

0Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes – R Religion

(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).

In 10-11, all SACs should have reported on the Critical Thinking Core Outcome. Were any changes to content, materials, pedagogy, etc made as a result?

No assessment was done in 09-10, so there was nothing to report. We did include Critical Thinking along with the two Core Outcomes for 10-11, so that we could include our assessment in relation to possible changes for 11-12.

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.

Include relevant information about:

- The students (how many, where in your program (one class, a group of classes, end of degree?)
- The nature of the assessment (written work, project, exam, performance task, observation etc).
- How was the assessment evaluated?

Religious Studies functions under the Humanities SAC. However, we chose to assess just the R 210 (World Religions) classes, as this is a relatively new subject area at PCC, and now has enough sections to make assessment of the classes meaningful. There are no full-time Religious Studies faculty, so the assessment was carried out by two part-time faculty. The two other part-time faculty teaching the class were invited to participate, but declined to do so.

The assessment was done in four of the seven sections of R 210 in the Winter Quarter. About 100 students were involved in the assessment activity. The classes involved included two at Sylvania, one at Rock Creek and one at Cascade.

The assessment was done by giving the students a brief scenario, which asked them to imagine they were planning the next World Parliament of Religions. They were to come up with three worship practices that could be honored at the Parliament, as well as suggesting issues that might arise in trying to carry out the activity and the importance of the issues. We did not presume the classes necessarily covered the actual

Parliament, but depended on the instructor to set some context for the students around what such a Parliament involves. The students were given the same scenario in the first and last weeks of the quarter.

Three simple rubrics were devised for use by the instructors in rating the short papers the students produced. The rubrics (appended at the end of this report as a separate file) covered Communication, Critical Thinking and Problem-solving and Cultural Awareness. The two instructors whose classes were assessed met to norm the rubrics and rate the students performance. We used a random selection of 10 examples from the beginning of the term, and 10 from the end, and assessed each example according to each of the three rubrics.

b. Results: What did you learn?

How well did your students do? Do the assessment results match your aspirations for your students? Did your assessment indicate any areas or aspects in which student achievement could be better?

(If your assessment was scored in some way, it would be helpful to report some of that information. Scores that can be taken apart into meaningful components are often helpful in determining areas that might need attention.)

As shown by the rubrics, we scored each piece of work on a scale from 0-4 for each element, 0 indicating that the element was non-existent, 4 meaning that it was fully present and well-developed. We went through a norming exercise with two pieces of work, which were not included in the assessment.

For Communication, the highest possible ranking was 12. The range of scores for the first round was 1-12, with an mean score of 6.9. At the end of the term, the range was 4-12, with a mean score of 8.6, a gain of 1.7 points in the mean. Initially, half the scores were below 6; by the end of the term, only one was. We interpret this to mean that students grew in their ability to express concepts in Religious Studies in writing.

For Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, the highest possible ranking was 8. The range of scores for the first round was 0-12, while the range at the end of the term was 1-7. More importantly, though, the mean score at the beginning was 3.8, while at the end it was 4.1. This indicates some a small increase in the ability to think critically around issues in Religious Studies.

For Cultural Awareness, the highest possible ranking was 12. For the first round, the range was 0-12, with the mean at 5.8; by the end of the term, the range was 1-12, with a mean of 8.1, an increase of 2.3. At the beginning of the term, half the scores were less than 6. By the end of the term, only 1 was.

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

4.

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This is an important part of what is expected as a result of assessment. It is not enough to say "we are doing great". We are expected to be self-examining, and curious about what we might do better.

Our results were not a great surprise. Given the nature of World Religions, we anticipated the greatest gains would be in Cultural Awareness. The increase in Communication skill was also expected. The much lower increase in Critical Thinking probably reflects the fact that the course is more focused on introducing students to various religions than it is on looking at issues related to them, although the need to think critically around issues of religious practice and tolerance of various beliefs certainly is touched on in the classes.

Given that this was our first attempt at discipline-level assessment, several points about the assessment itself were immediately apparent. The very low scores came from students who appeared to not take the exercise seriously. Since it was made clear that the exercise was not related to grading, some students seemed to think it didn't matter if they provided thoughtful answers. This leads us to believe we either need to reframe how we approach assessment, or allow students who find the idea to be too much of a bother to not submit anything at all; a poorly done artifact due to lack of interest on the part of a student does not help us determine where we need to improve.

