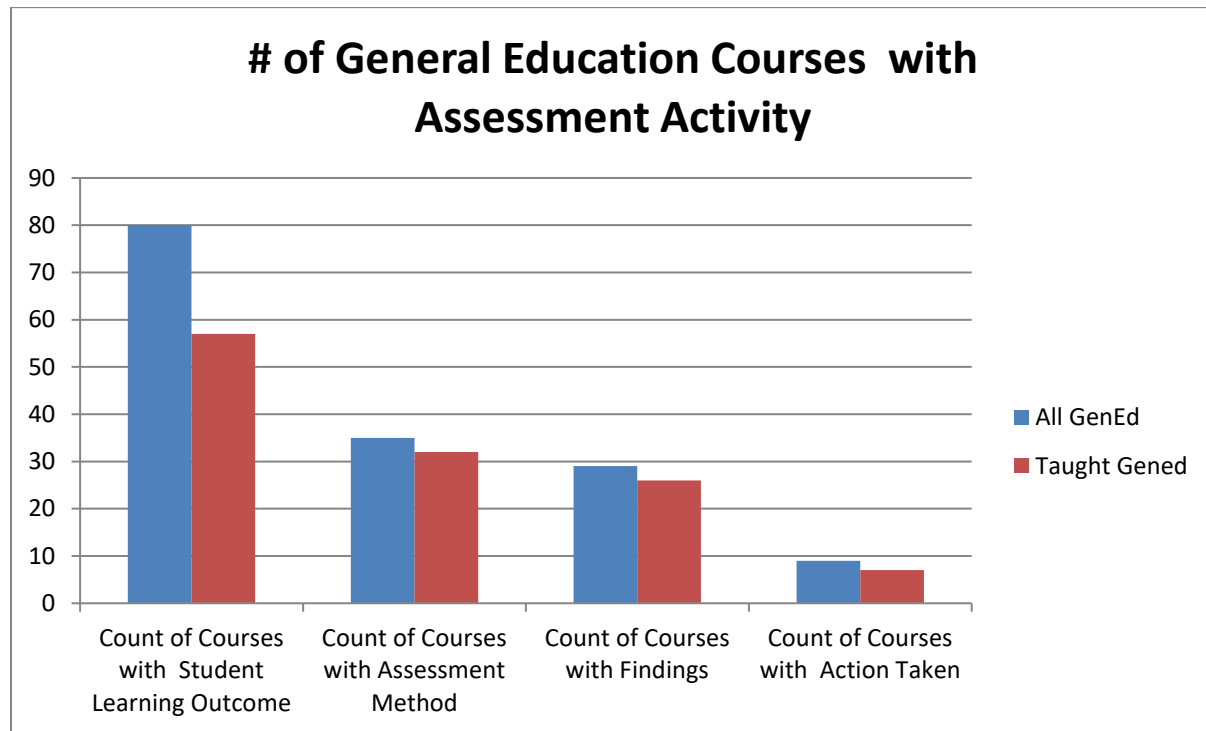


**MEMO Subject line: Weighing the Baby – General Education part 1**

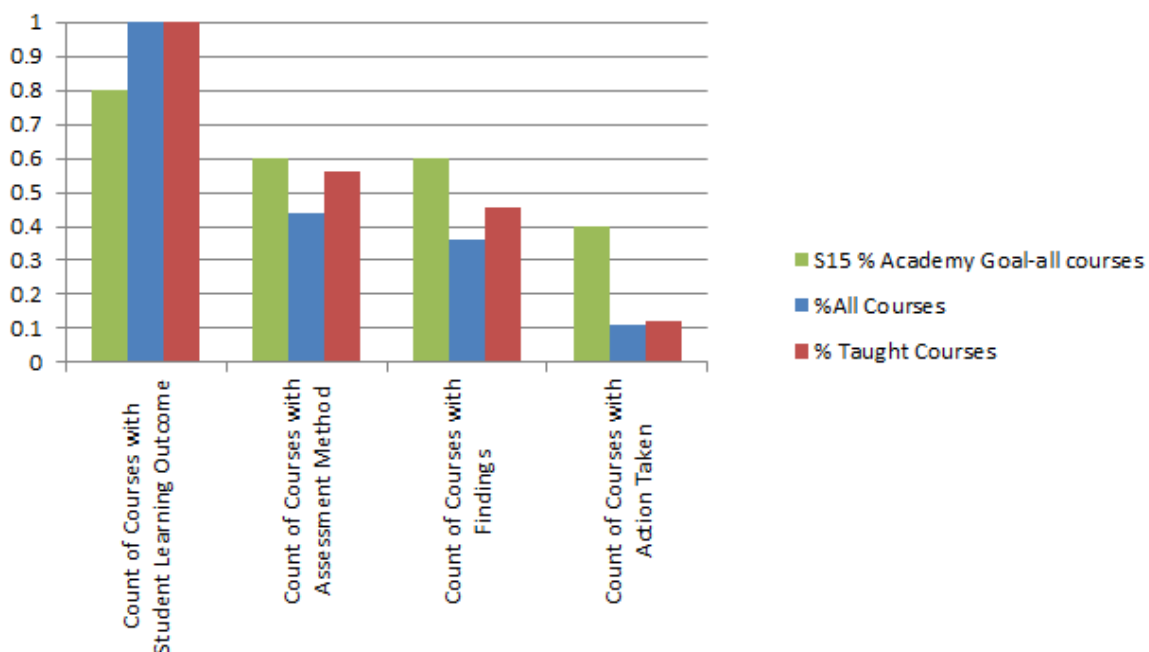
*“You don’t get a baby to grow by weighing it”*

The General Education Committee has approved approximately 80 courses as meeting specific general education outcomes, 57 of these were offered in the S14 and F14 semesters. Based on an analysis done in March 2015 the chart below shows the number of courses with defined outcomes, methods, findings and actions, respectively, that have been documented in Tracdat. The general education outcome was entered for each course, so the maximum for any blue column would be 80, and for any red column 57.



At the time of this analysis less than half of courses we taught addressing the general education outcome have had any assessment findings documented in Tracdat. The next chart presents this data in the form of percentages. The chart also adds our institutional goal set through the HLC Academy Project that 60% of courses by the spring 2015 have defined findings, and that 40% of courses have defined actions for the use of assessment to improve student learning. The Academy goals are presented in green.

