

Student Learning in IN250 U.S. Studies Academic Year 2008-09 Assessment

Millikin University

IN250 Coordinator

Larry Troy

June 25, 2009

Executive Summary

The 2008-2009 academic year was a continuation of the progress made in the previous year. As indicated in the previous year's report, changes in learning goals for the MPSL sequential program (IN140, IN150, IN151, IN250, IN251, and IN2350) are being phased in beginning with IN140, IN150, IN151 during the 2008-2009 academic year, and continuing with IN250 and the new IN251 for the 2009-2010 academic year. The current report, therefore, represents a simple continuation from the 2007-2008 academic year, and allows us to see the progress we have made in student learning with respect to the old learning goals. The data show that students are learning at higher levels than in the past. This improvement is probably due to further refinement of the US Studies classes brought about by better communication with the faculty on the learning goals and feedback from the previous year's report. In general, assessment of student learning in IN250 for the 2008-2009 academic year demonstrates the learning goals are being satisfied and that IN250 is a strong component of the sequential program of the MPSL.

Goals

The IN250 learning goals are:

By the end of IN250 U.S. Studies, students will be able to

1. Critically respond to texts by or about some of the diverse cultures and people living in the United States;
2. Use discipline-appropriate sources to inform their critical analyses of diverse individuals' or cultures' experiences and perspectives; and
3. Write at least one well-developed critical analysis about cultural, structural, or institutional issues specific to the discipline of the course.

Snapshot

During the 2007-08 academic year, 25 sections of IN 250 were offered by 16 faculty members (see Appendix A):

- 9 sections by four History faculty—two full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty; two adjunct faculty without terminal degree
- 4 sections by three Political Science faculty—two full-time tenure-track; one adjunct faculty
- 4 sections by two Sociology faculty—one full-time, tenured; one full-time non-tenure track
- 4 sections by four English faculty—three full-time, tenured or tenure-track, one full-time without terminal degree 1 section by one Philosophy faculty—full-time, tenured
- 2 sections by one Theatre faculty—full-time, tenure track
- 1 section by one Music faculty—full-time, tenure track

In addition, 4 sections of IN251 were piloted in preparation for the full-time implementation of this course in the curriculum in 2009-2010, and to serve transfer students who came in under the new curriculum.

- 2 sections by one Sociology faculty—fulltime, non-tenure-track
- 1 section by one Political Science faculty—fulltime, tenured
- 1 section by one Philosophy faculty—fulltime, tenured

The Learning Story

In all sections of IN250, students learn about the experiences and perspectives of some of the diverse cultures and people living in the United States. Courses may focus on particular groups (African Americans, women) or particular issues (poverty and welfare, Vietnam, Civil Rights, Watergate), but all faculty are committed to inculcating in their students sensitivity and empathy, as well as sharper critical thinking and writing skills. In all sections, students use discipline-specific sources in their writing, which ranges from the formal essay to informal discussion threads in Blackboard. Competencies that promote professional success and understanding of others are emphasized (as per MPSL Prepares 1 and 2).

Assessment Methods and Data

The IN250 Coordinator collected artifacts at the end of the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters. The IN250 self-study committees (Ono and Troy) randomly selected 5 artifacts each from 4 (out of 11 possible) of the Fall IN250 classes and from 11 (out of 14 possible) of the Spring IN250 classes. The artifacts included term papers, essay exams, and assignments. The committees used a single rubric (see Appendix B) to assess all artifacts on a 1-5 scale (1 indicating Nominal, 5 indicating Excellent) on each of the three goals. They then calculated average scores for each learning goal, for all artifacts in total and for each specific class. The following table shows the range of possible scores and interpretation.

Green	Excellent	3.67-5.00
Yellow	Adequate	2.34-3.66
Red	Nominal	1.00-2.33

Analysis of Assessment Results

Mean scores of raters for each learning goal for each class (IN250 and IN251 combined) Fall 2008			
Instructor	Critical Response to Diverse Cultures	Use of Sources	Critical Analysis
Dunn - Civil Rights	4.6	3.2	3.8
Dunn - Crim Just.	3.2	3.4	3.0
Landro - Theatre	4.5	4.3	4.2
Phillips - Soc Prob*	4.4	4.4	4.2
SUB-TOTAL	4.175	3.825	3.8
Mean scores of raters for each learning goal for each class (IN250 and IN251 combined) Spring 2009			
Instructor	Critical Response to Diverse Cultures	Use of Sources	Critical Analysis
Dunn - Civil Rights	4.6	3.2	3.8
Dunn - Crim Just	3.2	3.4	3.0
Jones - Women His	4.3	4.3	4.2
Jacobs - As Class*	4.5	4.4	4.4
Jessup - World Rel.	4.11	4.00	3.39
Landro - Theatre	3.7	3.7	3.4
Monroe - US Hist	4.6	4.6	5.0
Monroe - Viol Amer	3.8	3.8	3.8
Monroe - Viol Amer	4.0	4.1	4.0
Ono - Dem Cit.	4.0	4.0	4.125
Phillips - Soc Prob*	3.6	3.6	3.6
Stimeling - Rurality	5.0	4.0	4.75
Troy - Poverty	3.8	3.8	3.9
Wrighton - Grp Inf	3.7	3.7	3.975
Wrighton - Pol Sci*	2.4	1.6	3.0
SUB-TOTAL	3.954	3.747	3.89
GRAND TOTAL	4.01	3.81	3.95

* IN251 class

Overall, students in the 2007-08 IN250 courses met all three learning goals. The average scores for all three learning goals (4.01, 3.81, 3.95, respectively) fell in the Excellent range, and all show an improvement over the previous year.

