**HST 101 Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment**

**SLOAT Spring 2011 Final Report**

**by David Berry & Margaret M. Stevens**

**Introduction**

HST 101 is a basic introductory course that surveys the history of world civilizations from prehistoric times through antiquity and into the beginning of the modern era. Notably, since HST 101 is a general education course that satisfies core requirements for many academic programs at the College, it has one of the largest volumes of student enrollment at ECC every academic year. The course description for HST 101 is as follows:

HST 101 is the first half of a two-semester sequence. It examines aspects of the major social, political, economic, religious, and intellectual developments of world civilization from earliest times to the seventeenth century. Emphasis is placed on the ideas and institutions that have shaped the culture of world civilization.

This course, as described above, is defined by three course goals which, in turn, provide the framework through which student learning can be assessed and ultimately improved. These course goals are as follows:

1. demonstrate knowledge of some of the fundamental concepts and theories of historical events and ideas related to early human societies, classical, medieval, and early modern civilizations including but not limited to Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, Mesoamerica, Mongols, and Europe;
2. evaluate global exchanges and perspectives in the context of social, political, religious and intellectual traditions; and
3. read, analyze, organize, and synthesize evidence, historical problems, and interpretations connected to the history of world civilizations.

**SLOAT Assessment Plan**

The SLOAT Spring 2011 HST 101 Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment study, which was conducted by David Berry and Margaret Stevens, focuses on the aforementioned goals 1 and 3 only. The data that was collected was weighed against course goals 1 and 3 by means of both direct and indirect assessment methods for student learning. Journal entries and locally-designed quizzes and tests are the direct assessment methods that were utilized in this study. Student surveys, enrollment figures, and withdrawal statistics are the indirect assessment methods utilized in this study.

In order to assess student learning outcomes for course goals 1 and 3, the timeline for data collection relative to both course goals was established as follows: Journal Entry (5 samples) in Week 2; Midterm (6 samples) in Week 7; Quiz (2 samples) in Week 9; and Student Survey (59 samples) in Week 16. 3 sections out of a total of 32 sections of HST 101 in the Spring 2011 semester participated in data collection for this study. That is, out of 932 total students who were enrolled in HST 101 in the Spring 2011 semester, 124 enrolled students from 3 sections were to be assessed; however, not all 124 of the students enrolled in these 3 sections participated in the assessment process that is outlined below.

**Assessment Result/Findings**

I. Achievement, Partial Achievement or Non-achievement of Goals/MPOs

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Goal** | **MPO** | **Achieved** | **Partially achieved** | **Not achieved** |
| 1. demonstrate knowledge of some of the fundamental concepts and theories of historical events and ideas related to early human societies, classical, medieval, and early modern civilizations including but not limited to Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, Mesoamerica, Mongols, and Europe | 1.1 identify and describe key terms , names, and places of major civilizations |  | X |  |
| 1.2 evaluate the validity of various interpretations of historical events and institutions |  | X |  |
| 1.3 clarify and summarize information pertaining to historical events and ideas |  | X |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Goal** | **MPO** | **Achieved** | **Partially achieved** | **Not achieved** |
| 3. read, analyze, organize, and synthesize evidence, historical problems, and interpretations connected to the history of world civilizations | 3.1 use primary and secondary sources to show how historical problems are confronted |  |  | X |
| 3.2 conduct internet research and explore reliable sources on the history of world civilizations |  | X |  |

In order to determine whether each of these course goals was achieved—totally, partially, or not at all—we utilized the following data that was accumulated from direct assessment methods:

I. Direct Assessment Method Results

1. Course Goal 1
   1. Journal Entries
      1. MPO 1.1
         1. 3 students achieved
         2. 2 students partially achieved
      2. MPO 1.2
         1. 1 student achieved
         2. 3 students partially achieved
         3. 1 student not achieved
      3. MPO 1.3
         1. 2 students achieved
         2. 3 students partially achieved
   2. Quizzes
      1. MPO 1.1
         1. 2 students not achieved
   3. Mid-Term Examinations
      1. MPO 1.1
         1. 2 students achieved
         2. 1 student partially achieved
         3. 3 students not achieved
2. Course Goal 3
   1. Journal Entries
      1. MPO 3.1
         1. 1 student achieved
         2. 1 student partially achieved
         3. 3 students not achieved
      2. MPO 3.2
         1. 3 students partially achieved
         2. 2 students not achieved

