

Using Embedded Assignments to Create Cultures of Assessment in the Majors and the Core of Gonzaga University and Seattle University

Third Year Report (Final), February 25, 2012

Submitted on behalf of Gonzaga University and Seattle University by
John C. Bean, PI

OVERVIEW

It is with much appreciation to the Teagle Foundation that Seattle University and Gonzaga University submit their third and final report documenting the results of our implementation grant. On both campuses we have accomplished the goals set forth in our 2009 grant proposal—in many cases with achievements that far exceeded our hopes. On both campuses, our focus on building cultures of assessment within departments and the Core Curriculum has led to transformative results that are documentable and, we hope, worthy of dissemination. Moreover, as we explained in our previous reports, the cross-fertilization resulting from our cooperative efforts—particularly with regard to developing outcomes-based Core Curricula—has been a significant factor in our success.

ACTIVITIES NARRATIVE

Prong One: Writing in the Majors—Seattle University

Our Teagle work for Prong One must be placed within the context of Seattle University's disappointing accreditation report from the Northwest Consortium of Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) following its 2010 accreditation visit. (See our Year Two report for details.) In spite of our nationally recognized work for assessment in some departments, we were severely reprimanded for failing to create a systematic university-wide assessment process for all academic programs. That negative report in 2010 led to encouraging results in 2011, thanks in large part to our Teagle grant.

In spring 2010, the Provost's Office asked the University Assessment Committee (UAC) to create a systematic assessment process that would bring the university into compliance with NWCCU assessment standards within one year. This process was set in action during Fall Quarter 2010. It mandated that each undergraduate major and graduate program establish a 5-year assessment plan and conduct a direct assessment project for academic year 2010-2011. The UAC adopted the embedded assignment assessment model developed through the Teagle Implementation Grant. To provide special assistance to the College of Arts and Sciences (where most of the assessment problems resided), the administration expanded John Bean's duties as Consulting Professor for Writing and Assessment and as PI for the Teagle grant to include being assessment coordinator for Arts and Sciences. The insights derived from the Teagle Grant's "writing in the majors" workshops were incorporated into what we might call "accelerated assistance strategies" for all departments needing help (lunch meetings, afternoon workshops, one-on-one coffee consultations). In effect, an abbreviated form of the Teagle writing-in-the-majors workshops reached all departments in Arts and Sciences with only small expenditure of Teagle funds. As we show later in this section, the systematic assessment process demanded by NWCCU is now in place with 100 percent of A&S undergraduate majors completing a 5-year assessment plan and more than 90 percent completing a direct assessment project in 2010-2011, all of which used embedded assignments for direct assessment.

Year three highlights for Prong One—Writing in the Majors:

- Teagle-funded writing in the majors summer workshops (two-days each) were conducted for three programs: Communication, Theater, and Matteo Ricci College (Seattle University's experimental school linked with local Catholic high schools). Originally, the Year Three group included a cohort from the School of Nursing, but the nursing faculty had to withdraw due to scheduling conflicts. In year three, stipends were paid to 23 faculty members from the participating departments. The workshops were again led by a three-person team: John Bean, Consulting Professor for Writing and Assessment; Larry Nichols, Writing Center Director; and Lynn Deeken, Library Assessment Coordinator, who was accompanied by the particular reference librarian assigned to each respective department/program. These workshops followed the model described in our year 1 and year 2 reports.
- Driven by the UAC assessment mandate, accelerated versions of these writing-in-the-majors workshops—focused on embedded assignments, faculty-designed rubrics, departmental analysis of results, and ensuing “closing the loop” discussions—reached all undergraduate majors and graduate programs in Arts and Sciences. “Accelerated assistance strategies” included lunch workshops for chairs and assessment coordinators, a Teagle-funded workshop on rubric design, mini-workshops for individual departments or majors (particularly Visual Arts, Digital Design, Art History, Asian Studies, and Women Studies), and frequent coffee or email conversations. A few of these activities (particularly lunches) were funded by the Teagle grant and some by the College of Arts and Sciences. Most were unfunded, relying entirely on faculty good will and the pressure of reaching compliance with the NWCCU. The College of Arts and Sciences assessment report for 2010-11, showing how embedded assignments were incorporated into all undergraduate majors and graduate programs, is included as Appendix 1.
- Our decision to include reference librarians in the Teagle Writing in the Majors workshops led to an increasingly nuanced understanding of the complexities of teaching information literacy (IL) across the disciplines. For example, the IL skills demanded for expert insider prose in economics differ dramatically from those required in history, chemistry, psychology, environmental studies, or Asian studies. Besides the ability to locate sources using a variety of databases, IL demands the ability to read those sources rhetorically, to incorporate them meaningfully into a writer's own argument, and to meet disciplinary conventions for genre and documentation. Two projects for year 3 focused particularly on IL
 - A culminating Teagle “sharing workshop” on teaching the “literature review” was held for representative teachers from all majors in the social and physical sciences including engineering, and nursing. The focus of discussion was strategies for teaching undergraduates the skill of reading the discipline's peer-reviewed primary literature and producing an integrated literature review that either revealed a gap in knowledge or synthesized the current state of knowledge on a given problem. Workshop presenters included professors from chemistry, social work, and psychology who had recently published a paper or given conference presentations based on their Teagle-inspired work. 22 persons participated in this wine-and-cheese late afternoon workshop.
 - Two economics professors have produced an article now undergoing review at the *Journal of Economic Education*, which focuses on Teagle-inspired writing projects with strong IL components. Student assignments, focused on messy real-world policy issues, are sequenced to involve increasingly complex IL skills needed by professional economists. A second related project is now being planned that will include a librarian as co-author.

- An article describing the theory and practice of our Teagle Writing in the Majors workshops appeared as an invited book chapter in an edited collection on writing in the disciplines from the UK:

Bean, John C. "Backward Design: Towards an Effective Model of Staff Development in Writing in the Disciplines." In *Writing in the Disciplines*, Ed. Mary Dean and Peter O'Neill. London: Palgrave, 2011: 215-236.

A pdf copy of this article is attached as Appendix 2. Many of the ideas developed in the Writing in the Majors workshops are also included in John Bean's second edition of *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom* (Jossey-Bass, 2011). The Preface to the Second Edition specifically thanks the Teagle Foundation.

- Our Teagle-inspired article on writing in chemistry [Alaimo, Peter J., John C. Bean, Joseph Langenhan, and Larry Nichols. "Eliminating Lab Reports: A Rhetorical Approach for Teaching the Scientific Paper in Sophomore Organic Chemistry." *WAC Journal 20 (November) 2009*: 17-32] was cited in an article in *Science* and highlighted in an accompanying *Science* podcast: Moskovitz, C. and D. Kellogg, "Inquiry-Based Writing in the Laboratory Course." *Science*, 20 May (2011): 919-920.
- Also the year produced several conference papers stemming from Teagle-sponsored work:
 - Cook, K. E., & Murowchick, E. (2011, July). Do Literature Review Skills Transfer From One Classroom to Another?. Poster presented at the 2011 International Conference on the Teaching of Psychology, Vancouver, BC.
 - Brennan, M.K., Zeff, R., & Lovell, M. *Academic Writing for the Social Work Profession: Scaffolding Assignments Throughout the Curriculum*. Co-presented at Association of Social Work Baccalaureate Program Directors. Cincinnati, Ohio on February 24, 2011.
 - Zeff, R., Lovell, M., & Brennan, M.K. *Social Work Academic Writing: Scaffolding Assignments across the Curriculum*. Presented by Prof. Zeff at Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) Annual Program meeting (APM) in Atlanta, GA on October 30, 2011.
 - Lovell, M., Brennan, M.K. & Zeff, R. & . Paper, *Assessing Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes Through the Senior Capstone Project*. Paper accepted for Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) Annual Conference in Portland, OR, March 17, 2012
 - Nichols, L. "Writing Assignments/Writing Center Consultations: Partners in Constructing Meaning." Conference on College Composition and Communication, Atlanta, April, 2011.
 - Bean, J. "Writing and Deep Learning: What Do We Mean by 'Meaning-Constructing' Assignments?" Conference on College Composition and Communication, Atlanta, April, 2011.
 - Duniway, R, and J. Bean. "Developing Meta-Rubrics That Serve Multiple Goals: Assessing General Education Within Disciplinary Assignments." General Education and Assessment Conference (AAUC), Chicago, March, 2011.

