<u>**Undergraduate Academic Assessment Executive Summary**</u>

Department: Social Sciences. Academic Year: 2013-14

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I. **Background**: What factors caused you to choose this particular assessment
    target? If you chose this target because of a perceived problem, please
    explain.

    Goal #1:

    Students will be able to write a research paper.

    The Social Sciences department chose this assessment target as the skills
    required for the assignment spoke not only to the discipline of history, but to
    the other disciplines found within the social sciences as well. In addition, this
    assessment focused on an upper-level course, thus complementing our other
    assessment target which was conducted in a survey-level course.

    Goal #2:

    As an institution, CUNE has identified expanding the offering of Dual Credit
    courses to high schools as a priority.

    PSY 101 has been available as a dual credit course for many years. To date,
    no systematic, quantitative assessment has been made to determine if the
    PSY 101 dual credit courses were comparable to the PSY 101 courses
    offered on the campus of CUNE. This target assessment was selected in
    order for this issue to be assessed quantitatively.

II. **Question**: What specific question were you attempting to answer through this
    assessment? There may be more than one question, but no more than three.

    Goal #1:

    To what extent could students:
    1. Identify a viable research topic capable of being researched in one
        semester.
    2. Locate the adequate primary and secondary sources needed for their
        project.
    3. Analyze said sources in order to adequately formulate and support a
        historical thesis.

4. Place their argument into a greater historical and historiographical context.
5. Craft a well-written research paper which presents their work in a professional manner.

Goal #2:

Are the students in PSY 101 classes offered through the dual credit program learning content comparably to the students in PSY 101 classes offered on campus?

III. Methodology: Briefly explain your assessment methodology. The process used to collect data and the data itself are important pieces. Attach a copy of the assessment tool used.

Goal #1:

This assessment relied upon a grading rubric that directly reflected the components that the students were required to include in their projects. The rubric categories were: Thesis identification and support, Quality and analysis of sources, Context, and Quality of Writing and Research.

Goal #2:

a. Participants
   i. Dual Credit PSY 101 students – Fall 2013
      1. 3 classes with 3 different instructors.
   ii. CUNE PSY 101 students – Fall 2013
      1. 2 classes with same instructor.
b. Materials
   i. Final exam consisting of 30 multiple choice questions that covered all topics addressed in an introductory psychology text. (See Attachment 1).
c. Procedures
   i. Copies of the exam and answer sheets were emailed to three PSY 101 dual credit instructors and one CUNE PSY 101 instructor. Instructors were advised to not review the exam prior to administration.
   ii. Answer sheets were returned to Dr. Elwell for analysis.

IV. Summary of results: Summarize the results of your assessment. A narrative summary is required. Charts, tables or graphs are encouraged, but optional.

Goal #1:

There were 14 students registered in the class. One received an incomplete and was thus excluded from the assessment. Out of the remaining students, three received A's, eight received B's, one received a C and one an F. The highest grade was a 92, the lowest a 20. The average grade excluding the outlier F was an 85.8.

Collectively the class performed the strongest in the Context and Quality categories (20.5 and 20.7 out of 25 respectively), and weakest in the Thesis and Sources categories (19.6 and 20), although there was relative parity across all of the categories.

Goal #2:

Means and standard deviations were computed for CUNE participants and for Dual Credit participants. The resulting ranges, means and standard deviations were:

Group	CUNE	DUAL CREDIT
Range (0 – 30 possible)	7 - 27	10 - 29
Mean	18.16	19.72
SD	4.10	4.39
N	75	47

A t test was conducted to determine if the difference between the two groups was statistically significant. The two-tailed P value equals 0.0483. By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

The research question, Are the students in PSY 101 classes offered through the dual credit program learning content comparably to the students in PSY 101 classes offered on campus?, would be answered, no, they are not learning content comparably, they are learning it better than students in PSY 101 classes at CUNE.

V. **Conclusions:** Summarize your conclusions and the implications for teaching and learning in your department. Most importantly answer the following question: What did you learn from this assessment and how will it impact the teaching/learning process in your department?

Goal #1:

Overall, the class as a whole basically accomplished the task at hand. However, I was disappointed that there were only three A's awarded considering the fact that we spent a fair amount of time addressing expectations and concerns.

Anecdotally, I believe that these grades directly correlated to effort. Those students who performed the strongest were generally those who continued to communicate with me about their projects throughout the semester. In the future I will include more formal checkpoints, rather than rely on informal "check ins."

With regard to specific areas of improvement, I believe that students need more instruction in identifying, articulating and defending their thesis statements. This weakness could/should be remediated in all of our history courses, as the history faculty can spend more time helping students to identify the theses put forth in their assigned readings. Students also need further instruction in how to effectively locate historical resources.

Goal #2:

The results indicate that the PSY 101 Dual Credit students, overall (averaged across content areas) knew content better than CUNE PSY 101 students based on the tool used for this assessment. However, further assessment needs to be completed evaluating specific content areas to determine if students in both programs are comparable in specific content areas.

VI. Action Plan: As a result of this assessment, outline what your department will do and what timeline will be followed for making any changes.

Goal #1:

The lessons from this assessment will be used to alter the instruction in future upper-level courses requiring research papers. In the future, students will be given further instruction with regard to how to research using historical sources and how to use these sources in order to formulate a thesis.

Goal #2:

Analysis of the current data will continue to include spring classes and analysis specific to content areas to be completed by July 2014. Also, qualitative comments from Dual Credit instructors indicated some divergence in the terminology used on the exam not being comparable to that used in their Dual Credit text. (At this time we do not require that the same text be used in both programs.) In July 2014, a meeting will be held with all PSY 101 Dual Credit

Instructors and the CUNE psychology liaison. At that time, the content of the exam will be addressed.