

CLAS Core Assessment

GE Core Area: International and Global Issues
Academic Year: 2022-23

Executive Summary

The University of Iowa's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is committed to the regular assessment and improvement of the General Education CLAS Core, and so during the 2022-23 academic year, the College undertook the assessment of the International and Global Issues (IGI) area, one of eleven thematic areas in the CLAS Core. This was the first time this area has been assessed since the introduction of the CLAS Core. To complete this assessment, instructors in 29 courses produced course assessment reports explaining how each course helped students fulfill the learning outcomes for the IGI area, how the course demonstrated the general education course attributes (a set of instructional best practices expected of general education courses), and how the course instructors made revisions to the course in light of student struggles and successes. These reports came from 15 distinct academic disciplines and 11 different departments. Once instructors completed these reports, they were reviewed and analyzed by the General Education Curriculum Committee, with the findings synthesized into this report during the 2023-24 academic year.

The assessment showed that, in general, the courses in the IGI area are successfully helping students achieve the desired learning outcomes. They provide diverse and rich course content as students are immersed in studying a variety of contemporary global and international issues and exposed to a range of perspectives representing differing regional and social viewpoints. The course assessment reports provided ample evidence, in the form of comments and data from student evaluations, completed student assignments, and other class materials, that students are successfully achieving most of the learning outcomes for the IGI area. These findings were supplemented by data from student evaluations showing that the students themselves overwhelmingly believed the IGI courses were a successful learning experience.

At the same time, the assessment process showed that some of the student learning outcomes for the IGI area needed revision to provide greater clarity on the aims of the courses. Most importantly, the analysis of the course assessment reports demonstrated that learning outcome #3, which focuses on adaptability to the complexity and diversity of contemporary life, was so vague that instructors lacked clarity on how to incorporate it into their course designs. In light of this finding, both the General Education Curriculum Committee and the Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee agreed to eliminate it, confident that the intended student knowledge was covered by the other three learning outcomes for the area. The wording for two of the other three learning outcomes was also refined for greater clarity. In addition, the need for some improvements to the assessment process itself became apparent, particularly improvements in the prompts given to instructors for the course assessment reports.

This report provides a summary of the assessment process, its findings, and the actions either recommended or already taken in light of those findings.

Background

The University of Iowa's General Education CLAS Core is designed to provide students a well-rounded, multidisciplinary education and prepare them for success in the 21st century. The Core consists of eleven thematic areas plus a Sustainability requirement fulfilled by a course from another thematic area. One of the eleven thematic areas making up the Core is International and Global Issues (IGI), which is defined in this way in the IGI content requirement:

Courses examine contemporary international or global issues, introducing students to the perspectives of other nations or cultures. Courses in this area help students to understand contemporary issues from an international or global perspective by focusing predominantly on countries or issues outside of the United States. Courses studying a single country or using a historical perspective must place the subject within a contemporary international or global context.

Each thematic area in the Core also has a number of student learning outcomes, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students should develop and demonstrate in courses in those areas. Instructors who teach courses in a particular area are expected to design class lessons around these learning outcomes and develop assignments that foster and measure students' achievement of the outcomes. At the time of the IGI assessment, the student learning outcomes for the IGI area were:

1. Students develop knowledge of one or more contemporary global or international issues.
2. Students demonstrate a greater awareness of various perspectives and a deeper appreciation of how differences arise.
3. Students are better able to adapt to the complexity and diversity of contemporary life through their understanding of international and global contexts.
4. Students know and are able to apply at least one method of analysis and critical inquiry.

All GE CLAS Core courses, regardless of their thematic area, are also expected to demonstrate five GE course attributes:

1. Academic expectations are clearly defined.
2. Students receive early and frequent evaluation of their work.
3. A range of teaching and assessment strategies are used.
4. Assignments in the course will build in complexity.
5. Students practice writing and communication in methods appropriate to the discipline.

