2019
PROJECT
REPORTS

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
GRANTS

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

To promote best practices in program-level assessment of student learning outcomes, in Winter 2018 the Office of the Provost established the WSU Program Assessment Grant program and has renewed the program in subsequent years. The call for proposals invites Wayne State University faculty and staff to submit proposals to improve their academic or student services program's assessment efforts. These funds are available to assist in the piloting, creation, or significant revision of assessment instruments or processes, or to obtain professional development in program assessment. In this report you'll find descriptions of the 2019 grant projects.

Proposals are reviewed by a committee of faculty and staff volunteers who are experienced assessment practitioners from across campus. At least two reviewers independently evaluate each proposal using a rubric, and then reviewers meet to discuss and rank them. Priority is given to proposals with multiple participants that introduce innovative or experimental approaches to direct assessment or improved practices in student learning outcomes assessment at the program level, especially those that might serve as models for other programs.

Five projects were funded in 2019; each project's goals, activities, and impacts are summarized in the pages that follow. Some highlights among the projects' work to improve their programs' assessment practices include:

- Professional development to build expertise in assessment
- Redeveloping and operationalizing program learning outcomes
- Revising assessment instruments and processes
- Introduction or development of new assessment tools
- Development of a multi-method approach to understanding program impact on student learning and student success

For more information about the grant program, please see the WSU Program Assessment Grants page.

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APEX Program Assessment Using the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education

Recipients: Veronica Killebrew, Mark Jackson, Audrey Whitfield, Akelah Reese, Nicholas Patterson, Miquie Lopez, and Keanu Respess, Academic Pathways to Excellence (APEX)

Description of project goals: The APEX Scholars Program proposed to conduct a 2-day assessment retreat during which staff would:

1. Revisit program mission, goals, and objectives.
2. Determine if mission, goals, and objectives aligned with program and student needs.
3. Make necessary revisions to mission, goals, and objectives.

APEX also set a goal to conduct a CAS self-study to:

1. Assess whether or not our current program model addresses our students' needs.
2. Determine our strengths and limitations regarding program implementation strategies.
3. Assess whether or not the program achieved anticipated student outcomes and how our program services contributed to those outcomes.

Project activities: The APEX project team completed the following activities:

1. Assembled and trained a self-study team on using CAS standards
2. Distributed a survey to gauge staff prior knowledge of assessment practices
3. Revised the APEX Scholars program mission statement
4. Conducted CAS self-study ratings
5. Implemented a 2-day all-staff assessment retreat facilitated by a CAS consultant
6. Revised program goals and objectives
7. Implemented a professional development training session on Leadership and Assessment for APEX Staff facilitated by a CAS consultant
8. Revised student learning outcomes
9. Developed an action plan to expand on program strengths and address areas for improvement

Changes to the project plan: The self-study activities were slowed down due to the pandemic and our timelines had to be adjusted several times throughout the process. The final report is in progress and will be completed before the end of the Winter 2021 semester. The action plan was not completed in time for implementation for the Winter 2021 semester but will used during the 2021 Summer Bridge Program.

Program-level impact: The APEX Scholars program conducted a self-study utilizing the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education self-assessment guide for Learning Assistance Programs. The guide outlined the CAS standards and guidelines that Learning Assistance Programs, such as APEX, must meet to be effective in their role to support student learning and success. By employing this reflective process, the APEX staff garnered a deeper understanding of the program's strengths and deficiencies and developed a plan for program improvements.

The self-study covered the following twelve areas: 1) mission, 2) program and services, 3) student learning, development, and success, 4) assessment, 5) access, equity, diversity, and inclusion, 6), leadership, management, and supervision, 7), human resources, 8) collaboration and communication, 9) ethics, law, and policy, 10) financial resources, 11) technology, and 12) facilities and infrastructure. To conduct the self-study, each team member drafted individual ratings for each of the 12 areas, and then we convened as a team to discuss our ratings to reach a consensus on the final rating. Conducting the ratings of our program strengths and deficits in these 12 areas proved to be a real eye-opening experience. We realized that we were operating without the foundation of shared goals and objectives, making it difficult to assess if our programs and services were meeting our students' needs.

The self-study team shared the ratings and recommendations with the rest of the APEX staff and the CAS consultant, who developed training sessions to guide the staff in developing an action plan to improve program effectiveness.

Since conducting the self-study, the program has elevated its assessment practices. Working together, the APEX staff developed a profound appreciation for and commitment to the assessment process. In addition to the summative assessments conducted at the end of each semester, as a team we are more cognizant of the need to assess individual services and make a concerted effort to develop and disseminate assessment tools to understand the students' perspectives of the impact of the services we provide.

Being committed to assessment will greatly benefit our students because each program and service will be assessed for its value to students and alignment with program goals and objectives. When necessary, the staff will be able to make changes to programs and services that do not meet our students' evolving needs.

