

General Education Assessment
Spring 2016

GEO 6 Critically review resource material



General Education Committee
May 26, 2016

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	3
List of Figures	4
General Education Committee 2015-16	5
Fall 2015	5
Spring 2016	5
Introduction	6
Methods.....	7
Artifact Collection and Sampling Processes	7
Scoring and Data Aggregation Processes	7
Data Analysis Process.....	9
Results	10
GEO 6 Rubric Scores.....	10
Other Findings	12
Student Strengths.....	12
Student Weaknesses	12
Discussion	14
Summary of Recommendations	17
Suggestions for Improvement of the Assessment Process	17
Recommendations to the Academic Departments.....	17
Appendix: GEO 6 Rubric	19

List of Tables

Table 1: General education artifact collection Spring 2016.....	7
Table 2: Sub-score and total score levels.....	9
Table 3: Distribution of course-specific total scores.....	10
Table 4: Mean sub- and total scores.....	11

List of Figures

Figure 1: Mean total scores.....	10
Figure 2: Percentage of artifacts at each level.....	11
Figure 3: Sub-scores by course.....	12
Figure 4: Comparison of frequency distributions between GEO 2 written communication, GEO 4 quantitative reasoning, GEO 3 oral communication, GEO 9 technology, and GEO 6 critical review.	14

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General Education Assessment 2015-2016 Academic Year

Spring Semester – GEO 6 Critically Review Resource Material

Introduction

Oglala Lakota College's general education assessment in the current format is now in its third academic year. The first General Education Outcome (GEO) that was assessed was GEO 2 Communicate effectively in writing using both Lakota and English (2013-14 academic year), followed by GEO 4 Apply quantitative analytical skills (Fall 2014), and GEO 3 Demonstrate oral communication skills in both Lakota and English (Spring 2015). GEO 9 Demonstrate proficiency in the use of standard computer technologies was the outcome selected for Fall 2015, and the outcome assessed in the Spring 2016 semester was GEO 6 Critically review resource material. Unlike the previously assessed outcomes, GEO 6 is not predominantly associated with any one specific general education course. Artifacts were collected from three Humanities and Social Science courses: Lit 203 Introduction to Literature, Geog 213 World Regional Geography and SoSc 383 Social Policy. In addition, ED 213 Child Growth and Development (Education) submitted artifacts.

This report begins with a brief description of the assessment processes, including artifact collection, sampling and scoring, data aggregation, and data analysis processes. This section is followed by the results and their discussion. Quantitative data from the scoring as well as qualitative input from the scorers is included. The report ends with suggestions for improvement of students' critical reviewing skills and of the assessment process to close the loop.

Methods

Artifact Collection and Sampling Processes

In the absence of a full-time general education faculty director, the chair of the Assessment Committee temporarily leads the general education assessment process. Departments were asked to select one course and one assignment from that course as and artifact for GEO 6. Only the Humanities and Social Science and the Education Departments submitted artifacts. The details on the artifact assignments, number of sections and of received artifacts can be found in Table 1 below.

Course	Department	Artifact	# of Sections	# of Sections Submitting Artifacts	# of Artifacts Received
Lit 203	Humanities and Social Science	Drama critique	4	4	27
Geog 213	Humanities and Social Science	Research paper	3	3	7
ED 213	Education	Lakota perspective research paper	3	1	3
SoSc 383	Humanities and Social Science	Research paper	1	1	4
		TOTAL:	11	9	41

Table 1: General education artifact collection Spring 2016.

The General Education Committee previously determined that for courses that submit 30 or fewer artifacts, all assignments would be included in the scoring whereas a random sample of 30 assignments would be scored from courses with more than 30 submitted artifacts. None of the courses assessed in the Spring 2016 collected more than 30 student submissions, therefore the General Education Committee scored all artifacts that were submitted by the departments.