Prong 1: Writing in the Majors—Gonzaga University

During the third year of the grant, Gonzaga was able to achieve our goal of bringing into the conversation about academic majors the remaining departments in Arts and Sciences that had up to now not participated. We again held one summer workshop for the departments participating in this third grant year, with the usual opportunities to do internal department work and to exchange ideas with the other departments participating in the workshop. As was the case in the first two years, we allowed departments considerable leeway in defining the issues they wanted to work on and even whether the problems could be solved through embedded writing assignments. Our campus culture required a broad approach, but this approach has resulted in

embedded writing assignments in most departments as they engaged with the work and came to realize best responses to the identified problems. The outcome has been, as in the past, movement toward inculcating faculty-owned assessment thinking, particularly within disciplines unaccustomed to assessment. In some instances the results were unexpectedly impressive and useful.

The Departments of Religious Studies, Political Science, Mathematics, Theater, and Art participated in the grant's third year. The Mathematics Department had been particularly reluctant to be part of this effort in previous years, but this time—perhaps in part at the encouragement of the Dean of arts and Sciences—a significant number of the department's members took part, with unimagined success. Even though it provides a required core course for all Gonzaga students and is now obligated to identify learning goals for this requirement, the Mathematics Department has historically resisted outcomes assessment work. Nevertheless, the work of this department in the summer workshop was perhaps one of our greatest successes, as the department emerged not only with learning outcomes for its required core course but even a rubric to use in assessing the achievement of those goals. Obviously this is far removed from embedded writing assignments, but we consider this a significant grant achievement because it initiated the department into the assessment conversation, with the late summer result of some direct assessment of the learning goals identified in June. The Political Science Department reports “valuable strides toward [spelling out] learning objectives” and a plan to incorporate reading and writing guides into first year courses, as well as determining how to measure outcomes effectively. The Religious Studies Department has decided to create a junior seminar that will focus on introducing majors to research and theological methods; Teagle conversations also led to the creation of a new two-track curriculum for majors. In Art and in Theater, the grant started serious exploration of the use of e-portfolios as learning and assessment tool. The Art Department plans to begin using e-portfolios in 2012, in part because the grant funded one of the faculty members in the Art/Drama group to attend the e-portfolio workshop appended to the January 2011 National AAC&U Conference. As a result of the Teagle work, the Theater faculty has started to think about course goals less in terms of theatre/dance history, theatre lit, acting, movement, dance technique and design and more in terms of transferrable skills such as problem solving, collaborative learning, team building and constructive technique processes.

This past year, our two-day workshop in June was attended by twenty colleagues from these five departments and again administered by our present and past Writing Directors: John Eliason and Patricia Terry. Through much of the grant, we have retained Professor Eliason as a resource for departments engaged in the Teagle work of creating assignments and assessment rubrics. This workshop, as have the others, was very successful, both from our perspective and from that of the participants.

In a related event that followed up on the Teagle work, we brought in Charlie Blaich (of the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College), for our annual Learning Assessment Day (LeAD). He addressed “The Challenges of Doing Assessment at a Liberal Arts College.” This presentation was funded by Gonzaga rather than Teagle, but we saw it as adding yet another layer to the Teagle work and continuing to move our faculty through positive experiences with outcomes thinking and effective assessment from which they learn what their students are learning.

