

General Studies Pilot Results

In February of 2007 the General Studies Program conducted a pilot assessment of student learning in eight selected sections of four introductory General Studies Courses. One section of English 101, two sections of Sociology 100, three sections of Psychology 203, and two sections of History 210 were included. 288 students (162 freshmen, 75 sophomores, 32 juniors, and 13 seniors) responded. The proportion of males and females was almost equal (49.3% male and 50.7% female). 199 of the students had taken classes only at UNK while 89 had taken at least one course from another institution.

The assessment consisted of 24 items measuring students' abilities relative to the four overall objectives of the General Studies program: 1) locating and gathering information, 2) critical thinking, 3) communicating through reading and speaking, 4) and understanding of under represented cultures. Each area was measured with six questions on the assessment. Item difficulties ranged from .27 - .84. the alpha level for the instrument as a whole was .755.

Ability to locate and gather information sub-scale (alpha = .332)

Question	Difficulty	Correlation with total	Correlation with sub-scale	Sub-scale Alpha if item is removed
1	.726	.277	.551	.226
2	.764	.324	.449	.302
3	.510	.304	.504	.303
4	.819	.503	.489	.254
5	.688	.385	.534	.251
6	.368	.137	.367	.404

Critical thinking sub-scale (alpha = .37)

Question	Difficulty	Correlation with total	Correlation with sub-scale	Sub-scale Alpha if item is removed
7	.670	.524	.559	.279
8	.268	.266	.441	.361
9	.285	.350	.512	.311
10	.403	.245	.446	.388
11	.837	.498	.497	.291
12	.382	.369	.504	.337

Communication sub-scale (alpha = .478)

Question	Difficulty	Correlation with total	Correlation with sub-scale	Sub-scale Alpha if item is removed
13	.754	.479	.543	.408
14	.372	.392	.545	.424
15	.438	.273	.445	.496
16	.750	.461	.527	.419
17	.573	.453	.592	.393
18	.601	.394	.513	.449

Diversity sub-scale (alpha = .591)

Question	Difficulty	Correlation with total	Correlation with sub-scale	Sub-scale Alpha if item is removed
19	.476	.400	.483	.594
20	.463	.484	.576	.546
21	.476	.392	.508	.585
22	.632	.495	.653	.499
23	.715	.461	.606	.520
24	.580	.503	.618	.523

This information indicates that items should be added to each sub-scale to increase reliability and validity. Questions 6, 10, 15 and 19 should be examined for possible replacement.

Scores were then compared based on the number of hours completed. Significant ($r < .05$) correlations were found between the number of hours taken and the total score on the test (.236), the ability to locate and gather information subscale (.155), the critical thinking sub-scale (.132), the communication sub-scale (.198), and the diversity sub-scale (.207). However when number of hours were compared using a one-way ANOVA the only significant difference that was found was between 12-18 hours ($m = 12.45$) and 45 or more hours ($m = 15.32$) on the full scale. There were no significant differences for any of the sub-scales. There were no significant differences based on the class status of the student.