Courses in the IGI area are offered across multiple disciplines. In Summer 2022, there were 38 courses listed in the catalog belonging to the IGI area, across 16 disciplines. Not all of these courses were regularly offered at the time, however. They include:

ANTH 2100 Anthropology and Contemporary World Problems
ANTH 2136 Race, Place, and Power: Urban Anthropology
ANTH 2261 Human Impacts on the Environment
ARTH 1040 Arts of Africa
FREN 1006 Global Sports and National Cultures
FREN 1510 Cultural Misunderstandings: France and USA

GEOG 1060 Geography of Asia: From Japan to Pakistan
GEOG 1070 Contemporary Environmental Issues
GEOG 1090 Globalization and Geographic Diversity
GEOG 2910 The Global Economy
GHS 2000 Introduction to Global Health Studies
GRMN 2720 Germany in the World
GRMN 4315 German Society Today
HIST 1016 The History That Made Our World
HIST 1403 The West and the World: Modern
HIST 1601 Civilizations of Asia: China from Origins to the 17th Century
HIST 1602 Civilizations of Asia: China from the 17th Century to the Present
HIST 1604 Civilizations of Asia: Japan
HIST 1606 Civilizations of Asia: South Asia
HIST 1607 Civilizations of Asia: Korea
IS 2000 Introduction to International Studies
ITAL 2770 The Mafia and the Movies
LING 1040 Language Rights
POLI 1400 Introduction to Comparative Politics
POLI 1401 Introduction to Russian Politics
POLI 1445 Introduction to Asian Politics: China
POLI 1449 Introduction to European Politics
POLI 1500 Introduction to International Relations
POLI 1501 Introduction to American Foreign Policy
POLI 2415 Latin American Politics
RELS 1130 Introduction to Islamic Civilization
RELS 2852 Women in Islam and the Middle East
RELS 3855 Human Rights and Islam
RUSS 1132 Russia Today
RUSS 2050 Women from an Unknown Land: The Fight for Independence
SJUS 1046 Environmental Politics in India
SLAV 1132 Russia Today
SPST 2170 Sport and Globalization

Of these courses, 27 were also listed as fulfilling other areas of the GE CLAS Core, including: Historical Perspectives; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; Social Sciences; and Values and Culture. In an effort to reduce the number of courses offered in two GE Core areas, in conjunction with the assessment of the IGI area in 2022-23, the departments were asked to choose whether it was appropriate for these 27 courses to remain listed as IGI courses or to list them with their other GE Core area.

Assessment Process

Every GE CLAS Core area is periodically assessed to evaluate whether students are achieving the learning outcomes associated with that area, to inquire whether the learning outcomes need to be adjusted or revised, and to make sure that instructors are planning and conducting courses in a way consistent with the goals of the thematic area. The assessment process is also intended to make sure that courses are demonstrating the five GE course attributes. Although it includes data gathered from individual courses, the purpose of the assessment is not to evaluate particular courses or instructors, but rather to look at the thematic area

considered as a whole. An assessment of the IGI area was conducted in the 2022-23 academic year, the first time this area has been comprehensively assessed.

To carry out the assessment of the IGI area, three types of data were collected:

1. In Fall 2022, the instructors of courses that fulfill the IGI requirement were asked to complete assessment reports explaining how the course fulfills the CLAS General Education content requirement, how it helps students achieve the four IGI student learning outcomes, and how it fulfills the CLAS Core GE course attributes. Instructors were also asked to reflect on any struggles students experience in achieving the learning outcomes, suggested course improvements that could enhance student learning, enrollment trends, and other factors impacting the course.
2. As part of these assessment reports, instructors were asked to provide evidence that the course is helping students achieve the four IGI student learning outcomes. This evidence could include quantitative data from ACE course evaluations, student comments from the ACE evaluations, information on assignments given to students, and examples of student work.
3. The analyses and evidence collected from instructors were supplemented by aggregate data collected from the ACE evaluations from all offered courses fulfilling the IGI requirement. This data included students' responses to three custom questions included on the survey for all courses designated as IGI courses. The data was collected from the Spring 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters—data from Fall 2022 was not available because the custom questions for the GE Core thematic areas were not included in the ACE surveys that semester.