As the final grant cycle comes to a close, we can report varying degrees of success in the participating departments from the first two years and the pilot grant:

- Biology reports that the thinking the project engendered has led to a wholesale reconstruction of the Biology core curriculum for majors and minors. Formally, the department had focused its Teagle thinking on the outcome of having its graduating majors "write like scientists." Through the support of the grant, the department decided to use a portfolio approach to assessment, and in the summer workshop a small group of faculty developed a draft rubric for evaluating student writing, based on the characteristics the department identified as being hallmarks of good scientific writing. A key feature of the plan was to look for improvement, not just achievement of a particular standard, based on sample student papers from lower and upper-division courses to determine the distribution of performance levels according to the rubric. The department credits the Teagle grant with moving them beyond their frustrations about their core curriculum to thinking about what they wanted students to know and be able to do when they finished the major—this opportunity resulted in action.
- The Philosophy Department used the resources provided by the TEAGLE grant to articulate a set of outcomes that could be applied across multiple sections of three courses (all undergraduate courses taught by the department can qualify as core courses). They selected five instructors who represented different approaches to each course, and those groups identified a preliminary set of goals. They then increased the size of the groups in two steps until it resulted in a department-wide discussion. They also broke goals down into three general areas, drawn from the three components of classical virtue (thought, emotion, action): cognitive, emotional and behavioral. In the end, there was far more agreement in approach and practice than had been expected, with a common grounding vision of the role the four courses play in both the Core and in Jesuit formation more generally.
- The English Department credits Teagle, in part, if not whole, for its work on "reading" as an essential but under-treated skill for students of English, directly connected to the department's renewed attention to and articulation of the broad outcomes for its 200-level curricular level, and the thoughtful weighing of different 200-level courses and how they address these outcomes. In addition, they credit the grant in part with the recent overhaul of the department's comprehensive exam, which grew out of informal and increasingly formal conversations by a group of department members, led by those who were part of the Teagle group. Their focus was explicitly outcomes-based – *what do we want a senior English major to be able to do?* – and grounded in literary and critical reading as a much more active and generative practice than had been previously encouraged.
- The Psychology Department describes the Teagle workshops as the gift of time in which to think about objectives and assessment of those objectives, as well as the impetus for action. The department now has two years of analysis of Major Fields Test results and two years of assessment of students' scientific writing. While the results so far indicate that majors are meeting goals, the data gathering continues. Currently, the department is expanding the writing assessment to include both fall and spring courses, and using the same writing assessment method for the 200-level research methods course. This will provide a baseline for evaluating writing improvement over the roughly three years from research methods to graduation. The department is also considering the use of e-portfolios.

- The grant helped some members of the Sociology Department to explore their curriculum in Research Methods and Social Statistics. They discovered that their majors had gaps in reading and (a) grappling with social scientific literature, (b) becoming ‘statistically literate, (c) developing computer-based analytical skills, and (d) writing in the social sciences. The faculty members brainstormed assignments and activities to address these gaps and developed one, for example, which requires students to find specific empirical articles, read the abstract and identify and articulate specific components of the theoretical and analytical approach being employed. They have also created an assignment around writing a literature review, asking students to synthesize an existing body of literature, rather than simply summarizing it. They are working on further integration of objectives across courses and rubrics to assess the relevant outcomes.
- The Music Department credits the Teagle workshop with the development of effective assessment tools of teaching quality and of the curriculum for those majoring in music and music education. Results included embedded assessment assignments, the elimination of certain courses and the restructuring of other requirements, and significant assistance in the process of applying for national accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).
- The Department of Modern Languages identified the teaching and assessment of learning about culture in its program. As a result of the Teagle work, they have adopted a new textbook that integrates grammar and culture and promotes cultural exploration through the comparison of Italian and American customs. They have also revised the Italian Studies minor, adding a specific requirement for an exploration of cultural issues. Finally, they have moved from a required thesis to a capstone project that can focus on cultural differences.
- Teagle-supported thinking in the Physics Department identified three areas in the major that needed improvement: computational physics content, independent research and experimental design. The department began with a focus on the first of those and agreed to develop a new, required, foundational/intro 200 level course in computational physics. Upper division courses would build on that content and develop further computational skills and processes in problem solving and understanding material. The course proposal is working its way through the A&S and Academic Council process for course approval.
- In Communication Arts, a promising beginning in the workshop died for lack of someone to maintain the momentum and because the department became involved in wholesale reconstruction as the result of regular program review. Current uncertainty about the very definition of a department with five major subdivisions has removed the Teagle work from consideration. On the other hand, there has been some initial success (not directly related to Teagle) in doing direct assessment on the required core curriculum course the department offers: Speech 101.

