

General Education Assessment Report--CY 2020 with appendices

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General Education Assessment Summary Report--CY 2020

The CY 2019 General Education Assessment Summary Report opens on the image of a large white swan, solitary, against a backdrop of gray and brown. A somber image, one befitting the time, late March 2020.

One year on, it would be easy simply to light on the oddest of all elephants in the room, to note the difficulties born of the microscopic and the changes in teaching and student learning wrought by SARS-CoV-2, and leave it at that. Nearly half of the general education assessment reports for CY 2020 in the categories of Foreign Language, Humanities, Western Civilization, and World Awareness did make reference to the pandemic, mind you, but what is striking about the assessment reports is that, whether invoking Covid-19 or not, they made clear a commitment to teaching, to student learning, and to nuanced, formative assessment of the latter even in trying conditions. Those conditions included an early semester pivot following the initial pivot from in-person to mixed modality instruction for those opting for hybrid or either synchronous or asynchronous instruction, as all courses had to move to completely online instruction for two weeks early in the fall semester.

Neither elephant in the room (the problem unspoken and unaddressed) nor white elephant (that whose cost outweighs what it yields in return), when taken as a whole the CY 2020 general education assessment articulates the value of and in the effort necessary to take the measure of student learning. Fine work was done.

Six years on from the move to a calendar-year cycle, and thus with the CY 2020 assessment twice through our rota of selected categories in a particular year, it is worth remarking on how far we have come. In the CY 2014 summary report we noted the need to attend to reporting consistency, sample size, coordination, and rubrics. With CY 2020, nearly all departments and programs used the correct report form. Nearly all of the departments assessed at least the minimum of student work dictated by our sample size guidelines, coordination both with departments and programs regarding assessment procedures and practices is apparent across both schools and college, and the same holds for rubrics. The odd instance of a report submitted on an old, dated form is easily enough addressed; so too is ensuring that minimum sample size needs to take into account the number of students in each section of a course where learning is being assessed. We would be remiss if failing to note here, however, that courses where student work was under sampled were far outnumbered by courses that went well beyond the minimum sample size required. More than a dozen courses looked at work from all enrolled students with capacities ranging from 19 to 90. Another group of assessments sampled work from 80% or more of the students in the class; the percentage in a third group dipped below 90% in some cases simply because a number of students failed to stay with the course through to its end.

General Education assessment asks that departments and programs link both the various sections of the report and past reports and plans to present practices and results. We have improved on this regard. Indeed, the CY 2019 summary noted that the call sounded in earlier

summaries to ensure that the sections of individual reports cohere was heard and heeded by a greater number of departments and programs than had previously been the case. CY 2020 reports continue to build on that good work. In addition to strong suturing apparent from the usual departments and programs--Anthropology, Art, and Economics to name three--we can add departments such as History and programs such as Native American Studies. In the same vein, the thoughtfulness that went into the prompts shared was a telling example of linking assessment plans to reports and, critically, teaching to student learning. Reviewers did note, however, that at times the Action section of the report recounted what was done over the course of a particular course without also including what actions were to be contemplated and/or taken in light of the assessment revealed. The former offers telling examples of faculty working on the course and on student learning as the semester unfolds, which is both wonderful and welcome, but please do not neglect the latter.

Additionally, one also notes your willingness to use assessment to help identify how prompts can be improved, how rubrics can be tweaked, how what we ask of students over the course of a course might be reimagined. All of which is to say, in sum, that assessment is working as it should.

A through line running in earlier summary reports has been a reminder to departments and programs to bear in mind succession in order to help assessment practices run smoothly and yield meaningful results from year to year. Whether due to a lack of turnover in department and program leadership or to better communication between chairs and directors, the CY 2020 assessment reports suggest that our reminder in past summaries to be sure to attend to matters of succession and communication was heard and heeded.

Finally, with but very few exceptions CY 2020 assessment reports were submitted by the early February deadline--even as the spring semester calendar was jiggered, many faculty were teaching either wholly or in part online, and meetings could only take place virtually or with social distancing protocols in play. The commitment to timely submission is no small matter, for it enables the Assessment Advisory Committee and the General Education Council to complete its work on time.

We'll gather for our annual General Education assessment retreat early in the week following commencement. More on that to follow.

Appendix 1: Exemplary Reports

Here we include reports from Anthropology, Art, English, and Native American Studies

Course: ANT 341# of sections: 1Calendar Year: 2020

General Education Category	Learning Outcome Students will demonstrate	Information			Results ¹							
		Semester(s) of data collection	Students Assessed		Exceeding Standards		Meeting Standards		Approaching Standards		Not Meeting Standards	
			#	% ²	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
World Awareness— Social and Behavioral Sciences	Knowledge of either a broad outline of world history, or the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of one non-Western civilization	Fall 2020	34	100	17	50	13	38	2	6	2	6
	Understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, & employment of mathematical analysis	Fall 2020	34	100	21	62	9	26	4	12	0	0
	Knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences	Fall 2020	34	100	21	62	9	26	4	12	0	0

¹ Each student should be counted only once. If assessment has taken place across multiple sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.² Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in course.

Assessment tool and measure Did you use the assessment tool and measure identified in your assessment plan update? X Yes _____ No If No, please attach to this form a document indicating what you used instead and the rationale for doing so.

