

College of Business General Learning Outcomes Spring 2008 Results

The following is an evaluation of the direct assessment of the College of Business general learning outcomes. Assessment data were collected through an electronic process in April 2008. A total of 126 participants, in 400-level courses across the curriculum, were randomly assigned to one of three assessment tools. The three assessment tools included a written essay on diversity in the workforce, a series of multiple choice questions based on a financial spreadsheet, and a series of multiple choice questions related to legal, global, ethical issues, and team work. Separately, video recordings of group presentations in a Mgmt 478 section were utilized to assess oral and visual communication skills. A synopsis of the results is given below.

Essay Sample Group

In the essay sample group, students were asked to compose an essay related to diversity. This assessment served two purposes: to evaluate students' knowledge of managing diversity in the workforce and to evaluate students' writing communication skills. The sample size for the essay portion of the assessment was n=39. The essays were evaluated and scored using a rubric as well as the Written Composing rubric (Appendix 1).

Students were scored on three factors related to diversity, each worth 1 (poor), 2 (acceptable), or 3 (very good) points, for a total of 9 possible points for the very best essays. Tables 1, 2 and 3 illustrate how the students scored on each of the three factors. Table 4 details how the students scored overall, showing that the majority of students were judged to have demonstrated either acceptable or very good understanding of diversity issues.

Table 1. Negative Aspects.

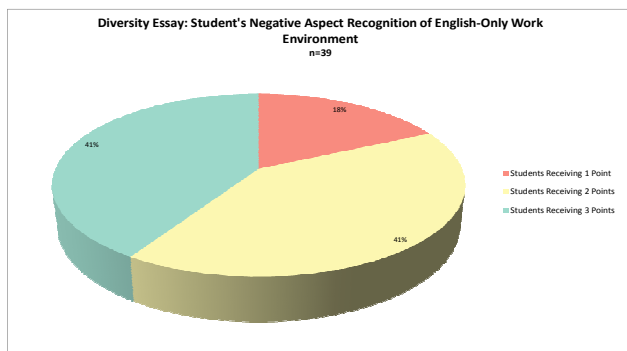


Table 2. Positive Aspects.

