

# Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes 2011-2012

## GEOGRAPHY

1| This is the first year that the Geography SAC will submit an assessment report.

2| Assessment Design

This year the Geography SAC focused on two outcomes: Self-Reflection and Cultural Awareness. The same assessment tool, rubric, was used for both outcomes.

A direct assessment was used to assess a written reaction paper students submitted based on a reading assignment on the *Nature of Maps* for Geography 221 (Field Geography: The Local Landscape). A total of 17 students submitted the assignment from a class with 20 students. Ideally, students from a number of different classes would be assessed using the same rubric on a reaction paper from a variety of topics so that the sample size would be closer to 125. This would represent a class from at 4 or 5 classes in a given term.

Below is the rubric that was used for the assessment:

	<b>Self-Reflection (5pts)</b>	<b>Analysis (5pts)</b>	<b>Presentation &amp; technical (5pts)</b>	<b>Academic Quality (5pts)</b>	<b>Cultural Awareness (5pts)</b>
<b>Does not meet expectations:  (1 point)</b>	No attempt at self-criticism	Does not make a connection between what is learned from lesson (reading, lecture, etc.) and the writing topic.	Language is unclear and confusing throughout the paper, uses informal language and incomplete sentences, and is not in essay format  Many errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation	Includes little to no information from varied sources and no citations.  Demonstrates little to no synthesis, analysis and/or research.	Does not demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which culture impacts decision-making nor the variations in cultural perspectives
<b>Partially meets expectations:  (2 points)</b>	There is some attempt at self-criticism, but the self-reflection fails to demonstrate awareness of personal bias	Makes a vague connection between what is learned from the lesson and the writing topic	There are some places in the paper where language is unclear and confusing, and informal and incomplete sentences are used.	Includes some information from varied sources. Some citations are included and/or not in the proper format.	Understands that culture impacts decision-making, but tends to view these issues in black and white. Knowledge is either sparse or includes

			Frequent mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation	Demonstrates some synthesis, analysis, and research.	significant misconceptions
<b>Meets expectations:  (3-4 points)</b>	The reflection demonstrates ability of the student to question their own biases, stereotypes, and preconceptions	Makes general connections between what is learned from the lesson and the writing topic. Interesting to read, but perhaps misses an important point somewhere.	The language is clear and smooth. Complete and formal sentences are used.  Minor, infrequent mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation	Includes considerable information from varied sources. Citations are included and/or in proper format.  Demonstrates considerable synthesis, analysis, and research.	Understands some specific ways in which culture impacts decision-making
<b>Exceeds expectations:  (5 points)</b>	Demonstrates ability of the student to question their own biases, stereotypes, preconceptions and/or assumptions and define new modes of thinking as a result	Makes a clear connection between what is learned from the lesson and the writing topic. Paper moves beyond a simple description to an analysis	Language is clear and expressive. Paper carries the reader along smoothly, from point to point; writes with confidence and clear vision that comes through to the reader.  Perfect spelling, grammar and punctuation	Includes thorough information from varied sources. All sources are cited and in proper format.  Demonstrates thorough synthesis, analysis, and research.	Fully understands the ways in which culture impacts decision-making of specific individuals, nations or groups and takes into account multiple cultural perspectives.

The Geography SAC created the rubric collaboratively based on how we assess students in our human geography courses through various writing assignments. Since the assessment was completed with only one instructor, there were no steps necessary to ensure the evaluation was consistent from one group to another.

### 3 | Results

Student scores ranged from a 15 (out of 25) to 25. The average score was a 22 out of 25. Here are the average scores for each outcome in the assessment:

- Self-Reflection: 3.9
- Analysis: 4.1
- Presentation: 4.3
- Academic Quality: 4.2
- Cultural Awareness: 4.5

Overall, the scores on the assignment were high. It is interesting to note that the highest and lowest scores were both the outcomes that we were assessing. Being that this is a reaction paper, which instructs students to be self-reflective, it is troublesome that students performed low on this particular outcome.

#### 4| Future Changes

- How to bring improve self-reflection (more practice in class, give examples)
- Larger sample size – get part-time instructors involved (currently only 1 full-time instructor within the entire SAC)
- Students do extremely well with cultural awareness – this lends itself well to geography as a subject area. Everything we discuss in class is related to cultures around the world and locally.

#### 5| Reflection

- Should all the outcomes for the assignment be weighted equally?
- Reaction papers are meant to have student have an in-depth look on their views of a particular topic – one that is philosophical in nature and has no right or wrong answer. There are so many topics within geography that fall within
- Get larger sample size – more to reflect upon if other instructors use this for other topics
- Discuss with SAC – what other assessment tools can be used in geography?