Course Assessment Reports

Of the 38 courses identified as fulfilling the IGI area in Fall 2022, instructors completed assessment reports for 29 of them, representing 15 distinct disciplines in 11 departments. Of the remaining courses, two were removed as a General Education course in 2022; one was listed as fulfilling both the IGI and Historical Perspectives GE requirements and it was decided it should only fulfill the latter; two had not been taught in years and were discontinued; and one appeared to be a duplicate of a course offered in another discipline but that had not been cross-listed. One was not assessed because it is treated as a topics course and the content varies from semester to semester. The other two assessment reports were simply not completed. Assessment reports were completed for the following courses:

ANTH 2100 Anthropology and Contemporary World Problems
ANTH 2136 Race, Place, and Power: Urban Anthropology
ARTH 1040 Arts of Africa
FREN 1006 Global Sports and National Cultures
FREN 1510 Cultural Misunderstandings: France and USA
GEOG 1070 Contemporary Environmental Issues
GEOG 1090 Globalization and Geographic Diversity
GEOG 2910 The Global Economy
GHS 2000 Introduction to Global Health Studies
GRMN 2720 Germany in the World
HIST 1403 The West and the World: Modern
HIST 1602 Civilizations of Asia: China from the 17th Century to the Present

HIST 1607 Civilizations of Asia: Korea
IS 2000 Introduction to International Studies
ITAL 2770 The Mafia and the Movies
LING 1040 Language Rights
POLI 1400 Introduction to Comparative Politics
POLI 1401 Introduction to Russian Politics
POLI 1449 Introduction to European Politics
POLI 1500 Introduction to International Relations
POLI 1501 Introduction to American Foreign Policy
POLI 2415 Latin American Politics
RELS 1130 Introduction to Islamic Civilization
RELS 2852 Women in Islam and the Middle East
RELS 3855 Human Rights and Islam
RUSS 1132 Russia Today
RUSS 2050 Women from an Unknown Land: The Fight for Independence
SJUS 1046 Environmental Politics in India
SPST 2170 Sport and Globalization

In Spring 2023, the General Education Curriculum Committee reviewed the 29 completed assessment reports, looking particularly for areas of success where courses are effectively helping students achieve student learning outcomes, areas where courses are not adequately helping students achieve the student learning outcomes or not fulfilling all of the GE course attributes, and ways that the IGI student learning outcomes could be improved. Members of the GECC completed feedback worksheets in response to each of the 29 assessment reports.

Assessment Report Evidence

Instructors used a variety of evidence to demonstrate student learning in their courses. Some instructors used evidence drawn from the ACE evaluations for their courses, including quantitative data showing that students self-report that they are achieving the IGI learning outcomes and student comments demonstrating that students appreciate various aspects of the course. Instructors also used assignment instructions and rubrics to illustrate how the course helps students achieve the IGI learning outcomes or fulfills the GE course attributes. Finally, some instructors used examples of student work to demonstrate how the course had successfully helped students achieve the IGI learning outcomes.

ACE Evaluation Data

In Spring 2022, 1,389 students completed the three questions touching on the IGI learning outcomes, a response rate of 33 percent overall. In Spring 2023, 2,038 students completed the questions, a response rate of 40 percent overall. Students were asked three questions related to the IGI learning outcomes, assessing, on a six-point scale ranging from 1, Strongly Disagree, to 6, Strongly Agree, the following statements:

- I have gained knowledge of a contemporary global or international issue.
- I have a deeper understanding of the importance of seeing an issue from multiple perspectives.
- I have learned to apply at least one method of analysis for understanding global issues.

The first question corresponds closely to IGI learning outcome #1, the second question with IGI learning outcome #2, and the third question with IGI learning outcome #4. Learning outcome #3 is not connected with a question used on the ACE evaluations.