In the two Teagle Pilot Grant departments, results have been mixed.

- The Chemistry Department evaluated reports from an advanced, writing-intensive, laboratory course to initiate discussions about scientific writing and expectations related to science-specific writing conventions and style. The outcome was that students improved through the course of the semester at skills that significantly affect their grade or are easy to fix; however, skills that require significant self-editing (and time) such as proper voice or writing concise and fluid sentences did not improve through the semester despite the faculty’s

marking up the paper with comments. Consequently, the department decided to distribute teaching of certain writing elements throughout the sophomore year classes, discovering first-hand that students do not improve without guided revision. Because this process significantly increases the work-load of faculty teaching those labs, it does not appear to be sustainable. The Teagle grant has led to ongoing exploration of how to best integrate scientific writing competence into the curriculum.

- The History Department's experience with the Teagle grant was, in the words of the lead faculty member in that department, "short, and not entirely sweet." It was not clear to that colleague that the grant funding would be limited to the pilot phase; particularly, he had expected continuous funding for the student journal that was started during the pilot grant period. When this did not occur, there was disappointment and bitterness. The department claims to have in place an outcomes assessment program that is under constant review and always being improved, and the Teagle grant is not seen as having had a significant impact on that.

Not surprisingly, the work the grant has started has often not been pursued after the year in which departments participated in the Teagle workshop, even in departments where engagement in the work was initially robust and real results were identified and acted upon. The reasons are predictable and include staffing and personnel changes, new departmental leadership, "squeaky wheel" realities, new priorities, and the major one: insufficient time to maintain this as foreground. The report from the Biology Department sums it up. "We are stuck in practice. The main sticking points currently seem to be: 1) the lack of an easy-to-adopt e-portfolio platform (this may change with the adoption of the Nuventis software); 2) a lack of time on behalf of faculty to organize the project and to read and evaluate the submitted papers; and 3) an effort to redesign our Biology core, which has taken over the department's momentum." Similarly, the Psychology Department reports that "there are quite a few things that we have not had time to do. Most prominent[ly] . . . student portfolios. With 300-400 majors and minors, only nine professors, and piles of other things to do we have barely had time to think about it, much less do anything."

On the other hand, the consistently recurring message from nearly all of the departments and even individual faculty members involved is that the grant created the invaluable opportunity to do the kind of thinking that leads to better understanding of teaching and learning within and across the disciplines. Clearly this work served as an introduction, for many colleagues, to direct outcomes assessment work and has been a truly invaluable boost to our movement toward a culture of assessment. A few comments from departments, again, are typical:

. . . a very valuable experience. During the academic year things are so busy that we have little opportunity for meaningful discussion and reflection on pedagogy. The dedicated time and structure of the workshop was tremendously helpful as a first step because it gave us a framework to start sharing information, developing common goals, and implementing teaching innovations in a core area of our discipline.

The grant did stimulate several faculty to increase their involvement with assessment; . . . as a result . . . we ended up with a better understanding of what we wanted from students in this area than we had previously.

. . . recent departmental discussions and revision-work . . . makes me confident . . . that the . . . Teagle work . . . will be returned to and assessed for what it can offer to us, going forward.

