

Assessment Committee
Spring semester report

OVERVIEW

My long-term goal is to develop assessment tools for use in relation to the Latin American/Latinx Studies program of Harold Washington. One key learning outcome of that program and multiple courses within it relates to understanding the diversity of Latinx people in the United States. Latina/o/x people in the United States are often portrayed as one homogenous group. This conflated representation often conveys Latina/o/x populations as Spanish-speaking, foreign-born and undocumented. This obscures the diversity of cultures, traditions, heritage countries that Latinx people come from, as well as the unique experiences of a large section of the U.S. population.

It is important to assess how students understand the diversity of the U.S. Latinx population especially in a city such as Chicago with a large Latinx population.

Further, as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), our demographics require us to meet these goals. We also need to ensure these outcomes so that non-Latinx students taking these classes will learn about a large majority of the people with whom they share a history, a city, a country.

My primary activities of the fall semester involved learning about assessment at Harold Washington College, especially the processes and terminology in use. The spring semester was spent conceptualizing and planning the long and short-term goals of the assessment project, and making progress through the stages of the unit assessment process, as described below. In order to work toward the ultimate, ambitious goal, we decided to start narrowly and expand gradually.

PROGRESS

Stage 1 – Outcome definition

I began by selecting key courses of the program and review of those course learning outcomes, as well as a review of the program learning outcomes, originally developed more than a decade ago. Assessing this course is something I've wanted to do for quite some time. After several consultations with Dave Richardson, I was able to define the SLOs I would like to specifically target. I found that some of the Learning Outcomes for Hist 216, U.S. Latinx History, were closest to my target interest, specifically:

- Recognize, describe, and analyze... diverse populations that comprise Latinos in the U.S.

- Compare and contrast the migration patterns of the various groups that comprise the Latinos in the U.S. today
- Use an interdisciplinary perspective to evaluate how Latinos are a heterogeneous group with diverse issues.
- Analyze complex interconnections of the diverse Latino people.

These outcomes contribute to an understanding of the diversity of the Latinx population of the United States, and so we selected these outcomes in this course for an assessment pilot. One result of this assessment pilot may be the revision and/or consolidation of these outcomes or a revision of the program outcomes to include a synthesis of these that the outcomes of other courses also support but in different ways.

Stage 2 – Assessment Research and Design

Throughout the second half of the spring semester, the Vice Chair and I held biweekly meetings and discussed a variety of potential assessment designs. We noted how at the beginning of this course, I introduce students to the concept of Latinx defined as Latin American heritage + U.S.-born or living in the United States for a long time. As part of this, we discuss that Latinas/os/x are descended from, or themselves from, people from the many diverse countries in Latin America. This diverse heritage contributes to diverse experiences in the United States.

Consequently, I have decided to give students an essay at the end of the semester (Fall 2022) to address the diversity of the U.S. Latinx population. I will assign specific questions for students to answer such as, “What is a U.S. Latinx experience and why is it important that we offer a course focused on U.S. Latinx history?” and rate their answers according to an assessment rubric to build a data set.

Stage 3 – Pilot Assessment Tools and Processes

In Fall 2022, I will give students the essay at the end of the semester. I will generally assess whether students are understanding the diversity of the Latina/o/x population. Depending on the outcome, I will adjust my introduction for Spring 2023, and also adjust the specific essay question and rubric as needed. I will also continue consideration of the expansion of the assessment across another course in the program, History 215, which would be the next stage of the project.

Stage 4 – Administer Specific Assessment

Potentially, Spring 2023, but more likely Fall 2023, when it is used in multiple environments.

Stage 5 – Data Analysis

This stage cannot occur until we have a viable assessment developed through the pilot process.

Stage 6 – Supporting Evidence-Based Change

For now, the evidence-based change will be primarily related to the assessment tools and processes, as well as the course and program outcomes.