration of the University Studies goals throughout the design of the course.

In addition the Capstone Office and the Center for Academic Excellence has developed a multi-layered approach to mid-quarter assessment. Each new Capstone faculty receives support through a 1:1 Capstone orientation, a mid-quarter feedback process, and time with an experienced Capstone faculty member who helps to mentor them through their first year of Capstones. A key aspect of the quality control in Capstones resides in the fact that there is oversight, support, collegiality and accountability via personnel in UNST and CAE for the Capstone program where classes are essentially "housed" in a variety of departments.

Mid/End of term Qualitative Analysis of Student Comments

The themes found in the qualitative data were similar to previous years with simply a variation in frequency. Students clearly articulate the strengths of the capstone courses in the mid quarter feedback as informative readings, high quality instruction, active pedagogies involved in the course and connection with the community. They report in the final course evaluations that these courses certainly teach them new knowledge social issues, enhance their commitment to social responsibility, deepen understanding of “self”, improve their skills working in groups, allow them to engage in real work in the real world, and enhance their appreciation of diversity. All of these outcomes support the goals of University Studies.

It was interesting to compare the mid quarter qualitative feedback with the end of term course evaluations related to the question about what could be improved or changed in the Capstone course. The end of term course evaluation confirmed that the vast majority of students did not have suggestions to improve the course. This is likely because most of these courses have been offered multiple times and engage in assessment and continuous improvement each time they are offered. The most frequent suggestion students had was to reduce the work load in capstones (suggested by less than 10 % of the respondents). This suggestion reminds us of the busy lives of our urban students who can be pressed for time with multiple commitments. The four remaining suggestion in the final course evaluations did mirror the suggestion from the mid-term feedback (seeking more detailed instruction for the final product (5% of students), better communication with the community partner (5% of students) and more clear instructions and grading criteria (2.5%) . It was helpful to measure the magnitude of these responses to see that the suggestions made in the final course evaluations are similar to those at the mid-term, but to realize that these concerns are only held by a relatively few number of students. It appears that the concerns expressed in the mid-quarter assessment were actually addressed to students satisfaction a vast majority of the time.

The Capstone Office will continue to share individual course data with the specific instructor so that we can improve the clarity of final products, assignments and grading criteria in the few courses where students were concerned. We will continue to offer 1:1 faculty support to make sure that we don't simply repeat a course that had unclear guidelines for assignments and final products. We will also work with faculty who have a high proportion of students commenting about the work load in their specific Capstone to see if the workload in these courses is actually too much for a six-credit course.

Capstone Student Final Project Analysis

When we examine the relatively low rubric scores for Capstone final projects, we cannot assume that meaningful connections with the University Studies Goals are not occurring. We just don't find evidence of those connections in these final work samples. We can conclude, however, that we need a more holistic approach to understanding the relevant connections students are making with the University Studies Goals. So we propose a more thorough approach by examining one or more of the following:

- course design (capstone proposal, syllabus)
- pedagogical methodology
- community partner feedback
- student reflection pieces
- course evaluation scores
- observation
- cross-sectional analysis (multi-term evaluation)
- SGID's

We would like to further explore this research by proposing the following steps:

Human Subjects Proposal (cleared by November 2007)
Collection of materials (collected by March 2008)

Assessment of materials (completed by June 2008)

References:

Creswell, J. W. (1994). Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

<http://pdx.edu/unst/goals.html>