Use of Assessment Results to Make Improvements

Improvements Extracted from a Sample of UCC Assessment Reports

2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

UCC FOUNDATIONS COURSES

A wider range of assessment formats beyond high stakes testing could provide additional insights into student competencies. For example, incorporating short answer could allow measurement of a greater variety of skills.

Suggestions for alternate outcomes assessment that align with industry standards and provide valuable feedback to students were requested.

The current goal is to offer several additional in-class group activities, possibly one per chapter, to be used in the future as assessment activities for the course. The assessment report had several suggestions that could be used as these potential group activities in the future.

Instructors should be mindful that it could be beneficial to assess students' written work in settings other than exams. Two possible assessments are: (1) assigning take-home quizzes that require students to submit written work for grading, and (2) requiring students to keep a notebook of their work that they perform to complete their online homework.

While students met expectations in Skills 1 and 2, there is still something to be learned from examining the data summary. Students performed very well in Skill 1, but their performance drops off a bit when it comes to applying the framework. Instructors should continue to be vigilant in emphasizing these types of assignments. We suggest discussing ideal distribution percentages for the 4 competence levels at the department level to establish reasonable expectations.

The report clearly shows a deficiency in our students' understanding of the first SLO, which was assessed through free-response questions. The assessment committee recommends that the course coordinator form a group to redesign the related in-class activities, ensuring a stronger focus on improving student comprehension of these topics. Additionally, students should be provided with more practice using open-ended questions that require detailed explanations, encouraging them to clearly articulate their reasoning and steps.

The on-campus assessment process was expanded to include the online sections during this assessment cycle. With the addition of instructional videos and step-by-step directions, the assessments were able to be more easily completed by students who were not in direct contact with an instructor. Results from the online student sections were included in the statistical analysis with those of on campus students for this particular assessment cycle, but will be considered as possible separate data points in future assessment cycles to determine how different delivery methods may impact outcomes.

Ongoing annual assessment is beneficial for continuously improving student learning and skill development in this course. Focusing efforts on helping students become more competent in applying concepts in context should be a priority based on this year's results. Additional teaching approaches, standardized materials, and more varied assessments can contribute to student growth in key cognitive abilities.

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In the future, common exams will contain questions taken directly out of the homework system.

After reviewing the results, the goal should be to increase the percentage of students who achieve full or partial credit to meet or exceed the expected performance level. We will implement active learning strategies, such as problem-solving sessions, case studies, and interactive simulations, to actively engage students in understanding the topic. Additionally, we will also concentrate on enhancing practical applications and incorporating real-world examples to make the concepts more accessible.

We are revising the sequence of classroom activities for addition and subtraction this semester. It will be interesting to see if/how this affects the assessment results at the end of the semester.

We plan to develop strategies for reflecting on experience. The development of this skill itself cannot be accomplished with a single writing assignment. We are trying a connected series of writing assignments, with the fourth one serving as a final reflection. This time, we will aim to simplify the final reflection – with a more focused topic for students and less extensive grading for instructors.

Develop item-specific rubrics. Because this assessment can be closely tied to specific learning outcomes, it has potential to provide valuable information for the improvement of instruction.

We will continue to collect data from the course every time it is offered. We are going to have a departmental discussion, to make necessary revisions or updates to the course.
In this assessment iteration, we have combined all 60 sections into one Canvas page and thanks to Tamper Monkey, we were able to easily access the standardized grading rubric across assignments, streamlining the process of data collection and reducing human error.

Results are shared with the faculty in the pre-semester meeting held in August the Friday before courses resume.

During the next assessment cycle, assessments will be modified to reflect the amount of work completed within a specific timeframe rather than the amount of time taken to complete the work. This has been identified as a more inclusive assessment opportunity for students of differing levels and potentially a more psychologically motivational/self-efficacy-enhancing approach.

After considering the results in the assessment report and participating in a CORE FLC, substantial revisions were implemented in the course, including changes to the instructional methods, course content, syllabus, incorporating real-world examples, and the addition of two projects. The current results indicate the course is meeting the expected performance level for SLO 2 but is below target for SLO 1. Further revisions of the course are now being considered and implemented to improve student success across all the course SLOs. For the next assessment cycle, the plan is to collect data from the common questions as well as the final project which we anticipate may provide additional information with regard to SLO 1.

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We will continue to compile the data because it provides useful information – for our department and for interested parties in Teachers College. Although a single administration of some other type of assessment might provide a small snapshot of student learning, this measure provides an overall view and reminds us how important it is to provide ongoing opportunities in class for students to work independently and collaboratively to generate knowledge.

Develop a rubric that identifies the specific subskills associated with the more general cognitive skill. This will not only help instructors in the assessment process, but it will also help students think about what it involved.