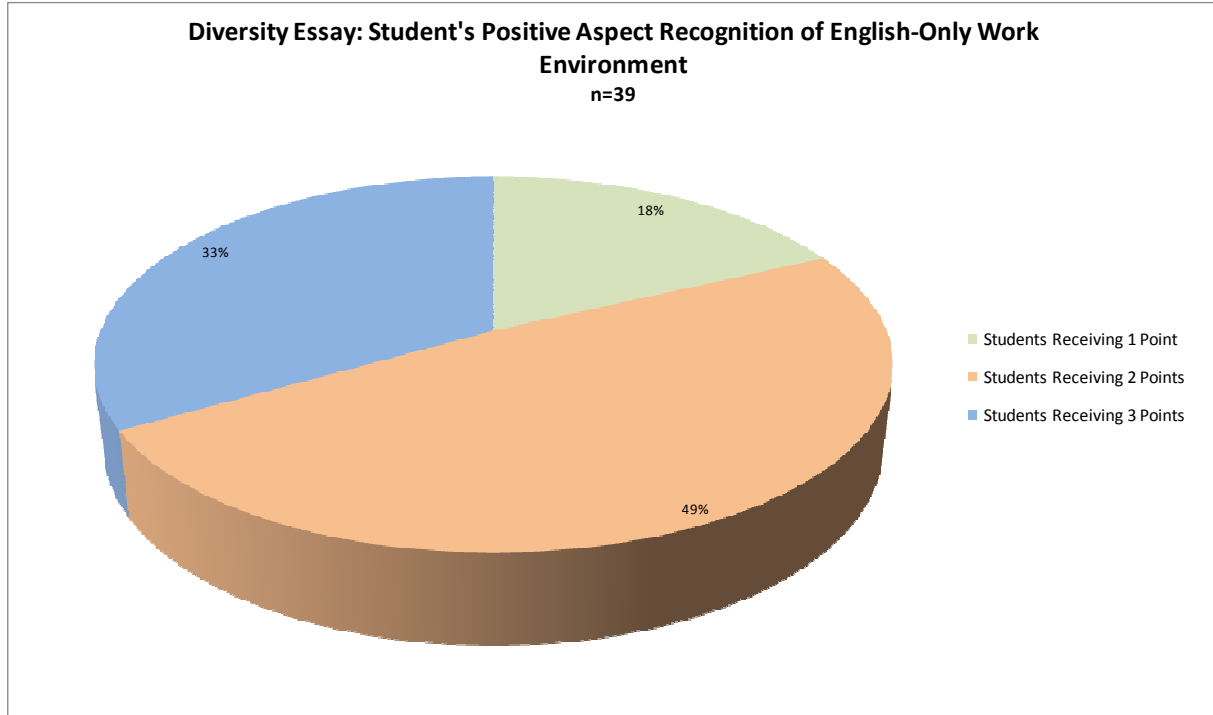
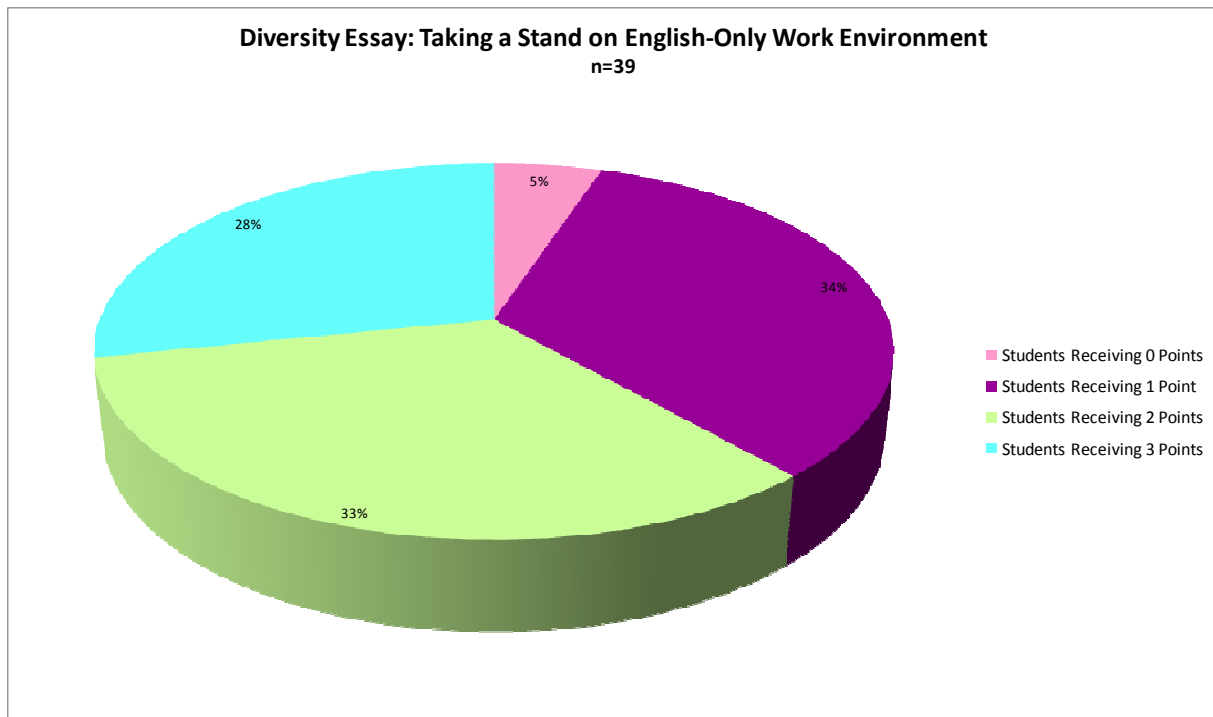
