**2018-2019 Annual Program Assessment Report Guide**

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College, and to [james.solomon@csun.edu](mailto:james.solomon@csun.edu), Director of the Office of Academic Assessment and Program Review, by **September 30, 2019**. You may, but are not required to, submit a separate report for each program, including graduate degree programs, which conducted assessment activities, or you may combine programs in a single report. **Please include this form with your report in the same file and identify your department/program in the file name.**

**College: College of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

**Department: History**

**Program: History**

**Assessment liaison:**

1. **Please check off whichever is applicable:**

**A. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Measured student work within program major/options.**

**B. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Analyzed results of measurement within program major/options.**

**C. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Applied results of analysis to program review/curriculum/review/revision major/options.**

**D. \_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_ Focused exclusively on the direct assessment measurement of General Education Arts and Humanities student learning outcomes**

1. **Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s).** On a separate sheet,provide a brief overview of this year’s assessment activities, including:

* an explanation for why your department chose the assessment activities (measurement, analysis, application, or GE assessment) that it enacted
* if your department implemented assessment **option A**, identify which program SLOs were assessed (please identify the SLOs in full), in which classes and/or contexts, what assessment instruments were used and the methodology employed, the resulting scores, and the relation between this year’s measure of student work and that of past years: (include as an appendix any and all relevant materials that you wish to include)
* if your department implemented assessment **option B**, identify what conclusions were drawn from the analysis of measured results, what changes to the program were planned in response, and the relation between this year’s analyses and past and future assessment activities
* if your department implemented **option C**, identify the program modifications that were adopted, and the relation between program modifications and past and future assessment activities
* if your program implemented **option D**, exclusively or simultaneously with **options** **A, B, and/or C**, identify the basic skill(s) assessed and the precise learning outcomes assessed, the assessment instruments and methodology employed, and the resulting scores
* in what way(s) your assessment activities may reflect the university’s commitment to diversity in all its dimensions but especially with respect to underrepresented groups
* any other assessment-related information you wish to include, including SLO revision (especially to ensure continuing alignment between program course offerings and both program and university student learning outcomes), and/or the creation and modification of new assessment instruments

**3. Preview of planned assessment activities for 2019-20.** Include a brief description as reflective of a continuous program of ongoing assessment.

CSUN History Department Assessment Report, 2018-2019

Richard S. Horowitz

Department Assessment Coordinator

August 19, 2019

# Introduction

During the 2018- 2019 academic year, the History Department focused attention on assessment of courses in the General Education Arts & Humanities Section. The Director of Academic Assessment determined that 2018-19 would be the year for assessment of the General Education Subject Explorations: Arts & Humanities courses, and directed departments with courses in this section of GE to make this all or part of assessment activities for the year. For the History Department this represents a change: in the past few years we have focused on assessment of courses in the major. It also means that in this year’s assessment process instead of using the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the History major, our assessment effort has focused on whether students these courses are meeting GE SLOs.

Since the History Department has several courses in this section (all the Western Civilization Classes), last Spring the Department assessment coordinator reviewed the courses that were to be scheduled, and discussed plans with the Department Chair and Department faculty. Since it was not clear that these courses would be offered in the Spring semester, we identified two courses offered in Fall 2018 for assessment: History 150: Western Civilization to 1500, and History 304: Themes in Western Civilization since 1500. These courses are offered every year.

After consultation with instructors and review of the GE Humanities Student Learning Outcomes we decided to assess SLO #1:

[Students will] Explain and reflect critically upon the human search for meaning, values, discourse and expression in one or more eras/stylistic periods or cultures.

This broadly defined SLO is at the center of the work in both classes and could be assessed using assignments that have been used in those classes for some time. Faculty were very cooperative, but expressed a preference for doing the assessment over at least two iterations of a similar assignment. The assessment of work was undertaken by a committee of three faculty.

In each case, a rubric was created for assessing the student work. As we have done in recent years, we used a scale of four points.

4= Student has demonstrated a high level of proficiency in meeting the SLO

3= Student has demonstrated a satisfactory level of proficiency in meeting the SLO,

2=The student has shown some ability to meet the SLO but not at the level we would like them to achieve.

1= the student has shown little or no ability to meet the SLO.

The History Department’s goal is to see 70% of students get a score of 3 or 4.

# History 150:

Two sections of History 150 were offered by the same instructor, using the same syllabus and requirements. The assessed work was a series of 3 short in-class quizzes based on assigned readings: the *Iliad*, Plutarch’s *The Age of Alexander* and the S*ong of Roland*. In these quizzes students had to demonstrate their ability to analyze passages from the text, and show their familiarity with important themes in the assigned reading. Quiz questions which pertained to the SLO under investigation were scored according to a rubric.