Briefly describe your method of analysis I used online assignments and exams as the primary assessments for the learning outcomes. For outcome one I focused solely on the results of the three exams which included multiple choice, term identify, and several short essay questions, to assess students' broad knowledge of the outlines of the history of the societies covered by Archaeology of the Old World by averaging their performance. For outcome two, I used online assignments and individual discussions, e.g. Making States Exercise, Myth of the Hunter-Gatherer, Imagining the Archaeological Record (campus/home ethnoarchaeology exercise), to determine student understanding of the essential methods and techniques used by archaeologists to interpret Old World sites. For outcome 3, I used our online individual assignments and exams, including several focused writing prompts, Making Empires exercise, and understanding state collapse essays, to evaluate student ability to both identify major concepts and models of human societies from anthropological archaeology and apply these using case studies I used the average of these assignments to evaluate how many students met the standards set by the plan.

Analysis of results Please be sure to address each learning outcome and both strengths and weaknesses revealed by the assessment, if any.

The assessments show that the majority of our students (over 3/4) either exceeded or met standards for all three outcomes, which was a very strong showing. Overall, the results showed that our 34 students in this class are doing well, and, I should note, they are doing much better than they did in a previous un-assessed iteration of this class (the first time I ever taught it) in which only exams were used as assessments. In parsing the results by each outcome separately, more analysis is possible. The highest percentage of performance actually came from outcomes 2 and 3, with significantly more students understanding and applying methods and concepts to the materials. There was less excellence in the exams, and I think especially in the few multiple choice and term identification questions, students did struggle a little more. Students did the absolute worst on the few multiple choice, which honestly shows the weakness of that method at assessment. I had some of the best answers I've ever received when students were asked to think about what some of the Middle Kingdom literature showed about Egyptian life, and a lot of engagement on thinking about what we leave behind in daily activities (the ethnoarchaeology of campus life). I also think students did better on the exams because they were able to essentially practice writing and getting feedback on short essays in the writing prompt exercises.

Action to be taken: please indicate the connection between the assessment findings and the proposed action(s); if no action is to be taken, please indicate why you think none is necessary.

One clear take-away from this is that multiple choice questions, although students claim they really like them, are one of the absolute worst areas in which students performed. They also showed very little substantive about what they learned as it is much harder to write more conceptually based multiple choice questions concerning in-depth questions about ancient state dynamics, for example. I think I will continue (as I have done this second time I have taught the class), to add short writing assignments that make conceptual demands of students. They seem to do well with them and actually appreciate the opportunity to use data directly, the way archaeologists do, rather than simply memorizing details about the various ancient societies. I think I could actual introduce even more historiographic analysis of the archaeology, since that would add another layer that, given the results I saw, the students might actually be capable of as well.

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

The big general point from this report and findings is that I think even in big classes it's possible to do more in-depth writing and conceptually challenging assignments as a way of bolstering student confidence and getting them to perform better on the essay/short answers portions of exams. This second time teaching the class I leaned a lot on those short assignments, which I partly did as online activities, and they proved to be very helpful to improving students' overall performance. From the feedback I got, most students did not find them overwhelming. I could see using these as formative assessments as a way to improve graded assessments. It will be interesting to see what happens when we return to more complete in person learning and I continue to use these online bolstering activities.

General Education Assessment Report—Western Civilization

Course: Art 251

of sections: 2

Calendar Year: Fall 2020

Knowledge and Skills Areas / Competencies	<u>Learning Outcome</u> Students will	Information			Results ¹			
		Semester(s) of data collection	Students Assessed		# Exceeding Standards	# Meeting Standards	# Approaching Standards	# Not Meeting Standards
			#	% ²				
Western Civilization	Students will demonstrate knowledge of the development of the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of Western civilization	Fall 2020	38	100	11 (29%)	27 (71%)	0	0
	Students will relate the development of Western civilization to that of other regions of the world	Fall 2020	38	100	31 (81.6%)	6 (15.8%)	0	1 (2.6%)

¹ Each student should be counted only once. If assessments have taken place across different courses/course sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.

² Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in courses approved as addressing this learning outcome area.

Assessment tool and measure used. Did you use the type of tool (exam questions, assignments, essays, etc.) and measure (quantitative or qualitative) identified in your assessment plan update? If not, please indicate both what you used instead and the rationale for doing so. If more space is needed, you may attach an extra sheet.

We followed the proposed assessment plan.

Analysis of results: please be sure to address each learning outcome and both strengths and weaknesses revealed by the assessment, if any.

We are pleased to see that 97-100% of the students enrolled in Art 251 satisfying GE Western Civilization continue to exceed and/or meet expectations (Goal 1= 100%; Goal 2= 97.4%), which is an improvement in Learning Outcomes for both goals, but particularly Goal 2 (an increase of 14%) since our last assessment report in 2017. In fact, in past assessments for GE Western Civilization, students routinely performed lower on Goal 2 in comparison to Goal 1. This 14% improvement on student performance on Goal 2 is welcome news considering this was one area targeted for improvement during our last assessment. However, it should be noted that fewer students completed all of the assessments that are used to compile data for Goal 2. Learning Outcomes for Goal 1 remained consistent with our last two assessments for this category (2017 and 2014). Another area of improvement that should be noted is that all students in this course met or exceeded expectations for Goal 1 and Goal 2, compared to the 2017 assessment wherein small numbers of students approached expectations as opposed to meeting or exceeding expectations. During this assessment cycle only one student failed to meet expectations but this can be attributed to the fact that the student didn't complete the coursework or homework (watching recorded class lectures, participating in discussion boards, and completing all low-stakes quizzes) that would have contributed to their ability to meet expectations for either goal.