Scoring and Data Aggregation Processes

In alignment with the previous semesters, the Assessment Committee used one of the VALUE rubrics¹ developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as a starting point for OLC's own rubric. The Assessment Committee determined that the Critical Thinking VALUE rubric would be a good fit. OLC's overall general education goal Students will exemplify Wolakolkiciyapi was added as a scoring element as was the case in the previous years. The GEO 6 rubric includes the following elements: 1) Wolakolkiciyapi, 2) Explanation of Issues, 3) Evidence, 4) Influence of Context and Assumptions, 5) Student's Position, and 6) Conclusion and Related Outcomes. This rubric is attached in the appendix.

The AAC&U VALUE rubrics and therefore also OLC's GEO rubrics use the levels benchmark (score=1), 1st milestone (2), 2nd milestone (3), and capstone (4). Scorers were encouraged to give a 0 when the benchmark for a certain element was not met. An artifact was considered to be at the capstone level if 1) the student demonstrated a thorough understanding of Wolakolkiciyapi and successfully utilized that knowledge to aid within school and community; 2) the issue/problem to be considered was stated clearly and described

¹ <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>

comprehensively; 3) information was taken from sources with enough interpretation and evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis, and viewpoints of experts were questioned thoroughly; 4) the student thoroughly analyzed his/her own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluated the relevance of contexts when presenting a position; 5) the student's specific position was imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue, he/she acknowledged limits of his/her position, and synthesized others' points of view within their position; and 6) conclusions and related outcomes were logical and reflected student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.

A paper at the second milestone level was characterized by 1) the student demonstrating increased knowledge of Wolakolkiciyapi within the classroom and beginning utilization of knowledge into communities; 2) the issue/problem being stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions; 3) information being taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis, and viewpoints of experts being subject to questioning; 4) identification of student's own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position; 5) specific position taking into account the complexities of an issue and acknowledgement of others' point of view within the position; and 6) the conclusion being logically tied to a range of information.

A paper at the first milestone level showed 1) demonstration of knowledge of Lakota perspective and attempted utilization of Wolakolkiciyapi in certain aspects of life and classroom; 2) issue/problem was stated but the description left some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown; 3) information was taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but they were not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis and viewpoints of experts were taken mostly as fact, with little questioning; 4) some assumptions were questioned but the student identified several relevant contexts when presenting a position, though he/she may be more aware of others' assumptions than his/her own; 5) specific position acknowledged different sides of an issue; and 6) conclusion was logically tied to information but information was chosen to fit the desired conclusion.

The student met the benchmark if 1) a minimum level of awareness and display of Wolakolkiciyapi was demonstrated; 2) the issue/problem was stated without clarification or description; 3) information was taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation and viewpoints of experts were taken as fact, without question; 4) the student showed an emerging awareness of present assumptions and began to identify some contexts when presenting a position; 5) the specific position was stated, but it was simplistic and obvious; and 6) conclusion was inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed.

The scoring of the artifacts took place on May 17, 2016 with five faculty members representing four academic departments (Math, Science, and Technology – 1 scorer; Humanities and Social Science – 2; Education – 1; Nursing – 1). Each artifact was scored by two reviewers and the scores from both reviewers for each of the rubric elements were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The mean of the reviewers' scores was used to determine the element scores and total scores for each artifact.

Data Analysis Process

Data aggregated in the manner described in the previous section was analyzed by defining the levels benchmark not met, benchmark met, 1st milestone, 2nd milestone, and capstone for the individual elements and the total score.² Table 2 summarizes the different levels.

	Benchmark Not Met	Benchmark Met	1 st Milestone	2 nd Milestone	Capstone
Individual Elements	0.0-0.4	0.5-1.4	1.5-2.4	2.5-3.4	3.5-4.0
Total Score:	0.0-2.9	3.0-8.9	9.0-14.9	15.0-20.9	21.0-24.0

Table 2: Sub-score and total score levels (red=benchmark not met, orange=benchmark met, green=1st milestone, light blue=2nd milestone, dark blue=capstone).

To ensure incorporation of a variety of views in the data analysis and interpretation beyond the scoring, the GEO 6 scorers met immediately following the scoring session to reflect on perceived strengths weaknesses, and possible strategies to help students. In addition, scorers were given the opportunity to give input into this report.