## % General Education Courses with Assessment Activity



We all value student learning, and set high expectations for the learning that occurs through the activities and experiences that take place in our courses. Just as weighing the baby doesn't make it grow, assessing a course doesn't make it better. Yet, without some assessment, we lack the information needed to guide and sustain improvement, or the knowledge that the baby needs more or less food. As faculty, corporately and individually, we need to use "the information gained from assessment to improve student learning", and this is an explicit requirement of HLC Criterion 4.B as well.

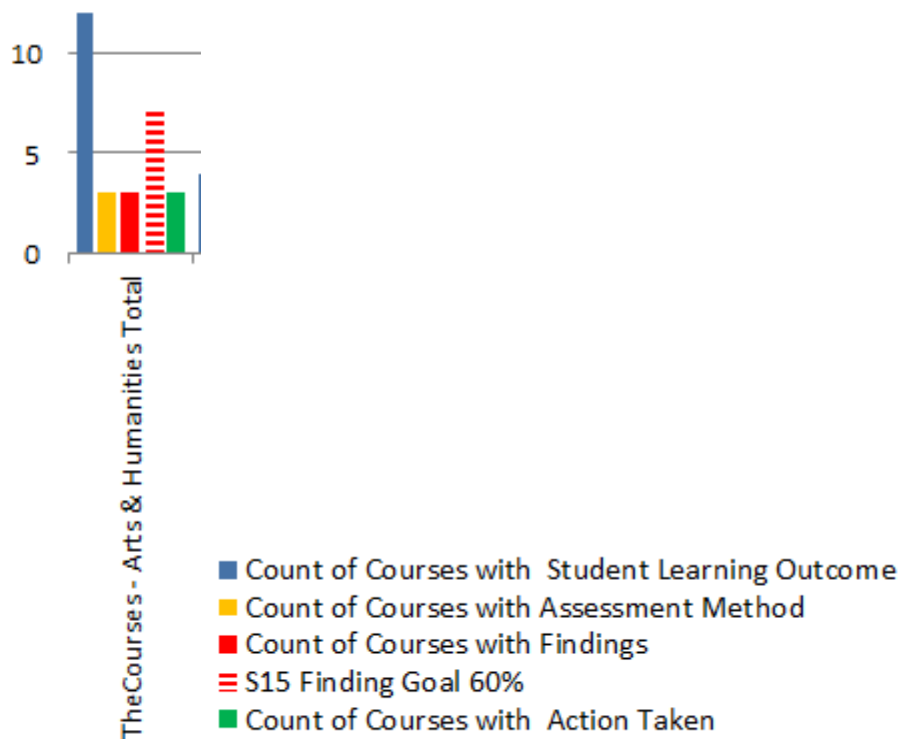
If schools need assistance to document general education course-level assessment data please contact one of the members of The Assessment Committee. Faculty can also enter information directly into Tracdat, or submit narratives and data using a template of your own design, or using a form like the Assessment Activity Log to prepare a course assessment report. Reports can be stored on an accessible network drive, emailed to [tracdat@lsu.edu](mailto:tracdat@lsu.edu) or sent by campus mail to D. Myton Admin206.

