Fall 2017
Core Curriculum Assessment Report

of

Skills 1 – Communication

from the

Humanities

Core Curricular Area

submitted by

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on behalf of the

Humanities
Core Area Assessment Committee

Methods

How was student work (artifacts) collected for assessment?

The CAAC members worked with instructors of the various sections to collect artifacts. We provided all selected instructors information about Skills 1.1 so that they could choose a fitting assignment to submit. In English, artifacts were collected from a representative from each course and modality. The same was done for Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies courses as well. Once collected, the artifacts were digitally uploaded to Google Drive and shared with the full committee. Individual folders were created within the shared Humanities Core folder for each instructor, and separate folders were created for the artifacts that were culled from each instructor using a random number generator.

What type of artifacts were collected?

All artifacts across all courses and modalities were short papers responding to a particular prompt provided by the instructor.

Instructors of the selected sections decided which artifacts to submit; we provided guidance and explanation for the Skills 1 area at departmental meetings, email instructions, and classroom observation of concurrent courses. Additional guidance from committee members was made available by request.

How were the artifacts sampled for assessment?

From each class and modality, artifacts were randomly selected for scoring. Since English had more modalities than Philosophy, in order for an equal amount of artifacts to be scored from each department, an additional section of Ethics and Society (face-to-face) was sampled. Ethics and Society was selected because it was the only course for which there was more than one section offered during the term. The modality (face-to-face vs. online) was selected at random. For each course and modality, six artifacts were selected for review. Artifacts were selected using a random number generator to select specific artifacts from each course.

How were the artifacts scored?

We used the 4-point scale for Skills 1 provided by Core Council. We divided the CAAC members into 2 groups, paired by department. The representatives from the English department scored the Philosophy artifacts and the representatives from the Philosophy department scored the English artifacts. Individual members entered scores for their assigned artifacts and entered them into a shared spreadsheet. The report writer compiled the final tally of results in the spreadsheet provided by Core Council.

How was reliability in scoring determined and ensured?

Prior to individual scoring, the CAAC committee met to discuss how best to interpret the grading rubric in the hopes of as consistent evaluation as possible. As with previous meetings, most of our discussion centered around what differentiates the 1 "Not Met" from 0 "Absent" categories. After all artifacts were scored, the CAAC committee met to discuss the scores, with particular attention to any variation. Fortunately, only 12 of the 60 total artifacts had any kind of difference of scores, and never by more than 1 point of difference.

Reflection

What was learned from the assessment results?

1) Overall, the scores are encouraging, as only about 3.3% of artifacts across all courses and all modalities (both English and Philosophy) were scored as at the 1 "Not Met" level, and no artifacts were scored at the 0 "Absent" level. Additionally, over half of the scores across all courses and all modalities were scored as 2 "Novice" or above. The general distribution of scores for a given course were largely the same across multiple modalities. This is encouraging since it indicates curriculum material is reaching students in a similar way, despite a different class formats.

2) We were of course hopeful that more students would have reached the 4 "Advanced" level, but only 3 artifacts were scored at this level. While there are always opportunities to improve courses, part of the explanation of the relatively low amount of "Advanced" level evaluation may be that many of the artifacts submitted by instructors were from assignments around the midpoint of the semester. One might expect that most students would not have reached the "Advanced" level until more or less completing the course. Moving forward, as reiterated by messages from Core Council, we will stress the importance of artifacts being collected from end of term assignments, maybe even the final exam (as appropriate).

3) Scores across all classes appeared to be much more similar when compared to the scoring distribution for the LO 2.1 and LO 2.2 evaluations. This may have been due to a much greater similarity in all of the artifacts, as they were all short essays. The LO 2.1 and LO 2.2 evaluations included short papers, quizzes, essay questions from exams, short answer assignments, and timed essays. While we do not wish to specifically restrict the types of artifacts submitted by instructors, it is likely more can be learned from these types of analyses the more similar in format the artifacts actually are.

Continuous Improvement

What changes will be made based upon the assessment results?

We hope to continue to improve on communication and support for instructors. It was encouraging to have been able to collect from all intended courses and modalities, an important improvement from our previous report. Additionally, reliability of the data can be improved by better communicating to instructors that submitted artifacts should come from the later part of the term, when possible. Admittedly, this may not be suitable for some of the learning objectives to be collected in the future.

Feedback

What changes are recommended for Core assessment?

One difficulty we have run into is finding a single assignment artifact that can be used to evaluate multiple LOs at the same time. While collecting multiple artifacts is a possibility, this needs to be balanced with the time and effort involved in what is requested from instructors. Additionally, multiple artifacts might make it more difficult to draw well-justified conclusions in various reports. Finally, multiple artifacts from a single class makes it more difficult for all artifacts to be from assignments given in the later part of the term. Any guidance from Core Council on this issue would be appreciated.

Comments

Other comments?

We continue to appreciate the clarity and consistency in the report requirements, as well as the ease of communication with Core Council.

END OF REPORT