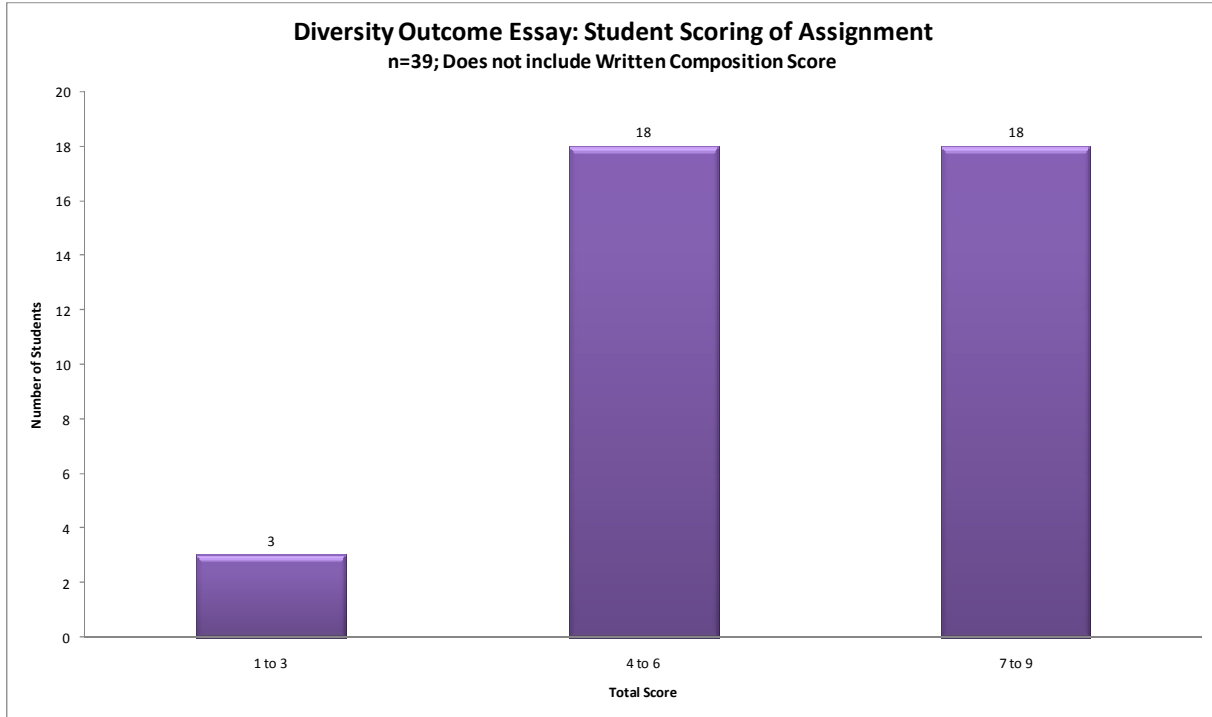