## MEMO Subject line: Weighing the Baby – General Education part 2

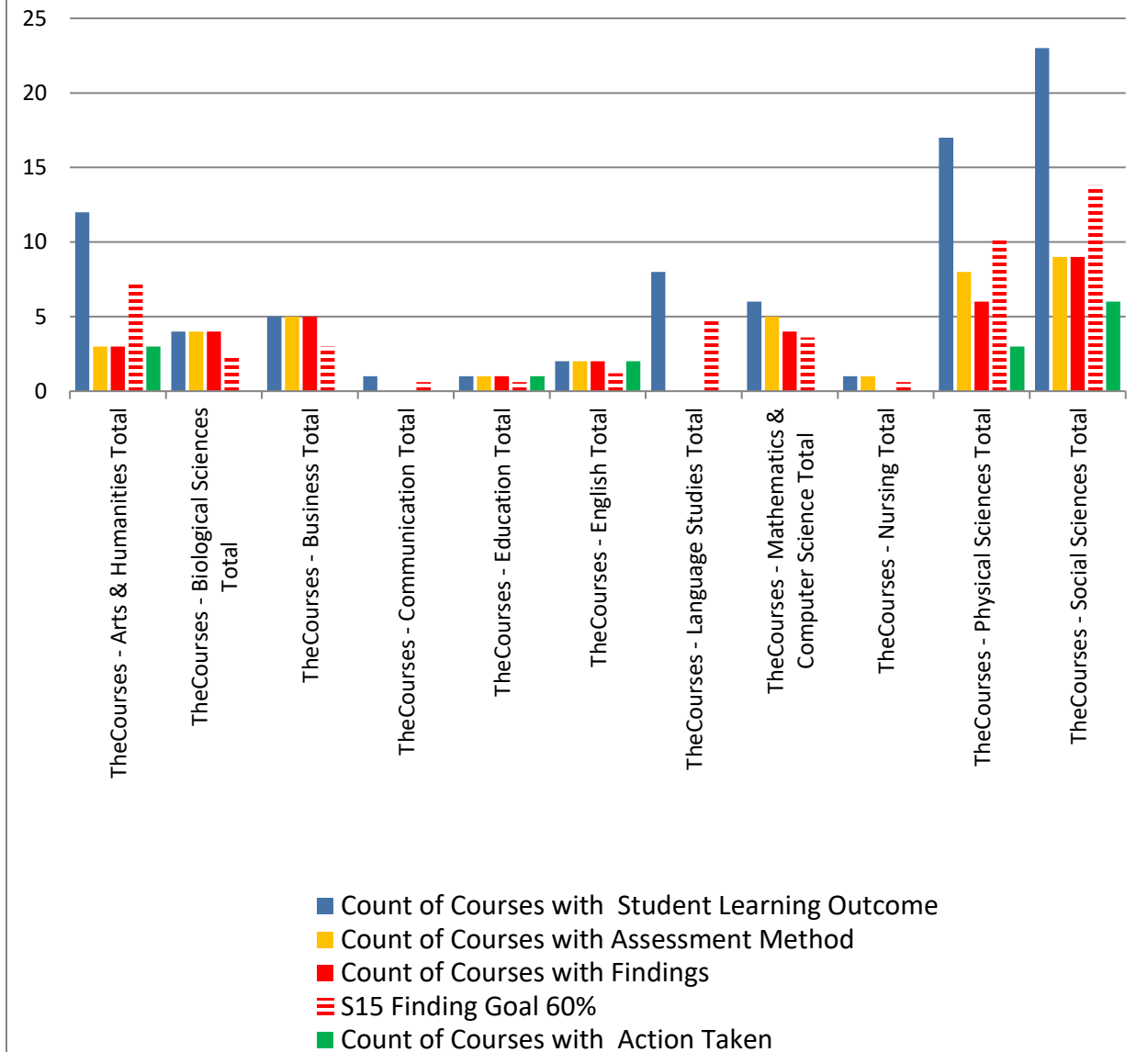
*“You don’t get a baby to grow by weighing it”*