Completing the Assessment

In Spring 2024, the CLAS Academic Assessment Coordinator analyzed all the evidence mentioned above and drafted an assessment report, including recommendations for instructors and for revisions to the IGI curriculum and the assessment process itself. This report was reviewed by the CLAS Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, the General Education Curriculum Committee, and the CLAS Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee, leading to a final draft of the report and a final set of recommendations and action items.

Course Assessment Reports and Faculty Evidence

The assessment reports completed by faculty for 29 of the courses in the IGI category, along with the evidence provided by faculty in support of those reports, provide useful information about how IGI courses are fostering the four student learning outcomes mentioned earlier, what strategies faculty are using to successfully promote student learning, how IGI courses could be improved to better support student learning, and how the IGI assessment process could be improved in the future to be of more benefit to faculty, students, and the university. Below are some key findings from these course assessment reports. Again, the purpose is not to assess or evaluate individual courses, but rather to identify patterns or trends across the IGI curriculum.

1. The content in IGI courses is closely aligned to the IGI content requirement.

Practically all of the courses included in the IGI assessment provide diverse and rich course content that fulfills the expectations of the IGI content requirement. Students are immersed in studying a variety of contemporary global and international issues and they are exposed to a range of perspectives representing differing regional and social viewpoints. In general, faculty have designed courses with lectures, discussion topics, readings, and other materials that expose students to the content necessary for successful student learning in this category.

2. The assessment process left it somewhat unclear how students are processing and applying course content through discussions, activities, and assignments.

Although there is ample evidence that students in IGI courses are exposed to meaningful content consistent with the goals of the area, the assessment process left it less clear how they are processing and applying the content through discussions, activities, and assignments. In large part because of the design of the assessment process, the course assessment reports, in their analyses, tended to put much greater emphasis on the content of the course delivered through readings and lectures than on how students will learn and apply the content. This issue was especially pronounced in the analyses related to learning outcome #1, perhaps because its focus on providing students with knowledge of global and international issues lends itself to focusing on the content of the course. Other learning outcomes, such as #4 which focuses on students applying a method of analysis to a contemporary issue, more readily elicited examples of assignments used to develop the outcome, but even here there was often a tendency to focus exclusively on content.

3. There is mixed evidence that students are achieving learning outcome #2 because of diverging interpretations of the learning outcome.

Learning outcome #2 states that “Students demonstrate a greater awareness of various perspectives and a deeper appreciation of how differences arise.” Instructors provided strong evidence, including examples of course content, assignments, and class discussions, that demonstrated how students achieve this outcome. Instructors, however, interpreted this learning outcome in different ways, leading to different types of analyses and a lack of clarity on whether students are truly achieving the goals of the outcome. For the majority of courses, this learning outcome is interpreted as meaning that students should be exposed to different perspectives on a particular global or international issue; for example, students might learn about how different nations tend to look at a particular international issue differently, or how different groups within a nation have differing views on an issue. In a smaller number of courses, the focus was on exploring rival disciplinary or theoretical perspectives on particular issues. And in some courses, the focus was on how the students themselves bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives to the learning process and to discussions of the issues covered in the course.

4. The lack of clarity on what is intended by learning outcome #3 made it difficult to assess student learning in that area.

Although the course assessment reports revealed some successful examples of how learning outcome #3 can be applied, overall the reports suggest that instructors are uncertain about what learning outcome #3 (“Students are better able to adapt to the complexity and diversity of contemporary life through their understanding of international and global contexts”) is aiming for. This lack of clarity made it difficult to collect clear evidence of student learning related to this outcome. Perhaps because the outcome includes a focus on “understanding of international and global contexts,” in many cases this section of the analyses overlaps significantly with the analyses of learning outcomes #1 and #2. The focus of the learning outcome, however, seems to be on student adaptability, and yet very few of the assessment reports address how this disposition is developed in the course.

5. There is strong evidence that students are achieving learning outcome #4, despite somewhat different interpretations of the outcome.