Table 3. Policy Stand.



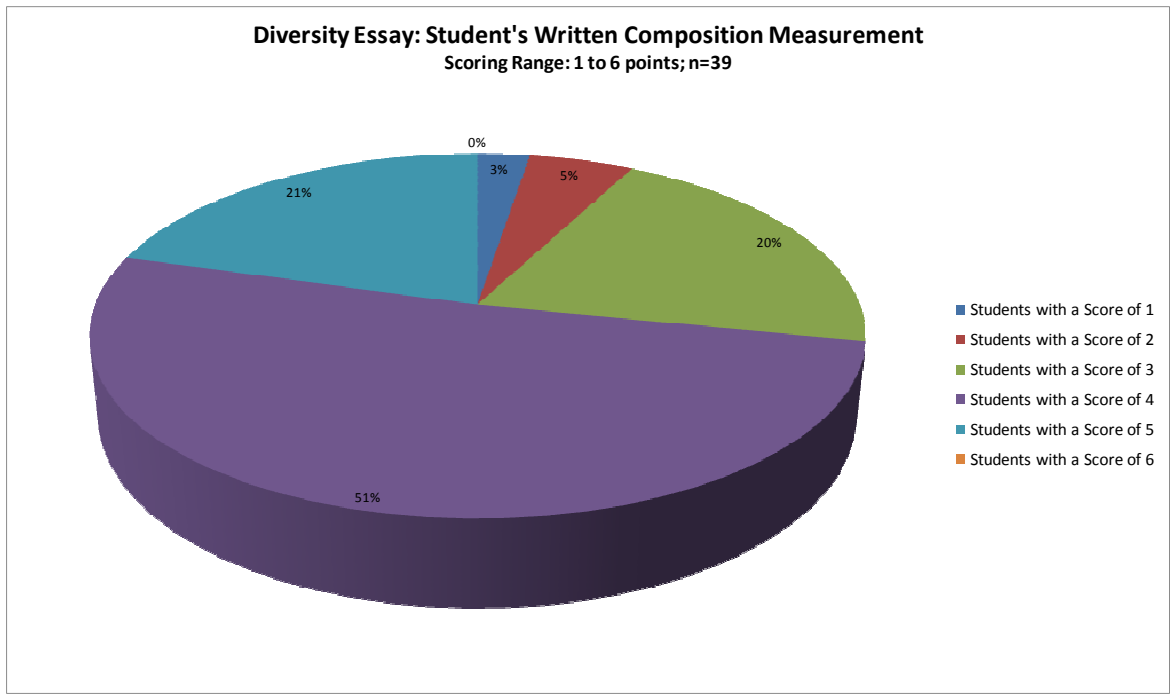
*Some students received 0 points because they did not address taking a stand.

Table 4. Total Scores.



Students’ writing abilities were measured on a scale of 1 (basic) to 6 (exemplary). The factors considered include context, substance, organization, style, and delivery. Table 5 below illustrates the students’ performance.

Table 5. Written Composition Scores.



As can be seen, no students were judged to have demonstrated exemplary writing skills. Nonetheless, the majority of students received either a 4 (competent) or 5 (mature) rating. Still, 28 percent of the students were rated as having developing (3), beginning (2), or basic (1) writing skills.

Financial Chart Sample Group

In the Financial Spreadsheet sample, students were provided with financial statements and asked a series of multiple choice questions. The sample size for this assessment was n=44. In most cases all participants responded, but a few questions were not answered by everyone. Four of five questions were answered correctly (80%).

Multiple Choice Sample Group

Students in this sample were asked a series of questions with multiple choice options regarding legal, global, and ethical business issues, and team work. The sample size for these questions was n=43. In most cases all participants responded, but a few questions were not answered by everyone. The following questions were asked with the correct answers in green and the incorrect answers in red, accompanied by a breakdown of how the questions were answered.

Legal

Students answered six multiple choice questions on basic business law. The majority of students answered four of six questions correctly for a 67 percent correct response rate.

Global

Students answered four multiple choice questions related to global business. The majority of students answered three out of four questions were answered correctly (75%).

Ethics

Students were asked to evaluate their own ethics by answering four statements with respect to their past experiences, using a 5-point response scale, where 1=Never and 5=in all situations. To determine an overall ethics score, scale items were summed and then averaged. The overall mean score was 4.32 (standard deviation=.491).

Team Work

Students were asked to reflect on their past experiences working with teams by responding to nine statements, using a 3-point response scale were 1=rarely and 3=usually. The mean score for team work was 2.31 (standard deviation=.369).

Oral and Visual Communication Skills

Twelve team presentations in one section of the capstone undergraduate course (Mgmt 478) were analyzed for demonstration of oral and visual communications skills. The presentations were evaluated using an oral communication rubric, where 1=poor and 4=excellent. Table 6 on the next page shows individual results for each team and average scores. Note that visual communication skills are embedded within the overall oral presentation rubric.

Table 6. Oral and Visual Communication Skills.

