

Business Liaison Report prepared by Bral Spight

Background

The Business Department at Harold Washington College wants to understand the abilities of students prior to entering a pathway of study to accomplish at least three things. First of all to begin baseline student performance in a way that could later be contrasted with performances of transferring/ graduating students to help demonstrate programmatic efficacy; secondly to help alter pathway curriculum based on any trends and issues perceived; and finally to be an aid in teacher preparation prior to the start of classwork in the next sequence of classes. Anecdotally instructors have observed that students enter into business pathways with a wide variation of knowledge and abilities. The goal was to provide a way to systematically and efficiently catalog student capabilities by individual that could be aggregated and collectivized as needed and appropriate. This work has been subsequently expanded to include topics relevant to the documentation required in support of departmental accreditation.

Department Buy-In and Outcome Definition

This work builds on previous work done in previous semesters. The department first held discussions with tenured and non-tenured faculty about the results of the pilot work. That input was used to tailor the timing and wording of the information sent to students via a Blackboard administered survey. It was determined that at a later date

Like previous semesters it was determined that the best time to approach students early in their HWC careers was at the beginning of three courses which were common to almost all later course requirements, Business 111, Business 141, and Business 181. This was then paired with the results of students completing courses considered to be taken later in their career, Business 269, Business 182, and Econ 201. It was determined that pending the results this semester a full review of questions would be undertaken with the assistance of faculty across the city colleges system.

Assessment Research and Design

This was a follow-up to a previously designed survey, a copy of the survey questions is included for review at the end of this report as an attachment. The general design principles were to leverage a national survey of potential "Exit" exams and assessments from community colleges and four-year colleges along with a questions from previous Business and Econ course exams to come up with the pool of questions to be used. Any question used was cross-referenced against the course outcomes and

expectations for the same courses to determine appropriateness for the assessment. The specific knowledge areas probed related to:

1. General knowledge of business terms and definitions deemed critical to performance in subsequent courses
2. Ability to perform basic computational business calculations
3. Ability to navigate routine mathematical operations which will serve as a foundation for the additional business calculation to be learned in higher-level classes

Assessment Tools and Processes

The assessment format chosen was to ask 30 multiple choice questions in 60 minutes in such a way that students would be best placed to score well only if such knowledge was deeply held. In addition to potential answers students would also be allowed the option to answer I do not know as appropriate. These same questions would then be used in a second survey presented to students matriculating through the second set of classes student generally take later in their tenure at HWC. The timing was honorary only and those that needed it were allowed to take as long as needed to complete the assessment. They were later asked how long it took to complete the assessment as the last question presented to them. The assessment were provided to all sections of aforementioned courses along with an instructor explanation that was sent out separately on how to administer the assessment and an encouragement for teachers to help ensure high participation rates through class participation credit or other appropriate means. The assessment was designed to run for two weeks before collection of results.

Administer Specific Assessment

The assessment was administered over a two week period in the fall of 2016 via a Blackboard domiciled tool. The tool went out to 26 sections, collectively all the fall sections of Business 111, Business 141, Business 181, Business 182, Business 269, and Economics 201 both online and face to face. Overall 157 students responded out of 1,121 surveyed for a response rate of 14%. Face-to-Face classes responded 33.9% of the time and on-line classes were much lower at 14%. "Early Tenure" classes had a 16% response rate while later tenure classes had an 11% response rate.

Data Analysis

The data yielded the following results:

- Average performance of the assessment for early career: 47% with a standard deviation of 15%.
- Average performance of the assessment for late career: 52% with a standard deviation of 13%.

- Percent increase between early and later is 10% with a p-value of 0.054. This is just a hair above significance at the 0.05 cutoff.
- Average performance of the assessment for online: 47% with a standard deviation of 14%.
- Average performance of the assessment for f2f career: 55% with a standard deviation of 15%.
- Percent increase between early and later is 16% with a p-value of 0.007. This is significant. (Note: there is significance here, it may not have been attributed to the learning modality, but the compositions this tool was administered in the F2F vs the online setting. See the respective response rates above.)
- Cronbach Alpha Score: 0.7738. This test measures the internal consistency of a tool. A value of 0.77 is typically deemed "acceptable".
- A Pt. Biserial was performed on all of the individual questions. Nothing flagged above 0.8, and only one question flagged below 0.2 which was Q5 (Pt. Biserial of 0.13)

Supporting Evidence-Based Change (Use of Findings)

The results will be presented in a department meeting in August and subsequently in a City Colleges wide discipline meeting in fall of 2017. The presentation to faculty will be used to provide input and guide the subsequent steps including any redesign efforts and to build support for the increased use of assessment in departmental self-evaluation. Part of the hope is that with successful refinement results could be provided in a digested form to inform instructors of higher level pathway courses what some of the capabilities and opportunities would be for their incoming student populations. In addition it is expected that any findings would be used as in support of the reaccreditation effort of the business department which will happen in the fall of 2018.