Learning outcome #4 is focused on helping students develop the ability to apply methods of analysis and critical inquiry to international and global issues. In some courses, the methods of analysis are clearly linked to disciplinary methods and practices. In others, the methods of analysis are drawn from theoretical perspectives common to the discipline of the course. Finally, in other courses, particularly in fields that are interdisciplinary or that lack traditional disciplinary methods, the focus is placed more on the learning outcome’s emphasis on “critical inquiry,” and students are expected to analyze an international or global issue through a more general, critical lens. Whichever approach is taken, however, the reports demonstrate that IGI courses are successfully meeting this outcome by introducing students to disciplinary and theoretical methods of analysis and through assignments such as papers, case studies, and presentations.

6. The design of the course assessment report prompts limited the ability to gather useful data on the GE course attributes and course improvements to respond to student struggles, and more guidance was needed for how to most effectively use evidence in the assessment reports.

As part of the course assessment reports, instructors were asked to summarize how the course meets the four GE course attributes mentioned earlier. In some cases, the assessment reports showed that in general, instructors are successfully communicating class expectations to students, providing regular feedback to students, and providing students with a variety of learning experiences that build in complexity over the term. In many other cases, in large part due to unclear directions for completing the course assessment reports, there was not sufficient evidence to evaluate if students in IGI courses are engaging in the pedagogical best practices captured in the GE course attributes.

As part of the assessment process, instructors were likewise asked to report on any struggles students have in a specific IGI course and the ways the instructor has attempted to improve the course. In most of the reports, instructors are attentive to student struggles and regularly seek meaningful ways to improve their courses. In some cases, however, due to a lack of clear direction in the prompts for the course assessment report, the focus is on updating the course materials to either reflect shifts in the discipline or to promote relevance for students, or on updating assignments. These discussions are thoughtful and beneficial, but there could also be greater focus on linking these discussions to the four IGI learning outcomes.

Finally, the course assessment reports draw on a variety of evidence to support their analyses of how courses meet the student learning outcomes. The most common forms of evidence include the quantitative results from ACE evaluations, a sample of relevant student comments from the ACE evaluations, and descriptions of assignments used in class that help foster a particular learning outcome. Other forms of evidence include completed student assignments that demonstrate student learning and informal assessments used in class, including surveys developed by the instructor. For the most part, the evidence used in the reports is appropriate, relevant, and illustrative. That being said, the directions for the course assessment reports do not provide much guidance on how to most effectively use this evidence and place it in its appropriate context. For example, quantitative data from student evaluations that seems positive may be used as evidence of student learning, but in reality the reported scores are lower than in similar courses. Student comments from course evaluations may be general and provide only vague evidence of student learning, or they may be cherry-picked.

ACE Evaluation Data

The quantitative data collected from student ACE evaluations provides information about students' self-assessment of their learning in IGI courses that supplements the findings drawn from the course assessment reports. This data has certain limitations, including the possibility that students have underestimated or overestimated how much they have learned in a course, the possible effect of student response rates on the validity of the results, the general nature of the questions asked of students, and the possibility that there is more complex, diverging data at the course level. Even so, students' self-assessment can be a valuable source of information on student learning, especially if it is paired with other sources of data. The following are key findings from the ACE evaluations conducted in IGI courses in Spring 2022 and Spring 2023:

1. Students report that, while taking an IGI course, they have gained knowledge of a contemporary global or international issue.

In Spring 2022, 80 percent of students in IGI courses completing the ACE evaluation reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I have gained knowledge of a contemporary global or international issue," with 56 percent stating that they strongly agreed with the statement. The mean response among all students answering the question was 5.22. Similarly, in Spring 2023, 77 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with 52 percent strongly agreeing. The mean response to the question in that semester was 5.10. This question correlates with learning outcome #1, "Students develop knowledge of one or more contemporary global or international issue," and so these student responses provide supporting evidence that this learning outcome is generally being met successfully.