Team	GM	United Airlines	Toyota	Starbucks	John Deere	Best Buy	Airbus	Soukup	Southwest	Honda	GE	Sony	Average
Accessibility													2.38
Do the speakers use appropriate figure/ground choices for their PPT slides?	4	2	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2.92
Do the speakers use appropriate typographical choices for their PPT slides?	4	2	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	2.58
Do the speakers use sufficient volume in their delivery?	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2.83
Do the speakers avoid using filler words?	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1.25
Does the presentation flow smoothly, with seamless transitions between slides and speakers, and with even delivery speed?	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	2	2.33
Comprehensibility													1.98
Do the speakers avoid distracting gestures (hands, stance, etc.)?	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1.50
Are the speakers' arguments based on sound reasoning and ample evidence?	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	1	2.75
Do the speakers make strategic use of slides (give points "breathing room," resist overwhelming the audience with information and data)?	3	1	4	3	2	3	1	3	2	2	1	1	2.17
Do the speakers use outside media strategically, including pictures, videos, etc.? Do outside media enhance presentation and reinforce key messages?	1	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	2	1	2	0	1.92
Do the speakers respond effectively to audience questions? Do speakers extend answers to the entire audience?	2	2	4	2	NA	4	1	2	NA	NA	1	NA	2.25
Are the PPT slides carefully edited? Is information presented in parallel style?	NA	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1.27

Usability														1.77
Do the writers use the Context-Content-Close (CCC) method to guide audience members through the presentation (do the speakers introduce themselves, the presentation agenda, and offer an appropriate close and summary)?	1	1	2	1	4	3	1	1	2	2	1	1		1.67
Do the speakers build credibility by establishing credentials and what's in it for the audience? Does the team exhibit enthusiasm for the topic?	3	1	3	2	2	4	1	4	3	2	1	3		2.42
Does the team build ethos by maintaining eye contact with the audience, focusing attention on their team's speaker, and using one voice in delivery (we vs. you, you vs. they, etc.)?	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	2	1	1		2.00
Do the speakers use claims effectively in their slides?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1.00
Overall Impression	3	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	1		1.92
Average Score	2.50	1.53	2.73	2.33	2.36	2.47	1.33	2.33	2.14	1.93	1.47	1.57		

More specific comments with respect to general observations by the communication evaluator are provided below:

Accessibility

- Very few chances with slides (wording, pictures, etc.). Little to no strategic use of graphics, charts, visuals, etc. Clearly very text heavy on many. Evidence of 'one presentation, four slide creators.'
- All well-spoken/loud enough.
- Lots of 'ums.'

Comprehensibility

- No overall sense of what conclusions the presentation will be arriving at. No overall context or rhetorical situation established.
- Most teams knew class concepts well, and could articulate answers to questions.
- Very few teams asked questions of each other.
- No focus on writing in parallel style was evident.

Usability

- Very little evidence of understanding rhetorical situation.
- You/they/we a problem.
- All cognizant of the need for eye contact with the audience even when reading from note cards.

In addition, the evaluator noted that almost all speakers used note cards, some to the point of being distracting.

Conclusion

The results presented in this report represent the first time that College of Business student learning outcomes have been directly assessed. These results should now be analyzed and discussed among faculty in the college for the following purposes:

- Evaluating the degree to which the results demonstrate students' competency with respect to each learning outcome.
- Identifying ways in which learning can be improved through curriculum content and/or processes.
- Deepening our understanding of exactly what each learning outcome encompasses.

Several measurement process issues should also be addressed:

- Are the assessment measures adequately measuring the desired outcomes?
- Are there more effective ways to collect data? Should we be considering on-going demonstration of learning outcomes, e.g., with electronic portfolios?
- Although measures were included for ethics and team work, both truly are capturing students' perceptions of their ethical behaviors and team performance, and therefore are not direct measures. How can these two outcomes be directly measured?