Individual impact: The self-study process allowed the staff to have open discussions about what we do great and areas in which we need to improve. Conducting the self-study allowed staff to have a voice and feel valued and heard throughout the process. The self-study process provided our program staff with a platform to redevelop the program goals and objectives, which fostered buy-in. Contracting a CAS consultant to facilitate the training sessions provided professional development for our staff and reinforced our work's purpose. The consultant, Trent Ball, is known nationally for his work in Equity and Access. The expertise he brought to the training sessions helped validate the process and connect assessment to our role in promoting student success.

Recognition/Appreciation: We greatly appreciate CAS Consultant Trent Ball; he went above and beyond and has committed his time to see our staff through the process.

Assessing Clinical Judgment and Critical Thinking through the Nursing Undergraduate Curriculum

Recipients: Erik Carter, Olubunmi Daramola, Michael Mooney, Meghna Shukla, and Elizabeth McQuillen, Nursing

Description of project goals: The overarching goal of this proposal was to increase undergraduate students' use and application of critical thinking and clinical judgment through curricular changes in specific courses, i.e., courses using the HESI Specialty/Exit exams. The BS in Nursing (BSN) track being analyzed is the accelerated, second-degree students (CD2 track). The CD2 track incoming cohort years used in this analysis are 2017 and 2018 (for comparison) and 2019 (post-award) for the interventions consisting of the Train the Trainer sessions and the use of the HESI Comprehensive review text throughout the program as opposed to the synthesis/immersion experience course NUR 4060.

The three primary objectives of this proposal include:
- Increasing training of undergraduate nursing faculty to enhance clinical judgment pertaining to student success in their program of study.
- Increasing undergraduate nursing students' HESI specialty/exit exam scores and ultimately the NCLEX exam.
- Increasing the nursing students' clinical judgment in the clinical setting.

Project activities:

1. Core undergraduate faculty attended Dr. Tim Bristol's "Nuts and Bolts" conference and served as master trainers. These core faculty members then trained undergraduate faculty using the "Train the Trainer" model covering the topic areas outlined below with instructions to consider embedding the content presented into their courses. -Completed 1/21
2. Implementation of early use of the HESI Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN Examination, 6th ed., in courses utilizing HESI Specialty exams -Completed 9/20

Program-level impact: The College of Nursing utilizes the Health Education Systems, Inc. (HESI) preparation examinations throughout the undergraduate student curriculum. These consist of specialty examinations such as Fundamentals, Maternity, Pediatrics, etc. The pre-exams are given early in the program's course, and the post-test is given during the students' final term. As the accelerated program is 18 months long, the time elapsed between the two exams is approximately one year; there are a few specialty exams with a shorter (6 month) period between tests. The exit exams (strongly correlated with NCLEX results) are given in the final term.

The BSN track being analyzed is the accelerated, second-degree students (CD2 track). The CD2 track incoming cohort years used in this analysis are 2017 and 2018 (for comparison) and 2019 (post-award). The interventions consisted of the Train the Trainer sessions and the HESI Comprehensive textbook throughout the program, starting with nursing foundations courses (NUR 2050) instead of starting with the synthesis/immersion experience course (NUR 4060). The use of these tenets supported success on both the course-specific specialty HESI exams as well as the HESI exits.

A limitation of these results is that they are correlational; it is impossible to tie the interventions with the results directly.

HESI Specialty Exams – Pre and Post
We used a percent change calculation for each specialty exam from the prior year (2018 to 2019).

Increases in Percent Change
The % change for Fundamentals from pre-test to post-test in 2019 was 18.4 (compared to 7.5 in 2018 and 5.4 in 2017). Gerontology's % increase was 8.1 in 2019 (compared to 1.0 in 2018 and -1.2 in 2017). The increase from pre-test to post-test for Maternity in 2019 was 11.8% compared to -1.0 in 2018.

Decreases in Percent Change
The percent change in 2019 for Pediatrics was -2.5 compared to 21.9 in 2018. Pharmacology's percent change was -9.6 in 2019 (compared to 29.0 in 2018 and 15.4 in 2017). Psych Mental Health had a percent change of -2.8 in 2019 compared to 9.6 in 2018 (yet had a -6.0 in 2017).

Post Score Results
The post score for Fundamentals in 2019 was higher than for the past two years. Gerontology, Maternity (compared to one year), and Pharmacology (higher than 2018 but lower than 2017). The 2019 post scores were lower compared to Med-Surg, Pediatrics, and Psych-Mental Health (although 2019 exceeds the post-score from 2017).

HESI Exit Scores
Exit scores used were the first attempt for all three years. 2019 HESI exit scores are higher in all three mean, min, and max than the prior two years.

Survey of Faculty Trainees

Members of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee attended the Train the Trainer Sessions 9/2019 through 1/2021, which occurred during various monthly undergraduate course coordinators' meetings in the College of Nursing. The range of participation for all Train the Trainer sessions was 4-6 faculty; the range for evaluation responses was 2-5 from faculty.

