Course Assessment– Part B: Your Results & Analysis   #412

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WR 115 – Introduction to Expository Writing – 1094337 – Tom Kaser – Fall 2019

Part B: Your Results
DIRECTIONS
1. Report the outcome achievement data gathered via the assignments, tests, etc. you identified for each outcome (question 3) of your Part A. (Only include data for students who completed the course. Do not include students who withdrew or earned an incomplete) Data for all 3 outcomes should be reported below. *

For this introductory course in expository writing, I want to expose the students to several areas of writing proficiency that I think they will need in WR 121. Thus I think it is important to include many measures of learning, not just a few. This term, I used 20 graded measures, some major, some minor, and they were applied to the determination of one's final grade as explained in the course syllabus: 1/3 on the student's performance, including progressive improvement, on three papers written outside of class; 1/3 on the student's performance on three tests of writing "mechanics" (punctuation and grammar); and 1/3 on other assigned work, including writing developed critiques (in-class) of fellow students' writing, developing concise-writing skills, and learning the differences between commonly confused words (e.g. affect/effect, principal/principle). Of the students who successfully completed the course, Of the 16 students who completed the course, 70% successfully completed the papers (most showed good improvement); 79% showed proficiency in all or most of the mechanics tests; and 100% showed "engagement" in the course by their attendance, commitment, and performance on other measures.

Outcome #1
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Regarding "Read to determine a writer's purpose and perspective," we spent considerable time in and out of class reading the (anonymous) writing of previous students in the course, plus papers turned in by students in this class. I encouraged the students to reading these papers not just as readers but as writers, noting such qualities as clarity, development, conciseness, word usage, and mechanical correctness. I emphasized the importance of reading for comprehension, not just completion, as they judged the writer's purpose and perspective. I required each student to write detailed, specific critiques of what they had just read. I graded these critiques on a simple scale of 3 (high proficiency), 2 (medium proficiency), and 1 (low proficiency).

% of students who successfully achieved the outcome (C or above) *	100% of the students received a 3 (mostly) or 2 on the critiquing, with the better grades appearing later in the course.
Outcome #2 *	Regarding "Write coherent essays that develop ideas in support of a thesis," most of the course's emphasis was on writing three papers outside of class. (Since "Good papers are not written but rewritten," the second paper was a "major-surgery" revision of the first paper. Students who did not actually revise the first paper--e.g. only made "corrections" or cosmetic changes--received a lower grade on the second paper than they did on the first.)
% of students who successfully achieved the outcome (C or above) *	100% of the 16 students who completed the course were doing A, B, or C work on their papers, overall, by the end of the course.

Outcome #3 *

Regarding "Paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize information effectively and ethically in order to integrate and connect other writers' ideas with one's

own," I have shaped this f2f course to be essentially a "writing workshop," and thus I required regular attendance. We spent considerable time in class discussing good (and bad) writing, as shown in hard-copy papers (written by previous students, with names changed) that were handed out. Synthesizing--expressing oneself--clearly and concisely was emphasized throughout the course, and I looked for the application of this principle in papers turned in by the students.
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% of students who successfully achieved the outcome (C or above) *	100%. It would be nearly impossible for a student who is actively angaged in the course, and attending regularly, not to note what we have discussed about paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing information.
ANALYSIS 3. What contributed to student success and/or lack of success? *	Since I have shaped this f2f course to be a "writing workshop," and I cover most material more than once (since few students gain 100% comprehensive on just one pass-through), I find that students who attend class (and are present mentally as well as physically) can't help buy learn most of what I am presenting. I expect everyone to participate in class discussions, and I call on everyone during Q&A discussions. In short, no one can "hide" in a back row; no one fail to learn if they will just show up.

