

Engaging Faculty in GE Assessment:

The “Unintended Consequences” of
Community-building through Assessment

Su Swarat, Sara Hariri, Robert Mead, Alison Wrynn & Pamela Oliver
California State University, Fullerton

WASC ARC
April 2018

Overview

- GE assessment: A challenge
- GE Faculty Learning Community: Our solution
- Faculty perspectives
- Small group exercise

Institutional Context: **Assessment**

- Area for improvement per 2012 WSCUC reaccreditation
- Faculty skepticism about assessment
- The beginning of a culture of assessment on campus

Institutional Context: **GE**

- Over **500** GE course in multiple disciplines “on the books”; In Fall 2017:
 - **367** GE courses or **1,796** sections
 - **27,086** students or **13,425** FTES
- A large percentage taught by part-time faculty
- Diverse opinions about GE goals:

Started with **265** GE Learning Goals  Concluded with **5** GE Learning Goals in 2015

Institutional Context: CSU

- **EO 1100:** Requires GE assessment

6.2.5 General Education Review and Assessment

In accordance with WASC Senior College and University Commission accreditation requirements, campuses shall:

- a. develop an assessment plan that: (1) aligns the GE curriculum with campus GE outcomes; (2) specifies explicit criteria for assessing the stated outcomes; (3) identifies when and how each outcome shall be assessed; (4) organizes and analyzes the collection of evidence; (5) and uses the assessment results to make improvements to the GE program, courses and pedagogy.
- b. provide for regular periodic reviews of GE program policies and practices in a manner comparable to those of major programs, including evaluation by an external reviewer. The review should include a statement of the Meaning, Quality and Integrity of the campus GE program and the ongoing assessment of GE student learning outcomes.

Institutional Context: **Initial Attempt**

- **GE curriculum mapping:** Courses — Learning Goals
- Active involvement of the **GE faculty senate**
- Direct assessment: Four courses using **embedded assignment**
- Indirect assessment: Student **survey**

