Use of Assessment Results to Make Improvements

Improvements Extracted from a Sample of UCC Assessment Reports

2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024

UCC TIER 1 COURSES

I aim to adapt and build in further scaffolded activities to see if initial observation and visual analysis can be further broken down to increase comprehension, fluidity in application, and ultimately accomplishment in the skill area.

This year, I broke the process of analysis down into 3 activities. Depending on results, further scaffolding and expansion of other assignments may be warranted.

I periodically revise lecture content and delivery to improve course material. Results were submitted to dept. chair for annual collection of dept. assessment data.

We implemented a new platform with the support of a Faculty Learning Community (FLC). We aligned our learning objectives with national recommendations and with other faculty in the department. The feedback from the students was overall positive. We compiled data from the entire semester, which suggests that the switch to active learning supports student success in this introductory course.

Extra help sessions are offered, and supplemental instructors are also available for this course. In addition, the department along with the Learning Center makes tutors available in our building. Students who avail of these facilities usually do well.

Without compromising on the rigor of the course, the syllabus was adjusted to accommodate students' varying needs.

We will continue to look for ways to improve student learning. Instructors are experimenting with different ways to help students master the material and we will continue to do so.

The results of this assessment are submitted to the departmental Curriculum Committee. An overview of the reports will be presented in a faculty meeting during the fall semester.

SLOs were updated in the syllabus in order to reflect improvements made by the Curriculum Committee to better align department/course SLOs with the desired UCC cognitive skills.

Will convene with other instructors of the course to create a uniform strategy and tool for assessment.

The Department plans to continue to better align the UCC assessment strategies of instructors teaching the same course.

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As this course moves away from the large lecture course, we have lots of opportunities for course redesign and thoughtful assessment. In upcoming semesters, self and peer evaluation of the major assignments in the class will enable us to learn more about the students' experiences and learning. Since this course is now being taught by three instructors in the department and in multiple modalities, I would like to compare the results of our assessment.

To share this information with other faculty, the content specialist will share this report's findings, and then, before the spring semester 2025, she will meet with any instructors teaching the course to review different strategies to ensure students are developing in these three cognitive skills.

I will continue to use this assignment for assessment. I was quite pleased with the submissions.

For midterm, the instructor carries out an internal survey with the students (start-stop-continue), which allows him to make adjustments to the class for the remainder of the semester. This way, the instructor does not have to wait until the next semester to make changes in class. Students are receptive and appreciate the professor's replies to their concerns. Following this strategy, no significant changes are necessary.

While I have long provided students with a study guide for each exam as well as a model essay answer, I should continue to enhance the connection between the primary sources and their historical context in class to make those connections clearer to students. Appreciating the power of historical context is vital to understanding causality and perspective in the past.

The results of these analyses will be shared with faculty teaching this course. For the most part, faculty are relatively stable from one semester to the next. Student performance for all criteria will be reviewed with a focus on continuous improvement.

These baseline results will be shared with the course instructors and with the department's Assessment Task Force. They will be included in the department's annual assessment report which is shared with and approved by department faculty. Instructors will examine lectures and assignments in an effort to improve student scores and understanding. In addition, the exam questions will be reviewed to ensure they produce strong results. Questions will be added to better differentiate between a couple of topics.

Changes in pedagogy have been geared toward reaching students beyond the classroom and provide additional learning opportunities. Results are shared with faculty during a departmental meeting in which we close the assessment circle and discuss further possible adjustments and initiatives.

As of now, my online delivery for this course and the assignments and objectives have resulted in overall positive outcomes for the student body, so I will not be changing the content of this course. The course effectiveness is also reflected consistently in student evaluations. I have shared my assessment with our unit head.

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The results were shared at the course committee meetings. Initiatives implemented to enhance the course include convening weekly meetings to address current progress and potential challenges, scheduling all labs on a uniform day each week, ensuring consistent training for teaching assistants, and coordinating uniform lab schedules across all sections.

