

Core Assessment Report, American Government and United States History
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Method

The department chair asked faculty members, who were not already involved in the department's program assessment progress, to assess their sections of 2311 or 2312. No adjunct or concurrent enrollment assignments were used.

Faculty members made copies of essay assignments and separated them into low, middle, and high groups. The assignments from HIST 2311 and 2312 and POLS 1310 in the fall 2015 semester consisted of essay assignments. Two members of the American history core assessment team looked at the Political science core assessment team looked at the American history assignments alongside the rubric to determine whether the rubric needed to be revised.

Results

Instructors separated the assignments into low, medium, and high work. The political science assignments were sufficient for addressing learning outcome 3a and 3b. Those assignments in the "high" group corresponded with the "excellent" descriptors in our rubric. Since instructors of the assessed sections didn't specifically design the tasks to assess the learning outcomes, very few student work samples contained evidence related to learning outcomes 1 and 2. The "medium" student work corresponded with our "acceptable" and "needs improvement" columns on learning outcomes 3a and 3b, while the "low" student work corresponded with the "needs improvement" column. Low student work needed much more elaboration and contained some factual errors. The history assignments were separated into low, medium, and high work. Assignments from HIST 2311 were reviewed as a test of the rubrics for the US Traditions core classes. The rubrics for learning outcomes 2a and 2b worked fairly well with this assignment.

Comments

Going forward, we need a plan for selecting which sections of HIST 2311 and 2312 and POLS 1310 will be assessed and a specific time when faculty will be notified. All HIST 2311 and 2312 and POLS 1310 instructors, including concurrent enrollment instructors, need to be familiar with the core assessment rubrics.

We also need to determine who will be responsible for assessing students' work and how this will rotate over future semesters. There was confusion about whether our department curriculum committee (responsible for assessment) or the group who prepared the rubric last year was responsible for core assessment.

Future Plans

For the 2016-2017 school year, we would like to create 2 assignments and embed their rubrics (portions of the core assessment rubric, to which individual instructors could add their own requirements) into Blackboard shells. We will use an online random number generator to select one section of face-to-face, one section of online, and one section of concurrent enrollment to administer the pre- and post-tests, as well as one of the two assignments. Faculty will be notified in the week before the start of the semester that their courses will be assessed. All other faculty and instructors would have the option of using these assignments.

The first assignment would be a document analysis task where the students look for author, purpose, audience, and potential bias in a primary source document.

The second assignment would be an essay and would cover knowledge learning outcomes 1, 2, and 3. Both assignments also address the written communication goal, so they could be used for assessment of communication as well.

We will ask instructors of the assessed sections to score the assignments based on the revised core assessment rubric. A member of the core assessment committee will also score the student assignments. We would like to use department funds to pay extra compensation to instructors for meeting to standardize their scoring on the rubric (using this year's student assignments) and for scoring and evaluating core assessment data. We could report the data to the core council as follows:

	Avg score knowledge outcome 1	Avg score knowledge outcome 2	Avg score knowledge outcome 3	Avg score knowledge outcome 4
Section 1 (face to face)				
Section 2 (online)				
Section 3 (concurrent)				
Average score				

This format would allow for comparison across delivery method (face to face, online, concurrent) and across knowledge objectives.