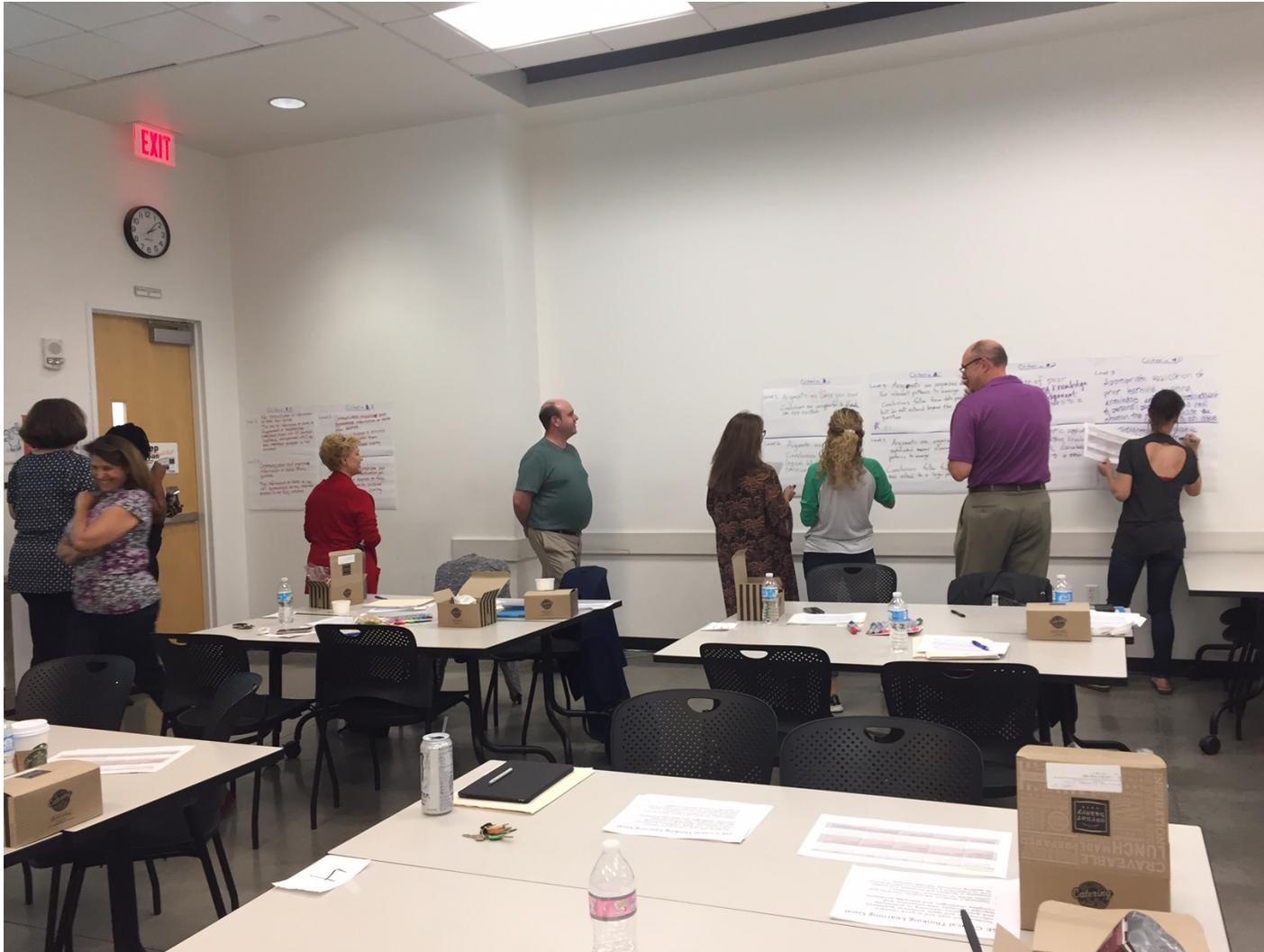
**Mixed
Results**

What do you think?

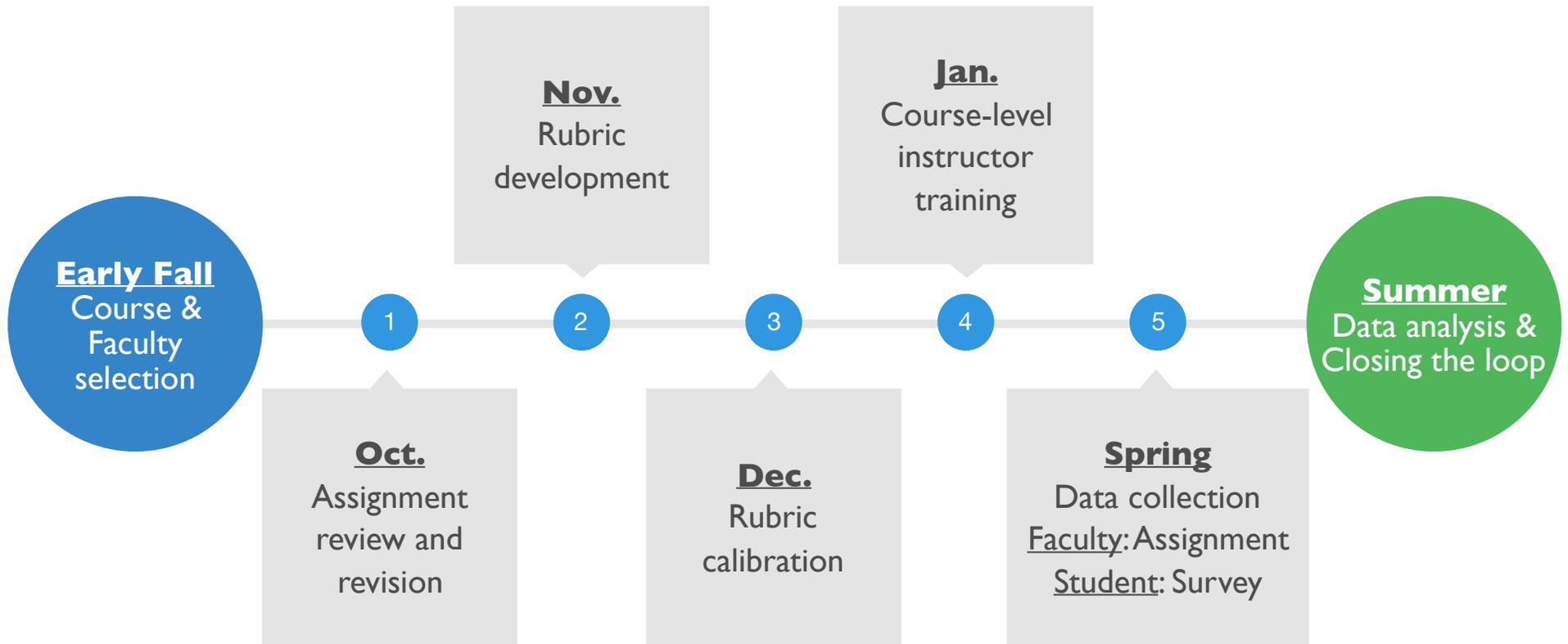
In order to develop a successful GE assessment model, what **critical features** does it need to have?