The main thing that I can focus on in the future is even clearer communication of deadlines, as quite a few students never turned in their final project that is necessary to complete this assessment. I have discussed methods for this with another instructor of this course and she found similar issues. We each plan to use better communication in the future and emphasize deadlines even more.

I will continue to explain each part of the project in depth to my students. In the online format, I've found that a video explanation seems to work the best, so I will make a video explaining the first section of the project for this semester. The project is still a well-developed artifact to test the above competencies. I plan to share my successes with other faculty in our unit meetings.

Repeated emphasis on best practices in laboratory data collection will continue to be emphasized in this course. More discussion in how to best analyze and interpret data will be done in the future. A copy of this report was given to faculty in the department.

Each course instructor has their own unique approach to teaching the material. Despite these differences, our assessment makes clear that the student learning objectives associated with this Tier I class are being met in each section of the course. The findings in this year's UCC assessment are consistent with previous assessments.

No changes to the course content are needed, other than potentially updating the examples of problems based on current events as the arise during the spring semester.

Use results from assignments to identify strengths and areas for improvement. There is a need to update the assessment activities, as some overlap and require extensive calculations.

I hope to have the opportunity to revise assessments and develop new assignments that better algin with each student learning outcomes.

These results were shared with the department, and compliments our inter-departmental assessment that we conduct every year. This is a course that we closely monitor given that it is a core course. We will continue to monitor progress moving forward, and work toward increasing the number of students who achieve competent levels on each learning objective.

These results will be shared with both current instructors within the department, with a particular focus on the SLOs in which students were more likely to be evaluated at a below-competency level of learning. In addition, we will continue to build on one of the key strengths of the course, ensuring that we highlight all of the skills that we are building across the semester to students.

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This is a course that we closely monitor given that it is a popular course for our minors and majors as well as students in other majors. We will continue to monitor progress moving forward.

This is the first cycle in which this course has been part of the UCC. Through these sections, we were able to directly align assignments to the objectives of the UCC. In doing so, we expanded the pool of students exposed to this course, the major and the profession. This data allowed us to learn about how our current assignment structures are meeting the goals of the courses and align with the UCC.

Further refinement of existing materials is planned. Modification of labs to include a greater emphasis on assessing individual understanding of materials is recommended. Transition to using cumulative assignment scores as a replacement for attendance seems to have been a good idea, but requires tweaking. A copy of this report was shared with the department.

This year I will edit the primary prompt (assignment #1) to include fewer sub-questions. The question will remain in alignment with student learning outcomes and will be implemented in the spring semester.

The three faculty members who taught this course in Fall 2020 met during the summer of 2021 to discuss the pre-produced modules, the quiz questions associated with the modules, and the data generated by the exam results.

I will continue to provide detailed guidelines and feedback to students.

For the moment, I do not plan significant changes, with the exception of the exclusive use of OER (no textbook costs) in spring 2023.

Changes to instruction as a result of assessment data show that there needs to be more practice explaining the use of grammatical structures. The results indicate that adding several informal grammatical presentations over the course of the semester would improve both oral and written accuracy.

This information will be shared with the department chair and instructors in the course. We have made changes in how we assess the exam questions for the fall of 2022 and have switched to giving students more occasions to practice in class in the form of additional worksheets.

Another change that is anticipated is to sort the exam data differently after 2021 so that results can be expressed in terms of individual students rather than individual questions. This will make assessment of the department's Tier 1 course similar to the assessment of its Tier 3 course and more in line with the guidelines created for assessment of the university core curriculum.

The class has been significantly altered, and the Fall of 2022 is the first time the new version of the course is being offered. The change was done in order to keep up with the best practices in the

discipline. The seemingly small changes had a great impact on what is being taught. Despite all of the changes, however, the SLOs will remain the same.

This report was shared with the leadership group of the department (chair, assistant chair, associate chair), as well as the instructors who taught the course. In addition, the report will be an item of discussion at one or both remaining faculty meetings in the Fall.

