COURSE LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS
Adopted and Approved by Charter Oak State College
Academic Council 2/2008

<u>100 – Level</u>

Cognitive Domain:

- Introduction to terms, concepts, techniques and ways of thinking/learning within discipline, typically in the context of a relatively broad survey of topics;
- Focus on incorporating and recalling basic information and understanding basic connections among facts and concepts;
- Focus of assessment/evaluation tools (e.g., examinations, writing assignments, homework projects, performances, in-class assignments, etc.) on convergent responses or products created in response to specific, directed demands by the instructor, where these products are generally recreations of material presented during the course;
- Application of techniques for the sake of learning the technique itself and under the direction/supervision of the instructor (e.g., basic painting skills, basic outlining skills, basic laboratory skills, basic computer skills, etc);
- Recognition and creation of meaningful categories of terms and concepts from material presented in the course.

Student Behavioral/Affective Domain:

- Willingness and self-discipline to independently schedule time for attending class, completing homework, studying and reviewing information;
- Ability to independently focus on and engage with course content in whatever form it might take (e.g., lectures, field trips, studio exercises, laboratories, etc.);
- Willingness and expectation to learn new material relating to factual knowledge, concepts and synthetic ideas, as well as to respectfully acknowledge viewpoints and ideas as presented by other students and faculty.

Assumed/Expected Student Preparation:

- Assumes no previous exposure to the specific subject matter;
- Basic ability to access information related to coursework through library resources, the Internet, instructors, etc.;
- Knowledge of grammatical convention and vocabulary to be able to compose a paper in response to specific, convergent requirements of an instructor;
- Reading comprehension skills sufficient to independently extract and summarize factual and at least some conceptual content from basic textbooks or other assigned readings in the discipline;
- Basic computational and mathematical skills, at least to the algebraic level wherein relationships among entities can be recognized and resolved:
- Ability to recognize fundamental cause-and-effect relationships between factors or elements specific to a discipline (e.g., that smoking may cause cancer, that economic strife may cause a war, that applied force may cause motion, that loyalty may cause dishonesty, etc.) upon illustration by an instructor or upon reading in course materials.

200 - Level

Cognitive Domain:

- Continued introduction to terms and concepts within the discipline, although typically within a more narrowly defined topic;
- Greater emphasis on understanding connections among terms and concepts;
- Inclusion of assessment/evaluation tools that place at least some emphasis on convergent responses or products not previously encountered in the course material (i.e., that form logical extensions of material presented but where these extensions/combinations have not been encountered previously);
- Development of the ability to integrate terms and concepts from throughout the course, from other introductory material in the discipline, and/or from analytical and communication skills learned in other introductory courses so as to recognize relationships among terms and concepts perhaps not explicitly discussed by the instructor;
- Development of written and oral communication skills as especially those used within the discipline.

Student Behavioral/Affective Domain:

- Experience with independently scheduling time for class attendance, completing assigned work, and studying and reviewing material outside of class;
- Willingness to begin recognizing and developing an ability to provide responses and/or create products in response to convergent demands related to topics not specifically discussed previously in the course.

Assumed/Expected Student Preparation:

- Exposure to related topics, although perhaps not to the specifics of the subject matter;
- At least some familiarity with some of the basic terms and concepts within the discipline;
- Ability to independently retrieve basic information about terms and concepts related to the discipline which may be presented but not explicitly defined during the course.

300 – Level

Cognitive Domain:

- Development of specialized terms, concepts, techniques and approaches pertaining to a narrowly defined topic within the discipline; curriculum designed for a subset of majors with shared interests and goals;
- Inclusion of assessment/evaluation tools such as writing assignments, assigned projects and performances, etc. that require use of library and other outside sources of information to create convergent or divergent products involving minimal direction by the instructor and minimal reliance on material presented directly during the course;
- Application of basic techniques and approaches not for their own sake, but as part of more integrated, primarily convergent learning goals (e.g., painting to a certain style, creating a certain compound in the laboratory, programming a computer for a certain task, etc.);
- Integration across multiple topics such that students come to recognize deeper, predictable patterns within the terms, concepts, techniques and approaches of a discipline;

- Development of ability to independently recognize relative values of different approaches within the discipline and to recognize potential biases, viewpoints, and/or intentions within the scholarship underlying the discipline.

