**Undergraduate Major Assessment Report**

**EALL**

**December 2018**

Following the Departmental assessment plan, for AY 17-18 EALL assessed the success of departmental Learning Objectives in two literature courses required for undergraduate majors, CHN 306 and JPN 307. The Department has two majors (Chinese and Japanese), each with three tracks (Culture Intensive, Language Intensive, and Linguistics Intensive). The assessed courses are part of the sequence required for all Chinese and Japanese Culture and Language Intensive majors.

**Chinese Culture**

The EALL Curriculum Map specifies four learning Objectives (LO) for the Chinese Culture-Intensive Major. **LO 1 Content Objectives,** where the desired outcome is defined as “identify, describe, and explain materials, terminologies, methodologies, and theories in Chinese literature, film and media.” **LO 2 is Critical Thinking/Analytical Skills**, where the desired outcome is defined as: “Read, discuss, and evaluate texts from both historical sources and contemporary works in literature, film and media, and linguistics, employing methodologies and criteria.” **LO 3 is Argumentation,** where the desired outcome is defined as: “Formulate original arguments, anticipating objections and responding in conscientious fashion.” **LO 4 is Communication**, where the desired outcome is defined as: “Communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning in written, oral, or other forms, in English or Chinese.”

In AY2017-2018 these intertwined Learning Objectives were assessed based on CHN 306: Introduction to Chinese Literature Part II, 200-1900 CE, taught in Winter 2018. Chinese majors and minors are required to take at least two of the 305/306/307/308 series. The 305/306/307 sequence presents a chronological survey of Chinese literature and culture from the earliest written texts (CHN 305) to the Modern period (CHN 307). CHN 308 covers literature produce outside of the Chinese Mainland, from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and South East Asia. According to the Curriculum Map, all four LOs are to be developed in in CHN 306, with assessment of mastery to occur in an array of 400-level courses.

Because learning to talk or write about literature requires students to demonstrate proficiency in all four areas, this report will discuss how students were assessed for each of the four LOs. CHN 306 is an ambitious course, covering 1700 years and multiple genres. The goals of the course are to introduce students to major literary works, authors, and core concepts in the political, intellectual and aesthetic history of China. Assignments in CHN 306 (Winter 2018) are scaffolded in order to give students repeated opportunities to review the materials and analyze them from different perspectives (aesthetic, thematic, cultural meanings, etc.). Students wrote three formal short papers (2-3 pp.) that required them to engage in a comparative close reading of selected passages from the reading assignments. For each paper, students were provided with a series of prompts that set up the broad outlines of an argumentative paper; the GE reviewed each of the topics in discussion section the week before the assignments were due. Students were also provided with a grading rubric for each paper that explains how much weight is given to each aspect of paper writing. Students also took three tests over the term: they were tested on basic knowledge (short answer), and their ability to apply a range of interpretive strategies to explicate passages from primary texts.

The grading rubric for the papers makes clear the value assigned to the various LOs:

**Grading Rubric**

Argument: /2 LO3 and LO4

Structure: /2 LO3 and LO4

Content (how much have you learned? How well have you explained the major concepts you discuss? How accurate is this information? How sophisticated is your analysis of the texts?): /7 L01 and LO2

Evidence (appropriate choice of quotes/ details; analysis of details—be sure to explain how these quotes/ details support your argument): /5 LO2, LO3, and LO4

Grammar/ Spelling: /2 LO4

Originality: /2 LO3 and LO4

Total: /20

**Table 1:** Distribution of scores from papers (LO1, LO2, LO3, and LO4)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Range of Scores | Paper 1 | Paper 2 | Paper 3 |
| 19-20 (A/A+) | 11 | 15 | 11 |
| 18-18.9 (A-/A) | 7 | 8 | 10 |
| 17-17.9 (B/B+) | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| 16-16.9 (B-/B) | 5 | 5 | 1 |
| 15-15.9 (C/C+) | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 14-14.9 (C-/C) | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| 13 or lower (D/F) | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Total # of students | 38 | 38 | 38 |

With the exception of those students who were taking the course P/N and did not turn in a final paper, or turned in papers that were plagiarized/ purchased, there is a general pattern showing improvement among those students who received B/ B+s for their first paper. Because the papers were graded according to the rubric, and because students were allowed to revise their first two papers for a higher grade, students could see where they needed to put in more effort and could see immediately that they would be rewarded for developing these Learning Objectives.