It should also be noted that in a typical semester we offer at least one section of ART 251 taught in a traditional, face-to-face lecture format and two sections taught asynchronous online. Due to budget restrictions and scheduling changes as a result of Covid-19 we only offered two sections online asynchronous this fall.

General Education Assessment Report—Western Civilization

Action to be taken in addressing these assessment findings:

Despite what appears to be data that demonstrates students successfully exceeding and meeting learning outcomes for GE Western Civilization, some of this data may require further consideration in light of mitigating circumstances involving changes made across campus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. First, there was one student who failed to meet expectations for Goal 2, and 4 students who failed to complete any of the assignments needed to assess Goal 1 and Goal 2 (resulting in a lack of data to assess and a reduced data pool). As noted earlier, the one student who failed to meet expectations for Goal 2 didn't complete the coursework that would have prepared them to meet the learning outcomes for Goal 2. In fact, that was also the problem with the other 4 students who failed to complete numerous assignments needed for assessment. The faculty member teaching this course noted that 30% of the students failed to complete at least one required assignment and 15% of the students failed to complete 2 or more assignments. Assessment for Goals 1 and 2 are based upon quiz and exam questions, some of which repeat between earlier, low-stakes quizzes and later comprehensive exams; this is also used to further test student retention of material. Because of the number of students failing to complete at least one of the low stakes quizzes or comprehensive exams that included these assessment questions, this data may not be sufficient enough to gauge either learning outcome. For example, questions used in 2017 and again in 2020 to assess Goal 2 appear on a quiz and again on the final exam. The faculty member noted students failed to complete both assessments using these questions. Further action should address how assessment can or should be conducted when utilizing test questions on several assignments spread out over the course of a semester if the pool of students involved inconsistently complete the work. For example, if student A successfully completes an early assessment but does not to complete the later assessment that tests the same content, should that data be used? Or, conversely, how should data be interpreted when a student exceeds expectations on an early assessment but fails expectations on the later assessment? Are test questions as opposed to exam grades or course grades more reliable for the purpose of this GE category, which is extremely broad in scope?

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

During a “normal” academic year, a section of this course is regularly taught online during either the fall or spring semesters with traditional face-to-face sections offered simultaneously. During the 2017 assessment report, we noted that students performed equally well in this course for GE Western Civilization whether the learning platform was face to face or online. This was good news at the time, as the art department sought to determine if student success was reduced in online learning formats and the data suggested that was not the case.

However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic all art history courses were moved to asynchronous online formats in fall 2020. Students across campus had to juggle multiple learning formats with their own unique set of challenges: hybrid, synchronous and asynchronous online. In the assessment data for fall 2020 the faculty member noted an unusually high number of students failing to complete at least one required assignment (30%) in the course, compared to 5% in past semesters, while 15% failing to complete 2 -3 assignments. In addition, the faculty member also noted students struggling to keep up with and manage online learning across all of their courses as well as experiencing general difficulties with anxiety and depression. As a result of this, the number of questions used for this assessment had to be reduced in order to maintain a consistent pool of students and as such, we are not entirely confident that data from this assessment is useful. We also did not received data for ART 250 (which is offered every semester and used to assess GE Western Civilization), so we cannot compare findings for these two courses from this cycle or with past assessment cycles in a more comprehensive way.

General Education Assessment Report – World Awareness – Humanities

Course: ENG 360 Literature in a Global Context

of sections: 1

Calendar Year: 2020

General Education Category	<u>Learning Outcome</u> Students will demonstrate	Information			Results ¹							
		Semester(s) of data collection	Students Assessed		Exceeding Standards		Meeting Standards		Approaching Standards		Not Meeting Standards	
			#	% ²	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
World Awareness Humanities	Knowledge of either a broad outline of world history, or the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture., etc. of one non-Western civilization	fall 2020	10	31	3	30	3	30	4	40	0	0
	Knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas of the General Education program		10	31	3	30	3	30	4	40	0	0

¹ Each student should be counted only once. If assessment has taken place across multiple sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.

² Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in the course.

Assessment tool and measure Did you use the assessment tool and measure identified in your assessment plan update? _____ Yes _____ No If No, please attach to this form a document indicating what you used instead and the rationale for doing so on.

There are three main evaluative tools used in Eng 360 this semester:

- a) Brief quizzes requiring short answers, administered whilst we are in the process of reading each novel (to ensure that students are comprehending and following key plot points, character developments, etc.)
- b) More complex quizzes/mini exams -- administered at the conclusion of each novel (4 in total; one quiz per novel). Each of these assignments contain questions that serve as prompts for short essays, focusing on some concept (focusing on cultural, political, ethical issues with which a character/characters must grapple) within each novel -- always something that was discussed, at length, in class. Writing these short essays requires analysis, textual analysis, close reading of the text, and critical thinking to address the complex issues of identity, and how identity may be affected by shifts in gendered norms, political events, cultural shifts, encounters with racism, homophobia, misogyny, or authoritarian power structures. The short essays serve as “practice” for the longer final paper, as these short essays help students learn how to identify some key concept in the novel, formulate a specific argument around that issue -- rather than simply follow a character or them
- c) A final paper is also used as a tool of evaluation.
- d) Instructors’ appraisals of the writing is also used as a qualitative measure.

