**Assessment Period:** Spring of 2015

**Courses Providing Data:** LEP 400 and COMM 450

**Goals and Learning Outcomes Assessed:**

**LEP Outcome 3 (Creative Thinking):** Be able to identify, formulate, and solve problems using interdisciplinary perspectives

**Overview:** Creative thinking was assessed in four sections of LEP 400 and one section of COMM 450 during the spring semester in 2015. Faculty members responsible for teaching these courses assessed a project or assignment that required students to think creatively. Although each assignment/project was unique, the tools used to assess creative thinking were the same.

**Assessment Strategy and Instrument:** Faculty members were given an assessment folder at the beginning of spring semester, which included 10 copies of each assessment tool and a short opinion survey. Each faculty member assessed the work of ten students using two different assessment tools – the AAC&U Creative Thinking Rubric and a measurement tool that ranked each of the LEP 3 sub-outcomes from a high score of 4 to a low score of zero. To ensure a certain degree of randomness in the selection of papers/projects to be assessed, participating faculty were asked to select ten students from the top of their class roster (by first or last name, in ascending or descending order). A total of 47 student assignments/projects were assessed, thirty-seven of which were assessed using both assessment tools.

**Results:** The majority of students demonstrated proficiency in creative thinking. When comparing assessment scores from each of the two assessment tools, the results were very similar. More specifically, both sets of results suggest that the overall performance level of the students sampled was midrange (i.e. Milestone 3 or Milestone 2). The lowest performance levels were in relation to “connecting, synthesizing, and transforming” and “innovative thinking,” which are dimensions of creative thinking in the AAC&U rubric.

 **Results Using the AAC&U Creative Thinking Value Rubric (N=37)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Capstone 4** | **Milestone** **3** | **Milestone 2**  | **Benchmark 1** | **Benchmark not Reached** **0** | **Cannot be Assessed****N/A** |
| Acquiring Competencies  | 8 | 11 | 16 | 2 |  |  |
| Taking Risks  | 6 | 10 | 16 | 5 |  |  |
| Solving Problems  | 8 | 11 | 12 | 6 |  |  |
| Embracing Contradictions  | 3 | 11 | 7 | 6 |  | 10 |
| Innovating Thinking | 7 | 5 | 16 | 9 |  |  |
| Connecting, Synthesizing, Transforming  | 4 | 8 | 14 | 10 | 1 |  |

**Results Using LEC Sub-Outcome Ratings (N=47)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Capstone 4** | **Milestone** **3** | **Milestone 2**  | **Benchmark 1** | **Benchmark not Reached** **0** | **Cannot be Assessed****N/A** |
| Break a complex issue or task into incremental steps  | 6 | 14 | 21 | 6 |  |  |
| Comprehend the difference and similarities among fields of study, and how these augment our understanding of important issues | 6 | 15 | 12 | 4 |  | 10 |
| Employ multiple modes of inquiry and analysis to arrive at a range of possible solutions to a problem or task | 3 | 10 | 20 | 4 |  | 10 |
| Apply a range of methods for producing creative results  | 3 | 16 | 22 | 5 | 1 |  |
| Exhibit increasing development of characteristics essential to being a creative thinker  | 9 | 12 | 16 | 8 | 2 |  |

**Summary of Feedback from Participating Faculty**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | No Response  |
| Would you utilize a creative thinking rubric when assessing students’ work in your LEP 400 class? | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Would you utilize a creative thinking rubric when assessing students’ work in your other classes? | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Please share your thoughts regarding the utility, practicality, and/or value of rubrics when assessing creating thinking.* “They provide faculty with an opportunity for self-reflection and professional reflexivity.”
* “First used rubrics in the 1990s at a different university. Basically think that rubrics are not worth the time and/or effort it takes to develop and use them.”
* “This instrument may be useful as an overarching tool for gathering data amass, but isn’t defined enough for an assignment of any specificity.”
* (My assignment) includes other objectives of the course and more specific aspects of evaluating evidence that don’t appear explicitly in the outcomes.”
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**NSSE Survey Data:**

The following questions are from the NSSE survey and compare first year student responses with senior student responses. 2008 represents the old LAC and 2013 would represent students under the new LEP

**Recommendations that will be discussed in the final report:**

a. Reduce the number of learning outcomes.

b. Revise the assessment plan for learning outcomes. The plan currently in use is cumbersome and largely ineffective.

c. Embed assessment for learning outcomes into existing program reviews.

d. Provide faculty with an assessment tool that can provide meaningful information at the university level. Because the dimensions of the AAC&U creative thinking rubric do not align with the LEP sub-outcomes, the rating tool used by participating faculty should be considered.