In the last email we spoke broadly about our progress in assessing student learning in our general education courses. In this article we will look at discipline specific evidence and the chart below which is based on the 80 approved general education course. This analysis was based on evidence in place in March 2015.

To explain the big chart below, we will look closely at one particular area. In the Arts & Humanities there are 12 courses approved to address general education outcomes (blue column) – all 12 have that humanities outcome entered in Tracdat. Of the 12 courses, three (3) have described their assessment methods (gold column). At least once within the past three years the school has entered some finding related to general education courses (solid red) for three courses. The hashed-red column reflects the HLC Academy Target that 60% of courses will have findings by the spring 2015. Finally, the green column documents the number of courses with actions defining how the faculty “uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning” – an explicit requirement of accreditation.



## ALL General Education Courses by School - includes courses not actively taught



If you or your school have course-level assessment data that needs to be documented please contact one of the members of The Assessment Committee. Information can be entered directly into Tracdat, or submitted using a template of your own design, or using a form like the Assessment Activity Log to prepare a course assessment report. Reports can be stored on an accessible network drive, emailed to [tracdat@lsu.edu](mailto:tracdat@lsu.edu) or sent by campus mail to D. Myton Admin206.

**MEMO Subject line: Weighing the Baby – General Education part 3 (ETS)**

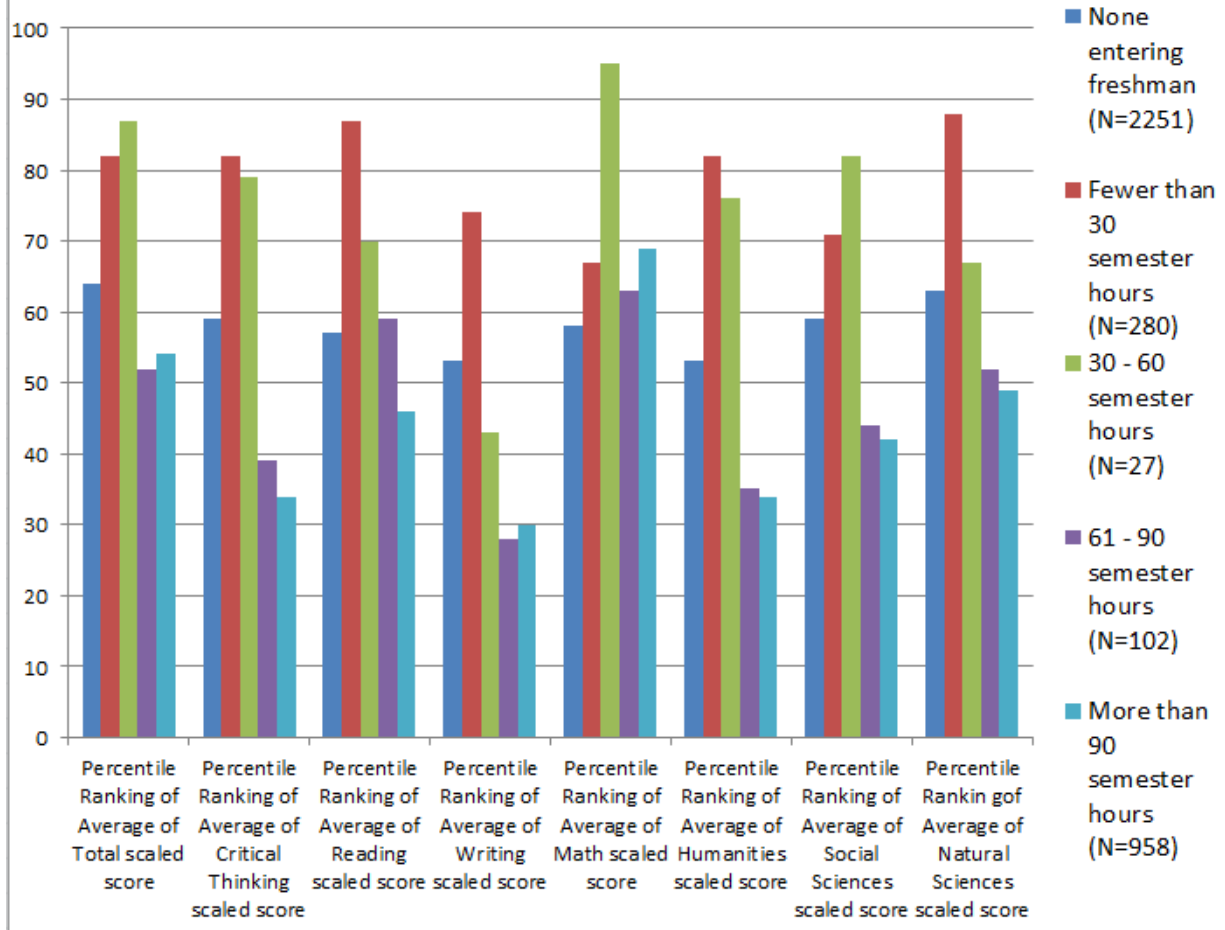
*“You don’t get a baby to grow by weighing it”*

The University has been using the ETS Proficiency Profile to assess student learning of the general education curriculum. This nationally normed test has been given to entering freshmen and exiting seniors for the past 4+ years and our data set now exceeds 3600 records. LSSU has also elected to include additional ‘locally developed questions’ with the ETS exam which were intended to assess students in areas of cultural diversity and humanities.