Student Behavioral/Affective Domain:

- Willingness to create products with minimal input or direction from the instructor that may be based upon material not directly presented in the course and perhaps in the context of collaborative effort with student colleagues;
- Independent recognition of, and willingness to commit to, time required for completion of disparate, occasionally divergent tasks (e.g., short-term vs. long-term writing assignments, stages of an on-going project, etc.);
- Recognition of one's own factual and/or conceptual knowledge of a discipline and where it could be strengthened relative to the state of development of that discipline;
- Ability to recognize appropriateness of seeking assistance and input at a variety of levels (e.g., self-directed study and review vs. assistance from the instructor vs. collaborative input from student colleagues, etc.).

Assumed/Expected Student Preparation:

- In-depth familiarity with basic terms, concepts, techniques and approaches of the discipline;
- Facility with independent use of sources of information pertinent to the discipline (e.g., library collections, online databases, primary scholarship, faculty recommendations, etc.);
- Ability to independently develop written and oral papers and presentations in the style of the discipline;
- Ability to recognize which elements or factors are important in shaping cause-and-effect relationships within the discipline.
- Note that this characterization of 300-level courses may not apply to courses that serve special curricular functions outside of typical sequences (e.g., IS program), 300-level courses that serve as entry-level courses for some academic programs (e.g., School of Business), or 300-level courses that do not have specific, sequence-based pre-requisites. Such courses may be numbered at the 300-level because of expectations of certain student affective/maturational characteristics without carrying the cognitive demand of "typical" 300-level courses. Charter Oak faculty have designated many of these 300-level courses as basic level, such as principles of management.

400 – Level

Cognitive Domain:

- Development and analysis of the most current terms, concepts, techniques and approaches shaping the discipline;
- Focus on inclusion of divergent, synthetic responses and/or products as assessment/evaluation tools that are produced with minimal input from the instructor;
- Application of techniques and approaches toward divergent assignments or projects that are potentially novel to the discipline, or that represent the most current approaches in the discipline;
- Increased focus on inclusion of primary scholarship in the discipline toward writing assignments, oral presentations, performances, etc.

Student Behavioral/Affective Domain:

- Willingness to commit time and energy toward solution of problems and/or creation of products with which the instructor may have limited direct experience and whose outcome the instructor may not be able to predict;
- Willingness to recognize and accept criticism and guidance as being constructive feedback from the instructor and from student colleagues.

Assumed/Expected Student Preparation:

- Ability to at least propose a problem to be solved or product to be created that is at least somewhat novel to the discipline;
- Independent recognition of technique or approach most appropriate to solving a particular problem or creating a specific product.

Provided below is a proposed grid showing relative degree of emphasis for a variety of cognitive, instructional, and student intellectual characteristics of courses defined at different academic levels. Terms used here are meant to complement the Proposal text, while not paralleling it absolutely.

Shade of grey indicates expected relative emphasis or focus on that characteristic. White does not indicate absence of emphasis or focus; i.e., remembering and recalling facts and figures is still an important component of many 400-level courses, and a textbook is still likely to be used in a 400-level course, but these elements are usually de-emphasized relative to other elements.

This grid will likely differ across various disciplines and is meant only to encourage explicit consideration of how course levels are functionally defined.

(SEE IMAGE ON NEXT PAGE)

Source: http://www.siue.edu/UGOV/Paul%20Brunkow/Paul_Brunkow_levels%20grid_files/slide0001.htm

Adopted and approved by COSC Academic Council 2/2008.