Section A Results

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Quiz 1 (number of students) | Quiz 1 % | Quiz 2 (number of students) | Quiz 2 % | Quiz 3 (number of students) | Quiz 3 % |
| 4 | 9 | 22 | 11 | 27 | 14 | 34 |
| 3 | 20 | 49 | 19 | 46 | 15 | 37 |
| 2 | 8 | 20 | 4 | 10 | 7 | 17 |
| 1 | 4 | 10 | 7 | 17 | 5 | 12 |

In Section A in Quiz 1 71%, in Quiz 2 73% and in Quiz 3 71% demonstrated proficiency in the SLO. The class demonstrates a consistent pattern of meeting the Department’s goals.

Section B Results

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Quiz 1 (number of students) | Quiz 1 % | Quiz 2 (number of students) | Quiz 2 % | Quiz 3 (number of students) | Quiz 3% |
| 4 | 13 | 33 | 11 | 28 | 11 | 28 |
| 3 | 10 | 25 | 17 | 43 | 8 | 20 |
| 2 | 13 | 33 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 15 |
| 1 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 17 | 14 | 36 |

In Section B in Quiz 1, 58% in Quiz 2 71% and in Quiz 3 48 % met the goal for the SLO.

## Discussion

(1) In History 150 over 70% of students demonstrated the skills we are looking for in at least one of the assessed assignments. In Section A, this was demonstrated repeatedly, and there was a pattern of improvement as more students achieved a score of 4 in each successive quiz. In Section B, more than 70% of students hit the target in the second assignment only, and there isn’t a clear pattern of improvement.

(2) In Section B, the surprising poor performance in the final quiz seems to indicate that students did not do the reading. The large number of scores of 1 in the final quiz in Section B suggests that students who had done quite well in the second quiz, simply did not do the reading for the third quiz.

It should be noted that the reading assignments for each quiz are very challenging primary source texts in translation, which were not written with American college students as their intended audience. The generally strong performance of students demonstrates that students enrolling in this course who did the work were able to make sense of complex material

# History 304

There were two sections of History 304, each taught by the same instructor using an identical syllabus. The scores for the two classes were aggregated.

For this class, two similar assignments were evaluated according to a rubric. Both were short written assignments done at home based on assigned primary source reading. The first presented different perspectives on the encounter between the Spanish and the Aztecs in the early 1500s. The second required students to read poems from the First World War and discuss how views of the war changed over time.

**Assignment One Assessment Results**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Number | % of total |
| 4 | 51 | 55 |
| 3 | 25 | 27 |
| 2 | 16 | 17 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

83% of students met or exceeded the standard set by the department.

**Assignment Two Assessment Results**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score | Number | % of total |
| 4 | 53 | 58.6 |
| 3 | 20 | 28.7 |
| 2 | 14 | 18 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |

84% met the or exceeded the standard set by the department

## Discussion

Student performance in this assessment substantially exceeded the level that the Department hoped. The students demonstrated an ability to analyze the texts and reflect on their meaning in historical context. The nature of the assignment – based on a more limited set of primary source readings – and the fact that it was done at home influenced the results. Where it is clear in the History 150 results that a key factor is whether students completed the reading, that was not a problem with this assignment as indicated by the lack of scores of 1. Students who turned in work took the time to complete it properly, and were sufficiently familiar with the material to at least garner a ‘2’ and most did much better.

# Conclusion:

Overall, this assessment indicates that current approaches to teaching GE courses in Arts and Humanities are having the desired effect on student learning. Student in upper division GE classes are doing significantly better than lower division – this is not a surprise. But lower division students did quite well.

It is notable that the lower division performance in this assessment was much stronger than we saw a few years ago when we specifically looked at large section classes ,although in that case we looked at History Department SLOs and analyzed results in scantron exams. All of the classes assessed this year were sections with enrollment of under 49, some under 40. This raises the question of whether large section classes are conducive to student success in GE at CSUN, but further study is needed.

Directions for Department Action***.***

A preliminary version of this report was circulated to Department faculty and discussed at a department retreat for all faculty (both tenured/tenure track and lecturers) on August 22, 2019. A healthy discussion followed of the many issues involved in teaching General Education Courses.

Our conclusion is that this assessment does not point to a need for curricular revision. We believe further discussion among faculty of GE is warranted along the following lines:

1. Sharing best practices for teaching students at both upper and lower division level. In recent years there has been concern about the reading skills of students. These instructors seem to have developed approaches that help students deal with difficult texts. At the same time the problem of getting students to read remains central to the success of these courses.
2. The Department ought to engage in further discussion and investigation of the impact of class size on student learning. The is a widespread sense that large section classes (over 50 students) result in lower levels of student engagement and performance.

# Plans for 2019-2020

The Director of the Office of Academic Assessment has informed us that this year departments with courses in Section D of GE (Social Sciences) need to do assessment of GE SLOs in this area. Since the bulk of the History Department’s GE courses are in this area (both regular Social Sciences and Title V) we will make this the focus of our assessment work this year. Hopefully we will return to assessing learning in the History Major in the following year.