

HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

THE ASSESSMENT TIMES

SPRING, 2014

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FROM THE CHAIR

Where to begin? The Assessment Committee underwent many changes this semester beginning with a change in committee leadership. As many of you know, Dr. Michael Heathfield began a well-deserved sabbatical in January so I stepped in as the interim Chair for the Spring Semester. That left the Vice-Chair position open and Dr. Ray Tse generously stepped in to fill the void. Even though these shifts were unexpected, the Committee moved seamlessly into 2014 with a full plate of assessment plans.

In February, we put the final touches to the Human Diversity Assessment Report and now we are looking for creative and innovative ways to disseminate that information to you. Working with Nikole Muzzy, the Director of Public Relations, we are exploring new avenues of communication that will showcase HWC's strengths in Human Diversity. In addition, we are considering ways to promote the dialog on Human Diversity by exploring student perceptions and suggestions for improving our efforts moving forward.

Our next college-wide assessment will take place this coming fall. It will be the second time the College assesses General Education Learning Outcomes in Information Literacy. Jeffrey Swigart and John Kieraldo have been working on creating an assessment tailored to the HWC community. When we last assessed Information Literacy, in 2003, we used an assessment tool that was not an ideal fit for a two-year college. We have learned a lot since that time. This will be the fifth assessment written and/or adapted by the Committee members. If everything goes as planned, we will conduct a pilot of this assessment at the end of this semester, just to get the kinks out, and then run a college-wide version mid semester next fall.

The early results are coming in from the Oral Communication Assessment that took place during Fall 2013. We have data from 685 students, representing 35 sections of classes, and 22 volunteering faculty members. Our data analyst, Phillip Vargas, has begun sorting the data

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jen Asimow - Chair
Applied Sciences

Ray Tse - Co Chair
Physical Science

Jeffrey Swigart - Secretary
Mathematics

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Physical Sciences



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and running the numbers. Ideally, we will turn this report around by the start of the Fall Semester with detailed information that should stimulate great discussions and ideas for improvement. We also elected a new team of Committee leadership for AY 2014-2015. I am pleased to announce that Carrie Nepstad will serve as the Chair, John Kieraldo will become the Vice-Chair, Jeffrey Swigart will remain as Secretary, and Phillip Vargas will continue in his role as Data Analyst. Please congratulate them when you cross paths. I am confident that the Committee is in good hands.

Enjoy the rest of the semester! Thank you for all of your continued support.

Jen Asimow, Applied Sciences

Testing for Statistical Dependence

There is a classic example in probability and statistics. If you flip a coin and it lands on heads, what is the probability that it will land on heads again? The answer is 50%. This is because the two events are statistically independent, or the result of one event has no effect on the outcome of the next. Even if you flipped a coin 100 times, and each time it landed on heads the chances of it landing on heads on the 101st flip would still be 50%. This is not always the case. Sometimes the probability of an outcome is dependent on previous results or some other variable. For example the probability of looking out the window and seeing someone holding an umbrella would be dependent on the current or imminent weather conditions, but would be independent of their eye color.

The Harold Washington College Assessment Committee is very interested in statistical dependence with respect to assessing how well our students meet the college's goals in term of learning outcomes. It is important to know how well the student body meets our college's learning outcomes, but it is vital to understand how this performance is dependent on outside variables. The only way you can effectively plan to improve upon a model is if you understand what variables affect performance, or what performance is dependent upon. Once these variables are analyzed and understood by both the faculty and administration we can better shift resources to these areas to ensure we have the largest impact.

One of the College's General Education Goals regarding human diversity is for our students to understand and respect human diversity. An assessment of this goal was performed in 2012. Part of this assessment was to determine how much discrimination students encountered

on campus. Again, while looking at these results we are not just interested in learning about how much discrimination there is, but what affects these data. One variable that we looked at was the relative degree of interaction with other ethnic, religious, or social groups. So, what do you think: Do you think the amount of discrimination students encounter increases or decreases when they interact with more students of different backgrounds? If you said decrease, you would be correct. Students who interact with students of different backgrounds feel less discriminated against. Findings such as these are not always intuitive, but they are always useful, and I can guarantee our creative faculty and administration will find ways to utilize them to the fullest.

