

IDR Honors College

Learning Outcome 1: Define Problem

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Identify and articulate problems/issues in a way that facilitates critical analysis and takes into account relevant contextual factors, i.e., its historical, ethical, social, cultural and disciplinary dimensions.

1.0: Honors College Assessment _First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Assessment Method

- 1. Data Source:** Evaluations from student final papers or projects (5 per class, chosen randomly) from Honors 2000 courses, and Honors Theses (HON4998). Scores from first row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 1, second row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 2, the third row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 3, and the fourth row of the Honors College Assessment rubric are used to assess Learning Outcome 4.
- 2 & 3. Data gathering and timeline:** Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.
- 4. Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.
- 5. Scales:** The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).
- 6. Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable for First Year students. For Thesis students we expect at least a 3.0.
- 7. Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on students' Define Problem from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is 3.7 on the 4 point scale. This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome. It is slightly above the previous year's score of 3.6.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is above 3.6 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the higher target of 3.0 for this learning outcome.

Actions

The results from the assessment for Define Problem during AY 2020-2021 were up somewhat from the year before, and since the coders were the same during both 2020 and 2021 were the same, we attribute this improvement to the hard work of our senior lecturers and their commitment to excellence.

With the consolidation of the Honors foundation sequence courses from the first and second semesters into a single course and the offering of new Honors Foundation Seminars in the second semester, we made major changes to the overall curriculum based on a collaborative process among the instructors and support staff to combine the best elements of the first and second semester curricula into a single one-semester course while respond to student comments obtained through the new and extremely effective semester-end evaluation forms. Given the significant variety among the courses offered by the senior lecturers, there is no one-size-fits-all option for further improvement. Senior lecturers will continue to develop their individual courses in consultation with one another and the Office of Teaching and Learning. Last year we recognized the limitations of the current assessment techniques and the challenges of continuing to do high-quality assessment within the new course framework, but we have not yet created a new assessment technique to resolve this problem, in part because previous quantitative assessments have not produced usable information. We will therefore continue to rely for course improvements on our individual, qualitative discussions regarding teaching techniques. The cadre of Honors senior lecturers in particular (and the Honors College in general) devote significant beginning-of-semester and end-of-semester time to reviewing past successes and failures and adapting the courses accordingly.

Timeline

Honors faculty will make continued adjustments to their courses throughout AY 2021-2022.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2021.

Reporting

We will discuss this meeting over the summer in small meetings among senior lecturers.

Learning Outcome 2: Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Efficiently gather and critically analyze information necessary to identify and/or develop actual and potential solutions to the problem.

2.0: Honors College Assessment 2_First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Assessment Method

- 1. Data Source:** Evaluations from student final papers or projects (5 per class, chosen randomly) from Honors 2000 courses, and Honors Theses (HON4998).
- 2 & 3. Data gathering and timeline:** Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.
- 4. Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.
- 5. Scales:** The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).
- 6. Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable for First Year students. For Thesis students we expect at least a 3.0.
- 7. Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on students' Analyze Issues Critically and Comprehensively from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is 3.4 on the 4 point scale. This is slightly higher than the 3.3 score of the previous year. This average exceeds the target of 2.0 for this learning outcome.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is above 3.6 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the higher target of 3.0 for this learning outcome.

Action

We will work to improve our performance in this realm in both the common Fall Honors 1000 section and in the individual Foundation Seminars. Anecdotally the scaffolded major paper in Honors 1000 was useful toward this end. Though the data do not provide any guidance, we will take additional steps based on our internal discussion:

- i. Reworking the scaffolded research paper to adapt to students' limited prior knowledge of the city of Detroit.
- ii. Considering whether to work with the Reuther archive to develop a mini-course on use of archival materials to uncover historical details and analyze historical claims. (We considered this for AY 2020-2021 but did not pursue it because teaching during COVID was already difficult enough)

Additional work for developing critical thinking skills will be undertaken by individual Senior Lecturers in their Winter 2022 semester Foundation Seminars, as happened during Winter 2021 .

Timeline

Honors faculty will make continued adjustments to their courses throughout AY 2021-2022.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2021.

Reporting

We have discussed this information during the May 2021 Foundation Sequence curriculum meeting and are disseminating this information in our May 2021 Honors staff meeting.

