Evolution of a Signature Assignment
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Introduction & Abstract
Through the creation of a signature assignment in an Introductory Sociology course (and implemented into higher level SCI courses) we have found a method that directly supports the teaching, learning, and assessment of the four required Texas Core Objectives for Foundational Component Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences (WRITTEN COMMUNICATION, CRITICAL THINKING, QUANTITATIVE LITERACY SKILLS, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY). The assessment of student learning has been tracked for 4 years by the Sociology Program at El Centro College, as well as the institution at large, as part of the QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) General Education & Academic Transfer Degrees. It accompanies and records the thinking that occurs when students are engaged in the science practices that take place during an investigation, such as asking questions, planning and carrying out investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, and constructing explanations. (Institute for Inquiry)

Objectives
The goal/objectives of the Sociology Program:

1. Alignment of Professor Performance and Student Outcomes
2. Effective Assignment Design
3. Decision Making
4. Continuous Improvement
   - Instruction
   - Student Learning Outcomes
   - Student Success
   - Communication

Materials and Methods 2014-2016

Through use of Blackboard Outcomes platform, assignments are aligned to the various AAC&U VALUE Rubrics. Faculty across several disciplines score a range of student artifacts- grading ranges from 1 (Benchmark) 2-3 (Milestones) 4 (Capstone.) Evaluators may assign a 0 to any sample not meeting Benchmark. In utilizing the signature assignment format, faculty have the ability to integrate learning throughout a course, assess that learning across all sections of that course, and have a common data set for reviewing student learning across the entire course. Assessment promotes consequential reflection, which facilitates learning/implementation.

Scores for each of the grading criteria have increased (astronomically in certain areas.) Our new modes of teaching Research Methods, moreover, Quantitative Research skills have equipped students with knowledge of analyzing data. Writing has improved due to more focus placed on this Signature Assignment. Critical Thinking has improved by asking more pertinent questions. We are continuously seeking alternative methodology for the assessment of Social Responsibility.

RESULTS

We continuously revise the prompt of the signature assignment. We have provided a scaffold which focuses on basic essay format.

- Introduction
- Thesis
- Body
- Transitions
- Conclusion
- Citations

This, along with supplemental materials fosters equity in the classroom. As part of the assignment we ask more pertinent questions regarding how students feel about the topic at large. Specifically asking students to explain how their decisions/perspective will impact consequences of self and others. We HAVE placed more focus on how students analyze information given to them. We HAVE put more focus/emphasis on quantitative analysis as a program. We HAVE actually improved our method of Quantitative Literacy instruction due to these rubrics and their results.

**REFERENCES**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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