² The GEO 6 rubric assigns the scores 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 to the levels benchmark not met (0), benchmark met (1), 1st milestone (2), 2nd milestone (3), and capstone (4). Ranges for each element were defined based on these assigned scores by following mathematical traditions in which .5 is rounded up. This system is followed for the definition of the ranges for total scores: The bottom score of a level was determined by multiplying the lowest score for an element at this level with the number of rubric elements. As an example, the range for 1st milestone was calculated by multiplying 1.5 with 6.

Results

GEO 6 Rubric Scores

Average scores were lowest in Lit 203 (8.04; benchmark met level). The average scores of the other courses were at the first milestone level with ED 213 (14.17) and SoSc 383 (14.88) having the highest average scores (see Figure 1 below).

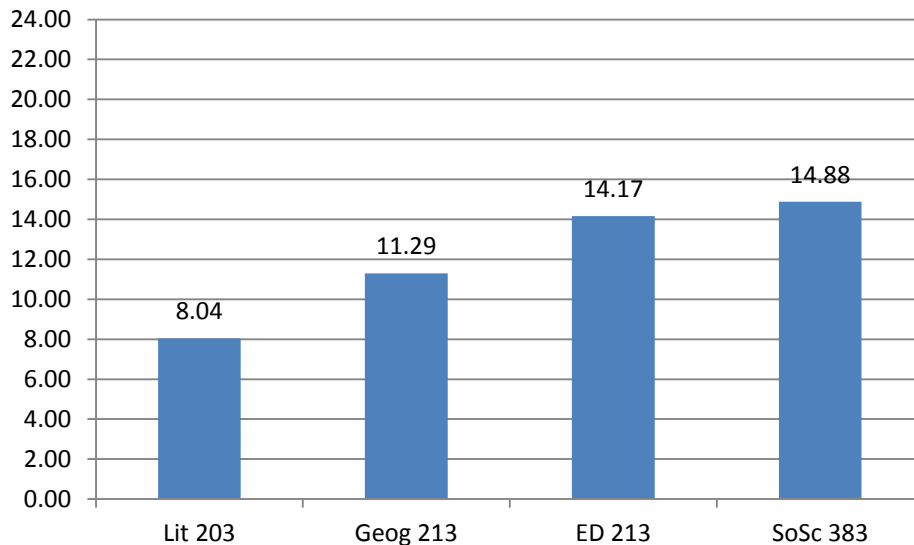


Figure 1: Mean total scores (0-2.9=benchmark not met; 3.0-8.9=benchmark met; 9.0-14.9=1st milestone; 15.0-20.9=2nd milestone; 21.0-24.0=capstone).

Table 3 and Figure 2 below show the distribution of total scores within each course. Artifact scores ranged from benchmark not met to 2nd milestone with 85% of artifacts being almost equally divided between the benchmark met and the 1st milestone levels. The frequency distribution appears to differ greatly between courses. Whereas almost two thirds (63%) of Lit 203 artifacts were scored at the benchmark met level, 86% of Geog 213 papers and 67% of ED 213 assignments were at the 1st milestone level, and SoSc 383 artifacts are equally spread between 1st milestone and 2nd milestone. However, the small number of artifacts received from the courses other than Lit 203 limits the reliability of these findings.

	Benchmark Not Met 0-2.9	Benchmark Met 3.0-8.9	1st Milestone 9.0-14.9	2nd Milestone 15.0-20.9	Capstone 21.0-24.0
ALL (N=41)	2 (4.9%)	18 (43.9%)	17 (41.5%)	4 (9.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Lit 203 (N=27)	2 (7.4%)	17 (63.0%)	7 (25.9%)	1 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Geog 213 (N=7)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	6 (85.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
ED 213 (N=3)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)
SoSc 383 (N=4)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 3: Distribution of course-specific total scores.