Learning Outcome 3: Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Develop and/or evaluate potential and actual solutions with detailed consideration given to relevant contextual factors, feasibility, and effects/impacts, and recommend or offer conclusions based on same.

3.0: Honors College Assessment 3_First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Assessment Method

- 1.** Evaluations from student final papers or projects (5 per class, chosen randomly) from Honors 2000 courses, and Honors Theses (HON4998).
- 2 & 3. Data gathering and timeline:** Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.
- 4. Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.
- 5. Scales:** The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).
- 6. Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable for First Year students. For Thesis students we expect at least a 3.0.
- 7. Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on students' Evaluate Proposed Solutions/Hypotheses to Problems from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is 3.3 on the 4 point scale. This is slightly higher than the 3.2 score of the previous year.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is above 3.6 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the higher target of 3.0 for this learning outcome.

Action

Last year's changes to Lengthen the time-frame of the Scaffolded Research Paper to allow for more development of proposed solutions either did not have the desired results or they did but the overall effect was diluted by the increased difficulty that students had in reaching out to local officials and experts during COVID. We do not have enough data, either quantitative or anecdotal, to reach any conclusion, but we will make the following significant change.

- i. Refocus the efforts of the Scaffolded Research Paper to focus on providing students with the tools they need to analyze the city's development and put less emphasis on areas where the students are less comfortable, particular policy, which can be dealt with in other classes.

As above, the Winter Semester Honors Foundation Seminars may also build upon this basis to expand problem-solving skills.

Timeline

Honors faculty will make continued adjustments to their courses throughout AY 2021-2022.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2021.

Reporting

We have discussed this information during the May 2021 Foundation Sequence curriculum meeting and are disseminating this information in our May 2021 Honors staff meeting.

Learning Outcome 4: Compose Effective Written Arguments

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Progress: Completed

Learning Outcome Description:

Compose written arguments that are responsive to the question, analytical (incorporates LO1, LO2, LO3), organized, substantiated and clear.

4.0: Honors College Assessment 4_First Year Final Project, and Honors Theses

Start: 9/1/2020

End: 8/31/2021

Assessment Method

- 1. Data Sources.** Evaluations from student final papers or projects (5 per class, chosen randomly) from Honors 2000 courses, and Honors Theses (HON4998).
- 2 & 3. Data gathering and timeline:** Honors First Year faculty collect these projects as a part of normal class requirement at the end of First Year coursework. Departmental Theses advisors report the scores to the Honors College Advisor.
- 4. Data Scoring:** Student work are scored by Honors First Year faculty and Honors Theses advisors using the Honors Assessment rubric.
- 5. Scales:** The rubric is based on an ordinal scale of 1 – 4, and defines each of the scores from 1 – 4 (Please refer to Honors College Assessment rubric).
- 6. Criterion for Acceptable performance:** A score of 2.0 or above on this Learning Outcome is acceptable.
- 7. Review of Results:** Honors faculty conduct an annual review of student performance on this assessment by May 15th each year.

Results

Average score on Compose Effective Written Arguments from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is 3.4 on the 4 point scale. This slightly higher than the 3.2 score of the previous year but identical to the 3.4 score of 2018-2019.

Average score on students' Senior Theses Define Problem from Fall 2020 – Winter 2021 is above 3.6 on the 4 point scale. This average substantially exceeds the higher target of 3.0 for this learning outcome.

On this indicator also, results showed a substantial increase from the previous academic year but controlling for the lecturers performing the assessment in both years shows virtually no change.

Action

The results from the assessment for Writing Quality during AY 2020-2021 have held stable over time. As with the previous year there does not seem to have been any significant growth in writing quality. Although changes in our methods do not seem able to improve this overall measure from year to year, our methods themselves are effective at improving students' writing from their pre-college baseline. We will attempt to continue our work in that regard in the following ways.

- i. Redesigning the first assignment of Hon1000 based on a collaborative process among senior lecturers.
- ii. Reconsidering the in-class or online mid-terms and finals, determining as a group whether they yield a net positive contribution to student learning (by motivating students to study)

Timeline

Honors faculty will make continued adjustments to their courses throughout AY 2021-2022.

Data for this assessment will be gathered and analyzed again during April – May, 2021.

Reporting

We have discussed this information during the May 2021 Foundation Sequence curriculum meeting and are disseminating this information in our May 2021 Honors staff meeting.