The majority of students performed well on the assessed project. But for the students who performed poorly, I believe this was primarily due to a basic lack of engagement with the course. Therefore, I will look for opportunities to bolster attendance and keep students engaged with the course. One way to do this is to start lecture periods with a fun or interesting example from current events that leads into the topic of the day. The university's efforts at student retention and engagement (e.g., the EAB reporting system) may also help to keep students engaged with their courses more broadly.

One area that I am currently not addressing well is the integration of multiple sources of information. I will look to integrate a focus on finding and comparing competing sources of data.

The two faculty who assessed the two sections of this course are two among at least four, perhaps more, who teach or will teach it. It is an introductory course that fulfills a UCC tier one humanities requirement and serves as a recruitment course for non-majors. The topics taught in this course vary widely, but the student learning objectives are the same.

The faculty may modify the instructions for assignments with additional clarification. The quality of the information and/or instructional videos in the course may also be enhanced.

As a newly formed department, we have created a shared cloud drive that all faculty will be required to submit student outcome learning data to at the end of every semester to remedy the above stated situation.

We propose a meeting among the faculty who teach this course to design a new assessment for this course and create a common structure for an assignment that all faculty can use while allowing some flexibility. Once faculty create this new assessment and corresponding assignments, all instructors will agree to have a "norming meeting" to ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding how the criteria are being interpreted.

With faculty turnover, we have only a few faculty who were involved in the design of our assessment procedures. The procedures are rather laborious. We are reviewing our UCC courses to develop more efficient assessment procedures.

Most of our assessment activities have come from a writing assignment in the laboratory component of the course. Historically, we have asked students to write 2 lab reports during the semester and different sections of these reports meet E/I and I/K transformations. To improve student learning outcomes/cognitive skills, we now scaffold the writing of one lab report. This change has allowed us to provide students with greater instruction and opportunities to receive feedback on progress toward SLOs. Each report section now comes with a detailed task description, pre-recorded video version of instructions- with provided examples- as well as a detailed rubric used to evaluate the students.

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Students have the opportunity to make revisions of each section before resubmitting them later in the semester. The peer review component that was conducted outside of class is now done during class. This has increased student engagement in the peer review process and increased the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning. Weekly lab worksheets have also been created in place of online, multiple choice prelab/postlab assessments. These worksheets allow students to work on very similar SLO/cognitive skills as what is in the lab report. This means we've created an environment where the students are continually working on these skills over the semester prior to assessment, instead of 1-2 attempts at many, many things.

The instructor has changed the tone of the syllabus to encourage students to engage more in office hours.

One instructor has switched to an active learning format of instruction where all the content is provided on videos and class time is spent on working worksheets over the content. Another instructor has adopted a partial active learning format where one of the three lecture periods is dedicated to in-class worksheets and some of the content is delivered by video.

Assessment Activities and/or Processes: We will in the future reduce the number of cognitive skills being assessed each semester from six to four.

The Departmental Assessment Committee will share its report with the faculty members in one of the next faculty meetings and discuss future suggestions and adjustments, e.g., success rate for competency levels, SLOs. In spring 2023, the department will schedule a faculty retreat to make further decisions.

Immersive projects in small groups are a hallmark of this course, so there are no plans to remove the projects. However, there may be ways to facilitate group work online in ways that will encourage students to work together with their groups even when they can't be physically in class.

I set the course up so that the tutorials were not graded but needed to be completed so students could gain knowledge and experience using the software so that they could easily complete the exercises that were assigned. I think some students would try to avoid doing these, which makes it challenging to complete the exercises. Maybe I'll find a way to attach some sort of points or complete/incomplete to it to incentivize the completion of the tutorials.

In the future, I plan to reduce my lecture and demonstration time and give students more time to work individually or together each week.

During the last seven years, I have compiled a test bank for assignments. Students are evaluated individually and as small groups. Due to COVID, I had to opt for a large number of low-stake tasks (assignments and participation in discussion forums) that I will maintain.