The chart below presents the percentile ranking of LSSU students overall, and in each of the seven sub-categories of the ETS exam. LSSU students are subdivided into five subgroups based on the number of university credits they had completed at the time of the test. Entering freshmen with no university coursework are indicated as “None entering freshman”, and 2251 students were in this category. Seniors would be in the category “More than 90 semester hours”.

The first blue column represents the performance of over 2200 entering freshman who scored, in average total scaled score (the first set of columns) above the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile. Students who entered the university with some credits (rust and green) scored even higher. However when we tested juniors and seniors, using the same exam, the percentile rankings are substantially lower with seniors scoring 10 percentile points lower. The declines in critical thinking and writing are even more dramatic.

**ETS Tests All Institutions July 2008-June 2013 - Percentile Ranking by Student Group and Subject**  
[https://www.ets.org/proficiencyprofile/scores/compare\\_data/proctored](https://www.ets.org/proficiencyprofile/scores/compare_data/proctored)



Just as weighing the baby doesn't make it grow, assessing a course or general education outcome doesn't make it better just by giving a standardized test, we have to do something with the information we gather. If our own concern wasn't enough, the HLC expects us to use "the information gained from assessment to improve student learning." Schools that deliver general education courses need to have faculty-level discussions about the general education outcomes, and how to meaningfully assess student learning in ways that are valuable and reflect the learning goals we set for students.

Schools are encouraged to work with their Assessment Committee representatives to gather the support and resources needed to ensure that students are achieving the general education learning outcomes defined for the courses in their area. Contact a member of the Assessment Committee, or email [Tracdat@lsu.edu](mailto:Tracdat@lsu.edu).