

Assessment Summaries 2009

Division: Social Science

Academic Discipline(s): Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Economics, Ethnic Studies, Geography, History, Human Services, Humanities, Philosophy/Religion, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Women's Studies

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1. Describe program review processes that inform your division's efforts to improve program or discipline student learning outcomes.

The Social Science Assessment Team created a number of processes, or helped develop processes (see below), that can be used by faculty to assess student learning outcomes in their courses. With the wide variety of disciplines and career technical programs that make up the Social Science Division, developing processes and devices that would be useable by any division member was a challenge. The intent was to develop tools that could be used by faculty members in any discipline or program to improve assessment of their courses. The first two years of work focused on identifying social science learning outcomes, as described in the AAOT and career technical program requirements, which could serve as a common basis for developing a handbook and specific tools for the division. The outcomes that were chosen which were common to AAOT and CT program requirements encompassed communication and critical thinking skills. Materials were developed around these particular skills for faculty use in improving student learning outcomes.

More recently, members of the division assessment team have joined with faculty in other transfer divisions to focus on developing tools and processes that can be applied more broadly to transfer courses. The basic approach has been to assess student work in aggregate on assignments that should exhibit gains for specific student learning outcomes. A comparison of students' work early in their transfer course careers with those further along in their careers should give an indication of whether they have had an experience that produces a "value added" impact on their skills.

2. Based on assessments of program or discipline outcomes, what changes have been implemented since 2004 to increase student success and improve student learning?

Resources and processes developed as assessment tools for Social Science disciplines and programs:

2004-05

The assessment team (Jody Anderson, Lindy Beane, Jeff Borrowdale, Sheila Broderick, Barbara DeFilippo, Marge Helzer, Mo Kermanshache, David Leung, Lynn Songer) collected articles and assessment materials for development of an assessment handbook for the division. This collection was kept in a central location for faculty use and

evaluated for development of an assessment strategy.

2005-06

The assessment team developed a pre-post test strategy that could be applied to any course in the division. The team provided a description of developing content questions that would help assess critical thinking skills, some examples of such questions, and description of a process for administering such questions early in the term and at the finish of the term so that the associated learning outcomes could be assessed. Data from several faculty who employed this process were analyzed and returned to the faculty member.

2006-07

The pre-post test process was continued into a second year and refined. The division assessment handbook was refined further and a Social Science “skills framework” was added. A process for comparing student learning outcomes in two sections, taught by the same instructor, one in a traditional classroom format and the other in an online/hybrid format was developed for implementation in the following year. The beginnings of a strategy for addressing communication skills was also discussed and incorporated into the work plan for the next year.

2007-08

The assessment work was shifted from a division focus to a broader, lower division transfer, focus. Members of the Social Science Assessment Team joined this larger, combined group and worked through an approach to assessing student learning outcomes that could be applied to transfer courses. The initial focus of this group was on critical thinking skills, which meshed well with the previous work done at the division level. This group explored approaches to assessment at other institutions and developed a model for use at Lane Community College. The assessment team produced a process that employed a Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Assessment Rubric, developed by the assessment team, to student work, or “artifacts,” to show whether critical thinking was employed in the work. Work produced by students early in their Lane careers was compared with students who had taken many transfer courses to determine whether, in aggregate, it was apparent that additional critical thinking skills were present. Social Science faculty were active in recruiting and evaluating artifacts.

2008-09

Social Science was again active in the college-wide assessment work. A rubric for evaluating effective communication was developed by the group. Similar to the process used for 2007-08, the “Communicate Effectively” rubric was applied to artifacts. Student work was solicited from faculty across several transfer divisions and evaluated by the assessment team using both the Critical Thinking and Communicate Effectively rubrics. Results of this evaluation are under faculty review, yet to be circulated.