

## American Studies Students' Ability to Analyze Intersecting Identity Categories of Diversity

### American Studies BA - College of Humanities and Social Sciences

#### Step 1: Student Learning Outcome

Students will express an understanding of American cultural diversity that recognizes the historical construction and functioning of categories of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, or region.

#### Step 2: Methods and Measures

An existing essay assignment in the core course AMST 350 that requires students to analyze a chosen piece of evidence within the framework of the diversity of U.S. culture, while also examining how identity categories change over time and how they function in individual and collective life.

**Assignment Template:** *“Select a piece of evidence from our chosen cultural field [in this case fast food] and consider what imagined communities it helps to create. Analyze intersecting identities of race, class, gender, nation, region, religion, sexuality, generation, and/or other identity categories”.*

The department's Assessment Committee used a 4 point, common rubric to measure the outcome. To ensure interrater reliability, the committee chair rescored assignments after individual scores were collected.

Student work was rated as, Outstanding, Acceptable, Weak, or No Evidence. Rubric dimensions included:

- Demonstrates an understanding of American cultural diversity
- Recognizes that categories of identity are historically constructed and change over time
- Analyzes how different categories of identity function within American culture

#### Step 3: Criteria for Success

Learning Outcome is adequately achieved if 75% of student essays reviewed are rated “acceptable” or “outstanding”.

#### Step 4: Results

Out of 25 scored assignments, the criteria of success was met with a total of 84% of students demonstrating adequate achievement of the outcome, with 28% at “acceptable” and 56% at “outstanding”.

#### Step 5: Improvement Actions

Although the criteria for success was met, 16% of students performed at the “weak” level in one of the components of the SLO; “Recognizes that categories of identity are historically constructed and change over time”. The Assessment Committee identified this as an area for improvement with the following recommendations:

- 1) Modify the component of the essay prompt to emphasize the requirement of analyzing the chosen evidence within its historical context.
- 2) Provide students with clear examples of scholarship demonstrating the historically constructed and changeable nature of identity categories.

Student's mastery of the SLO will continue to be monitored to determine the impact of the action items, and whether additional modifications are needed.