

CORE Assessment

Spring/Summer 2008

**Michael J. Anderson, Ph.D.
Director of Academic Assessment**

Individual tables prepared by Helen Johnson

Background

The emphasis of the assessment effort in the CORE for the first 2 years of its existence has been to develop a cycle for assessing the learning goals of the core and to increase awareness of, and participation in, assessment by the CORE faculty. In approaching these tasks we had to deal with an inherited method of direct assessment that had some flaws, but because of institutional constraints could not be wholly abandoned. Another challenge was that Brooklyn College has an unusually long list of learning goals compared to other CUNY institutions and similar institutions nationally. Some of the goals also were, for practical assessment purposes, too “dense” in that they contained several, sometimes unrelated, learning goals. Last, but not least, Summer 08 saw the arrival of the third different director of the Core Curriculum, an added challenge to building a sustained and coherent Assessment regimen.

Actions

During this period the basic approach has been to try and maintain participation and solidify the structure supporting CORE assessment. This included more feedback from the core coordinators in order to further refine the method of assessment and further work on some sort of sustainable cycle. The large number of learning goals for the CORE remains a formidable challenge in creating a sustainable assessment cycle. The following specific actions were taken:

- During Spring Semester 08 we continued, in consultation with CORE course coordinators, to use the inherited method to in CORE classes to continue to build the process and maintain participation. The focus remained on components of goal #1 although in some sections other goals were assessed. (For results see tables below and in the appendix.)
- As a result of meetings with the CORE course coordinators at the end of the spring semester, it was decided that the coordinators and their faculty would choose which goals they would assess in fall 08. We believe this will further strengthen faculty buy in, tighten alignment of course objectives to CORE goals, and provide some information about a sustainable assessment cycle and/or goal revision.
- Efforts to improve and standardize the method continued. During meetings with CORE coordinators it was decided to use a 4 point (rather than 3) scale in the fall of 08. The CORE Director will work with the Assessment Director to draft a new form and instructions for the fall.
- A qualitative analysis was done on the assessment forms turned in by faculty assessing “critical thinking.” This analysis, together with input from various discussions with CORE faculty, and faculty practices, were used to create a draft

common rubric for “critical thinking...” We will ask coordinators to help facilitate piloting the common rubric this fall.

- We again analyzed question #20 as a proxy for “critical thinking” though the response rates for spring were generally low. We continue to advocate for using the student evaluation as an indirect measure of student learning, however, the questions need to be aligned with the actual goals.

Results

In general participation in core assessment remained strong in Spring 08. The numbers participating were down somewhat, however, a significant portion of this can be explained by the tragic loss of the CIS CORE coordinator. The results are summarized in the table below and the individual results are in the tables provided in the appendix.

CORE Assessment Summary

Semester	Goal	Sections	Courses	Artifacts
Spring '08				
	Critical Thinking	50	8	1275
	Critical/Creative Thinking	6	1	250
	Logical Reasoning	12	3	202
	Understanding Art History	10	2	395
	Quantitative Reasoning	6	1	176
Total: Spring '08		84	15	2298

We were unable to convince the institution to align the items in the student evaluations at this time. We did, however, assemble the results for CORE courses in Spring 08 for Question #20 which we took as a proxy for “critical thinking” (see tables in the appendix).

Analysis / Future Actions

The work of the core coordinators and the ability for them to be held accountable to some extent for the collection of assessment results from the faculty remains crucial to the continued high level of participation in CORE assessment. Also the efforts of the Directors office at faculty development are raising awareness. The actual results, in terms of the level of student learning are not comparable, however, due to the lack of a common rubric. At meetings with coordinators and/or CORE faculty this spring we made progress

in raising awareness of the need for common rubric and made some concrete steps in defining what one might look like in the area of “critical thinking...” (See appendix 3) In addition:

- We hope to find CORE faculty to volunteer to pilot the draft of a common rubric for critical thinking. The information generated by this will help guide the process of common rubrics for other CORE goals.
- We will continue our efforts to have the institution align the student evaluation instrument with the college wide learning goals. From an assessment perspective this remains a lost opportunity to utilize something we already do for assessment purposes. With appropriate sophistication the student evaluations could also be customized to gather indirect data for program assessment.
- We will continue to initiate conversations and processes to develop common rubrics including such forums as the annual CORE Conference, the Center for Teaching, and the Assessment Task Force.
- We will continue to improve the process of assessment in the CORE. We have initiated the 4 point rubric for fall 08 and will continue to improve the communication with, and support for, CORE coordinators and CORE faculty.
- In fall 08 we will try to spread more widely the assessment efforts to capture more of the goals simultaneously. This will provide crucial information and insight into the shape of a regular assessment cycle in the CORE.

Appendix 1: Results by Semester, Goal, and Section

CRITICAL THINKING				
Spring 2008				
Core and Section	Less Than Good		Good	Better
Classical Cultures CC1.1				
TF9	7		10	5
TF10	4		11	9
TR12H	8		26	16
TR3	10		30	18
MR10B	5		15	4
TF12F	6		8	3
MW4B & EMW6	7		20	25
TF12	4		7	13
TF8	5		13	9
S9	3		12	3
U9	4		17	4
MW4	10		14	7
***** MW12	4		11	10
***** TR12	4		11	13
Philosophy CC: 2.1 Knowledge, Reality, Values				
TR3	0		4	7
TR4	0		8	6
TZ3 & ET6	4		20	9
MW12A	6		21	6
Section ?	0		23	5
MR12F	0		15	4
M10F	4		12	4
MR9A	6		14	8
TR12	5		21	10
WZ9A	3		18	6
MW12B	3		16	6
MW1B	8		13	7
MR8A	5		19	11
FZ9	2		3	9
EFV6	7		10	8
MW1A	6		10	9
Section ?	10		11	8
TZ9	9		9	8
WZ9B	6		7	7
ER6	2		13	8
MW3	7		10	16
MW4	5		14	9

History CC2.2 The Shaping of The Modern World			
TF8	1	1	1
Sociology: CC2.3 People Power & Politics			
MR9A -BF	10	8	6
MR9AF	16	8	9
Political Thinking:CC 2.3 People, Places & Politics			
MR10	18	15	4
TF9AF/BF	5	9	6
ET6	5	10	11
Philosophy CC10.05 Philosophical Issues in Lit.			
MW1	2	9	15
Philosophy CC10.09 The Self & Society			
S12	10	15	9
FZ9	5	13	12
Philosophy: CC20.04/Global Spanish-Speaking			
Section?	7	3	12
Totals:	272	599	404

LOGICAL REASONING Spring 2008				
Core and Section	Less Than Good		Good	Better
Sociology: People Places & Politics CC2.3				
Section? Pro. Hoyer	11		6	3
ETR8	13		12	5
S12	13		13	2
Political Science CC2.3				
MW12A	10		2	25
MR10A	1		4	15
CIS: CC3.12				
MR8D	3		4	1
TF9A	1		5	3
MW12	0		3	12
MW1A	0		5	7
V1	0		4	0
MZ1	0		2	1
TZ1B	2		9	5
Totals:	54		69	79

UNDERSTANDING ART, HISTORY & CULTURE Spring 2008					
Core and Section	Bad	Less Than Good		Good	Better
Introduction to Art: CC1.2					
MR9B		18		48	12
MR10A		8		54	18
EW6		3		13	2
MW3		2		19	2
MW1		18		50	22
TF10B		19		37	20
% EFV6,S12,U12		20%		40%	40%
Art: CC20.06					
MW1	7	5		10	14
Totals:	7	73.2		231.4	90.4