These evaluative and assessment tools demonstrate how ENG 360, in the context of our discipline, and within our program specifically, provides critical tools that are aligned with the mandates of General Education: World Awareness requirements.

Evaluation tools were also changed this semester from being focused on papers and one big Midterm Exam to several short essay-based questions after the completion of each novel. This was due to the demands and realities students faced as they struggled to focus on complex novels, plotlines, and concepts in an entirely online course. The essay-based questions, which we discussed in class (strategies for how best to approach writing their answers, what would work as evidence from the text, etc.) helped students take a collaborative, communal approach to education and learning. The short essays helped them focus on one novel at a time, and at the end of the semester, these “practice essays” resulted in far better writing and critical thinking development in the final papers, as students added to, critiqued, and enriched each other’s ideas.

Briefly describe your **method of analysis**

The method of analysis involved evaluating students’ short answers and essay-based answers to quizzes for adequate analysis of a particular idea or concept using evidence from the texts (the novels, interviews with the authors, reviews, and other relevant articles), and material from class discussion.

The qualitative measures also depended also on the evaluation of:

- a) writing (grammar, mechanics, punctuation) skills,
- b) ability to construct clear paragraphs, organise their ideas in a logical order in paragraphs
- c) and formulate coherent and original arguments for final papers

Analysis of results Please be sure to address each learning outcome and both strengths and weaknesses revealed by the assessment, if any.

In the section of ENG 360 included in the assessment, students had the choice of writing about works that featured at least one non-Western culture. In this case, the non-Western cultures were based in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean (insofar as the Caribbean has been viewed from the Western colonial perspective as problematically resistant to Western cultural norms, it qualifies as non-Western), and the immigrant communities they have formed in countries that were former colonial powers (Britain). The novels that students analyzed for papers that were included in the sample for this assessment includes *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz, which focuses on toxic masculinity, the relationship between the US and its colonies in the Caribbean, and the life of a young Dominican boy who does not fit in with his cultures' gendered norms for masculinity; *Mr. Loverman* by Bernardine Evaristo, which focused on the lives of Afro-Caribbean people who had migrated to England; *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which follows the experience of a Nigerian woman who leaves her home country to study in the U.S., and who ultimately returns to resettle in Nigeria; and *The Buddha of Suburbia* by Hanif Kureishi, which is a coming-of-age novel that incorporates a young Pakistani-British boy's coming to terms with his gender fluidity.

The conventions and methods of English literary studies focused on for this report are: (1) the articulation to the reader of the writer's own theory about the meaning and methods of the texts being discussed, as part of explaining the reason for and critical relevance of the student's writing, and (2) the responsible use of literary and critical text sources, not only to substantiate arguments about the meaning and methods of the literary texts being discussed, but, especially in the case of critical texts, as occasions for the student to question or problematize some of the assumptions of a text.

Work that exceeded expectations followed through with the requirement for the assertion of a uniquely challenging argument that responded to the premise of the course by placing the literary text within a global context. A student who wrote on Diaz's novel went above and beyond these requirement to assess the ways in which three of the main characters -- Yunion, Lola, and the titular character, Oscar -- attempt to "escape the harm caused by the gender expectations of their social worlds", with each character finding escape through "creating alternative universes" and "imaginary worlds" that allow them "to formulate safer and more expansive spaces" that "insulate[] them from the trauma that each of them has endured" as immigrants who survived the violence of the US-backed Trujillo regime.

Another student argued that, in Evaristo's novel, both main characters (and narrators) Carmel and Barrington have been prevented from personal happiness directly as a result of the social rules imposed by hetero-patriarchal society and church doctrine in two geopolitical locations: Antigua, where they grew up, and in the London (Great Britain) to which they immigrated in the 1960s.

Writers cited a mixture of media and scholarly sources on their topic, including interviews with authors, and articles that pertain to the specific issue on which they focused -- be it gendered norms and sexuality (as it pertains to a particular social group and time period), or how violence is normalised within families in which abuse takes place. They used journal articles focused on cultural diversity, psychology, the politics of minoritised groups, critical feminist and gender work, social justice, and education.

Work that approached expectations did not give thorough consideration either to the cultural particularities of what the novel represented, or their global context. For example, one student observed of Adichie's *Americanah*, in which the main character, a Black Nigerian woman living in the U.S., struggles to straighten her naturally curly hair: "Trying to achieve this look [of straight] hair had caused many black women both psychological and physical distress, and trauma. Most of us would never understand this pain because we don't have curly kinky hair but by looking at it in a more technical way, we may be able to put ourselves in their shoes and sympathize."

Action to be taken Please indicate the connection between the assessment findings and the proposed action(s); if no action is to be taken, please indicate why you think none is necessary.

We are encouraged that a majority of the students capably applied the tools of scholarly literary analysis in building arguments that situate the texts politically, culturally, and historically. We remain aware, however, of some of the structural issues that surround ENG 360 as a course with a legacy linked to a decades-old drive to “diversify” course offerings, a legacy that shows up in statements like the one quoted above, where the student believes the point of their critique is to sympathize with a Black woman’s struggles against White supremacy. In writing that only approached the learning outcomes, we continue to see the effect of creating the expectation that a course like ENG 360 (and instructors who teach them) will teach “the world” or “diversity” through a few works of fiction.