Our Solution:

GE Faculty Learning Community



A Year-long Working Group



Faculty Learning Community

Participants from 2016-2017

- **15** courses from 8 colleges out of 224 upper-division GE courses offered in Spring 2017
- **42** faculty:
 - 15 course coordinators/leads
 - 27 instructors
 - 3 instructors declined to participate
- **2,251** students

**GE Learning Goal
of focus:**

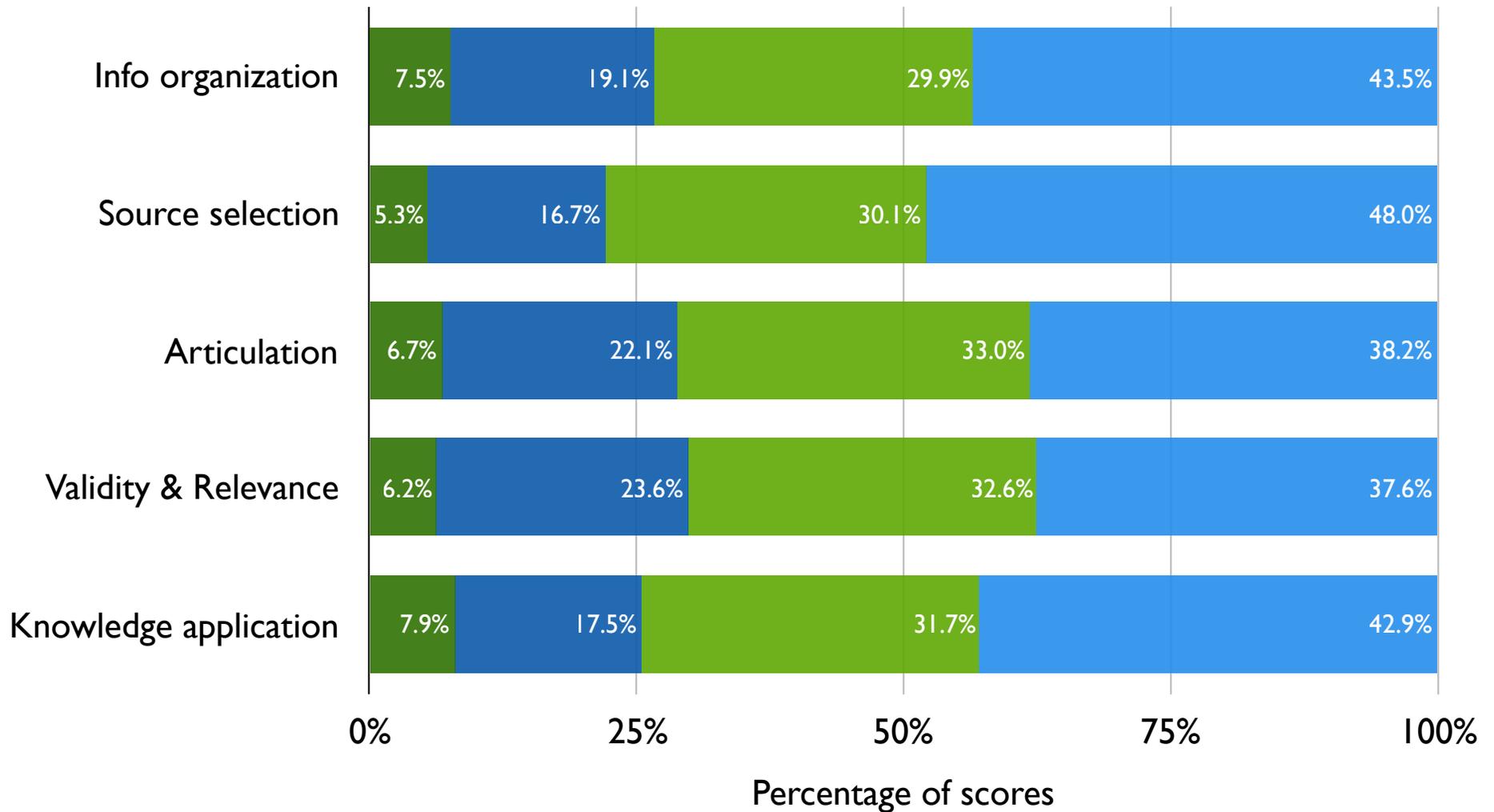
**CRITICAL
THINKING**

Comparable Assignment Common Rubric

CRITERIA		1	2	3	4	N/A
		Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	
A	INFORMATION ORGANIZATION Appropriately present and organize supporting information	No communication of information from sources. The use of information is inconsistent or inappropriate so the intended purpose is not achieved.	Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not well synthesized.	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved, but would benefit from improved clarity .	Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose with exceptional clarity.	N/A
B	SOURCE SELECTION Choose information from reliable, relevant and valid sources	Information taken from questionable and/or irrelevant sources.	Information taken from somewhat adequate and reasonable sources.	Information taken from adequate and reasonable sources.	Information taken from high quality and relevant sources.	
C	ARTICULATION PROCESS Analyze, evaluate or interpret information critically for accuracy, appropriateness or sufficiency to pursue specific conclusion(s), argument(s) or solution(s)	Poor evaluation or interpretation of the information.	Limited evaluation or interpretation of the information.	Proficient evaluation or interpretation of the information.	Sophisticated evaluation or interpretation of the information.	N/A
D	VALIDITY AND RELEVANCE OF ARGUMENT/CONCLUSION Clearly articulate the value, validity and relevance of argument(s) and conclusion(s), and if applicable, acknowledge relevant personal perspective(s)	Arguments are unsupported or irrelevant (to the assignment). Conclusions are unsupported, non-existent, or unrelated to the information presented.	Arguments are weakly supported. Conclusions are somewhat logical, but incomplete, flawed or irrelevant.	Arguments are relevant (to the assignment) and supported for relevant patterns to emerge. Conclusions adequately follow from the information presented.	Arguments are relevant (to the assignment) and highly supported in a sophisticated manner allowing for important patterns to emerge. Innovative conclusions follow from the information presented.	N/A
E	CREATIVE APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE Apply prior academic knowledge to a new context	No application of prior learning or existing knowledge to a new context	Limited or simplistic application of prior learning or existing knowledge to a new context	Appropriate application of prior learning or existing knowledge to a new context	Thoughtful or innovative application of prior learning or existing knowledge to a new context that reflects integration and synthesis of information, and complexity of the issue.	N/A