Quantitative Reasoning Spring 2008				
Core and Section	Less Than Good		Good	Better
Physics: 3.31				
MZ12A		1	3	6
EWZ6A		5	4	11
TG9A/B		18	8	8
MD1O		7	27	23
EMZ6B		6	13	16
MD9A		4	8	8
Total:		41	63	72

CREATIVE THINKING Spring 2008					
Core and Section		Less Than Good		Good	Better
Music CC1.3 Language, History & Culture					
	Section?		4	15	17
	Section?		11	39	32
	Section?		5	25	13
	WS		2	20	25
	MW1A		4	9	8
	MW12		5	9	7
Totals:			31	117	102

Appendix #2: Student Evaluation Question #20

College Faculty Evaluations-Spring 2008:

Question 20: How much ability to analyze and solve problems have you gained?

Course	A lot	A fair amount	Some	A Little	Hardly Anything	Not Applicable	# of answers
CC1.1- 820 registered- Response rate: 29.51%	23.24%	31.12%	21.16%	4.98%	5.81%	13.69%	241
CC1.2 -1157 registered, Response rate: 29.39%	28.78%	32.94%	17.51%	4.75%	2.97%	13.06%	337
CC1.3 -950 registered- Response rate: 33.79%	21.50%	33.96%	15.58%	3.12%	3.12%	22.74%	321`
CC 2.1- 1186 registered- Response rate: 30.44%	24.51%	39.55%	20.89%	6.13%	3.34%	5.57%	359
CC 2.2 -939 registered- Response rate:31.52%	25.42%	37.29%	16.27%	6.78%	3.39%	10.85%	295
CC 2.3 -1110 registered- Response rate: 29.37%	25.46%	34.05%	17.79%	5.83%	5.21%	11.66%	326
CC3.11 -476 registered- Response rate: 28.15%	29.10%	32.09	17.16%	11.19%	9.70%	0.75%	134
CC3.12 -415 registered- Response rate: 25.30%	20.95%	40.95%	23.81%	4.76%	6.67%	2.86%	105
CC3.21 -528 registered – Response rate 22.54%	21.01%	42.02%	22.69%	4.20%	5.88%	4.20%	119
CC 3.22-592- registered- Response rate: 26.86%	18.24%	48.43%	20.13%	7.55%	3.77%	1.89%	159
CC 3.31 – 238 registered- Response rate: 25.21%	31.67%	41.67%	21.67%	1.67%	1.67%	1.67%	60
CC3.32- 1159 registered- Response rate: 26.57%	13.96%	29.55%	25.00%	9.09%	14.94%	7.47%	308
CC10.01- 88 registered- Response rate: 26.14%	8.70%	56.52%	12.04%	4.35%	8.70%	8.70%	23
CC10.02 – 28 registered – Response rate: 28.57%	25.00%	37.50%	25.00%	0.00%	12.50%	0.00%	8
CC10.03- 34 registered- Response rate: 32.35%	27.27%	36.36%	18.18%	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	11
CC10.04- 118 registered – Response rate: 34.75%	34.15%	26.83%	2.44%	7.32%	14.63%	14.63%	41
CC10.05- 87 registered – Response rate: 39.08%	23.53%	50.00%	11.76%	5.88%	2.94%	5.88%	34
CC10.06 – 66 registered Response rate: 36.36%	25.00%	33.33%	8.33%	4.17%	12.50%	16.67%	24
CC10.07- 42 registered- Response rate: 33.33%	42.86%	42.86%	7.14%	7.14%	0.00%	0.00%	14

College Faculty Evaluations-Spring 2008

Question 20: How much ability to analyze and solve problems have you gained?