2. Students report that, after taking an IGI course, they have a deeper understanding of the importance of seeing an issue from multiple perspectives.

In Spring 2022, 77 percent of students in IGI courses who completed the ACE evaluation either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I have a deeper understanding of the importance of seeing an issue from multiple perspectives," with 54 percent strongly agreeing. The mean response among students was 5.15. In Spring 2023, 75 percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with 50 strongly agreeing. The mean response in this semester was 5.07. This question correlates with learning outcome #2, "1. Students demonstrate a greater awareness of various perspectives and a deeper appreciation of how differences arise," and therefore the student responses provide supporting evidence that this learning outcome is generally being met successfully.

3. Students report that, while taking an IGI course, they have learned to apply at least one method of analysis for understanding global issues.

In Spring 2022, 75 percent of students in IGI courses and completing the ACE evaluation either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I have learned to apply at least one method of analysis for understanding global issues," with 50 percent strongly agreeing. The mean score among student respondents was 5.09. Likewise, in Spring 2023, 73 percent of students reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with 47 percent strongly agreeing. The mean score this semester was 4.99. This question correlates with learning outcome #4, "Students know and are able to apply at least one method of analysis and critical inquiry," and so these student responses provide supporting evidence that this learning outcome is generally being met successfully, although perhaps not as well as the other two learning outcomes addressed by evaluation questions, given the somewhat lower mean scores.

4. There is a lack of evidence whether students believe they are better able to adapt to the complexity and diversity of contemporary life through their understanding of international and global contexts.

Due to the absence of an ACE evaluation question correlating with student learning outcome #3, "Students are better able to adapt to the complexity and diversity of contemporary life through their understanding of international and global contexts," there is a lack of evidence whether students perceive that they are successfully achieving this outcome.

5. Students report successfully achieving the IGI learning outcomes across the different disciplines offering IGI courses.

The mean student responses to each of the three questions included in the ACE evaluation, when broken down by department, show that students report successfully achieving the student learning outcomes across the different disciplines. In Spring 2022, of the 11 departments offering IGI courses, 8 had mean responses for all three questions above the overall mean response for each question. In Spring 2023, of the 11 departments offering IGI courses, 9 had mean responses for all three questions above the overall mean response for each question. This demonstrates that across the majority of disciplines, courses are providing successful learning opportunities for students.

6. Students' self-assessment of their learning in IGI courses declined from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023, although only slightly.

Even though solid majorities of students reported successfully achieving learning outcomes in both Spring 2022 and Spring 2023, it is worth noting that mean student responses declined across all three ACE evaluation questions between those two semesters, although only slightly. The mean response on whether students had gained knowledge of a contemporary global or international issue declined by 0.12. The mean response on whether students had gained a deeper understanding of the importance of seeing an issue from multiple perspectives declined by 0.08. And the mean response on whether students had learned to apply at least one method of analysis for understanding global issues declined by 0.10. These results do not necessarily represent a problem with the IGI curriculum and may reflect challenges specific to particular departments or courses. Nevertheless, this is a trend worth monitoring in the future.

Recommendations and Action Items

This section includes recommendations for how faculty teaching in the IGI thematic area can improve their courses to better help students achieve the IGI learning outcomes. It also includes action items the General Education and Curriculum Committee and Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee, has already taken, in light of the findings of this report, to revise the four IGI student learning outcomes, and will take to improve the assessment process for the future. The below recommendations and action items are listed in thematic order and not in order of importance.

Recommendations for Faculty

1. Continue to offer course content and assignments that promote successful student learning.

The course assessment reports illustrate that instructors are providing students with a range of courses that explore international and global issues that are important, relevant, and interesting to students. Instructors have designed courses that provide students with a breadth and depth of knowledge on these topics across 15 distinct disciplines. Course syllabi and assignment examples provided as evidence in the course assessment reports also demonstrate that instructors have taken care to design assignments that engage students in critical thinking and that help them achieve the IGI learning outcomes. Student responses to the ACE evaluations showing that the overwhelming majority of students believe they are successfully achieving key learning objectives in the IGI courses provide further evidence of the benefits of both course

content and course assignments. Faculty should continue their efforts to provide these learning experiences to students.