Results: Assignment scores

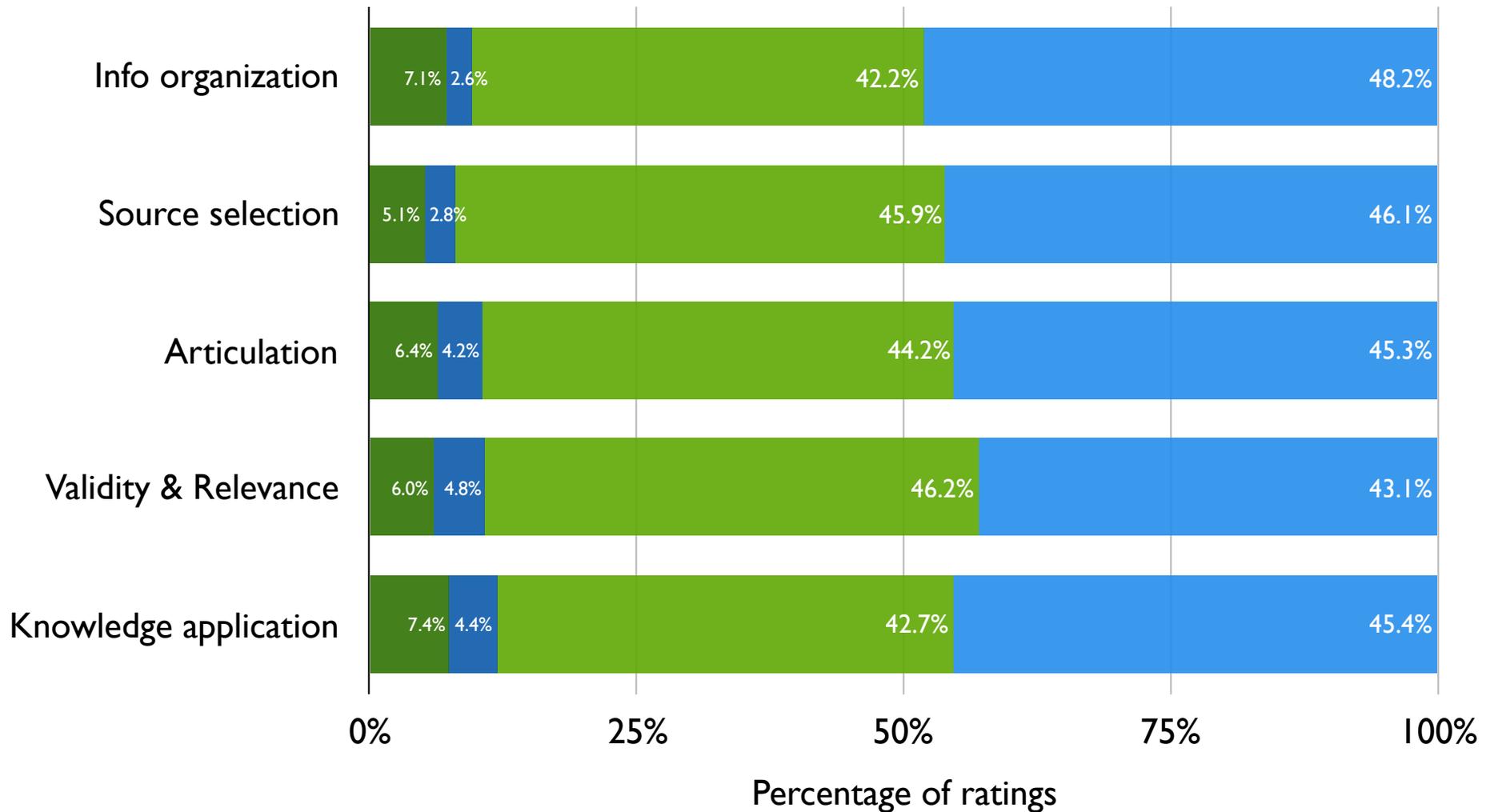
■ Below Basic ■ Basic ■ Proficient ■ Advanced



Results: Student survey

57%
response
rate

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree



“Closing the loop”: Faculty recommendations

- Get baseline data in lower division GE courses
- Incorporate the rubric criteria into GE requirements
- Refine assessment process (e.g. timing of assignment; online vs. F2F)

Faculty reflection

What worked well:

Collegiality
Collaboration
Diversity/Cross-discipline
Open discussion
Engaged/Vested
Food

What was challenging:

Involve/train other instructors
Alignment b/w assignment & rubric

Cost: **\$10,000 - 15,000** per year

Insights from Participating Faculty: Part-time Faculty

• **Challenges:**

- Not knowing the rules and policies as a part-timer
- Not used to be heard by full-time faculty
- Training fellow faculties

• **Achievements:**

- Part of “the big league”
- Involvement in more department activities
- Heard my voice and became more involved in assessment

Insights from Participating Faculty: Tenured Faculty

- **Challenges:**
 - Getting acceptance
 - Getting a sincere commitment
 - Stealing time
- **Advice:**
 - Be both informed and empathetic in recruiting fellow colleagues
 - Be flexible in the embedded assignment
 - Be focused in assessment exercise

Small Group Brainstorm

How would you adapt this model of GE assessment on your campus?

What challenges would you encounter? How would you resolve them?

Thank you!

Contact: data@fullerton.edu