It also seemed to us that some students were taking the class without actually having completed the pre-requisites (based on the quality of writing). The new system that keeps students out will probably make a difference in that area in the future. We also determined that the instructions with the exercise were ambiguous, and that the exercise itself needed more information to help the students have context for their answers. And students needed to be specifically told to write their answers in fully developed paragraphs, if that's what we were looking for (which it was).

As for what the assessment will do for how the classes are taught—at least for the two who participated—we plan to find ways to introduce more opportunities for students to think critically about issues around religion, and to consider what they might suggest for ways to mediate conflict among religions. We'll continue as we have in the area of presenting the religions we cover, as it was evident students were gaining a good grasp on them. And we'll continue working on helping the students learn the vocabulary for discussing religions—again, beyond that, we'll see what kind of difference the new enforcement of pre-requisites makes in the work students produce before deciding that we need to do more than that on communication.

Religious Studies Rubrics 2010-2011

**Program Assessment Rubric
Religious Studies: Communication
2010-2011**

Communication Rubric for assessing R 210 2010-2011	Level 4 Excellent communication skills	Level 3 Very good communication skills	Level 2 Adequate communication skills	Level 1 Basic communication skills
Level of understanding of the assignment as shown in the written work	Demonstrates full understanding of the situation presented and its implications	Demonstrates full understanding of the situation; understands some of the implications	Demonstrates full understanding of the situation, but misses implications OR Demonstrates partial understanding of the situation, and understands some of the implications	Demonstrates partial understanding of the situation, does not address any of the implications
Complexity and clarity of ideas offered, including correct use of written English	Uses written English to convey complex ideas clearly; no technical errors in the writing	Uses written English to convey complex ideas with slight loss of clarity; minor technical errors in writing	Uses written English to convey basic ideas with slight loss of clarity OR attempts to convey complex ideas but without clarity; minor technical errors in writing	Uses written English to convey basic ideas, but without clarity; major technical errors in writing
Technical terms for Religious Studies used correctly	Technical terms are used where appropriate throughout the writing and all are used correctly	Technical terms are used, but not in every appropriate context; all terms are used correctly	Few technical terms are used OR there are errors in the use	No technical terms are used OR all terms are used incorrectly

Program Assessment Rubric
Religious Studies: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
2010-2011

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Rubric for assessing R 210 2010-2011	Level 4 Excellent critical thinking and problem solving skills	Level 3 Very good critical thinking and problem solving skills	Level 2 Adequate critical thinking and problem solving skills	Level 1 Basic critical thinking and problem solving skills
Evidence of thinking critically about the presented situation	Situation is fully analyzed and important issues identified	Situation is analyzed and at least one important issue identified	Limited analysis is done and an issue of lesser importance is identified	An issue is mentioned without analysis OR limited analysis is done
Creative plan offered to deal with presented situation	Fully developed, well-thought out and creative solution presented	Solution offered is not fully developed or does not address issues fully	Solution is given only in very basic form, with minimal consideration of issues	Solution is offered in very basic form; no issues are addressed in it

**Program Assessment Rubric
Religious Studies: Cultural Awareness
2010-2011**

Cultural Awareness Rubric for assessing R210 2010-2011	Level 4 Very high level of cultural awareness	Level 3 High level of cultural awareness	Level 2 Moderate level of cultural awareness	Level 1 Limited cultural awareness
Use of religious terms and concepts for religions discussed (quantity)	Appropriate terms and concepts included for all religions discussed	Appropriate terms and concepts included for some religions OR some terms and concepts for all religions,	A few terms and concepts mentioned for some religions	Little or no mention of specific religious terminology or concepts
Depth of cultural understanding evidenced	Deep understanding of all religions discussed	Understanding is in evidence, but superficial in some areas	Some understanding demonstrated, mostly superficial	Very little understanding of religions in evidence
Depth of interaction with ideas of various religions discussed	Engages religious ideas at a deep level	Engages some of the ideas at a deep level	Engages at least some of the ideas	No engagement, simply presents ideas