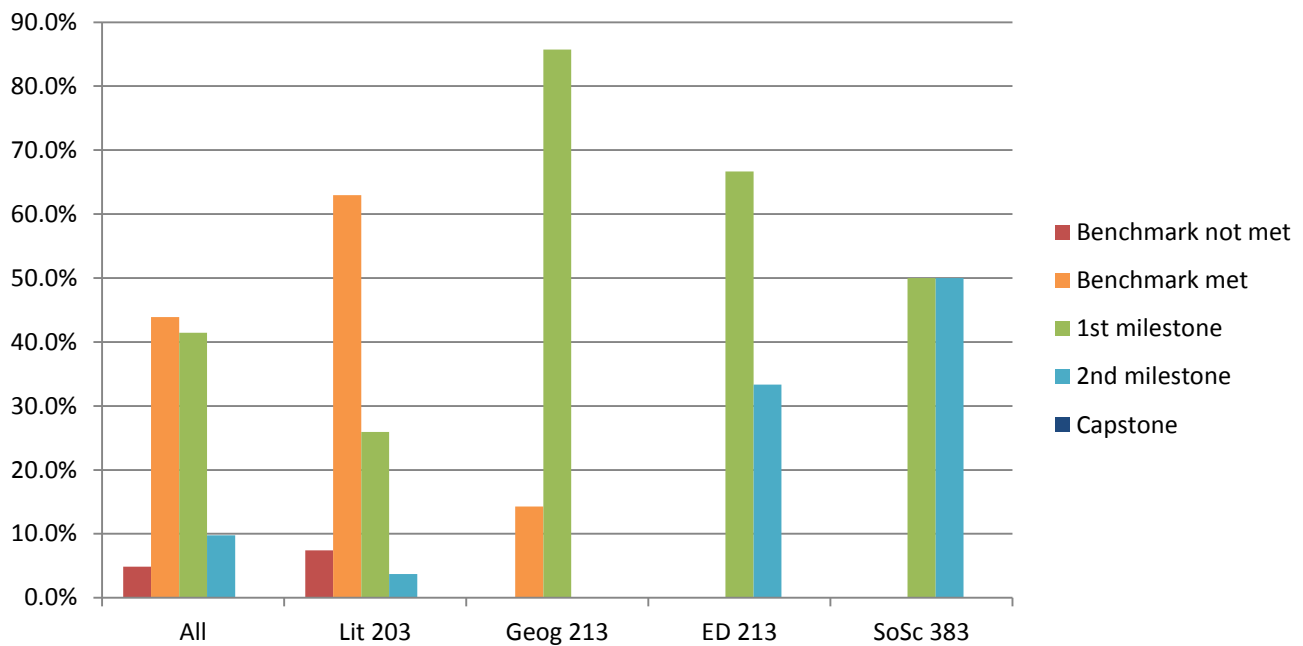


Figure 2: Percentage of artifacts at each level.

To evaluate how well the GEO is being met, the scores of each PLO element were compared for all of the courses submitting artifacts. Table 4 and Figure 3 present that analysis. Overall, the average scores for Wolakolkiciyapi were lowest (1.22) followed by Influence of Context and Assumptions (1.41). These average scores were at the benchmark met level. Conclusion and Related Outcomes (1.65), Student's Position (1.68), and Evidence (1.78) were scored on average at the first milestone level. Explanation of Issues received the highest score with 2.06, which is at the 2nd milestone level.

	Total Score	Wolakolkiciyapi	Explanation of Issues	Evidence	Influence of Context and Assumptions	Student's Position	Conclusion and Related Outcomes
Lit 203 (N=27)	8.04	0.81	1.76	1.61	1.11	1.41	1.41
Geog 213 (N=7)	11.29	1.29	2.50	1.71	1.86	2.14	2.07
ED 213 (N=3)	14.17	2.83	2.67	2.33	1.83	2.33	2.17
SoSc 383 (N=4)	14.88	2.63	2.88	2.63	2.38	2.25	2.13
ALL (N=41)	9.71	1.22	2.06	1.78	1.41	1.68	1.65

Table 4: Mean sub- and total scores (red=benchmark not met, orange=benchmark met, green=1st milestone, light blue=2nd milestone, dark blue=capstone).