So that this work of teaching literatures featuring perspectives beyond America and Europe does not fall to the two English Literary Studies faculty members who at present teach ENG 360, the best action we could take would be to hire faculty with the needed expertise, as outlined in our two most recent positions requested in Early English and World Literatures, and Asia/Pacific American Literatures. The courses these new faculty members teach would qualify for the World Awareness category, and additional faculty would allow us to offer a 200-level “methods of world literary studies” course where some of the issues we outline here could be foregrounded and addressed by the students. An entry-level world literary studies methods course could be an entryway, if not a formal prerequisite, for going on to upper-division, global-focused literature courses like ENG 360.

As things are, ENG 360 must achieve the feat of being a class focused on literary study and writing skills integral to the English major, but also, a GE-“World Awareness” fulfilling course, and also, a must-take for Adolescence Education English Concentrates, and a requirement-fulfilling option for Childhood Education English Concentrates, and the Global Culture Concentration of the Global and International Studies major.

The action we need to take, of hiring these faculty, would allow students to expand their notion of the global beyond using literature as an instruction manual for any given set of people, or a location’s cultural and religious practices, and its history and complex political shifts. It would also allow students the chance to expand their views of the works of writers of color from Asia, Africa, the Arab and Islamic worlds, Latin America and the Caribbean. They could learn to understand them not just as instruction manuals, or the fulfillment of imperial/Euro-centric narratives the students have gleaned from news, politicians’ speeches, or social media. More courses would provide opportunities for them to see the works as objects of literary and artistic merit in their own right.

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

Course: NAS 100# of sections: 1Calendar Year: 2020

General Education Category	Learning Outcome Students will demonstrate	Information			Results ¹							
		Semester(s) of data collection	Students Assessed		Exceeding Standards		Meeting Standards		Approaching Standards		Not Meeting Standards	
			#	% ²	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
World Awareness— Social and Behavioral Sciences	Knowledge of either a broad outline of world history, or the distinctive features of the history, institutions, economy, society, culture, etc., of one non-Western civilization	Fall 2020	92	100	37	40	31	34	7	8	17	18
	Understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, including observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, & employment of mathematical analysis	Fall 2020	92	100	37	40	31	34	7	8	17	18
	Knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences	Fall 2020	92	100	37	40	31	34	7	8	17	18

¹ Each student should be counted only once. If assessment has taken place across multiple sections, data should be aggregated for the purpose of this report.² Number should represent percentage of the total students enrolled in course.

Assessment tool and measure Did you use the assessment tool and measure identified in your assessment plan update? x Yes No If No, please attach to this form a document indicating what you used instead and the rationale for doing so.

Briefly describe your method of analysis: I used short writing assignments, take-home exams, and journals as the primary assessment tools for the learning outcomes and to assess students' specific knowledge of Native American History, Federal Indian Policy, and Native American Literature. For outcome one specific online assessments (Columbus Narrative and manifest destiny, reflections on residential school system survivor testimonials, what is a plastic shaman?) were used to assess students' knowledge and understanding of both Native American History and Federal Indian Policy while others (privacy of Native American religion and culture) were specifically used to assess knowledge and understanding of non-Western epistemologies, knowledge sources, theologies and ethics. For outcome 2 I used online writing assignments (What is Deloria's most challenging critique of anthropology?, What is Boas' central argument about race/why should this argument matter for anthropologists?) and zoom discussions in order to determine student comprehension of the essential methods used by academics to collaborate with contemporary Native American peoples and communities. Finally for outcome 3 I used short writing assignments (What are the key principles that govern ethics of ethnographic fieldwork?, What is NAGPRA?, How does the life and death of Ishi inform the ethics of museum spaces?), exams, and targeted readings (Deloria, Colwell-Chanthaphonh, and Cryne) in order to introduce students to contemporary controversies between Native peoples and academics (exploitation, scientific racism, NAGPRA, boarding schools, ethics of fieldwork, IRB, informed consent) and how the academy has responded - research ethics, collaboration, centering Indigenous voices.

Analysis of results Please be sure to address each learning outcome and both strengths and weaknesses revealed by the assessment, if any.

Upon review of assessment the majority of my students (74%) either exceeded or met the standards for all three learning outcomes. The highest percentage of performance was evenly spread through objectives 1, 2, and 3. Students were able to take a deep dive into Native American Studies and discuss many aspects of conquest and colonization that had been glossed over in their primary educations. Students showed particular excellence in their take home essays which revolved around Treuer's text "Everything You Wanted To Know About Indians But Were Afraid To Ask" and Tommy Orange's novel "There There".

I was not happy to see how many students did not do well in this course. Of the 17 who were given an "E" it is my opinion that 13 of them did not (for whatever reason...many of which I believe were related to the pandemic) did not even earn an "E". They simply disappeared. I tried on multiple occasions in a variety of formats to reach out to these students and let them know that they had a Professor who was there to advocate for their success. But I failed these students, and they in turn failed this course. I never had this many students do this poorly in one of my courses and I am determined that it will not happen again next semester – when I will be teaching NAS100 again with the same 98 student cap.

Action to be taken: please indicate the connection between the assessment findings and the proposed action(s); if no action is to be taken, please indicate why you think none is necessary.

