How Assessment Can Teach Us about Institutional Complexity

A Case Study of the College Core Course at UCSC

Tonya Ritola, PhD, Teaching Professor
Assessment Symposium, 2015
"Complexity theory encourages us to see organizations as complex adaptive systems composed of a diversity of agents who interact with one another, mutually affect one another, and in so doing generate novel behavior for the system as a whole." (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001, p. 390)
Assessment Project Overview

Core
C1 Outcomes

START
C9 & C10

collected final drafts of text-based assignment

(n=129)

developed rubric & scored in three domains (9 criteria)

Analytical Writing Placement Exam Scores

Level 1 Level 2 Level 3
1-5 6 8-9

Analytical Writing Placement Exam Scores

provided recommendations & shared results*

CROWN COLLEGE

CRITICAL READING
WRITING
CRITICAL THINKING

Analysis ★

★ (n=129)
# Assessment Rubric: Critical Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERION</th>
<th>EXCEEDS</th>
<th>MEETS</th>
<th>DOES NOT MEET (failed attempt)</th>
<th>DOES NOT MEET (no evidence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with Texts</td>
<td>Writer introduces texts to readers, writes about texts clearly, and explains another writer’s perspective.</td>
<td>Writer introduces texts, writes about texts, and explains texts. However, one or more of the writer’s [...]</td>
<td>Text offers evidence of the writer’s inability to manage sources. For instance, the writer attempts to [...]</td>
<td>Writer provides no evidence that he/she/they knows how to integrate other texts into the project, [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Quotations, Paraphrases, and/or Summary</td>
<td>Where appropriate, writer uses paraphrasing, summary, and direct quotations to good rhetorical effect [...]</td>
<td>Writer can paraphrase, summarize, and directly quote others’ texts and shows [...]</td>
<td>Text offers evidence of the writer’s inability to summarize, quote, and/or paraphrase effectively. [...]</td>
<td>Writer does not refer to other texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples Explain Concepts</td>
<td>Writer clearly explains the major concepts within the text(s) by including relevant examples (from the texts, [...]</td>
<td>Writer integrates relevant examples (from texts, observations, and/or personal experiences) [...]</td>
<td>Writer integrates some examples but not enough; writer integrates examples that are superficially related to the [...]</td>
<td>Writer does not include examples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stretch +</td>
<td>Assignments ≠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading +</td>
<td>Tutoring ≠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing -</td>
<td>First-Generation = (...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Status +/−</td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity = (...)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional Complexity: One Course

Course Features

- Themed course
- Cohort development
- Shared inquiry
- Writing outcomes (GE)
- Critical thinking
- Critical reading
- Introduction to university life

Course Differences (across colleges)

- Tutoring opportunities
- Curricula
- Faculty expertise
- Goal emphasis
- Assignment types
- Time (10 v. 20 weeks)
- Number of units (5-10)
- 9 Provosts

*high-impact practice & distinctive UCSC experience*
Emergent Structures

Committee on Educational Policy
ELWR / C1 Regulations

Council of Provosts
Core Models for Consideration

Writing Program Assessment Committee

C1 & C2 Outcomes

Multilingual Curriculum

WASC Reaccreditation

Student Success Steering Committee
Current Vision

Outcomes  CEP Policy  Models  Co-Curricular  Implementation

2015-2016

TBD

all at the same time, without distinct order

2017-2018

MLC (TBD)
Vision for Evidence-Based Decision Making

CONCERTED TIMELINE + ORDER + STRATEGY

**Outcomes**

**CEP Policy**

**Models including MLC**

**Co-Curricular**

**Implementation**

**2015-2016**

**2016-2018**

**2019-2020**

**COORDINATED ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES**

- Integrate C9/C10 Results
- Assess Crown College Model
- Assess Oakes
- Integrate Results (4 colleges)
- Enable Decision Making

**CONCERTED TIMELINE + ORDER + STRATEGY**
Contact Information

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.