

## **Project Summary: Essential Skills in the 300 Level Justice Core**

### **Participants:**

Amy Green (ISP)

Crystal Endsley (AFR)

Melinda Powers (ENG)

James DeLorenzi (HIS)

### **Context and Intention:**

The goal of the working group was to improve student learning of key common skills such as writing, critical thinking, and information literacy in 300 level justice core courses across the disciplines. This project was inspired by the 2015-16 General Education Assessment report, which measured student learning of critical thinking, information literacy, and writing in the general education curriculum, including English Composition I and II, the Flexible Core, and the 300 level Justice Core. The major finding of the report was that John Jay students do not improve their skills in critical thinking, writing, and information literacy sufficiently beyond the introductory level. Among the reasons for this, the report suggests, is a lack of shared understanding of the role of the course in developing these skills and a need for development opportunities to help faculty build their courses to support student learning of these skills. As a result, the group undertook a series of tasks to explore and develop the 300 justice core to meet student learning needs in essential skills.

### **Activities:**

- Reviewed the findings and recommendations from the 2015-16 General Education assessment report and recommendations.
- Reviewed student needs and student performance in 300 justice core courses
- Reviewed 300 level justice core learning goals in the context of the general education curriculum Drafted revised learning outcomes for 300 Justice Core Courses
- Communicated with additional faculty in 300 Justice Core for feedback on outcomes
- Created draft rubric for student performance on new learning outcomes

### **Summary of the data collected and analysis:**

The primary finding that shaped the work of the 300 Justice Core group was that there is a mismatch between the 300 level performance expectations for the course, and the needs/abilities of students taking it. While the level of the course suggests that students would come in with junior level reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities, they often report that student learning needs are substantially more basic. This course's function is further complicated by the fact that it often serves as an entry point for transfer students to the college – thereby introducing them to academic standards and expectations that may in some cases differ from those from their prior educational experiences. Therefore, the group discussed whether the course ought to serve as a moment to pause and bring students up to speed on key skills like critical thinking, reading, writing, and information literacy. The resulting draft of revised learning outcomes and rubric were designed to fulfill this purpose.

### **Products:**

- Evaluation of challenges and needs for 300 Justice Core students and courses
- List of potential skills to be developed in the 300 justice core (Appendix A)
- Draft Revised learning outcomes for 300 Justice Core (Appendix B)
- Partial draft rubric for student performance on revised learning outcomes (Appendix C)

**Assessment instruments used:**

<b>Objective/metric</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Course status and student needs evaluated	Evaluation completed
Student learning needs in context of gen ed identified	Needs mapped (see Appendix A)
Skills-based learning outcomes developed	Draft outcomes developed (see Appendix B)
Rubrics developed	Draft rubric developed (See Appendix C)
Faculty consulted	-departments of participants consulted -course faculty at large invited to TLC session

**Next Steps:**

Upon conclusion of the group’s work, the plan was to proceed with obtaining approval through governance bodies for the revised 300 justice core learning outcomes, followed by activities to develop faculty’s ability to teach these skills in their courses.

However, shortly after the conclusion of the PIG 300 JC grant work, another group of faculty began discussing student learning in another College Option area, Learning from the Past. Since this category presents another opportunity to address essential skills learning needs, we want to ensure that these categories work together as effectively as possible.

As a result, the final changes to 300 JC learning outcomes are on hold pending progress in addressing Learning from the Past.

**Spending**

Faculty were paid in 10 NTA hours according to their rank (one assistant professor, and three associate professors). No other funds were requested or spent.

# of Participants	Rank	Estimated NTA Rate	Hours	Subtotal
	Adjunct	52.65	10	
1	Assistant	56.98	10	569.80
3	Associate	63.42	10	1902.60
	Full	69.87	10	
				Total: 2472.40

Appendix A: Map of skills learning outcomes across gen ed categories

<p><u>First Year Seminar</u></p> <p>1. Identify issues of justice and analyze them using evidence.  <b>-reading</b>  <b>-writing/oral communication</b>  <b>-Critical Thinking/analysis</b>  <b>-information literacy</b></p> <p>2. <b>Teamwork</b></p> <p>3. Employ effective planning strategies and utilize campus resources in order to achieve academic and personal goals.  <b>learning skills / integrative learning</b></p>
<p><u>English Comp</u></p> <p>1. <b>Reading/Critical Thinking</b></p> <p>2. <b>Writing</b></p> <p>3. <b>Information literacy</b></p> <p><b>-technology</b></p> <p>4. <b>(Writing)</b></p> <p>5. <b>Creativity (etc.)</b></p>

<p><u>All Flexible Core</u></p> <p>1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.  <b>Information Literacy</b></p> <p>2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.  <b>Critical Thinking / analysis</b></p> <p><b>(Reading)</b></p> <p>3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.  <b>Writing/Oral Communication</b></p>
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<p><u>300 Justice Core</u></p> <p><b>-Reading (?)</b></p> <p><b>-Writing (?)</b></p> <p><b>-Creativity (?)_____</b></p> <p><b>-Research/Inquiry (?)_____</b></p> <p><b>-information literacy (?)__</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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The outcomes below resulted from the work of the PIG grant group's efforts to incorporate gen ed skills learning into the 300 justice core. Faculty involved include: Amy Green (ISP), Crystal Endsley (AFR), Melinda Powers (ENG), and James DeLorenzi (HIS).

**The group recommends making this a writing intensive course.**

**Draft Revised outcomes:**

A student will:

1. Contextualize and analyze struggles for justice.
2. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources, intellectual perspectives, and approaches.
3. Analyze and explain a text using methods appropriate for the genre, medium, and/or discipline, [identifying and evaluating the thesis and supporting evidence or examining how its components produce meaning.]
4. Organize and synthesize information and ideas into a coherently structured, thesis-driven, evidence-based argument in oral and written form.

**Current 300 JC Outcomes:**

A student will:

1. Develop an understanding of the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts of the struggles for justice.
2. Analyze how struggles for justice have shaped society and culture.
3. Differentiate multiple perspectives on the same subject.

**Flex Core common outcomes (across 100 and 200 level gen ed courses)**

A student will:

1. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
2. Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
3. Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

Appendix C: 300-level Justice Core Rubric for draft revised outcomes

Draft Learning Goals Students will:	Criteria (“performance indicators”). Students will be able to:	Assignments that teach/assess this skill	Comments: does the goal capture what students should learn in the course?
1. Contextualize and analyze struggles for justice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. articulate the struggles/s for justice relevant to the course</li> <li>2. articulate the social, political, historical, and/or cultural dimension/s of the struggle/s</li> <li>3. apply theories, concepts, and practices of justice to course content</li> </ol>	-	
2. Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and intellectual approaches	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify appropriate primary and secondary sources</li> <li>2. collect and interpret information from sources that represent a range of perspectives</li> <li>3. collect and interpret sources in a variety of forms, genres, and/or media</li> </ol>	-	
3. Analyze and explain a text using methods appropriate for the genre, medium, and/or discipline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. identify and evaluate the thesis and supporting evidence</li> <li>2. explain how its components produce meaning</li> </ol>	-	
4. Synthesize information and ideas into a coherently structured, thesis-driven, evidence-based argument	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. formulate a question</li> <li>2. construct a thesis</li> <li>3. connect evidence to thesis</li> </ol>	-	