Phillip Vargas, Physical Science

Assessment in Humanities and Music

The Humanities and Music Department has been working over the course of the 2013-2014 academic year to develop an assessment for music performance; this assessment will be piloted in the final weeks of the Spring 2014 semester.

Full-time music faculty worked together to clearly articulate what students earning an AFA in Music Performance or Music Education should be able to do when they complete the program. One of these program-level student learning outcomes was related to Music Performance, which faculty selected as the next outcome to assess.

Music faculty, in consultation with the Humanities and Music department's Unit-Level Assessment Liaison, then created a tool designed to assess how students completing all levels of Applied Music (music performance) courses are performing relative to that outcome. The group created a descriptive rubric that will be used to assess the juried exams that occur at the end of the semester, thus generating meaningful data about student learning and performance in every dimension of the outcome.

We look forward to learning about where our students are succeeding as well as where they are struggling so that we can better support student learning at all levels as they progress through our programs.

Erica McComack, Humanities

Assessment in Applied Science

The Applied Science Department includes the following programs: Addiction Studies, Child Development, Criminal Justice, and Social Work/Youth Work/Gerontology. For the unit-level Assessment Liaison project, the whole department has been focusing on Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines. Last year, we developed department-level student learning outcomes focused on writing. Based on those outcomes, a rubric was developed, piloted, and administered using a sample of student writing from various programs within the department. This semester, the data has been analyzed with support from the Assessment Committee Data Analyst, Phillip Vargas. Based on results of this analysis, it was determined that additional information needs to be added to the tool in order to do more comparative analyses which will help us to understand how students are building their writing skills over time, and if their writing improves from the introductory courses to the final courses in our programs. We have also decided to add one additional performance level to the rubric in order to collect more nuanced information about student writing. We are in the process of building an online space for all Applied Science instructors to use for a variety of reasons including access to assessment information, professional development resources for instructors, and resources for students that are directly related to each of our writing SLOs.

All of these pieces of the puzzle have been valuable, but probably the most useful part of the process has been in the conversations instructors have had with each other about what is most important to them about student writing. During our most recent departmental meeting, some of the full and part-time instructors as well as our departmental tutor, Lynne Sabas, were able to spend time together examining the data summary, and discussing what it means to us and how we plan to move forward. The goal for this semester is to assess writing across all programs within the department.

As we face the last few weeks of the semester and the mountains of grading, please enjoy these messages from students about feedback on written work:

Beyond the Red Ink: <http://tr.im/562z9>

Carrie Nepstad, Applied Sciences

Assessment in Art and Architecture

The departmental level assessment taking place in Art and Architecture is at the individual course level. Currently Art

144, 2D Design, has an assessment that looks at how well students are able to understand and apply the use of 1-point perspective, 2-point perspective and isometric projection. These are core skills that students need to master in Art 144 in order to excel in the studio classes. This assessment has been run three semesters in a row now and the results have helped instructors gain more information about what their students are learning.

Art 131, the General Drawing class, has an end-of-the-semester observational drawing. The assessment in this course measures how all the skills learned through the semester are applied to drawing a still life with a variety of challenging objects. This assessment has run three semesters in a row and the results have helped instructors identify which skills were learned well and which ones need reinforcement.

The long-term goal is for all the courses in the Department of Art and Architecture to have some type of assessments to measure student success. In pursuit of this goal, this semester there will be pilot assessments in Beginning Ceramics and 3D Design.

Paul Wandless, Art and Architecture

Information Literacy Assessment

The Assessment Committee is currently working on an instrument for assessing student learning outcomes in information literacy among HWC students. Our goal is to run a pilot of this survey-based assessment after spring break, and then in the fall semester we would carry this out as a college-wide assessment. In attempting to determine what this assessment endeavor would look like, we took into consideration several of the information literacy assessment tools that are available.