Prong 2: Core Revision—Gonzaga University

The third and final year of grant funding coincided with the completion of the formal core curriculum revision work of the University Core Curriculum Committee. Over the life of the grant, the work of this committee was supported in multiple ways:

- Most committee members were funded to attend multiple conferences on curriculum, general education thinking, and assessment. This included our ability to send two teams of committee members to two AAC&U institutes that were invaluable to our core revision process. The grant also supported multiple visits by the Core Committee Chairs to our Florence and London campuses to ensure the participation of colleagues at those sites in the core revision conversation. In addition, the grant paid for multiple other faculty members from around the institution to attend conferences that furthered their understanding of curricular issues.
- The grant helped link the thinking emerging from Teagle work to general improvement of teaching by funding a team of colleagues who attended a Dee Fink workshop in Chicago, as well as several days of Core model explorations by forty faculty members on our home campus.
- Teagle has funded the acquisition of much supportive literature related to curricular and assessment thinking.
- The grant provided continuous support for the meetings and retreats the Core Curriculum engaged in over the grant's three year life and played a distinct role in helping the institution to create formal baccalaureate learning goals and proposed core curriculum learning objectives, as well as two outcomes based core models being vetted by faculty and the university community this academic year.
- The impact of exploring the problems, as well as sharing the experiences and the collective wisdom of each institution in the core revision work Seattle University and Gonzaga University have been engaged in has enriched our process and helped us immeasurably.

While much work remains in the efforts to revise our core curriculum, the Teagle grant has been instrumental in supporting what has been accomplished and has put us well on the way toward an improved revised core curriculum. It has supported formal and informal education of faculty colleagues and has helped bring them together productively for explorations of options. In supporting outcomes assessment thinking through the first prong of the grant, the Teagle Foundation has also supported the core work indirectly, since it meant that more faculty members had experience with the kind of thinking that we are asking them to do about the core curriculum.

Prong 2: Core Revision—Seattle University

The Seattle University work in Prong 2 of this grant has been focused on integrating outcomes-based education and assessment into the revision of the university's Core Curriculum. While the funds for the bulk of this work have been appropriately provided by the university itself (committee operations,

faculty workshops, faculty release time, staff support, etc.), the funds from the Teagle Foundation have enabled us to educate administrators and faculty about assessment, develop a library of reference materials on assessment, support the development of assessment rubrics relevant to the new Core, and offer two pilot courses designed to address assessment needs. These activities have been enormously helpful in the work of developing the new Core and building support for that revision.

The work of developing the new Core Curriculum reached a major milestone in May of 2011, when the Seattle University Board of Trustees unanimously approved the new curriculum. This curriculum is explicitly outcomes-driven, with established overall learning outcomes and specific learning outcomes identified for each course. Course design for each course is built around those outcomes, with faculty obliged to demonstrate how their individual Core courses will explicitly address the assigned outcomes. Assessment points are also built into the new curriculum, with embedded assignments specified in all four modules in the program. These embedded assignments will be collected and analyzed via rubrics for assessment purposes. Work on implementing the new curriculum is now underway, with full implementation scheduled for fall of 2013. A short summary of the new curriculum is contained in Appendix 3.

Educating Faculty and Administrators about Assessment

Shifting from a discipline-based curriculum to an assessable outcomes-based curriculum has required a culture shift at Seattle University, changing the ways that we have typically thought about curriculum design and teaching. At the beginning of this effort, very few faculty or leaders on campus had training in assessment or outcomes-driven education. One central thrust of the Teagle grant has been to facilitate that culture change by educating faculty and administration about assessment issues. This work has followed three paths:

- Supporting faculty and administrators in attending workshops and conferences on assessment. The bulk of this work happened in the first two years of the grant, but continued in 2011, when four faculty members and two administrators attended assessment conferences, supported in part by fund from this grant. This included three AAC&U conferences and a three-day assessment workshop at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Attendance at these conferences has been very valuable. When we have funded faculty or administrators new to assessment to these conferences and workshops the reaction has been uniformly positive and valuable. In particular, these experiences have resulted in two important changes in attitudes and knowledge: 1) an awareness that assessment is both valuable and relatively straightforward and 2) an understanding that use of outcomes and assessment is now the norm in higher education.
- On-campus workshops for faculty on assessment issues. The goals of these workshops have been to infuse understanding of assessment across the faculty and to develop capacities needed to more effectively assess the new Core. Some of these assessment workshops have focused on specific assessment challenges, particularly in science/math and social justice (see below). Others have focused on more universal issues, such as the creation and use of rubrics for assessment (18 faculty members attended a workshop on designing and using rubrics in June of 2011).
- Developing a library and collection of resources on assessment. Slightly more than \$300 was spent in 2011 on the purchase of books and other publications regarding learning assessment and outcomes-driven education. These materials, together with similar purchases made in previous years under this grant or with university funds, have established a small library of more than 50 volumes housed in the office of the University Core. In addition, the University Core office has begun collecting sample rubrics and other assessment instruments. These materials have been made available to the faculty and staff leading the curriculum revision, the University Assessment Committee, and the Core Assessment Committee, as well as to any other faculty or staff member who is interested. They will continue to be very useful as we implement the assessment methods in the new curriculum.

Pilot Courses

Our original grant proposal was submitted before the university launched the full revision of the Core curriculum, and that proposal had envisioned incremental change in the curriculum. Offering pilot sections of outcomes driven courses in 2011 was a key step in that incremental change model. The full, complete overhaul of the curriculum complicated those plans, but in a helpful manner. Regardless, we proceeded with offering two pilot sections of courses as part of this grant in Fall of 2011. One of these courses was a pilot version of the inquiry seminars that are at the heart of the Freshmen-level courses in the new curriculum. This course, titled “The Sociology of Higher Education” challenged first term college students to study higher education, reflect on their own goals and values regarding their education, and engage in rigorous research and writing assignments. Embedded assignments were used for assessment purposes. A section of Math 120 was used as a second pilot course in fall of 2011. Our previous assessment work has identified Math 120 as a critical course for student persistence. High failure rates in this course were associated with poor performance in subsequent classes and also resulted in students leaving the university. For this pilot course we paired the course with a Residential Learning Community so that all of the enrolled students were community members and then offered tutoring workshops in the residence hall where the community is located during the term. Full assessment is not yet complete on this course, but initial results are promising.

In addition to our successfully developing a new outcomes-based Core Curriculum and the associated activities listed above, we were also able to complete two core projects that directly relate to the goals specified in our original grant application: Creating “communities of assessment” around math/science literacy and around social justice. Teagle funding allowed us to complete both projects.

Building a Community of Assessment around Math/Science Literacy [see Appendix 4]

The Core Assessment Committee made math/science literacy the focus of its major Teagle-funded project initiated in year 2 of the grant but not completed until Winter Quarter 2011. 24 faculty from all across the curriculum participated in this project. The Core Assessment Committee’s report on this project is included as Appendix 4.

Building a Community of Assessment around Social Justice [see Appendix 5]

During Spring, Summer, and Fall Quarters, 2011, the Core Assessment Committee focused on using reflection essays built into 12 senior synthesis courses to assess students’ engagement with social and environmental justice (part of our mission values). We repeated, on a larger scale, the project piloted in our initial planning proposal from 2008. The Core Assessment Committee’s report on this project is included as Appendix 5.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most empowering aspect of the grant funding was that the two institutions did not feel strait-jacketed to emulate each other’s approaches. Seattle University had already established a strong culture of writing-across-the-curriculum and had experimented with an embedded assignment approach to assessment through the help of Barbara Walvoord as outside consultant in 2002-2005. As a result, Seattle University was able to proceed with its “Writing in the Majors” projects using approaches already piloted in such departments as English, History, and Finance. In contrast, for help in establishing processes to develop a new Core Curriculum, Seattle University turned to Gonzaga University for inspiration and guidance. Our early video-conferences in 2009-10 with our Gonzaga colleagues, our visit to Gonzaga in summer 2011, and the visits to Seattle by the Gonzaga Teagle team allowed Seattle University to develop workshops that invited bottom-up participation by faculty. Ironically, Seattle University has

completed its Core revision process sooner than Gonzaga. (The speed at Seattle University was the result of strong pressure from the administration and Board of Trustees to finish quickly.)

