

Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes -- Political Science

(For Degree, Certificate or Core Outcomes)

To complete this Assessment Report, please address the questions below, and send to learningassessment@pcc.edu by **June 20, 2011**; subject line: REPORT Assessment [SAC]

1. Describe changes that have been implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes that resulted from outcome assessments carried out in the previous academic year.

(Information provided here may be referenced, inserted into or summarized in Program Review 2.C.iii (for Core Outcomes) or 6.B.iii (for CTE Degree and Certificate outcomes).

As a result of assessment of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in 2010 we learned:

Students need to be given more guidance on how to recognize arguments, construct arguments, assess evidence, identify fallacies, and how to detect biases. This can be accomplished by using handouts and more in-class practice exercises and assignments. Discussing grading rubrics ahead of time can also indicate to students what is expected.

2. Identify the outcomes assessed this year, and describe the methods used.
What were the results of the assessment (i.e., what did you learn about how well students are meeting the outcomes)?

(Information provided here may be referenced, inserted into or summarized in Program Review 2.C.i& ii (for Core Outcomes) or 6.B.i & ii (for CTE Degree and Certificate outcomes)

a. Describe the method(s) you used.

Political Science assessed Communication and Cultural Awareness 2010-2011

During Winter term 2 sections of PS 205 Global Political and 1 section of PS 220 US Foreign Policy were given an assignment that assessed the Cultural Awareness and Communication outcomes.

Students in all 3 courses were required to interview a foreign born individual. The interview consisted of questions such as: What were the conditions abroad that influenced you to come to the US? What have been your experiences after coming to the US and has it been what you expected? : How did you view US relations with your country of origin before coming to the US and how do you view those relations now?

After the interview students wrote a 4-6 page paper discussing the responses of their interviewee and their reflection on why cultural awareness is important to good international relations among countries. The paper included discussion of their own cultural perspectives, values, and assumptions and those of their interviewee.

Students then presented their findings to small groups of fellow students. Each student was given a rubric that assessed communication skills. Each student applied the rubric to assessing every student presentation in the small groups.

Finally one member from each group presented to the entire class the groups general observations.

Methods Used

A sample of these papers and peer assessment rubrics from all 3 classes were discussed by the instructors and evaluated to determine:

How well the student identifies their own cultural perspectives, values and assumptions and compares those to others' perspectives, values and assumptions.

To what extent does the student's written and oral communication demonstrates audience awareness, demonstrates an awareness of differing points of view, and makes an effective presentation.

b. Results: What did you learn?

First, students did a good job of uncovering and sharing the personal stories of the foreign-born individuals. Many of the students were touched by the harrowing journeys taken by many of the people to come to this country. The group sharing allowed students to begin to understand and empathize with the different cultural perspectives beyond their own sometimes narrow experiences. Second, students overall were better at identifying and critiquing the interviewee's cultural perspectives than identifying their own values and assumptions. Students' assessment of the communication skills were fairly generous (3 -4 on a scale of 1-4). Their assessment of each other was 20 % of their total grade for the project. The written paper was assessed by the instructor using roughly the guidelines for the assignment itself. Students had a difficult time connecting how the interviewee's experiences connected to foreign policy culture

3. Identify any changes that should, as a result of this assessment, be implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes.

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In the future we would like to use a separate cultural literacy rubric to assess this assignment. We think it is best to let students discuss the rubric before the start of the project, so they are better aware of the expectations.

Name of person being evaluated: _____

Communication/presentation

Evaluator's Name: _____

	1	2	3	4	Points assigned
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because of poor organization; introduction is undeveloped or irrelevant.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because of some abrupt jumps; some of the main points are unclear or not sufficient stressed;	Satisfactory organization; clear introduction; main points are well stated, even if some transitions are somewhat sudden.	Superb organization; main points well stated and argued, with each leading to the next point of the talk.	
Delivery	Mumbles the words, audience members in the back can't hear anything; too many filler words; distracting gestures;	Low voice, occasionally inaudible; some distracting filler words and gestures; articulation mostly, but not always, clear;	Clear voice, generally effective delivery; minimal distracting gestures, etc., but somewhat monotone;	Natural, confident delivery that does not just convey the message but enhances it; excellent use of volume, pace etc.	
Relating to audience	Reads most of the presentation from the slides or notes with no eye contact with audience members; seems unaware of audience reactions;	Occasional eye contact with audience but mostly reads the presentation; some awareness of at least a portion of the audience; only brief responses to audience questions;	Generally aware of the audience reactions; maintains good eye contact when speaking and when answering questions;	Keeps the audience engaged throughout the presentation; modifies material on-the-fly based on audience questions and comments; keenly aware of audience reactions.	
				TOTAL	

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In 10-11, all SACs should have reported on the Critical Thinking Core Outcome. This is the report for the Critical Thinking Core Outcomes from 2010.

2. Identify the outcomes assessed this year, and describe the methods used. What were the results of the assessment (i.e., what did you learn about how well students are meeting the outcomes)?

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a. Describe the method(s) you used.

Plan of Action: Four US Government sections were selected and administered the same essay question: “*How do the biases and format constraints of information sources (print, broadcast, internet, etc) impact outcomes (e.g. voting choice, party affiliation, public opinion, etc.)?*”

Five exams from each section were gathered (names of students removed). A compilation of different exams were given to 3 instructors to assess using the Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric, using a scale of 1-4 1 –weak, 2-unacceptable, 3-acceptable, 4-strong.

b. Results: What did you learn?

What Did We Learn?

The total average score was 2.9. Clearly some students practice the desired critical thinking skills but many more were still at the unacceptable level. Upon some discussion faculty realized that the question itself could have been better written to cue students to what we were looking for. If we had discussed the rubric with students before the exam it might have helped. This might have triggered the depth of analysis desired by the faculty and measured by the rubric. Critical thinking is possibly the most difficult outcome to master. It has to be practiced extensively, yet students in our courses may have had little to no experience in critical analysis, identifying different points of view, or questioning

what they hear and read. They have to practice it in our classrooms before they can be successful in transfer work at other colleges, workplace, or community.

3. Identify any changes that should, as a result of this assessment, be implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes.

(Information provided here may be referenced, inserted into or summarized in Program Review 2.C.iii (for Core Outcomes) or 6.B.iii (for CTE Degree and Certificate outcomes)

What Changes do we need to make?

Students need to be given more guidance on how to recognize arguments, construct arguments, assess evidence, identify fallacies, and how to detect biases. This can be accomplished by using handouts and more in-class practice exercises and assignments. Discussing grading rubrics ahead of time can also indicate to students what is expected.