Course	A lot	A fair amount	Some	A Little	Hardly Anything	Not Applicable	# of answers
CC10.09 – 102 registered- Response rate: 35.29%	30.50%	58.33%	5.56%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	36
CC: 10:10 – 26 registered- Response rate: 46.15%	41.67%	58.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12
CC10.11- 9 registered- Response rate: 22.22%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2
CC20.02- 237 registered- Response rate: 34.60%	29.27%	30.49%	12.20%	6.10%	9.76%	12.20%	82
CC20.03- 78 registered- Response rate: 35.09%	46.43%	35.71%	7.14%	0.00%	3.57%	7.14%	28
CC20.04- 61 registered- Response rate: 29.51%	44.44%	33.33%	11.11%	0.00%	5.56%	5.56%	18
CC20.05- 54 registered- Response rate: 22.22%	33.33%	33.33%	25.00	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	12
CC20.06 – 40 registered – Response rate: 55.00%	27.27%	31.82%	9.09%	4.55%	4.55%	22.73%	22
CC20:07 – 37 registered – Response rate: 45.95%	29.41%	23.53%	17.65%	5.88%	5.88%	17.65%	17
CC30.01- 66 registered- Response rate: 37.88%	24.00%	32.00%	8.00%	4.00%	24.00%	8.00%	25
CC30.02- 66 registered- Response rate: 27.27%	22.22%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	11.11%	0.00%	18
CC30.03- 158 registered- Response rate: 31.65%	32.00%	48.00%	14.00%	0.00%	6.00%	0.00%	50
CC30.04 – 30 registered – Response rate: 43.33%	0.00%	15.38%	15.38%	15.28%	38.46%	15.38%	13
CC30.05- 60 registered- Response rate: 30.00%	11.11%	33.33%	27.78%	11.11%	5.56%	11.11%	18
CC30.06- 49 registered- Response rate: 28.57%	50.00%	28.57%	21.34%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14
CC30.07 – 38 registered – Response rate:42.11%	25.00%	31.25%	18.75%	12.50%	6.25%	6.25%	16
CC30.08- 35 registered- Response rate: 37.14%	23.08%	23.08%	38.46%	7.69%	0.00%	7.69%	13
CC30.09- 35 registered- Response rate: 28.57%	10.00%	30.00%	30.00%	20.00%	10.00%	0.00%	10

Appendix #3

Draft Rubric: Goal 1: “Be able to think critically and creatively, to reason logically...”

The student work demonstrates:	1	2	3	4
Ability to recognize/recall/ and correctly summarize relevant key material, facts, ideas and concepts.	Shows little or no grasp of or ability to summarize material.	Grasp of the key facts, ideas and concepts maybe weak and/or some may be missing. Summary may be unclear/incomplete and/or incorrect in places.	Mostly sure grasp of key ideas. No major ideas missing. Summaries mostly clear and correct.	Consistently solid and nuanced grasp of the material. Clear, complete, and correct summary.
Ability to present a, coherent, logical and well reasoned argument that includes a clear thesis.	Most elements missing and/or underdeveloped	Most elements are present and somewhat developed. An element may be missing and/or some underdeveloped and/or unclear.	All elements are present and developed. Some minor lapses in coherence, logic and/or clarity	All elements are consistently present and appropriately developed.
Ability to identify the appropriate context (historical/theoretical/textual, research literature) of source material and locate their arguments within appropriate context.	Shows no awareness of the appropriate context of source material.	Some awareness of context(s). However, may be incorrect and/or little or no linkage of own arguments to appropriate contexts.	Mostly accurate awareness of context(s) and generally locates own arguments within context with only minor lapses.	Consistently locates own arguments within an accurate understanding of the context(s) of the source material.
Ability to recognize multiple interpretations and distinguish fact from opinion and analysis.	Shows no awareness of multiple interpretations and/or unable to distinguish fact from opinion.	Generally aware of multiple interpretations. However may be inaccurate in describing them and/or often confuses fact and opinion.	Correctly grasps multiple interpretations. Rarely confuses fact with opinion and analysis.	Consistently, clearly, and correctly recognizes multiple interpretations. Consistently and sharply distinguishes between fact and opinion/analysis.