



CITY COLLEGES of CHICAGO

Harold Washington

Education that Works

The Assessment Times For Students Spring, 2013

From the Chair

Did you know that the Harold Washington College's Assessment Committee received the Council for Higher Education Accreditation Award for outstanding institutional practices in student learning outcomes? This award is the result of 10 plus years of hard work by many, many people and would not have been possible without the consistent support and participation of our fabulous student body. A few of us flew to Washington D.C. to pick up the award, which really started the semester off with a bang.

Assessment Updates

Over the past year we have added new and exciting dimensions to our assessment work. One of the new initiatives has been to include the assessment of student learning outcomes at the Department, Discipline and Unit level. This has been progressing really well, and we are learning much about how to "grow from within" departmental assessment cultures to provide faculty with solid data and decisions to continuously improve student learning outcomes in their disciplines.

Another exciting project will be unveiled sometime next year. Several faculty members are developing our very own MOOMs. By this I mean Mini Online Open Modules. These will be small learning modules designed to support student achievement in very specific areas. The areas were chosen based on the assessment data we have gathered over the past several years. We are very excited about this innovative project.

In the fall, the Assessment Committee will be conducting a college-wide assessment of Oral Communication Skills. This is going to be a complex assessment, and you will hear more about it at the start of the fall semester.

POP QUIZ

Can you name the seven disciplines of the social sciences?

Social Science Assessment – What We Learned

A lot, in short!

Specifically, we learned much about students' relationships to the social sciences, such as the following:

1. Students were more comfortable with the social sciences than they were with mathematics or the natural sciences. However, they were not as comfortable with the social sciences as they were with reading, writing, and the humanities.
2. Among the seven disciplines within the social sciences students demonstrated a greater ability to distinguish between economics, geography, political science, and history.
3. However, the ability to distinguish among all seven disciplines improved as students completed their social science requirements.
4. While students valued the importance of the social sciences in understanding the world around them, students were less certain of the applicability of what they learned in the social sciences to future careers or other college courses.
5. Students recognized that the social sciences require a higher level of cognitive learning than simple recall or comprehension; however, the assessment provided no evidence that what they learned in a social science classroom was applied outside the classroom.

What do you think? Do you agree with the findings?

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Effective Writing Assessment Conclusions

Recommendations

Students who had the additional support of a combined Reading section with their English course performed significantly better on the Effective Writing Assessment

Students should be placed in English 100/
Reading 125 more frequently.

Additional sections of wrap-around Reading
sections should be made available.

Students who place into pre-college English courses did not perform as well on the Effective Writing Assessment as those who came in at college-level English

Strategies for successful and
speedy completion of pre-
college English courses should
be examined

Completion criteria in
transitioning from remedial
courses to college-level English
should be re-examined

The effectiveness of current pre-
college English courses needs to
be re-examined with a specific
focus on SLOs, content and
teaching/learning pedagogy

Students struggle with self-identifying their strengths and challenges as writers

Frequent and abundant
feedback should be offered to
students on all of their written
work

Faculty should be specific about
the strengths and challenges
their students face in writing

Professional development
should be made available to all
faculty about the best way to
give useful feedback to students
to improve student writing
specifically

Students who are asked to write more frequently in their coursework, perform better than those who are asked to write less often

Students should be assigned more written work in all disciplines



Complete report: <http://tinyurl.com/coknlmt>

The Assessment Committee is made up of faculty, administrators, and professional staff. We are always looking for more interested members, including students. If you have any questions about becoming a member of the committee or about anything else concerning assessment at HWC, please contact Michael Heathfield, Chair @ mheathfield@ccc.edu (office 712) or Jennifer Asimow, Vice-Chair @ jasimow@ccc.edu.