2. Focus on the diverse perspectives of impacted stakeholders when analyzing international and global issues.

Learning outcome #2 focuses on fostering “a greater awareness of various perspectives and a deeper appreciation of how differences arise.” The course assessment reports make apparent that instructors have interpreted and implemented this in a variety of ways, focusing on: differing perspectives among the stakeholders impacted by an international and global issue; rival theoretical and disciplinary perspectives on the issues covered in a course; and the diverse backgrounds and perspectives brought to the class by students. The first two seem to be more consistent with the intent of this learning outcome, although the second may be more appropriate for an upper-level course for majors. Although instructors should always be attentive to students’ diverse backgrounds and try to use that as a learning opportunity, that is not a distinctive feature of IGI courses. Rather, recognizing the complexity of global and international issues, acknowledging that there are multiple stakeholders involved, and possibly learning to look at an issue from multiple theoretical perspectives are key aspects of an IGI course. Therefore, courses that do not already do so should include content and assignments that foster these forms of knowledge. As noted below in the section on action items for the GECC, this learning outcome has been revised to better reflect its intended purpose.

Action Items for the General Education Curriculum Committee

1. Revise learning outcome #1.

Discussions of an earlier draft of the IGI assessment report and the need to revise the area learning outcomes led the UEPC to propose that the word “contemporary” be removed from learning outcome #1 because the term is vague and has distinct meanings for different academic disciplines. The learning outcome now reads:

Students develop knowledge of one or more global or international issues.

2. Revise learning outcome #2.

Based on the course assessment reports, instructors interpreted learning outcome #2 in a variety of ways, as focusing on: differing perspectives among the stakeholders impacted by an international and global issue; rival theoretical and disciplinary perspectives on the issues covered in a course; and the diverse backgrounds and perspectives brought to the class by students. The first two seem more in line with the purpose of the learning outcome, although a focus on rival theoretical and disciplinary perspectives may be more appropriate for an upper-level course geared toward majors than a general education course. In light of these issues, the GECC and the UEPC have revised the learning outcome to read:

Students demonstrate an understanding of different international and regional perspectives on complex global issues and the reasons for these differences.

3. Eliminate learning outcome #3.

The course assessment reports demonstrate uncertainty among instructors about the meaning of learning outcome #3. In some cases, their analyses of this learning outcome overlap with those for learning outcomes #1 and #2. In other cases, instructors included material with no explicit link to the learning outcome. This uncertainty is compounded by the lack of data drawn from student evaluations related to this learning outcome due to the absence of a corresponding question on the ACE evaluations. In light of these problems, both the GECC and the UEPCC agreed that this learning outcome should be eliminated. The committees agreed that the focus of the learning outcome on developing “adaptability” in a complex, diverse, and global world that students could transfer to other contexts was adequately covered by the remaining three learning outcomes.

4. Provide more guidance on the effective use of evidence in the course assessment reports.

The directions for completing the course assessment reports already allow faculty to use a substantial variety of sources of evidence to support their analyses and provide helpful guidelines on how to select and use various types of evidence. On the other hand, additional guidance could be provided on the effective use of evidence, including information on how to best use both quantitative and qualitative data from the ACE evaluations.

5. Update the directions for completing the course assessment reports to make it clearer that instructors should reflect not only on course content, but on the student learning process considered holistically, including assignments and class activities.

The course assessment reports tended to focus on course content and content delivery, but it is also essential to include a discussion of how students process the content they receive and how the content is applied and reinforced through assignments. The analysis of the course assessment reports suggests the instructions for the assessment were unclear. Including directions explicitly asking instructors to discuss how course content and class activities and assignments work together to help students achieve the IGI learning outcomes might encourage more in-depth reflection and more informative assessment reports.