One clear take-away is that far too many students did not do well in this course. NAS100 was the only course I delivered asynchronously and I think that that had a lot to do with the high percentage of “not meeting standards”. I have decided to move this course from an asynchronous to bichronous modality for the Spring '21 semester. This shift in modality, along with a few trusted teaching-assistants, will allow me to have larger group chats (98 or 49) but then be able to breakout into smaller discussion rooms (15 to 19) in order to allow for question and answer, human interaction, and a more solid understanding of their peers. I anticipate that the shift in modalities should bring about a higher level of accountability and engagement from students and lead to less students not meeting the standards of the course.

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

In the asynchronous setting I chose to have take-home examinations – in addition to weekly writing assignments and journals. Our students were over-stressed and underprepared for this semester. They responded well to not having any timed quizzes or tests and I think that they put more effort than usual into their take-home exams because they knew that those were the BIG grades for the semester. Overall, I saw an increase in the quality and scope of take-home exams without any decline in the knowledge of key concepts of the class.

Appendix 2: Insights

Here you will find comments concerning communication and process, teaching and teaching supplements, and other advice, comments, and suggestions.

Communication and Process

For sequential Gen Ed courses like ITA 102, it may be helpful to evaluate student performance in 101 relative to 102. Said differently, it may be valuable to see what correlation (if any) exists between poor performance in a foundational 101 course and poor performance in the 102.

- + There is a need of templates with syntactical, semantical, and textual evaluation criteria to support instructors who grade a variety of writing assignments.
- + It would be very helpful for Language Instructors to have access to text templates to visualize outlines of several texts such as descriptive, narrative, and argumentative essays as well as literary and film reviews to categorize the theme, theme development, characters, etc.
- + Students from minority groups struggled with health issues and faced financial instability as a result of the Coronavirus. Their social-emotional distress did not let them focus on their schoolwork. They had major problems in concentration and performance success, juggling work and studies. Students whose parents were unemployed or who tackled additional home domestic load due to an underemployed single parent were unable to complete assignments and drop their grade significantly.

Students were mostly engaged with the activity. I encourage to use this assessment in intermediate language courses as an all-around engaging activity.

During a “normal” academic year, a section of this course is regularly taught online during either the fall or spring semesters with traditional face-to-face sections offered simultaneously. During the 2017 assessment report, we noted that students performed equally well in this course for GE Western Civilization whether the learning platform was face to face or online. This was good news at the time, as the art department sought to determine if student success was reduced in online learning formats and the data suggested that was not the case.

However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic all art history courses were moved to asynchronous online formats in fall 2020. Students across campus had to juggle multiple learning formats with their own unique set of challenges: hybrid, synchronous and asynchronous online. In the assessment data for fall 2020 the faculty member noted an unusually high number of students failing to complete at least one required assignment (30%) in the course, compared to 5% in past semesters, while 15% failing to complete 2 -3 assignments. In addition, the faculty member also noted students struggling to keep up with and manage online learning across all of their courses as well as experiencing general difficulties with anxiety and depression. As a result of this, the number of questions used for this assessment had to be reduced in order to maintain a consistent pool of students and as such, we are not entirely confident that data from this assessment is useful. We also did not received data for ART 250 (which is offered every semester and used to assess GE Western Civilization), so we cannot compare findings for these two courses from this cycle or with past assessment cycles in a more comprehensive way.

This round of assessment corresponds to an unprecedented period for higher education. There are opportunities to think more broadly about modality, use of “class time,” and how to assess learning. In addition, it highlights the need for more conversations and actions about how we serve our most vulnerable students in the worst of times. Perhaps our best advice is to accept that, sometimes, we just don’t know. Here external factors made internal comparisons and analysis difficult. Without being able to map problems to an action, the best way forward is to be committed to improvement for the course in general and more inclusive pedagogy to better support student persistence.

Statistical analysis reflecting a large cohort of students, over a protracted length of time can often reveal opportunities for pedagogical improvements which transcend topic specific course content. In a recent article available on the academic site “The Conversation” (2020, November 20) Educational and Developmental Psychologist Christine Grové along with 4 other co-authors discussed the correlated improvements ALL students experience when online content is made more accessible to persons with disabilities. The inclusion of transcripts, close captioning, and other resources can assist students with a variety of comprehension issues and reduce attrition rates. “The evidence-based principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) underpin this work” (5 tips on how unis can do more to design online learning that works for all students, Grove’ 2020).

Two conclusions might be drawn from this particular assessment. While spring 2020 GE assessment was cancelled due to the sudden move to remote learning in March of 2020, faculty members had little time to prepare fall 2020 courses for an entire semester of online learning and students, similarly, were not prepared for the challenges and complexities of managing schedules and workloads employing mixed learning platforms. The campus saw record numbers of students withdraw or go on academic probation so clearly the educational experience, the mental health of our students and student performance, was compromised in fall 2020. Is this assessment data a reliable indicator of our students’ mastery of the learning outcomes for GE World Awareness- Humanities? Is assessment data collected during an ongoing worldwide pandemic useful? When the university feels compelled to offer a pass/fail option to students for two consecutive terms, is any of that assessment data useful? The other item for consideration is, can assessment be conducted or the results interpreted in the same manner in online learning versus hybrid or traditional face-to face instruction? Are there adjustments that should be made between these formats and the goals of assessment? And, how does daily physical interaction with faculty members contribute to student mastery of the learning outcomes for GE programs?

Meaningful assessment in very large sections is hard! This is our first experience with this and we understand now that the GWS program will have to weigh the benefits of offering these large sections as a means to expose more students to the field with the often increased grading load required in the assessment of gen-ed courses.

