General Education Assessment Report:

Europe
Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives
Regions Beyond Europe

Fall 2009

The University at Albany, SUNY

Assessment Report

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Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness

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General Education Assessment

Fall 2009

Categories Assessed: Europe, Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives, Regions Beyond Europe

Background

In Fall 2009 the University at Albany assessed the degree to which students were achieving student learning outcomes in the general education categories of Europe, Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives, and Regions Beyond Europe. As with previous assessments the sample was chosen to be generally representative of the categories rather than strictly random.

- The Europe sample consisted of 9 classes from 5 different departments with enrollments ranging from 15 to 116. Six faculty completed Form 1 and seven completed Form 2. The results represent 289 assessed students, or 50% of the 583 of the sampled students. (The number is smaller than it would otherwise have been, because the instructor of a class with 108 students completed the assessments based on a representative sample of the work of 20 students.)

- The Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives sample consisted of 6 classes from 6 different departments with enrollments ranging from 39 to 168. Out of the classes sampled, five faculty completed Form 1 and four completed Form 2. The result represents 90.5% of the sampled students.

- The Regions Beyond Europe sample consisted of 10 classes from 6 different departments with enrollments ranging from 5 to 127. Out of the classes sampled, eight faculty completed Form 1 and five completed Form 2. The results represent 55.6% of the sampled students.
Europe Results

Course Embedded Assessment
Assessment results indicate that the majority of students “met” or “exceeded” expectations for all four learning objectives, although the percentages categorized as only “approached” or “not meeting” are higher than for other general education categories assessed that term. The highest figure for the percentage of combined “met” or “exceeded” was for learning objective 3, at 73%, followed by 71% for learning objective 1, 60% for learning objective 2 and only 57% for learning objective 4.

Table 1. Europe – Reported as percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Exceeding A/A</th>
<th>Meeting B+/B/B- C+/C/C-</th>
<th>Approaching D+/D/D</th>
<th>Not Meeting E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. an understanding of the variety of cultures, regions, and countries that make up Europe.</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. knowledge of the distinctiveness of Europe as manifested in the development of diverse histories, institutions, economies, societies, and cultures.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. knowledge of the relationship between Europe and other regions of the world as expressed through political, economic, and cultural contact</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. an understanding of how the knowledge that becomes the basis of historical inquiry is constructed.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Perceptions of Courses in the Europe General Education Category: Survey Results

In this category 175 students completed the perceptions survey, representing 49% of the sampled students.

Student responses indicate that they thought that they were well introduced to the details of the subject matter (“Greatly”: 71%), but were divided on their responses to the question about the extent to which they were required to apply information responses through assignments and exams (“Greatly”: 49%).1 Answers to questions 4, 5, and 6 (the extent to which exams require application of information; the extent to which the course required thought about the subject matter; and the extent to which the course required consideration of the value of the subject matter) indicated that students were much more divided in their evaluation of the course in regard to these program criteria. In the section of the survey pertaining to why students took the course, a large majority (81%) indicated an interest in the subject matter.

Recommendations:
None

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1 The scale of possible answers on the survey ranged from “Very little,” “Somewhat,” and “Considerably” to “Greatly,” as well as “Not applicable.”
Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives Results

Course Embedded Assessment

Assessment results from this category indicate that the majority of students “exceeded” or “met” expectations. As shown in Table 2, below, for all four learning objectives at least 70% of students were judged to be either meeting or exceeding expectations. While the majority of students performed well, there was a comparatively high percentage of students “not meeting” the objectives in these classes. Objective 1 reported 18%, not meeting; Objective 2 reported 21% and Objective 3 reported 18%. These numbers may be somewhat skewed owing to one class in which the results reported in the “did not meet” designation were unusually high.

Table 2. Global & Cross-Cultural Perspectives – reported as percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Exceeding (A/A)</th>
<th>Meeting (B+/B-/C+/C-)</th>
<th>Approaching (D+/D/D)</th>
<th>Not Meeting (E)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. an understanding of the impact (e.g. economic, political, historical, cultural) of nations, regions, and cultures.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. an understanding of the reciprocal interactions between individuals and global systems.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. an ability to see cultural groups from their own points of view.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. an ability to use the analytic tools of a specific discipline to engage in comparative analyses of cultures, nations, and regions.</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Perceptions of Courses in the Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives General Education Category: Survey Results

In this category 265 students completed the perceptions surveys, representing about half (64%) of the students in the sample. Well over half of the students responding replied “Greatly” to nine of the ten questions.\(^2\) The one exception was question 10 (“an ability to use the analytical tools of a specific discipline to engage in comparative analyses of cultures, nations and regions”) to which 45% of the students answered “Greatly,” 29% answered “Considerably,” and 16% answered “Somewhat.” In the section of the survey pertaining to why students took the course, a majority (62%) indicated an interest in the subject matter.

Recommendations:

None

\(^2\) Same scale used as for Europe.
Regions Beyond Europe

Course Embedded Assessment

Assessment results from this category indicate that the vast majority of students “exceeded” or “met” expectations. In fact, over 90% of students were rated as meeting or exceeding expectations in all four learning objectives, with fully 96% of students judged to have met or exceeded expectations for objective 2. Fewer than 5% of students only “approached” the goal in any of the learning objectives, and 3% or fewer of students “did not meet” the objective for any of the objectives.

Table 3. Regions Beyond Europe – reported as percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Exceeding</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Approaching</th>
<th>Not Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to demonstrate:</td>
<td>A/A</td>
<td>B+/B/B-</td>
<td>C+/C/C-</td>
<td>D+/D/D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. knowledge of the distinctive features (e.g. history, institutions, economies, societies, cultures) of one region beyond Europe or European North America.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. an understanding of a region beyond Europe or European North America from the perspective of its people(s).</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. an ability to analyze and contextualize cultural and historical materials relevant to the region being studied.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ability to locate and identify distinctive geographical features of the region.</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Perceptions of Courses in the Regions Beyond Europe General Education Program: Survey Results

In this category 468 students completed the perceptions surveys, representing 83% of the students in the sample. The responses in this category showed a greater variance in the distribution of responses than in the Europe or Global categories. A majority of students answered “greatly” to 6 of the 10 questions, but 11% of respondents answered “very little” to Question 1: “To what extent did your instructor make connections between the subject matter and the General Education category?” Most striking in the results was that only 15% of students reported that they took the course out of interest (Question 14), that the recommendation of a friend (Question 13) seemed to play a strong role in the choice of 72% of respondents, as did the reputation of the instructor (Question 15) which influenced 65% of the respondents.

Recommendations:

None

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3 Same scale used as for Europe.
The appendices that accompany this report have been redacted to protect the identities of respondents and the integrity of the General Education Assessment process.