

Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes 2012-13

GEOGRAPHY

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Core outcome(s) assessed: Cultural Awareness

1| Changes from 2011-2012

In the 2011-12 Academic year, the Geography SAC assessed both Cultural Awareness and Self-Reflection. The main critique of the assessment was the small sample size (17 students). This feedback prompted us to continue with the Cultural Awareness outcome this year in order to have a large enough sample size on which to reflect and make changes to our course content and ways of instruction.

2| Assessment Design

Five Geography Instructors participated in the direct assessment, each using a different (written) assignment to assess student's cultural awareness. For example, one instructor asked, "Do you think the immigration experience is the same as it was a century ago or has it changed? Give reasons for your answer" on an exam. Another instructor used the rubric to assess cultural awareness within student's presentation on the course research project.

The students that were assessed were from the following courses: Geography 105 (Intro to Human Geography), Geo 106 (World Regional Geography), and Geo 221 (Field Geography, the Local Landscape). A total of 98 students were assessed from five separate courses. Since cultural awareness is inherent in all geography courses, we decided to select students from all Geography classes (excluding any technical and GIS courses) to get as wide of a selection of students as possible. One of the courses was Distance Learning, and the other four were face-to-face.

Below is the assessment rubric.

	Cultural Awareness	Possible Points
Does not meet expectations	Does not demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which culture impacts decision-making nor the variations in cultural perspectives	1
Partially meets expectations	Understands that culture impacts decision-making, but tends to view these issues in black and white. Knowledge is either sparse or includes significant misconceptions	2
Meets expectations	Understands some specific ways in which culture impacts decision-making	3 or 4
Exceeds expectations	Fully understands the ways in which culture impacts decision-making of specific individuals, nations or groups and takes into account multiple cultural perspectives.	5

The Geography SAC collaboratively designed the rubric. As a group, we discussed various examples of content that would be designated for each of the possible scores (1-5).

3| Results

Student scores ranged from a 1 to 5, with an average of 3.73. This means, that on average our Geography students are meeting or exceeding our expectations for cultural awareness. Our results also show that approximately 75% of Geography students are (at least) meeting our expectations. Only 4% of our students did not meet our expectation and 20% partially met our expectations.

	# of Students	Total Score
Does not meet expectations (1)	4	4
Partially meets expectations (2)	20	40
Meets expectations (3-4)	32	112
Exceeds expectations (5)	42	210
Totals	98	366
Average Score	3.734693878	

4| Future Changes

Overall, the students scored high for cultural awareness, which has led to a positive and constructive conversation within the SAC. At this point, we are pleased with our results and the level of competency of our students in Cultural Awareness. Most everything that is covered in any Geography course includes cultures around the world or locally and how they interact with the surrounding environment, politics, economy, and society. We decided that we have spent adequate time assessing this particular core outcome and will move on to Problem Solving / Critical Thinking, and Community & Environmental Responsibility for the 2013-14 academic year.

5| Reflection

At this point, the Geography SAC is pleased with our assessment rubric and ability to use that rubric across multiple courses and assignments. This is important to us as a SAC since we do not have a standardized text or assignment for our human or physical Geography courses. There are no other methodologies that we have discussed that we think would lead to more meaningful results. Based on anecdotal information and more qualitative assessments, we expected that our students are becoming more culturally aware in our courses and this assessment confirmed that. We do not plan to revise our assessment rubric or process to assess Cultural Awareness. If the Learning Assessment team has any suggestions for improvement, we are open to ideas!

In our discussions for the 2013-14 academic year we have discussed other methodologies for assessing Problem Solving / Critical Thinking and Community & Environmental Responsibility. A few ideas that we discussed were including 2 or 3 questions on an exam or using a map interpretation assignment (using different maps relevant to a specific course).