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1. Varying the methods of assessment (mix of journals, essays, and discussions) allows students to show what they have learned in different ways and allows students with different skill sets to perform successfully in the format that they are most comfortable with. For example, essay scores show students' progress in critical thinking, writing, and analysis, and those with strong writing skills perform well; meanwhile short answers in the discussion forum shows acquisition of new knowledge gained through an engagement with course resources, and interaction with peers, and those with creative-reflective thinking and social skills perform well.
2. In an asynchronous online learning environment, discussion forums and journals are especially useful to facilitate reflective learning, and the opportunity to apply new knowledge to personal and professional experiences.
3. Students find it challenging to work in groups in an asynchronous online learning course, and so, the instructor needs to provide various tools in advance so that students understand the challenges as well as the necessary skills they can develop through collaboration (especially in a digital world). The instructor needs to work closely and monitor individual groups to facilitate group work through the semester.
4. Students in the 3 hour synchronous course participated in critical thinking assessments that helped with reflective learning. In groups students did a deep dive of particular cultures including but not limited to, Brazil, China, and Benin. They dissected historical and cultural facets of these communities to understand how they developed over time and influenced the educational system. Students provided evidence of this understanding through group presentations, mid-semester exam and final paper.

1. As an educator, it is helpful to look at the difference between what is taught and what is learned. Observations from the course instructor as a school administrator was that lesson plans often focus on what was taught by the teacher, but little was directed at what was learned by the student. Instructors need to look at results and adjust teaching styles to focus on hands-on, interactive ways of teaching. Use the assessments to reflect on the course.
2. The pandemic has significantly impacted the interactive classroom environment. Research shows that hands-on and minds-on active learning is best for learners and what educators should strive for.
3. Data gathered in this format may not be representative of normal semesters with preferred instructional delivery modes. Reliance on temporary faculty for data gathering may impact result.

Teaching and Teaching Supplements

- Obviously, the size of the class affects students motivation. Eight students were ideal for me to communicate individual student very well.
- Sharing all the materials in Google drive was helpful for students to review, catch up and self-study.
- Online teaching was challenging but divided rooms on Zoom for discussions and practices were very useful.

Like many other instructors, I found I had to change my assessment techniques to more adequately evaluate student performance during remote learning. The evaluation of language proficiency is very difficult in a remote setting when students have access to so many excellent translation apps, etc. The video presentation helped me feel more confident that my students were challenged to produce original work. I found, giving two video assignments, helped students be better prepared for the second one. Very clear directions and expectations are required.

It was useful to look at how students demonstrate their knowledge/mastery in multiple formats (e.g. papers and discussion group posts) as some students excel in different formats/genres. Providing multiple formats for students to exhibit their knowledge/mastery seems to be important, particularly when using culturally responsive educational approaches.

These courses require the acquisition of skills (writing and speaking in another language), as well as knowledge (memorization of data, expending one's knowledge in other cultures). As a result, a variety of tasks are needed to insure the development of such skills and the expansion of knowledge. Emphasis on individual performance in the form of consistent input throughout the semester is a must.

Because of the quality and quantity of individual efforts, as well as other factors (study conditions, environment, etc.) students can have very different results. Only one's individual performance demonstrates if the skills are or not mastered and we need to ensure that such performance is allowed in a variety of situations (at home, when one can take the time to do an assignment, or spontaneously, in situations that mimic real life).

Students admit that they do not read literary works. However, they are happy to be exposed to them if they are guided for it with questions and assignments. In-class group discussions are always popular with students but this didn't always work in the online setting even when students were divided into small groups in breakout rooms.

I have found that students respond to mini-deadlines and microassignments, particularly when they are dealing with subject matter that they are new to. Keeping the subject matter broad and applicable (not just aimed at majors) is critical, and I have found that much of the apathy in the failing students actually comes from majors. The non-majors are engaged and positive.

I will continue to teach with a theme. I believe this is an effective approach for students who take the course to fulfil their GE requirements. Giving the class a “big question” at the beginning of the semester and readdressing it at the end helps students to internalize the information that they acquire through the semester and construct an answer of their own.

Essay questions are an excellent choice in attempting to assess how much students can master in a few months.

Instructors who participated in this round of assessment will continue to teach this course covering the 20th century history built around specific themes. They believe that this method has proven to be an effective approach for students taking the course to fulfil their GE requirements. Providing the class with a “big question” or a “grand question” at the beginning of the semester, referring to it throughout the semester, and readdressing it at the end help students internalize the information that they acquire during the semester and construct their own answers using critical and analytical skills.

The big general point from this report and findings is that I think even in big classes it’s possible to do more in-depth writing and conceptually challenging assignments as a way of bolstering student confidence and getting them to perform better on the essay/short answers portions of exams. This second time teaching the class I leaned a lot on those short assignments, which I partly did as online activities, and they proved to be very helpful to improving students’ overall performance. From the feedback I got, most students did not find them overwhelming. I could see using these as formative assessments as a way to improve graded assessments. It will be interesting to see what happens when we return to more complete in person learning and I continue to use these online bolstering activities.

In the bichronous setting I chose to not have examinations - instead relying on weekly writing assignments, journals, and essay’s. Our students were over-stressed and underprepared for this semester. They responded well to not having any timed quizzes or tests and I think that they put more effort than usual into their essay’s because they knew that those were the BIG grades for the semester. Overall I saw an increase in the quality and scope of essay’s without any decline in the knowledge of key concepts of the class.

