Several UD Faculty were funded in 2009 to develop and implement research projects that support the General Education initiatives of the University of Delaware, and contribute to the scholarly body of knowledge concerning the role, impact, and assessment of general education goals at UD. These reports, submitted in Spring and Fall 2010, are intended to inform the assessment of our current students’ attainment of general education goals, and to inform discussions related to potential changes to the UD general education program.


This report is part of a larger study to evaluate how computer instruction (i.e., the online pedagogical resource Sakai), compared to more traditional face-to-face approaches (i.e., traditional lectures), might improve students’ achievement of general education and department-specific learning goals in large survey courses. Using CRJU 110 as the subject, data suggests that:

1. In large survey courses, use of Sakai/lecture hybrid formats may help students grasp abstract philosophical ideas better than traditional lecture formats by providing them with opportunities to discuss their thoughts and exchange ideas with students and their professors via blogging, forums, or live chats. Absent opportunities for student discussion, concrete ideas may be best suited to the large traditional lecture format.
2. Large survey courses might be best equipped to facilitate student learning on general education goals that closely parallel their departmental missions. The study found very few differences in student learning across student demographics and class condition.

**The Quantitative Literacy/Reasoning Project.** Dr. Louis Rossi, Dr. Bettyann Daley, Dr. Alfinio Flores, Mathematical Sciences, Principle Investigators.

This pilot study described what quantitative knowledge a small sample of undergraduates retained and learned during their four years at the University of Delaware.

- 7/42 (17%) increased their placement level (did better on the test)
- 19/42 (45%) decreased their placement level (did worse on the test)
- 16/42 (38%) showed no change in their placement level.
- On average, student Math Placement Exam levels dropped by 0.3.
- There was no apparent connection between degree program and changes in Math Placement Exam score.
Assessing the efficacy of DLE courses for undergraduate students. Dr. Delphis F. Levia and Dr. April R. Veness, Geography, Principle Investigators

Results investigating the “readiness” of students to participate in the Discovery Learning Experience indicate:

• Social science DLE courses that rely on a repertoire of knowledge, skills and experiences acquired largely during that course are appropriate for Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors, because students in each of these levels are starting at the same point in their learning. Starting at the same point, however, does not mean that each level of student is equally willing or happy to embrace the uncertainties and challenges of “discovery” work.

• Natural science DLE courses should be reserved for Junior and Senior level students that have acquired the requisite background required to be able to reflect meaningfully on the subject matter and its relationship to the larger discipline.


This memo describes the assessment activities of the UD Writing Program during the 2009-2010 academic year. During this period, the program assessed its students’ expertise selecting and using sources in argument-based writing in both the first year writing course (English 110) and in the English department’s second-writing courses (English 301 and 302). While student achievement in 110 aligns well with our goals and expectations1, the data from the second-writing courses suggest students may not retain this level of achievement.