II. Indirect Assessment Method Results

1. Student Learning Survey/Questionnaire

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Did you buy the book for this class? | **Yes** | | **No** | |
| 45 | | 14 | |
| Do you do the assigned homework? | **All** | **Most** | **Some** | **None** |
| 39 | 17 | 3 | 0 |
| Do you study? | **Yes** | | **No** | |
| 52 | | 6 | |
| If yes to #3, how many hours? | **1 – 5** | **6 – 10** | **11 – 15** | **16+** |
| 37 | 13 | 3 | 0 |
| Do you have employment? | **Yes** | | **No** | |
| 43 | | 16 | |
| If yes to #5, how many hours per week do you work? | **1 – 10** | **11 – 15** | **16 – 25** | **26+** |
| 6 | 5 | 12 | 21 |
| Do you have children? | **Yes** | | **No** | |
| 42 | | 17 | |

1. Student Enrollment Figures
   1. Out of 932 students who initially enrolled in the course, only 724 (~78%) remained enrolled to completion; that is, 108 (~12%) students withdrew from HST 101 in the Spring 2011 semester.
   2. Interestingly, the majority of the withdrawals from the course occurred in the morning classes, including the 11:30 **–** 12:50 timeslot.

**Interpretation of Results**

Based on the results of the direct assessment data collected from the journal entries, quizzes and mid-term examinations, it appears that the general trend in student learning is toward partial or non-achievement of the course goals and MPOs that have been established for HST 101. Keep in mind, however, that our use of available data was considerably limited by the availability of only the journal entries for evaluating course goals 1 and 3 in completion. The quizzes and mid-term exam were objectively unable to be applied to MPOs 1.2 and 1.3 and also to CG 3 because each of these goals/MPOs requires a writing sample on the part of the student.

In terms of the indirect assessment methods that were used in conjunction with the student survey responses, current data is merely a starting point for identifying potential barriers as well as potential motivators for student learning. While we know that, for example, 45 students out of 59 (~76%) purchased the book, we do not necessarily know if those 45 students achieved higher final course grades than the 14 (~24%) who did not purchase same. It is also interesting to note that the vast majority, 39 students (~66%), claimed that they complete all homework assignments, but again we do not know if consistent completion of homework led to these students receiving higher final course grades or learning considerably more than others who completed less than all assigned tasks. Finally, in terms of employment, it would important to determine whether or not the quantity and quality of employment correlates—positively or adversely—with the level of student learning in HST 101.

Student enrollment figures are also elusive as a means of trying to determine barriers to student learning outcomes. While we know 108 (~12%) students withdrew from HST 101 in the Spring 2011 semester, we do not know at which point in the semester they withdrew. That is, for example, was it after receiving feedback from the first major writing assignment or multiple choice quiz/exam? Was it based on scheduling conflicts with non-academic related obligations—such as employment—that resulted in class withdrawals? Without understanding the circumstances surrounding withdrawals for HST 101—which seem considerably high—we are left with insufficient tools for addressing the problem of attrition in the course and, ultimately, improving the circumstances for achieving optimal student learning outcomes.

**Summation and Recommendation**

The assessment tools would have to be considerably improved upon in order to interpret data on a more sophisticated and useful level. We need to establish a standardized rubric in which several key historical facts, eras or concepts become one assessment tool that can be applied to students from any/every section of HST 101 at some point over the course of the semester. The challenge is creating a standard rubric without, however, delimiting the academic freedom and individual teaching methods of instructors and professors who teach the course. Rather than having simply the full-time professors define the assessment tool and then charging the part-time faculty with its implementation, we must form a collective assessment-making body comprised of both full- and part-time faculty. Needless to say, the part-time faculty ought to be financially compensated for working beyond their required allotment in the contract.

We might also want to consider adjusting or adding to the current Course Goals and corresponding MPOs so that they can be more amenable to measuring student learning by way of multiple choice exams. As they are currently articulated, writing samples and oral presentations are the primary means of gauging student learning for HST 101; however, a considerable number of our faculty and adjunct staff utilize multiple choice quizzes and exams which, in turn, do not elucidate the data that would support the measurement of student mastery of the existing HST 101 Course Goals and corresponding MPOs. The other option, however, is to require full-time and part-time faculty to consistently evaluate student writing samples from as a means of gauging student learning outcomes.