In contrast, the flexibility provided by the Teagle grant allowed Gonzaga University to focus on the needs of its own institution. For example, at Gonzaga, it became clear early on that a narrow interpretation of the embedded writing assignment part of the grant proposal would not be successful. As a crucial first step in moving some departments toward engaging in serious outcomes assessment thinking, Gonzaga needed an approach that allowed departments to identify any and all significant problems and to attempt to resolve them in ways that worked for them. Thus, for Philosophy and Mathematics, departments which teach a great number of courses in the core curriculum, the project focused on their core courses, but that became the jumping off point for outcomes assessment work that will eventually lead them to the work this prong of the grant was narrowly designed to do. The leeway to shape the grant in a way that allowed the work to be successful at both institutions was essential to the grant's success, and for this leeway Gonzaga is particularly grateful to the Teagle Foundation.

The importance of the Teagle grant support on both our campuses cannot be overestimated. The principal investigators on both campuses are absolutely convinced that the grant has been essential in moving our campuses closer to operating as cultures of assessment. Neither of them anticipated the degree of impact the grant has had, as it has far exceeded expectations. The grant has been extraordinarily successful in allowing for two very different approaches to achieve the same goals, making it possible for the two campuses to function independently, yet interdependently, in ways that led to greater success for both. The PIs believe that this freedom to explore what worked on each campus and what had the greatest chance of success made possible the development of replicable models that can productively serve other institutions engaged in similar efforts. The Teagle Implementation Grant has sown the seeds for new thinking that is changing our campus cultures. On both of our campuses we have enjoyed strong administrative support as we continue to improve our majors and our thinking about our University Cores. "Teagle thinking" has and will continue to shape our most innovative assessment work.

BUDGET NARRATIVE**Seattle University**

	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted
	2011	2011	2009	2009	2010	2010
Travel/Conferences	13,100.00	8,000.00	7,400.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	18,600.00
Meetings	3,400.00	3,680.00	9,400.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	4,680.00
Stipends	15,000.00	16,000.00	19,000.00	19,000.00	24,000.00	17,000.00
Benefits (stipends)	4,600.00	4,880.00	5,700.00	5,800.00	7,300.00	5,185.00
Courses	10,000.00	10,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,000.00
Benefits (courses)	3,100.00	3,202.50	30.00	1,200.00	0.00	2,135.00
Materials	700.00	720.00	0.00	1,000.00	2,200.00	1,000.00
Staff	0.00	3,000.00			2,000.00	3,000.00
Total	49,900.00	49,982.50	41530	50000	58,500.00	58,600.00

Gonzaga University

	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	
	2011	2011	2010	2010	2009	2009	
Meetings	12,000	6,000	2,300	2,000	2,200	4,000	
Travel	16,000	22,000	10,400	22,000	26,000	20,000	
Stipends	22,000	20,000	36,100	23,500	19,400	23,000	
Materials		2,000	1,200	1,000	1,800	2,000	
Staff				500	600	1,700	
Total	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	

APPENDICES FROM SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Appendix 1: Report on 2010-11 Assessment Projects in the College of Arts and Sciences

Appendix 2: "Backward Design: Towards an Effective Model of Staff Development in Writing in the Disciplines"

Appendix 3A and 3B: Summary Documents on the Seattle University's New Core Curriculum

Appendix 4: Report on Math/Science Literacy Project

Appendix 5: Report on Social Justice Assessment Project Using Reflection Essays