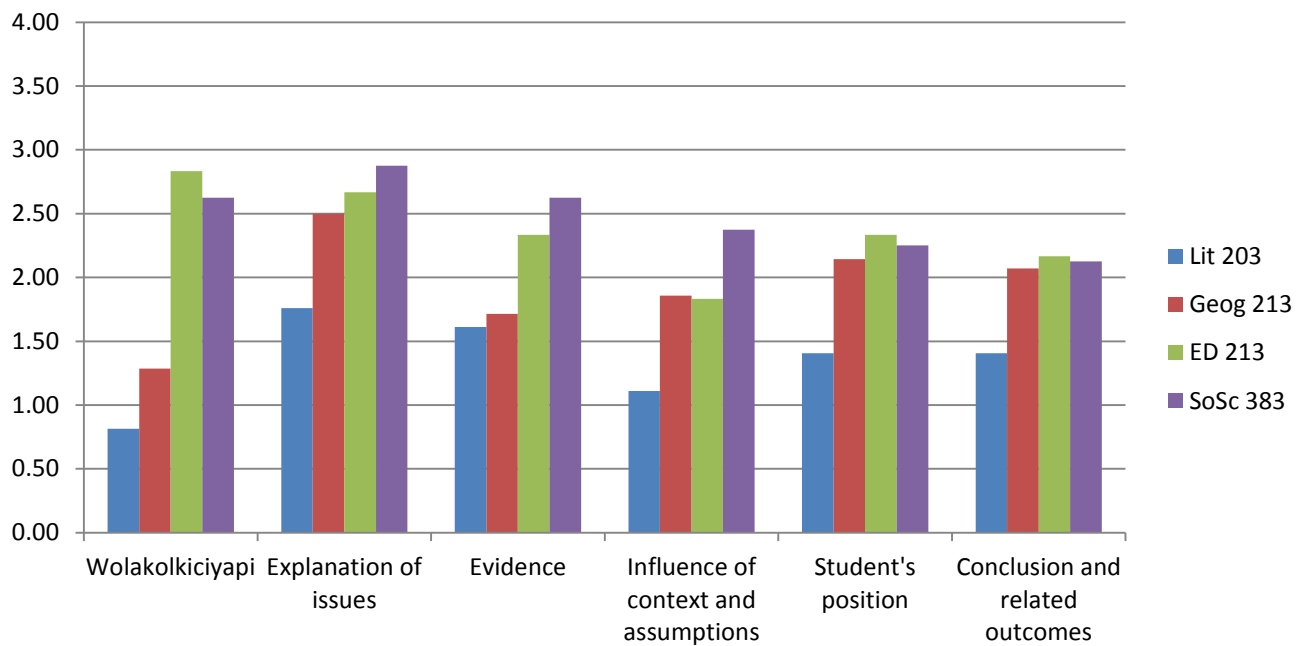


Figure 3: Sub-scores by course (0.0-0.4=benchmark not met, 0.5-1.4=benchmark met, 1.5-2.4=1st milestone, 2.5-3.4=2nd milestone, 3.5-4.0=capstone).

Figure 3 above reveals drastic differences with regard to strong and weak elements between the courses. Whereas Wolakolkiciyapi was the weakest element in Lit 203 and Geog 213, but it was the strongest one in ED 213 and the second strongest in SoSc 383. Explanation of Issues received the highest scores in Lit 203, Geog 213, and SoSc 383 and the second-highest score in ED 213. Overall, the categories Evidence, Influence of Context and Assumptions, and Conclusion and Related Outcomes appeared to be weakest.

Other Findings

All scorers were asked to identify students' strengths and weaknesses regarding critical review, make suggestions for improving students' skills as well as to give feedback regarding the assessment process. The scorer feedback is included in this section as well as in the discussion and recommendations sections.

Student Strengths

- Overall, students displayed good writing skills.
- Several students expressed enthusiasm about the topic of their paper.
- Wolakolkiciyapi was evident in all ED 213 and SoSc 383 papers and in the majority of the Geog 213 assignments.
- Some students showed emerging critical thinking skills.

Student Weaknesses

- Students often did not cite their sources, or only cited them in the references list but not in the text.

