Academic Assessment Council: Assessment Workshop

Assessment Learning Cycle

1. Define intended learning objectives
2. Provide learning opportunities
3. Compare outcomes with intended objectives
4. Redesign program to improve learning

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Why We Do Assessment...
Western Association of Schools & Colleges

BRACE YOURSELVES

WASC IS COMING
Assessment = Program Improvement
Anthropology Department SLOs

• 1. Document, interpret, and analyze human cultural and biological diversity. ("Diversity")

• 2. Reason intelligently about ethical issues in human societies and in the practice of anthropology. ("Ethics")

• 3. Integrate anthropological reasoning and historical perspectives into basic scholarly research. ("Research")

• 4. Demonstrate methodological skills in at least one of these subdisciplines of anthropology: archaeology; social and sociocultural anthropology; museum studies; and physical anthropology. ("Methods")

• 5. Effectively communicate anthropological issues and research. Write clear expository essays on anthropological topics. ("Communication")

Spring 2011 Assessment Report
What Are We Trying to Learn?

• Research
  • Integrate anthropological reasoning and historical perspectives into basic scholarly research.

• Communication
  • Effectively communicate anthropological issues and research. Write clear expository essays on anthropological topics.
Research: Assessment of Core Majors Courses

• Covered three subdisciplines within Anthropology
  • ANTH 301: Physical Anthropology
  • ANTH 302: Archaeology
  • ANTH 303: Cultural Anthropology
Research: Assessment of Core Majors Courses

- Covered three subdisciplines within Anthropology
  - ANTH 301: Physical Anthropology
  - ANTH 302: Archaeology
  - ANTH 303: Cultural Anthropology

Benchmarks:
- Unacceptable: <75% of students achieving (or their individual scores <75%)
- Acceptable: 75-89% of students achieving (or their individual scores 75-89%)
- Outstanding: 90-100% of students achieving (or their individual scores >90%)

The Four Fields of Anthropology:
- Cultural Anthropology: The study of cultures and societies of human beings and their very recent past. Traditional cultural anthropologists study living cultures and present their observations in an ethnography.
- Archaeology: The study of past societies and their cultures, especially the material remains of the past, such as tools, food remains, and places where people lived.
- Linguistic Anthropology: The study of language, especially how language is structured, evolution of language, and the social and cultural contexts for language.
- Physical Anthropology: Also called biological anthropology, physical anthropology is the study of human evolution and variation, both past and current.
ANTH 301: Physical Anthropology

• Introductory physical anthropology course for Anthropology majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Pre- vs. post-test (research methods)
  • $N = 27$ (completed both pre- and post-test)
ANTH 302: Archaeology

• Introductory archaeology course for Anthropology majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Pre- vs. post-test (research methods)
  • $N = 30$ (completed both pre- and post-test)
ANTH 303: Cultural Anthropology

• Introductory cultural anthropology course for Anthropology majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Pre- vs. post-test (research methods)
  • $N = 31$ (essay-based assessment using a 5 point scale)
    • 1) Documentation
    • 2) Interpretation
    • 3) Analysis
67% of students performed at a 75% level or higher on post-test. (Mean post-test score = 75% vs. 53% pre-test score: 22% improvement)
ANTH 302: Archaeology—Results

86% of students performed at a 75% level or higher. (Correct response changed from 24% in pre-test to 87% in post-test: 63% improvement)
ANTh 303: Cultural Anthropology—Results

100% of students performed at an acceptable level for the post-test (scores of 3-5 for all criteria). "Documentation" (85% post-test vs. 30% pre-test: 55% improvement); "Interpretation" (91% post-test vs. 28% pre-test: 63% improvement); "Analysis" (90% post-test vs. 25% pre-test: 65% improvement).
Communication: Assessment of Capstone Seminar

- Covered capstone seminar in Anthropology
  - ANTH 496: History of Theory & Methods in Anthropology

**Benchmarks:**
- Unacceptable: <75% of students achieving (or their individual scores <75%)
- Acceptable: 75-89% of students achieving (or their individual scores 75-89%)
- Outstanding: 90-100% of students achieving (or their individual scores >90%)
ANTH 496: History of Theory & Methods in Anthropology

• Introductory cultural anthropology course for Anthro majors

• Assessment strategy
  • Weekly BlackBoard posting essay assignments (written communication)
  • $N = 18$ (essay-based assessment using a 3 point scale)
    • 1) Command of topic
    • 2) Development of argument
    • 3) Organization & language mechanics
ANTH 496: History of Theory & Methods in Anthropology—Results

83% of students performed at an acceptable level (score of 6 and higher).
Total mean score = 81% (Command of Topic = 81%; Development of Argument = 81%; Organization and Language Mechanics = 80%)

Bernard’s four elements

- Question
- Assumptions
- Methods
- Evidence

The key elements of the discipline made inside the discipline used by practitioners that practitioners recognize as valid

For more information, see Bernard’s History and Theory in Anthropology (2000).
Closing the Loop!

How will the assessment data and their evaluation be used to improve the program? Possible actions might include revising pedagogy, courses, curricula, or other learning support mechanisms.

• Results shared with department and discussed at the next meeting. Discussed results at Spring faculty retreat, and addressed ways to improve student understanding of research methods and communication skills.

• Share writing guides among faculty. Encouraged faculty to assign partial final paper assignments earlier in the semester to provide feedback.

• Collect data for 5-year review & review all SLOs within cycle
Questions?