I have added an additional mechanism for feedback on the essays, giving comments that highlight the most important writing attribute(s) they need to address from each essay. Thus, students receive both big picture and detail-oriented feedback.

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As last year's report explained, we have planned to better coordinate pedagogical strategies for addressing literacy concerns (reading and writing) in our UCC and lower-level courses.

Further refinement of existing materials is planned, and greater emphasis on student attendance and engagement will be considered. A copy of this report was shared with the department.

Efforts to increase the ability of students to engage in the virtual labs should be investigated, possibly through the use of more creative ways of presenting data to the students.

It seems that the high percentage of students in this course who were not required to take it previously will need special attention to get caught up in the beginning. Faculty will be directed to this report in a shared department folder.

Our assessment suggests that major alterations to the pedagogies employed by instructors are unnecessary. Each instructor is adequately achieving the student learning objectives, the development of cognitive skills, and the transformations expected to take place in the university core curriculum.

Repeated emphasis on best practices in laboratory data collection will continue to be emphasized in this course. More discussion in how to best analyze and interpret data will be done in the future.

Each instructor has their own unique approach to teaching the material. Despite these differences, our assessment makes clear that the student learning objectives associated with this Tier I class are being met in each section of the course.

Going forward, assessments may benefit from establishing uniform questions related to each SLO and cognitive skill (i.e., resolving differences in the way in which exam questions are worded).

My learning outcomes are not well-developed. While the course does address broad goals regarding theory development, I see that I need to state clearly as learning goals the various steps relating to the Tier 1 transformations that get one there. I feel that I am addressing these in class, but I need to make that clear in the syllabus.

I give my students short weekly writing assignments that ask them to work with and apply concepts and theories from the week's classes. I will redesign the assignments to ensure that they align more directly with the UCC goals and with my updated learning goals.

Discuss the creation of common assessments, particularly those that allow for measuring "accomplished" performance, across sections.

Implement best practices from a new book that will help guide our discussions of curricular and assessment strategies.

These results were shared with the department, and compliments our inter-departmental assessment that we conduct every year. This is a course that we closely monitor given that it is a core course for our majors. We will continue to monitor progress moving forward, and work toward increasing the number of students who achieve competent levels on each learning objective.

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Instructors will continue to be advised to increase the number of learning opportunities in regard to being able to analyze and interpret data in graphical form to increase the percentage of students who demonstrate competence in this learning objective.

These results will be shared with current instructors within the department, with a particular focus on the cognitive skills in which students were more likely to be evaluated at a below-competency level of learning: filtering experiences through various theoretical lenses and recognizing that problems and solutions vary based on the theoretical lens that is utilized. In addition, we will continue to build on one of the key strengths of the course (integrate information from multiple sources to develop new knowledge and insights), ensuring that we highlight all of the skills that we are building across the semester to students.

This report demonstrates the need to incorporate more opportunities for students to develop theoretical knowledge and application skills throughout the course, perhaps with additional low-stakes, formative learning opportunities. In addition, instructors will continue to consider ways to promote student engagement and attendance throughout the semester (with active learning opportunities, communicating the importance of in-person engagement for in-person classes, etc.). Incorporating these strategies may help larger-stakes assignments appear more doable to students and facilitate higher numbers of submissions, as students grow more comfortable with the concepts and material after participating in in-class discussions/activities.

Faculty met to talk about results. The order of lab experiments was changed to better align with the topics in the lectures, so the two can reinforce each other more.

This is a course that we closely monitor given that it is a popular course for our minors and majors as well as students in other majors. We will continue to monitor progress moving forward.

I discuss the student learning outcomes and behavior with my fellow colleagues. Those beginning students who missed either or both quizzes need more nudge. I am planning to send them reminder emails for future quizzes and also allow them to make up for the missed quizzes. I will offer those developing and beginning students a personal meeting chance either in my office or on zoom.

The professor is expanding a discussion board post to emphasize specific content. The professor will also add related questions to their homework to reinforce understanding.

