

Spring 2017
Core Curriculum Assessment Report

of

**Knowledge 1 - Mathematics, Social and Natural Sciences, Engineering
and Technology**

from the

Social Science

Core Curricular Area



submitted by

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on behalf of the

Social Science
Core Area Assessment Committee

Methods

How was student work (artifacts) collected for assessment?

As per instruction by Core Council, all modes of course instruction were to be assessed. Therefore, if multiple sections of the course were being taught then one selection from each mode of instruction had to be selected. Professors of respective classes to be assessed selected artifacts they felt would provide good measurements of knowledge goals as found in the rubric. Depending on the format of the class, written artifacts or electronic documents were used for assessment. Early on we learned that the social science rubric is an efficient means of assessing and scoring student outcomes in most of the core courses. Before any course packets were collected, we made sure that all core course instructors understood that we would be assessing student learning outcomes and scoring responses using our rubric for Knowledge 1.

What type of artifacts were collected?

Some courses utilized multiple choice questions while others selected exam essays or writing assignments. The different selections reflect the different types of classes being assessed for the social sciences. We requested that student artifact submissions, whether they be essay, multiple-choice, or some combination of both, be submitted with a key for interpreting the data to ensure accuracy in scoring the artifacts.

How were the artifacts sampled for assessment?

Generally the entire class was assessed, but in large classes either 20% or XYZ were randomly chosen for assessment. Before we began the collection of student artifacts, we made sure that core courses to be assessed were randomly selected using a random number generator, to best ensure that all core course selections be unbiased.

How were the artifacts scored?

Artifacts were individually scored using the social sciences knowledge rubric. Then, the results were compiled to create a summary rubric for the entire course.

How was reliability in scoring determined and ensured?

Reliability and rigor in scoring was ensured, to some degree, by double-blind assessing of each packet of artifacts. In this case, each core area course was assessed by at least two separate assessors. If the scores on the learning outcomes by two individual assessors reflected a high level of agreement, the scores were averaged and then recorded as final assessment scores. If an obvious and significant disagreement was found between the two assessors on the committee would reassign the assessing to try and determine the source of such a discrepancy. Fortunately, our assessing of the student artifacts didn't produce such discrepancies. Also, we had the opportunity to test the reliability of the scoring rubric during the "pilot" study that was conducted in the fall of 2015. This term we used the same rubric with only a slight adjustment in the electronic/digital recording format.

Reflection

What was learned from the assessment results?

In this assessment, we found that consistency and uniformity broke down in some cases. Economics and Geography seemed to be somewhat marginalized, both in terms of student artifact submissions and the interpretation of student artifacts to be scored. It appeared obvious to those not trained in these disciplines that at least a novice understanding of the discipline would be enormously helpful in rendering a fair assessment of the submitted artifacts.

Continuous Improvement

What changes will be made based upon the assessment results?

There are a few significant changes that we will employ in future assessments that should help make the assessment process more efficient to conduct, better organized for analyzing data, and less complicated in interpreting data and communicating results. I think it all begins with a complete and comprehensive training venue that helps to ensure continuity and reliability of the assessment process. We need to clear convey to the instructors of Core Courses the need to understand the assessment process, and to collaborate with CAAC members on best ways and practices for administering assessment instruments. And finally, we need to identify those things that work and best serve our efforts as assessors and keep them, and let go of practices that are obstructive and distracting at best.

Feedback

What changes are recommended for Core assessment?

There are still areas which could be streamlined to make assessment more informative and less tedious. For example, there is still room for improvement in providing assistance in how to score more complicated (essay) artifacts. We need to develop the best strategies for ensuring reliable and effective scoring so that we have one-to-one agreement on our scoring of student artifacts before reporting results. There should, perhaps, also be a means of receiving feedback from course instructors about the assessment process and learn from them ways in which to improve the assessment process.

Comments

Other comments?

END OF REPORT