

**Assessment Trends Report
Student Learning Outcomes in Social Science Education**

November 11, 2009

The goal of this report is to evaluate the assessment of student learning outcomes in Social Science Education. The report addresses four key questions to evaluate the quality of our assessment processes.

(1) How have we sustained the assessment effort over a multi-year period of time?

How many years have you completed an annual assessment report?

_____ 2006 _____ 2007 _____ 2008 ___X___ 2009

The History Department completed its first annual assessment report in 2009.

(2) How do we systematically and comprehensively collect and analyze data about student learning?

The History Department has lacked academic expertise in Social Science Education. Therefore, they have struggled to integrate the Secondary Education learning goal standards with learning goals for the History major. Their official learning goals for both History and Social Science Education are identical. However, in the 2009 report “additional learning outcome goals specific to the Secondary Education Major” are described as being the learning goals of the three additional History courses required of all Social Science Education students.

The assessment plan calls for a review of the following student artifacts: exams, a final project in Cultural Geography, a unit plan in Methods of teaching History, and an essay on State and Local History.

Although the report claims that artifacts were collected in 2007-2008, no resulting data was provided nor analyzed in the annual report.

In contrast to the History Department’s lack of systematic, comprehensive data collection, the School of Education has a very systematic, comprehensive data collection process for all Social Science Education students. Based on state and national standards, the School of Education helps students build a portfolio of artifacts called “Candidate Assessments” using the LIVETEXT electronic portfolio system. Every standard and learning goal is assessed with data collection going back for several years.

In the recently completed Specific Program Application report for NCATE accreditation of the Social Science Education program, data on student performance for every standard is reported and analyzed. This report, completed by the Director of the School of Education, Dr. Nancy Gaylen, provided rich data about the Social Science Education students’ weaknesses and strengths on each goal. The SPA report addresses one of the missing areas of assessment in the History major assessment process—a measure of the students’ content knowledge in areas of history required in the curriculum map.

(3) How do we use the analysis to improve curriculum and pedagogy and to inform decisions about budgets and strategic priorities?

The History Department assessment efforts have not resulted in significant results, so no recommendations for improvements in pedagogy, curriculum or resources have come from those processes. However, with a recent change in leadership in the History Department, the full-time faculty have engaged in a review of the SPA report for NCATE accreditation. As a result of that review, curriculum changes have been made so that Social Science Education students will meet all state and national standards.

The history faculty have been very interested in the results of the Illinois licensure test of content knowledge in Social Science Education. For example, were surprised to discover that Millikin University seniors were performing poorly on the World History area of the exam. Based on the SPA data and analysis, the History Department is currently searching for a new tenure-track assistant professor to replace the former Chair of the department. The new faculty member will direct the Social Science Education major and work closely with the School of Education to integrate the assessment processes for all Social Science Education students into the Education LIVETEXT portfolio system.

(4) How do we evaluate, modify, and continue to improve the student learning assessment process in this program?

The 2009 report claims that the department will collect and analyze data next year. Through the work of the School of Education on national accreditation for the Social Science Education program, the current full-time faculty in history understand that they need to revise their assessment plan and processes for this program. They have also come to

understand that their current assessment plan for the History major is not comprehensive—it does not assess student performance nor knowledge in all learning goals, specifically content knowledge based on curriculum requirements.

Evaluation from Focus Visit Leadership Team (includes Academic Deans, Program Leaders, and Focus Visit Report Writers)

Rating: Red

Academic program	Goal 1 (multi-year)	Goal 2 (data collection)	Goal 3 (Use assessment to improve)	Goal 4 (improve assessment)	Total
Social Science Education	1	2	2	1	6

Based on the History Department's limited success with assessment of Social Science Education students, all four goals would be rated in the RED (1 point each) if that were the only assessment for this program. However, when we consider the rich data collection and analysis of student performance in the Education Portfolio, we understand that there is systematic and comprehensive data being collected. This data is being used to make recommendations for improvements in pedagogy, curriculum and faculty resources. Therefore, we rate Goal 2 as Yellow, and Goal 3 as Yellow. Goal 4 is rated Red because these two assessment traditions need to be integrated into one quality tradition.