Comparison of AY2007-08 and AY2008-2009 Data

	Critical Response to Diverse Cultures	Use of Sources	Critical Analysis
2007-2008 Academic Year	3.41	3.58	3.29
2008-2009 Academic Year	4.01	3.81	3.95

Another way of comparing last year's results with this year's is to look at the average ratings of each artifact for each learning goal. These are reported in the table below.

**Alternate Comparison of AY2007-08 and AY2008-2009 Data
% Of Average Ratings That Were At Least Adequate**

	Critical Response to Diverse Cultures	Use of Sources	Critical Analysis
2007-2008 Academic Year	77%	89%	77%
2008-2009 Academic Year	96%	91%	96%

Whereas last year, between 77% and 89% of the artifacts were scored at least Adequate on the three learning goals, this year over 90% of the 77 artifacts met this standard on each learning goal. These scores indicate that students are indeed learning, based on the goals developed by the faculty.

Feedback Loop

During the 2008-2009 Academic Year, last year's report was distributed to all faculty, and several workshops were held to review the findings, specifically for those faculty teaching US Studies classes. Discussion at these workshops focused on clarification of the learning goals and consideration of best practices in teaching and learning, grading, and assessment. Syllabi, tests, handouts, and grading rubrics were shared. The upcoming changes in the learning goals for 2009-2010 and the addition of IN251 to the Sequential Program also played prominently in the discussion. Indeed, these changes are the result of the assessment procedures and feedback loop over the last two years.

This report will also be distributed to all faculty, and similar workshops will be held during the 2009-2010 Academic Year. The key focus of these workshops, however, will be on ensuring that all IN250 and IN251 classes are teaching to the new learning goals and that assessment procedures are ready and in place.

Appendix A
IN250 Courses, AY 2008-09

Date	Course Title	Cross-listed Department & Course number	FT Tenured Or t-track, W/terminal Degree	FT Contract Faculty w/ Terminal Degree	FT Contract Faculty w/o Terminal Degree	Adjunct Faculty
Fall 2008	Criminal Justice	PO235				•
	Civil Rights, Vietnam, & Watergate	PO260				•
	World Religions in America	HI210				•
	Outsiders in Film and Fiction				•	
	American Band Stands		•			
	City in American Novels	EN220	•			
	U.S. History To 1865 (2 sections)	HI203	•			
	Drama & Representation of US	TH331	•			
	Women in America	HI210			•	
	Contemporary Social Problems (2 sections)	IN251		•		
Spring 2008	Rurality and American Imagination		•			
	Political Participation and Democratic Citizenship	PO260	•			
	Group Influence in America	PO260	•			
	History of Intolerance	EN220	•			
	Drama & Representation of US	TH331	•			
	US History Since 1865 (2 sections)	HI204	•			
	US History Since 1865 (2 sections)	HI204				•
	Violence in America (2 sections)	HI210	•			
	Poverty and Welfare (2 sections)	SO224	•			
	Social Class in America	IN251 PH260	•			
	Contemporary Social Problems (2 sections)	IN251		•		
	World Religion in US	HI210				•

Appendix B
IN250 Assessment Rubric

Millikin University
IN250 U.S. Studies
Student Learning Evaluation—REVISED June 26, 2007

By the end of IN250/U.S. Studies, students will be able to

1. Critically respond to texts by or about some of the diverse cultures and people living in the United States;
2. Use discipline-appropriate sources to inform their critical analyses of diverse individuals' or cultures' experiences and perspectives; and
3. Write at least one well-developed critical analysis about cultural, structural, or institutional issues specific to the discipline of the course.

Item Evaluated: Variable—may be an essay, exam, or response paper

Evaluation by: Self-Study Assessment Team Member

	Excellent (5 points)	Adequate (3 points)	Nominal (1 point)
Critical Response	An excellent response demonstrates consistent reflective thinking in using previous reading, research, and/or experience as a prompt not only to describe and explain, but also to develop awareness of the self in relation to other cultures.	An adequate response demonstrates inconsistent reflective thinking in using previous reading, research, and/or experience as a prompt not only to describe and explain, but also to develop awareness of the self in relation to other cultures.	A nominal response lacks a connection between uses of reading and writing and the development of self-awareness in relation to others.
Use of Sources to Inform Critical Analysis	An excellent analysis demonstrates the student's consistent ability to use discipline-appropriate sources. The student interprets, rather than summarizes, relevant evidence. Student can formulate a well-positioned and well-supported argument or opinion by critically synthesizing multiple perspectives.	An adequate analysis demonstrates the student's inconsistent attempt to use discipline-appropriate sources. The student inconsistently attempts to interpret, rather than summarize, relevant evidence. Student attempts to formulate a well-positioned and well-supported argument or opinion by critically synthesizing multiple perspectives.	A nominal analysis demonstrates no attempt to interpret evidence.
Well-developed Critical Analysis	An excellent analysis demonstrates the student's consistent ability to compose a well-organized, properly-documented, and carefully-edited piece in a confident voice.	An adequate analysis demonstrates the student's inconsistent attempt to compose a well-organized, properly-documented, and carefully-edited piece in a confident voice. The student may make errors in documentation and/or grammar and mechanics.	A nominal analysis demonstrates no attempt to edit or document. There are many errors in documentation and/or grammar and mechanics.