- Many of the sources were not scholarly/peer-reviewed.
- Lit 203: Many students did not include sources other than the book or movie they chose, especially no scholarly sources.
- Students were hesitant to question source material.
- The majority of papers consisted mostly of a summary of source(s) instead of analysis and synthesis.
- Students frequently did not explore multiple perspectives.
- SoSc 383: Students did not synthesize information gained through interviews and scholarly sources.
- Many students did not use APA format correctly.

Discussion

GEO 6 was the fifth general education outcome that was assessed. Frequency distributions of the levels at which the different GEO artifacts were scored are compared in Figure 4 below. The distribution of GEO 6 artifacts looks similar to GEOs 2 and 4 but worse than GEOs 3 and 9. In the Fall 2015 General Education Assessment Report, the General Education Committee explained that changes to the assessment procedure were the predominant factor leading to changes in frequency distributions. In the case of GEO 6, however, the lower scores were the result of a poor match between the GEO 6 rubric and the assignment used as artifact in Lit 203, the course that submitted almost two thirds of the artifacts used in this assessment. GEO 6 requires students to critically review resource materials. This involves the students finding materials from reputable and acceptable sources, critically evaluating that material, synthesizing information contained in several sources, and drawing independent conclusions based on their research. The Lit 203 assignment was a drama critique in which students were required to analyze one book, movie, or play using strategies utilized in literary analysis and criticism. Students mostly just summarized the drama, though some applied analytical literary concepts. Unless they also analyzed their own assumptions and assumptions of others, questioned viewpoints of experts, and included a detailed description of their own opinions and discussed conclusions and related outcomes, they received low scores on the GEO 6 rubric.

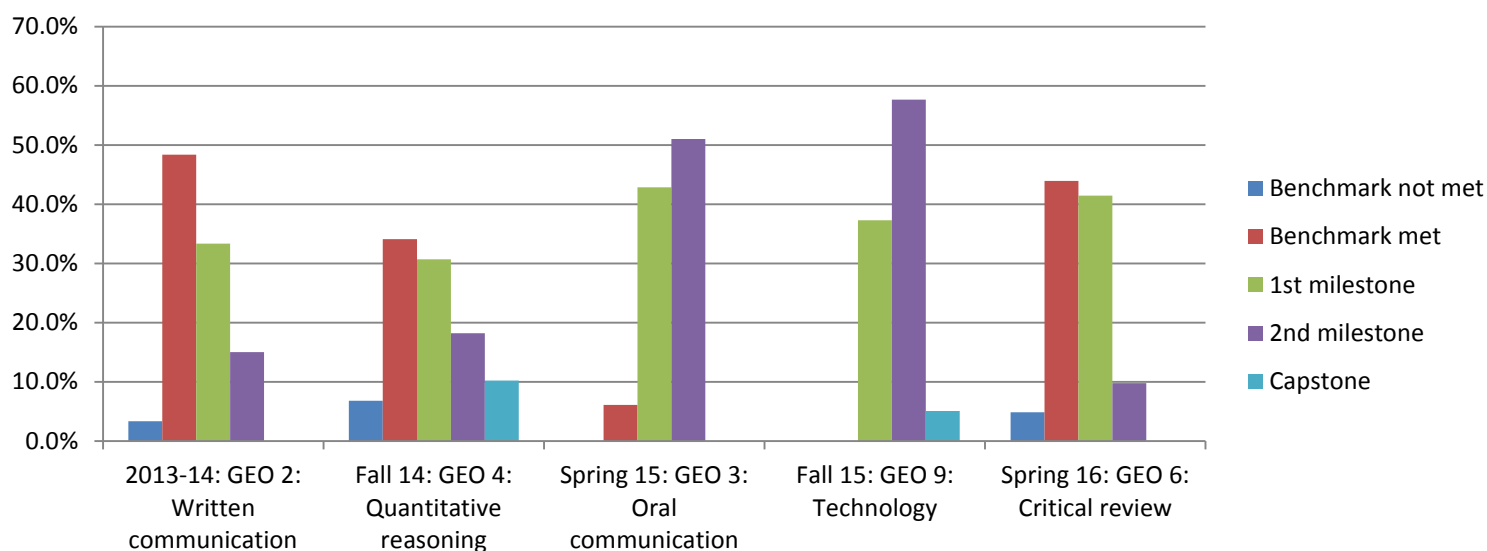


Figure 4: Comparison of frequency distributions between GEO 2 written communication, GEO 4 quantitative reasoning, GEO 3 oral communication, GEO 9 technology, and GEO 6 critical review.