Appendix 1. Written Communication Rubric

WRITTEN COMPOSING	Exemplary 6	Mature 5	Competent 4	Developing 3	Beginning 2	Basic 1 (0 = N/A)
	responds <i>creatively</i> , requiring little or no revision	responds <i>fully</i> , requiring only minor revision	responds <i>competently</i> , requiring limited revision	responds <i>inappropriately</i> , requiring focused revision	responds <i>incompletely</i> , requiring extensive revision	responds <i>naively</i> , requiring thorough revision
DOES THE WRITING GENUINELY AND PRODUCTIVELY ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE?						
CONTEXT PURPOSE POSITION AUDIENCE	subtle, challenging claim; inventive, informed position; professional, engaging attitude	explicit, fully developed claim; clear, informed position; deliberate overall strategy	identifiable (if predictable) claim; considered position; workable (if inconsistent) overall strategy	ambiguous claim; tentative position; a major inconsistency in persona or a weak choice of persona	vague, over-generalized, or trite claim; inconsistent persona or a workable persona poorly implemented	no discernible claim; confusing or unspecified position; inappropriate persona
SUBSTANCE SCOPE DEPTH RELEVANCE FAIRNESS	comprehensive, open topic exploration; detailed support for the major claim or dominant impression; responsible, strategic use of sources	reliable, detailed examination of the subject; sufficient, purposeful content; accurate use of sources	adequately chosen content (possibly some lack of range and quality in content); satisfactory use of sources	unfocused or underdeveloped content with some relevant supporting detail; major off-topic or nonproductive content; unintentional plagiarism	weak level of detail; trite, confusing or simplistic content (underdeveloped content; biased sources; conflicting content; crucial omissions)	broad, narrow, underdeveloped, or ill-defined subject; poor or no support for claim; substantive errors in summarizing sources or blatant plagiarism
ORGANIZATION FOCUS STRUCTURE RELATIONSHIP EMPHASIS	sophisticated claim at message and paragraph levels; multiple organizing strategies; subtle transitions; engaging momentum	identifiable, sustained overall claim; solid organization with firm guidance for readers; coherent transitions/sequencing	stated overall claim with supporting subclaims; standard organization; explicit (if mechanical) transitions; prioritized ideas	a major weakness in claims; mechanical organization; a major transitional problem (misdirection, omission, digression); misproportioned space	weak, ambiguous, or unsupportable claim; rambling organization; missing transitions; poor sequencing/prioritizing of ideas	simplistic or incoherent claim; weak paragraph unity; loose or digressive organization; missing or flawed transitions
STYLE CONVENTIONS AESTHETICS VARIETY	creative use of usage conventions; scrupulously responsible citation of sources; innovative voice, tone, sentence structure, vocabulary	adherence to usage standards; clear, functional, accurate citation of source; deliberate language use; fluent, varied sentence structure and diction	adherence to usage standards, but minor problems in layout, headings, margins, pagination, or documentary style; consistent, somewhat varied language	a major pattern of grammatical and/or mechanical errors or several minor errors; absent or nonstandard documentation; weak stylistic strategy; little rhetorical variety	some major, distracting grammatical, documentary, punctuation, or mechanical errors; no documentation; trite discourse	disruptive grammatical, documentary, punctuation, or mechanical errors; naive language use; conspicuous redundancy
DELIVERY CONSISTENCY ENGAGEMENT ACCESSIBILITY LAYERING	innovative accommodation of media and conventions: headings; contrast; typography; white space; paper color, texture, weight, and size; timing; visuals (graphs, charts, tables, video)	purposeful accommodation of media and conventions: headings; contrast; typography; white space; paper color, texture, weight, and size; timing; visuals (graphs, charts, tables, video)	standard use of typography, visuals, and graphics with minor inconsistencies; readable, accessible text; acceptable figure-ground contrast	a major problem with first impression, accessibility, figure-ground contrast, media choice; inconsistent or omitted headings, captions, or visuals; hurried or prolonged closure	multiple problems in media integration and document design that create clichéd, confusing, or distracting first impression; faulty pacing; weak visual conventions or confusing hierarchy	offensive, haphazard, or missing visual guides; inappropriate media choice; color and typography that weaken legibility, readability, or accessibility; little or no figure-ground contrast; monotonous