We will work toward continuing to better align the course objectives and student learning outcomes to present a more unified approach to the UCC cognitive skills covered within the course experience and work toward identifying assessment methods that continue to serve the objectives of the course while aligning with the UCC cognitive skills rubric template.

Think of ways to incorporate gamification early in the class and/or bonus incentives for attendance in the first few weeks as this seems to be the largest drop-off points.

Normalize and encourage a culture of continued contact even with students that we might not have seen in a while. Normalize and encourage instructors to show possibilities of recovering after a missed assignment in the class.

Results from assessments that have been previously utilized were compared to results from pre-COVID as classes returned to in-person during Fall 2021. Returning to the in-person assessments allows for better controllability with the assessment process and recording of results. We continue to note significant improvement in each of the five assessments from pre to post. Starting with this reporting cycle, we are starting to look at the next level of data so in the future we can hopefully compare the actual changes, rather than just focusing only on achieving significant improvement.

We recommend incorporating more contextual problems into homework, quizzes, and exams throughout the course to provide students with more practice applying concepts. Structured labs or group activities focused on solving contextual problems could also be beneficial.

In an attempt to validate the assessment process implemented during the AY21-22, the assessment process was kept relatively the same throughout AY22-23. The additional steps that were taken this past year involved Graduate Assistants who teach in the Program creating video tutorials for each assessment. These videos were created so that the online and on-campus students complete the same assessments.

Ensure communication about the late policies and late assignments are clear, consistent, and frequent.

To promote the development of these cognitive skills, it is suggested that instructors continue to find ways to prioritize student voice.

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The key will be the development of a rubric that identifies the specific subskills associated with the more general skill. This will not only help instructors in the assessment process, but it will also help students think about what it involved in the analysis of children's mathematical reasoning.

Review course policies to see if all of the speech deductions are appropriate and learner centered and not overly punitive.

After looking at the results, we are going to consider updates to the grading rubric for future semesters.

Frequent contact and follow-up with students are imperative. Instructors should reach out after a pattern of absences has developed.

Employ the newly developed early alert reporting system. Continue to pursue communication with the student with supportive messages about possibilities for success and/or help each week.

Highlight the resources from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and make sure that each instructor is employing specific strategies each week. We can choose a select few of the tips and scale them out for all students.

It is expected that assessment of student learning outcomes will be an ongoing part of this course, and we will continue to evaluate course content, emphasis, and delivery relative to achievement of course objectives. The scope of the assessment will remain the same during the next cycle by including sample data from various sections of this course.

The success rate exceeded the established benchmark (80%) for all skills assessed. However, student learning can be improved on skills where the success rate was close to the established benchmark.

Explain what resources are available and how crucial the first six weeks of the semester are for student retention at the university and in our courses.

My new assessment still focuses on historical methodologies, but it allows students to draw more explicitly on our course materials rather than generate something new. I believe that I will use this new form of assessment more consistently moving forward. Although I am not considering making changes to this specific assessment, I have been making changes to the entire class so students are more prepared to complete this assignment.

It is worth noting that this course is still taught in a large lecture traditional format, and it may be worth considering a more student-centered format.

Results are disseminated to relevant faculty (in the form of departmental semi-annual assessment reports) and are used to reflect on teaching practices in the next semester. Instructors are asked to reflect on ways to improve student performance in problems related to cognitive skill 2, and also to reflect upon the extent to which the distribution of student skill levels matches well with the final course grades given.

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This course went through a major revision in the 2022-2023 school year and each semester will provide us with more data to evaluate as we continue to strive to meet the transformations. I look forward to tracking trends in the in-person and online sections and trends across the modalities.

Since we have common questions for each of the three chapters, we plan to rotate which chapter is assessed each year.

We are suggesting that additional SLOs should be included in the primary syllabus to better assess the skills students are learning in the course.

I plan to have staff from the Office of Online and Strategic Learning come to my spring course and survey the students regarding loss of interest, choices to dedicate more time to other classes at the end of the semester, my teaching style, and their time management choices. Again, I do not currently have enough evidence to determine why the drop in performance occurred. With the help of other professionals, I plan to investigate.

In this section of History 151, unlike my Spring 2023 section of History 152, "World Civilization II," I had students break up into small groups to discuss the primary sources in Victors and Vanquished. I will continue to do this and track any impact over time that I see.

Work done in both my spring and fall sections was reported to faculty in an FLC document on effective teaching methods and improvements to be made.

The assessment report will be made available in the Department Assessment OneDrive folder that is available to all department faculty.

I realized that I could be more explicit in explaining what methods I'm using in all of my lectures. Doing so allows my students to more effectively understand the difference between methods vs narratives, and it also facilitates the identification of the most relevant material. If students can identify the most relevant material more quickly, my hope is that they will improve on the other aspects of the rubric - contextual analysis and comparative and evaluative analysis.

For future semesters, I would like to map an assessment activity (probably a challenge) to the cognitive skill develop strategies for reflecting on experience.