A common weakness that was evident in the majority of artifacts reviewed for GEO 6 was that students too often simply summarized information that they have found elsewhere but analysis and synthesis of the information were lacking. Students are hesitant to question the authors of their sources, and to consider how an author's background influences his/her writing and how the student's own background also influences how the topic is perceived. Instructors need to introduce such a critical review in lower-level courses through modeling and reinforce this skill at the upper level. The Education Department has found collecting strong examples from students and providing them to other students as well as creating templates successful strategies.

The qualitative feedback of scorers presented in the previous section included the common concern that students too often do not use scholarly sources. This did not specifically show up as weakness in the rubric because there was no rubric element that specifically addressed the quality of a source. The Evidence element was described as “selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion” (GEO 6 rubric) but the descriptions of the different levels focus only on whether or not the information was interpreted and evaluated sufficiently, and if viewpoints of experts were questioned. A quality of source element should therefore be included in future GEO 6 assessment. The lack of use of scholarly resources was also noted during the GEO 9 assessment (use of standard computer technologies) earlier in the year: internet search, particularly locating scholarly resources using library resources or evaluating web content for validity, received the lowest scores. Some instructors have attempted to encourage students to use quality resources by requiring them to submit their references and/or a draft earlier in the semester. Experiences with such strategies have been mixed.

A continuing weakness is lack of evidence of Wolakolkiciyapi, learning of Lakota ways of life in community, in students’ artifacts. There are likely multiple connected factors in play: Departments don’t yet sufficiently incorporate Wolakolkiciyapi into their courses, or the assignment selected as artifact does not lend itself for demonstration of Wolakolkiciyapi. On the other hand, there is not yet common understanding of what characterizes exemplification of Wolakolkiciyapi among scorers and faculty in general. For example, one person may score an artifact at the first milestone level if the student demonstrated Lakota virtues such as fortitude, wisdom, and bravery by writing a long, detailed research paper regardless of the topic, whereas another scorer may say that Wolakolkiciyapi is not evident if there is no explicit reference to Lakota perspective. Once a general education faculty director is hired, this person should organize a workshop where faculty discuss these issues and receive guidance from the Lakota Studies Department. The Education Department may also provide suggestions to other departments as they have revised curriculum to provide better alignment with OLC’s overall general education goal and the GEOs.

Several methodological limitations impact reliability and validity of the GEO 6 assessment. One limitation regards the small number of artifacts received from Geog 213 (seven artifacts), ED 213 (three artifacts), and SoSc 383 (four artifacts). This limits the usefulness of comparing scores between courses. Another limitation regards the scoring itself: In many cases, the two individuals scoring the same artifact evaluated it drastically different. The most extreme example was an artifact that received 1 point by one scorer and 24 points by the other scorer. This shows that the scorers did not have a common understanding of how the different rubric elements manifested themselves in the papers. This issue could be reduced by scoring several artifacts as a group at the beginning of the session.

Whereas in the previous semesters artifacts were submitted to the General Education Committee from three to six departments, only two departments collected artifacts in the Spring 2016. It is particularly concerning that the Social Work, Vocational Education, and Graduate Studies Departments have not participated in any of the five general education assessments that have taken place so far. The Humanities and Social Science Department is the only department that submitted artifacts every time. Lakota Studies and Education collected artifacts three times but the former only did so from one of multiple sections of the same course instead of doing so for all sections taught in that semester. Nursing and Math, Science and Technology submitted artifacts twice, and Business and Foundational Studies participated in the process one time. One factor in low participation of the departments has been that without a general education faculty director, it

has been challenging for the Assessment Committee to create GEO rubrics as early as needed and to provide sufficient assistance to the departments. Nonetheless, it appears that some departments do not perceive themselves as part of the general education assessment process at OLC. College administration needs to stress the need for all departments to participate in this process. To better organize general education assessment in the future and to give departments more guidance regarding the courses from which artifacts should be collected, the alignment between general education and upper-level courses and the general education outcomes will need to be updated. The new general education faculty director should meet with the departments to assist in this process.