**Tests:**

The three tests assessed students’ proficiency in LO1 and LO2. The concept of literary analysis, as opposed to memorizing facts, was new to many students in the course. Over 80% of the points given for the tests were assigned to short essays in which students had to explicate various aspects of a passage cited from primary texts. Because of the high percentage of international students enrolled in the course, primarily native speakers of Chinese, English proficiency was ignored in grading the tests.

**Table 2:** Distribution of scores from tests (LO1 and LO2)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Range of scores | Test 1 | Test 2 | Test 3 |
| 27-30 (A- to A+) | 13 | 12 | 21 |
| 24-26.9 (B- to B+) | 10 | 13 | 9 |
| 21-23.9 (C- to C+) | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| Below 21 (D or F) | 5 | 5 | 2 |

The striking jump in “A” range scores on the final test is evidence of the progress made by close to a quarter of the students over the ten-week term in mastering the wide range of skills and contextual knowledge needed for literary analysis.

**Japanese Culture**

The EALL Curriculum Map specifies four learning Objectives (LO) for the Japanese Culture-Intensive Major. LO 2 is Critical Thinking/Analytical Skills, where the desired outcome is defined as: “Read, discuss, and evaluate texts from both historical sources and contemporary works in literature, film and media, and linguistics, employing methodologies and criteria.” LO 3 is Argumentation, where the desired outcome is defined as: “Formulate original arguments, anticipating objections and responding in conscientious fashion.”

In AY2017-2018 these learning Objectives were assessed based on JPN 307: Introduction to Japanese Literature Part III, taught in Winter 2018. This is one of a pool of courses from which Japanese majors and minors are required to take two courses; the 305/306/307 sequence presents a chronological survey of Japanese literature and culture in three parts. According to the Curriculum Map, in JPN 307 these two LOs are to be introduced and developed, with assessment of mastery to occur in an array of 400-level courses.

JPN 307 (in Winter 2018) featured three types of writing assignments, each of which approaches one or both of the LO’s in a different way. Students were required to (a) write five short homework essays, each producing a close reading and analysis of a selected passage from the reading assignments; (b) produce impromptu written analyses of selected passages from the reading assignments on the midterm and final exams; and (c) submit a final essay on a topic announced late in the term, which the students were expected to answer with careful argumentation and evidence drawn from the assigned readings.

The homework essays (a) were graded essentially on a participation/effort basis, so the scores are not useful for discussing student progress here, although the assignment itself was useful as a basis for students performing similar tasks on the exams. The written portions of the exams (b) comprised 60% of the points for each exam (the remainder being multiple-choice and short-answer questions), so the distribution of scores for these exams can be interpreted as a rough proxy for students’ growing proficiency in LO’s 2 and 3. The final essay (c) was the most direct assessment of these LO’s, and the score distribution for this assignment can represent the level of proficiency attained by students at the end of JPN 307.

The class contained 51 students. The following chart compares the numbers of A-range, B-range, and C-range grades among the midterm exam, final exam, and final essay.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Midterm exam | Final exam | Final essay |
| A range | 26 | 34 | 27 |
| B range | 14 | 11 | 12 |
| C range | 11 | 4 | 7 |

While the progression is not as stark as it could be (partly because the comparisons between the exams and the essay are not exact), we can observe an overall trend of improvement in student performance in LO 2 and 3 over the ten weeks of JPN 307. This suggests that the course is adequately introducing and developing the Learning Objectives, and preparing students for further progress in higher level classes.

**Next Steps**

EALL will assess the Learning Objectives in language and literature/culture courses in alternating years. Next year, AY 2019-20, we will assess Chinese and Japanese 400 level language classes.

**Approaches to Curricular Improvement**

As sectors and as a department, EALL holds ongoing active discussions on curricular improvement. One outcome of discussions held in 2017, was the development of a capstone class for Chinese culture majors to give them a structured opportunity to write a substantial research paper with the goal of mastery of LO 3 Argumentation and LO 4 Communication. As a next step, the department will continue to discuss ideas, identify areas of improvement to implement, and implement the changes.