All areas suggesting less than an accomplished assessment will become a focus area during the next assessment cycle. A special emphasis will be placed on improving future artifacts in which assessments were assigned the lowest overall scores.

Consider updating assignments to better pinpoint assessments. The assessments overlap with several assignments which becomes difficult to assess properly.

Will update new assessments assignments when developed for each SLO to be better fitting and appropriate. Hopefully updated readily for the next UCC report.

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The rubric was updated two years ago based on feedback from midterm evaluations from students. The data from midterm evaluations were used to determine where students were struggling and how the final assignment and rubric would be revised.

Exploration of a collaborative rubric for future assignments will be conducted in a faculty meeting.

Next year, data from more sections of the course will be included.

Changes in pedagogy have been geared toward reaching students beyond the classroom to provide additional learning opportunities.

Results are shared with faculty during a departmental meeting in which we close the assessment circle and discuss further possible adjustments and initiatives.

Discussion with the faculty involved in this assessment (and who teach this course on rotation) has led to a push to redesign our course. While an overhaul may feel drastic, we believe that our approach to the material needs to change. Student engagement is decreasing, and we need ways to connect with them in the classroom. Several of us our going to push to perform more backwards design and active learning activities. We are moving to open-source materials to reduce the cost burden. This is absolutely holding students back. We hope with a more interactive approach, will help improve the outcomes on our assessment in the next cycle.

We will consider opportunities to scaffold more major and lengthier assignments across several smaller submissions. Incorporating these strategies may help larger-stakes assignments appear more doable to students and facilitate higher numbers of submissions (and fully completed submissions), as students build upon their work across time.

I have been involved in two Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) that address alternate grading and UCC courses and I am solidly convinced about giving students descriptive, actionable feedback and allowing them the chance to revise and resubmit. I believe this will significantly improve performance on UCC cognitive skills, especially for the "developing" and "beginner" categories. The results were shared with our UCC data coordinator who reported it in a section meeting. I also discussed it in my alternate grading FLC as an example of why it's important to give students, especially in the first six weeks, second and third chances.

In the online sections, we want to provide more support in understanding the importance of context. This will include adding more specific questions to the course journals, especially in Weeks 4-6. Each week, we will ask a broad question regarding how the context affects creativity at (a) a macro level, (b) a micro level, and (c) a personal level.

In upcoming semesters, I would like the self and peer evaluation of the dark side of communication presentation to be more detailed to evaluate the cognitive skill of working independently as well as collaboratively to generate knowledge.

The results help us understand which specific stage of the project students need more guidance or instruction on. The results were shared and discussed among the faculty who teach the course.

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Changes in pedagogy have been geared toward reaching students beyond the classroom and provide additional learning opportunities.

The class was significantly during the 2021–22 academic year, and during the time period covered by this report (the Fall of 2022 and the Spring of 2023) was the first time the revised version of the course was offered. The change was done in order to keep up with the best practices in the discipline. The new course now covers music until 1800 rather than 1750. That seemingly small change has had a marked impact on what is being taught. Despite all of the changes, however, the SLOs have remained the fairly consistent.

Further refinement of existing materials is planned. A transition from focusing on raw attendance to student performance on conceptual questions will be explored for the second learning objective. A copy of this report was shared with the department.

Based upon last year's assessment I adjusted by providing more examples in class. I also incorporated more time for peer and instructor feedback, including a graded peer-evaluation component to the overall assignment category. Moreover, I included more scholarly examples and lessons to serve as models. I believe by making these adjustments from the previous semesters, I was able to ensure students were able to fully grasp and execute the skills necessary to conduct a scholarly analysis. I believe that by making these adjustments, more students were successful in earning a higher grade on the assignment and overall deeper understanding of what it means to analyze something versus just describe. I also believe students were able to communicate deeper and larger understandings.

This semester I used in-class writing /discussion activities in the in-person section of the class which had a positive impact on class engagement. This allowed students who did not feel comfortable speaking up during the class the opportunity to voice their thoughts throughout the semester.