Summary of Recommendations

Suggestions for Improvement of the Assessment Process

General Education Faculty Director:

- The General Education Faculty Director should present which GEO is to be assessed and a rubric at least as a draft to the department chairs prior to the beginning the semester.
- Assist departments with aligning courses to general education outcomes.
- Facilitate workshop for faculty to discuss how Wolakolkiciyapi can be demonstrated in a variety of assignments across departments.

Artifact type:

- It needs to be emphasized to the chairs that they need to select an artifact that allows the General Education Committee to score the assignment on all or at least most elements listed on the rubric. If a course that is aligned with the GEO does not have an assignment that covers most of the elements, a new assignment should be created and be used not only in the semester in which that GEO is assessed but also in other years.

GEO 6 rubric:

- Quality of Source needs to be added as element.
- The different levels need to be differentiated more clearly.

Other:

- It needs to be emphasized that ALL departments are expected to participate in the general education assessment.
- At the beginning of each scoring session, the scorers should score several artifacts together to gain a common understanding of the rubric.

Recommendations to the Academic Departments

Humanities and Social Science Department (Lit 203, Geog 213, SoSc 383):

- Continue to emphasize the use of scholarly materials as basis for academic papers (already in lower level courses).
- Lit 203: Emphasize and model literary criticism, and clarify difference between critical review and summary.
- Lit 203: Consider using a different assignment as artifact when GEO 6 is assessed again.
- Lit 203 and Geog 213: Modify assignments so students are required to exemplify Wolakolkiciyapi when completing the assignment.

- Continue to include assignments that require students to critically review source material (already in lower level courses).

Education Department (Ed 213):

- Continue to emphasize the use of scholarly materials as basis for research papers.
- Continue to include assignments that require students to critically review source material (already in lower level courses).

All academic departments:

- Emphasize the use of scholarly materials as basis for academic papers starting in 100-level courses.
- Require students to critically review source material across all levels.
- Revise alignment of general education and upper-level courses with general education outcomes.
- Participate in general education assessment in most semesters.
- Participate in a workshop to discuss how students can exemplify Wolakolkiciyapi in a variety of assignments.
- Consider requiring students to complete information literacy orientation provided by OLC's Woksape Tipi

Appendix: GEO 6 Rubric

**OLC General Education Goal:
Students will exemplify Wolakolkiciyapi: Learning Lakota ways of life in community.**

Wolakolkiciyapi is a philosophical concept, a mutual agreement for continued peace harmony within one’s life and community. One may gain a better understanding of the definition by displaying aspects of Lakota virtues including; compassion, bravery, fortitude, generosity, patience, humility, and wisdom. By continuing to improve oneself through the practice of “wolakolkiciyapi” one may better his/herself and therefore the community.

Capstone 4	Milestone 3	Milestone 2	Benchmark 1	0
Demonstrates a thorough understanding of “wolakolkiciyapi” and successfully utilizes that knowledge to aid within school and community.	Demonstrates increased knowledge of “wolakolkiciyapi” within classroom and begins to utilize knowledge expanding into communities.	Demonstrates knowledge of Lakota perspective and attempts to utilize “wolakolkiciyapi” in certain aspects of life and classroom.	Demonstrates minimum level of awareness and display of “wolakolkiciyapi”	

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

**Ability 4 Critical Thinking
General Education Outcome 6: Critically review resource material.**

	Capstone 4	Milestone 3	Milestone 2	Benchmark 1	0
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.	

<p>Evidence Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion</p>	<p>Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly.</p>	<p>Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning.</p>	<p>Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.</p>	<p>Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question.</p>	
<p>Influence of context and assumptions</p>	<p>Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.</p>	<p>Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.</p>	<p>Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).</p>	<p>Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.</p>	
<p>Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)</p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' point of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis).</p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue.</p>	<p>Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious.</p>	
<p>Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)</p>	<p>Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.</p>	<p>Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</p>	<p>Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</p>	<p>Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.</p>	