

History Students' Ability to Explain Change Across Different Eras

History BA – College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Step 1: Student Learning Outcome

Students can explain causes and consequences of change over time across different eras.

Step 2: Methods and Measures

Direct Measure: In fall 2016, final papers in the senior capstone course, HIST 490T, were assessed across three sections using a rubric drafted and calibrated by the Assessment Committee with faculty input. The rubric included the following dimensions: Breadth, Causes, and Consequences.

Each paper was scored with the following ratings:

- Does Not Meet Expectations
- Needs Improvement
- Meets Expectations
- Exceeds Expectations

Indirect Measure: In spring 2017, a University Exit Survey was administered for each college. Students who were identified as history majors were given a subset of questions specific to their major.

Students responded with their level of agreement (Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree) to the following questions;

- *My experience as a history major has helped me better to understand the historical roots of our complex, global world today.*
- *My experience as a history major has improved my ability to conceptualize problems and use research to find answers to them.*
- *My experience as a history major has improved my ability to formulate well-reasoned arguments and to articulate those arguments in speaking and/or written form.*

Step 3: Criteria for Success

Direct Measure: 70% of student samples "meets" or "exceeds" expectations.

Indirect Measure: 70% of students "strongly agree" or "agree" to all questions.

Step 4: Results

Direct Measure: 100% of students were rated as "meets expectations" or "exceeds expectations," which was well above the criteria for success (70%).

Although the criteria for success was met, the Assessment Committee concluded that the final papers in 490T were not the best evidence to use to assess the outcome because not all papers addressed causes and consequences or covered different time periods, regions or sections of society. Because the 490T classes are thematic and students have the freedom to choose topics, the papers did not always reflect the criteria in the rubric. The committee believes that the assessment process was flawed and that the data does not offer a reliable measurement of student mastery of the outcome.

Indirect Measure: 95% of students responded "strongly agree" or "agree," which was well above the criteria for success (70%).

Step 5: Improvement Actions

Direct Measure: The Assessment Committee will make the following changes for the outcome's next assessment cycle;

- 1) Faculty will be asked to identify a 400-level course that addresses the outcome.
- 2) Follow established procedures for rubric development and calibration.
- 3) Only the papers from seniors will be used in the assessment, in accordance with university requirements to assess near the end of a student's program.

Indirect Measure: The Assessment Committee will discuss whether to revise or add new questions to the University Exit Survey.