In the asynchronous setting I chose to have take-home examinations – in addition to weekly writing assignments and journals. Our students were over-stressed and underprepared for this semester. They responded well to not having any timed quizzes or tests and I think that they put more effort than usual into their take-home exams because they knew that those were the BIG grades for the semester. Overall, I saw an increase in the quality and scope of take-home exams without any decline in the knowledge of key concepts of the class.

Other Advice, Comments, and Suggestions

Academic honesty was discussed with students right at the beginning of the semester. A statement was introduced at the top of each test:

I pledge that I will not use computer translation programs, online dictionaries, my textbook and/or other people to complete this test. I understand that using them is considered academic dishonesty and will result in failing grade.

Name: _____

At this time faculty offered no broader guidance to their colleagues. If after meeting with our departmental colleagues teaching World and U.S. surveys we generate any useful counsel, we will be sure to include it in future discussions regarding assessment.

As noted in our comments in our assessment of HIS 100, after engaging in discussions with colleagues in the History department, we will offer broader guidance should we develop any new insights or suggestions for improving our ongoing assessment.

Students need to learn to write and speak well. This is not being addressed.

The science literacy/world awareness test, is an appropriate tool for assessing the world awareness – natural sciences knowledge of the students and other professors teaching similar courses may adopt this test for assessment purposes.

As mentioned earlier, students do not have adequate global awareness. Some cannot even locate large countries on the map or have any rudimentary knowledge about large countries. I believe that we need to provide more global awareness in our existing courses.

Using a four-point rubric is a good way to assess assignments. This is a best practice and should be utilized when assessing lo's for the course. Our student demographics are growing in diversity bringing alternative learning styles to the online classroom. This helps us as faculty remain open to continuously improve and adjust our pedagogical practice for student success. Teaching this class in an online modality requires multiple tools and methods of engagement (i.e. zoom, blackboard and McGraw Hill Connect).

Having the entire course ready a year before it started so that I could do the assessment plan in Nov. 2019 almost never happens for me. What made this easier was that I wrote up the assessment plan when I planned the course, which was over the summer 2020.

Make sure the assignment directly addresses the learning outcome.

Appendix 3: CY 2017 & CY 2020 Comparison

CY 2017 & CY 2020 comparison--aggregated by category*

*percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Foreign Language LO#1	assessed	exceeding	meeting	approaching	not meeting
CY 2017 (9 courses)	750	385 (51.3%)	279 (37.2%)	53 (7.1%)	33 (4.4%)
CY 2020 (5 courses)	103	22 (21.4%)	55 (53.4%)	13 (12.6%)	13 (12.6%)

Foreign Language LO#2	assessed	exceeding	meeting	approaching	not meeting
CY 2017 (9 courses)	750	427 (56.9%)	219 (29.2%)	58 (7.7%)	46 (6.1%)
CY 2020 (5 courses)	107	38 (35.5%)	54 (50.5%)	6 (5.6%)	9 (8.4%)*

*the CY 2020 number of student work assessed is significantly lower for two reasons: a number of foreign languages we offer do not have 102-level sections in the fall and the Spanish language assessment focused on student work in only two sections

Humanities	assessed	exceeding	meeting	approaching	not meeting
CY 2017 (14 courses)	638	220 (34.5%)	210 (32.9%)	106 (16.6%)	102 (15.98%)
CY 2020 (12 courses)	370	170 (45.9%)	99 (26.8%)	46 (12.4%)	54 (14.6%)

Western Civilization LO#1	assessed	exceeding	meeting	approaching	not meeting
CY 2017 (7 courses)*	657	272 (41.4%)	285 (43.4%)	81 (12.3%)	18 (2.7%)
CY 2020 (6 courses)*	159	47 (29.6%)	77 (48.4%)	27 (16.98%)	8 (5.0%)

Western Civilization LO#2	assessed	exceeding	meeting	approaching	not meeting
CY 2017 (7 courses)*	661	225 (34.0%)	295 (44.6%)	126 (19.1%)	18 (2.7%)
CY 2020 (6 courses)*	159	47 (29.6%)	77 (48.4%)	27 (16.98%)	8 (5.0%)

*two departments/programs submitted reports that only assessed one learning outcome; therefore, those results are not included in the results.

World Awareness LO#1*	assessed	exceeding	meeting	approaching	not meeting
CY 2017 (30 courses)	1009	274 (27.2%)	507 (50.2%)	133 (13.2%)	95 (9.4%)
CY 2020 (21 courses)**	983	323 (32.9%)	409 (41.6%)	142 (14.4%)	108 (11%)

*LO#1 is the learning outcome held in common across all World Awareness offerings, regardless of sub-group

**data from one course was not included due to lack of aggregation in the data and reporting errors

Percentage meeting or exceeding

Foreign Language LO#1 2017 88.5% Foreign Language LO#1 2020 74.8%

Foreign Language LO#2 2017 86.1% Foreign Language LO#2 2020 86.0%

Humanities 2017 67.4%

Humanities 2020 72.7%

Western Civilization LO#1 2017 84.8%

Western Civilization LO#1 2020 78.0%

Western Civilization LO#2 2017 78.6%

Western Civilization LO#2 2020 78.0%

World Awareness LO#1 (common to all sub-groups)

2017 87.4%

2020 74.5%