4. Helping students to realistically self-assess and reflect on their understanding and progress encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Please compare your students' perception of their end-of-term understanding/mastery of the three outcomes (found in student evaluations) to your assessment (above) of student achievement of the three outcomes. *

Whether I am required to or not (e.g. on course assessments like this), I require students to evaluate each of the courses I teach--and I place a great deal of credibility on the feedback I receive on those evaluations (especially when several students are saying the same thing). For this WR 115 course, here are some of the typical comments I received:
One of my "instructor questions" asked this: "How much more do you think you learned about writing than you knew when you entered the course? Why, or why not, do you think that
was so?" Some of the responses:
* "I learned a lot more in [this] college class than I did in my high school class."
* "I thought the teaching style was excellent."
* "I learned a lot, . . . whether it was rules, using words correctly, grammar or any of the
other things we went over. This was due to the structure and the way the class was run."
* "After taking this class, I have a better understanding about writing. And I learned lots of useful writing techniques. Before this class, I thought I was good at writing. However, the more I learned in class, the more I realized how little I knew about writing. Now I think writing is like running a company. You are the boss of it. You need to have good leadership and good organizational skills. Words and sentences are like workers in your company. You want to select clear worlds and sentences that can help you. Topic sentences are your middle management. You want to give them enough resources to help build their teams, which are well- developed paragraphs. Fire useless workers or trouble makers, such as fragments, run-on sentences, wrong punctuation, and non-conciseness. As a non- native speaker, writing in English is not easy for me, but after taking this class, I found writing is fun and not that difficult. I am very lucky to have such a good writing teacher in college."

Another of my instructor questions asked: "You received ample feedback on your writing in this course. To what extent did you pay attention to that feedback? Did you find it
useful?" Some of the responses:
* "In this class I feel like I learned more than I ever did in my middle school or high school English classes."
* "I paid close attention to the feedback. That's the most feedback I'd ever got for my writing paper. It must take lots of time for our teacher to give that much feedback to every student's paper. It's so useful, helping me know where I need to work on and how I can improve the quality of writing. I appreciate it a lot."
* "Yes, I found it very useful. Other teachers when they give papers back, they barely nark it at all and all you receive is a grade but are left with no understanding of why you got that specific grade."

The feedback that I was given was well thought out and it moved me closer to writing the proper

way. This course was very useful to find what was troublesome in my papers.

5. Did student achievement of outcomes meet your expectations for successfully teaching to each outcome (question 4 from Part A) *	For those studeents who successfully completed the course, I am satisfied with their performance (considering that some of them had learning challenges).
6. Based on your analysis in the questions above, what course adjustments are warranted (curricular, pedagogical, student instruction, etc.)? *	I have been teaching for many years, and no term passes that I do not "tweak" every course I teach. I do not believe in pedagogical flaunting because I think good teaching adheres to the "KISS" principle ("Keep it Simple Sweetie"). By keeping assignments, tests, quizzes, and expectations simple (which is not the same thing as "simplistic"), I have seen how most students will, eventually, learn.
7. What resources would be required to implement your recommended course adjustments (materials, training, equipment, etc.)? What Budget implications result?	None. That teaching is best which is simplest. I do use the tools in my smart classroom, but I find what students retain most is teaching, and especially discussion, that they can relate to.
8. Describe the results of any adjustments you made from the last assessment of this course (if applicable) and their effectiveness in student achievement of outcomes. *	The adjustments I make from term to term tend to be incremental, based on what students have said in their evaluations of the course. When I see that an exercise or drill (or test or other measure) is not working, I change it to see if it produces better results. I am constantly changing my teaching materials.
9. Describe how you explain information about course outcomes and their relevance to your students.	Course outcomes are covered in the course syllabus, and on the first day of class we discuss the implications of those outcomes. It is my view that the outcomes, as they currently exist, are overall generalized, vague, and meaningless to most students. In the first few days of each term, I try to explain what I think the outcomes are getting at--and how that has relevance to each student in college and in life generally.
10. Please describe any changes/additions to instruction, curriculum or assessment that you made to support students in better achieving the CGCC Core Learning Outcomes: CLO #1: Communication. The areas that faculty are focusing on are: "Source and Evidence" and "Organization and Presentation" and CLO #2: Critical Thinking/Problem Solving. The areas that faculty are focusing on are: "Student's Position" (Critical Thinking) and "Evaluate Potential Solutions" (Problem Solving). CLO #4: Cultural Awareness. The area that faculty is focusing on is: "Curiosity" – Encouraging our students to "Ask deeper questions about other cultures and seek out answers to these questions" CLO #5: Community and Environmental Responsibility. The area that faculty are focusing on are: "Applying Knowledge to Contemporary Contexts" and "Understanding Global Systems"	Apologies, but I just don't understand this question. Surely, meaningful course assessment can involve clearer, simpler language than this.

Created 28 Dec 2019	

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