

HUNTER COLLEGE FOREIGN LANGUAGES RESOLUTION

Proposal: Reduce the number of learning outcomes that must be met for the Flexible Common Core from the 3 required of all 4 categories to 1 of 3 for all 4 categories.

Rationale: This part of the Common Core begins with the stipulation that “All Flexible Common Core courses must meet the following three learning outcomes. A student will be able to:

- Retrieve, evaluate, and interpret information from a variety of sources and points of view. - Evaluate evidence and arguments critically.
- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.”

One could argue that it takes students the better part of their college experience to develop these abilities, or perhaps, to put it somewhat differently, that these are major-level outcomes. As such, it may not be feasible to achieve (or indeed desirable to pursue) all three of these learning outcomes in an introductory-level course. In many disciplines, introductory courses build the prerequisite skills and abilities that students will require in order to pursue these learning outcomes later. We trust that it was not the intention of the Steering Committee to make it difficult for introductory-level courses to fulfill the learning outcomes of the Common Core, but that could very well be an effect of these learning outcomes as currently stated, particularly given the stipulation that a course must fulfill all three. Moreover, this reduction in learning outcomes would enable faculty and students to address each learning outcome in a more meaningful way, thus ensuring strong academic foundations.

Proposal: Replace the additional learning outcomes outlined in the November 1st version of the Flexible Common Core with those listed in the summary of the October 21st meeting for all four areas of this section of the Common Core Structure.

Rationale: There are significant differences between the additional learning outcomes of October 21st and November 1st in all four areas of the Flexible Common Core: World Cultures, U.S. Experience in its Diversity, Creative Expression, Individual and Society. The latest guidelines emphasize analysis and the application of fundamental concepts and research methods of (inter)disciplinary fields, tasks that typically require previous and sustained intellectual training. In contrast, the earlier guidelines stress goals that are more in consonance with the scope and methods of the foundational coursework that the Pathways initiative encompasses: by targeting goals such as understanding, developing informed perspectives, demonstrating knowledge, thinking critically, and identifying, examining, explaining and evaluating information, the additional outcomes proposed on October 21st better enable students to acquire the content base and cognitive abilities needed later for more focused learning and research. By establishing appropriate goals and expectations at the introductory level, the additional Flexible Core outcomes of October 21st foster the academic success and satisfaction for CUNY students that Pathways to Degree Completion strives for in the community and senior colleges alike.