Three of the better known information literacy assessment tools are Project SAILS, TRAILS Assessment of Information Literacy Skills, and the Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges' (NILRC) information literacy assessment. The Assessment Committee last carried out an information literacy assessment in 2003 and the assessment tool that was used was the Project SAILS instrument. Based on standards of the Association of College and Research Libraries, SAILS involves establishing a benchmark for the information literacy skills of a given group of students through pre-testing. Administering an information literacy assessment using SAILS costs four dollars per student. TRAILS, partially based on standards of

WHERE CITATIONS COME FROM:

CITOGENESIS STEP #1:

THROUGH A CONVOLUTED PROCESS, A USER'S BRAIN GENERATES FACTS. THESE ARE TYPED INTO WIKIPEDIA.

THE "SCROLL LOCK" KEY WAS DESIGNED BY FUTURE ENERGY SECRETARY STEVEN CHU, CHU IN A COLLEGE PROJECT.



A RUSHED WRITER CHECKS WIKIPEDIA FOR A SUMMARY OF THEIR SUBJECT.

US ENERGY SECRETARY STEVEN CHU, (NOBEL PRIZEWINNER AND CREATOR OF THE UBIQUITOUS "SCROLL LOCK" KEY) TESTIFIED BEFORE CONGRESS TODAY...



STEP #2

SURPRISED READERS CHECK WIKIPEDIA, SEE THE CLAIM, AND FLAG IT FOR REVIEW. A PASSING EDITOR FINDS THE PIECE AND ADDS IT AS A CITATION.

GOOGLE IS YOUR FRIEND, PEOPLE.

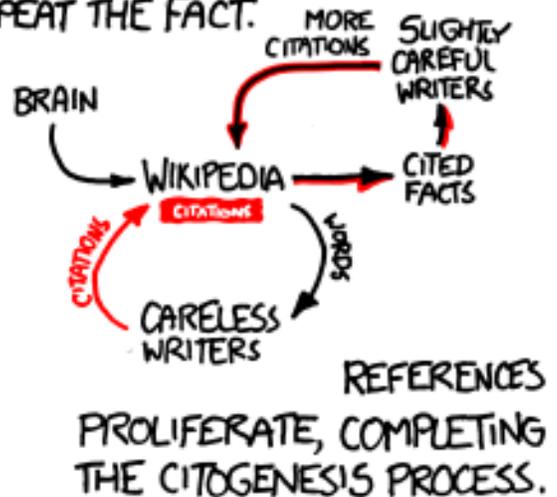
<REF>{{CITE WEB|URL=



STEP #3

STEP #4

NOW THAT OTHER WRITERS HAVE A REAL SOURCE, THEY REPEAT THE FACT.



HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

Assessment Committee

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[http://ccc.edu/
hwcassessment/](http://ccc.edu/hwcassessment/)

Newsletter layout: John Kieraldo

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE CHARGE

The HWC Assessment Committee is dedicated to the improvement of student learning through the meaningful utilization of assessment data in an effort to support the HWC community towards the evolution of college curriculum. As outlined in this charge, the HWC Assessment Committee is committed to defining assessment at Harold Washington College, as well as establishing and ensuring that appropriate assessment procedures and practices are followed in collecting, reviewing, analyzing and disseminating information/data on assessment. Finally, the HWC Assessment Committee is responsible for providing a forum for dialogue regarding assessment issues to support a college culture, which includes the assessment process.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

We are always looking for new faculty, students and staff to join in our exciting work. We meet every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in room 1046. All are welcome to join us. The Committee Charge states that there can only be two voting members from each department, but we are happy to involve as many people in our work as possible. If you want to discuss what this might involve or ask further questions, please contact Mike Heathfield (see contact info at left).

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the American Association for School Libraries, is an assessment tool designed for students in the third through the twelfth grades.

The tool that we have chosen to base our assessment on is that of the Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges (NILRC). It was designed for first-year community college students. There is no cost to run the assessment on NILRC's Web site. However, as the original assessment was written more than ten years ago, we have decided that our needs would be better served if we were to modify the assessment somewhat and to run it ourselves with freely available resources.

We have tailored the NILRC assessment to provide information about how our students are performing in the areas of our student learning outcomes for information literacy. In some cases we have modified questions with a view to a more current context, and in other cases we have modified questions for the sake of greater clarity or relevance to our local community, as well as to our SLOs. And we are also incorporating into our assessment a number of questions surveying the research practices of our students.

Jeffrey Swigart, Mathematics, and John Kieraldo, Library



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