The sessions were:

- Dr. Daramola: Increasing Training of Faculty to Enhance Clinical Judgement as it Pertains to Student Success (Clinical Grading: Assessing Student Performance, Maternity in the Classroom, Culture and Diversity Teaching.
- Dr. Carter: Increase in Student HESI Specialty and Exit Exam Scores (NextGen and Alternate Format Test Items, Clinical Judgment in the Classroom, Lab, and Clinical: Hands-on Response to NCSBN Update)
- Dr. Mooney: Increasing the Nursing Student Clinical Judgment in the Clinical Setting (Note Taking that Works for Prioritization Power, NextGen and Alternate Format Test Items)
- Ms. Shukla: Integration of Techniques that Support Critical Thinking in the Clinical Setting (Clinical and Simulation Management, Pharmacology in the CBC, Skills Fair)

Train the Trainer Session Evaluation Results

The majority of respondents for all four sessions (n = 15 with multiple responses for each respondent) either agreed or strongly agreed (80%) that they had an interest in learning new techniques for teaching effectiveness before the presentation, with a smaller number (20%) indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "the content of the training was useful," with 27% remaining neutral. While most agreed/strongly agreed that the presenters shared the information effectively (74%) and 20% neutral, there was disagreement (6%) for one session (with a comment indicating that it wasn't clear why some tools were selected for use and the examples went by too quickly).

Seventy-three percent of the respondents agreed that the presentations' multimedia was effective (with 20% neutral and 7% disagreement). These percentages were the same for the item "I can readily implement these techniques in my course(s)."

Individual impact:

Dr. Carter: This work on the assessment grant allowed great intra-departmental collaboration as we functioned to increase understanding of tools that we as faculty could use to improve our students' levels of critical thinking, clinical judgment, and clinical reasoning early in their UG nursing program journey. Attendance at the Nuts and Bolts conference provided us much-needed support and tools that we were able to infuse into our curriculum, thereby supporting our desire to increase student's success programmatically as well as support success in their NCLEX scores. Additionally, instituting the use of the HESI Comprehensive Review for the NCLEX-RN Examination, 6th ed., early in the curriculum, i.e., NUR 2050, better-prepared students for success in their HESI Specialty/Exit exams in specific classes, and overall increased their exit exams in cohorts.

Dr. Mooney: Navigating a new style of testing for boards is challenging. This grant provided the opportunity to experience these testing modalities and teach other faculty. Integrating these within our teaching and assessing style system will be immensely beneficial to students. The tool to enhance self-directed learning in the clinical setting has received positive student feedback and created more productive post-conference dialogue.

Dr. Daramola: The assessment grant provided the opportunity to work with colleagues in evaluating current modalities of teaching critical thinking at the College of Nursing. The Nuts-and-Bolts conference allowed learning from colleagues practicing at other institutions about their journey in making changes and the modalities for making those changes. It also provided the tools and resources to keep students engaged as active participants in their learning. Some of the exercises introduced included allowing students to take on leadership roles, make decisions, and lead post-conference discussions. Encouraging students to engage with and acknowledge the cultural impact on the patients' care was another concept emphasized at the conference. The students had to develop and use individual study guides based on previous performances on specialty examinations. The goal is to improve performance in the HESI exit examinations.

Ms. Shukla: Attending the "Nuts and Bolts" conference allowed me as a clinical educator to learn new technology and teaching methods in order to improve the delivery of education to my students. I learned to incorporate new techniques that will aid students in retention of clinical skills. The idea of a "concept- based curriculum" was introduced which will help to streamline the vast array of concepts that are taught throughout the nursing program.

Additionally, various exercises to help with crossover of information from textbook to practicum were well received by students and demonstrated in their daily performances. In particular, group exercises to encourage students to discuss concepts with each other and build on previously shared information were instrumental in retention of course content.

Recognition/Appreciation: The grant's tenets were supported by all UG faculty members where this proposal was shared and for the college's Administration Council and Academic Leadership members' support.

Assessing Skills Development and Knowledge Retention Among Honors College Students: Comparing Freshman-Level Curricular Outcomes

Recipients: Kevin Deegan-Krause, Beth Fowler, Tim Moran, and Kevin Rashid, Irvin D. Reid Honors College

Description of project goals: In the past, the Honors College has conducted an assessment of first-year students' final papers using a rubric modified from the AAC&U website that measures critical thinking, problem definition, evaluation of proposed solutions, and written arguments. The same rubric is then used to assess students' Honors Theses, which are submitted at the end of their undergraduate careers. This method offered a helpful look at how students have performed on their final first-year paper and on their thesis, but we needed additional standards, a more objective assessment system, clear demographic data, and additional points of contact throughout a student's undergraduate career in order to identify the knowledge that students retain from the first-year sequence, and to track growth in writing and critical thinking skills, which are key to our departmental mission.

The Honors College first-year sequence was also altered going forward from the 2019-20 academic year. Previously, all students accepted into the Honors College took HON 1000, an interdisciplinary Urban Studies course focused on Detroit, in the Fall, and PS 1010, a political science course emphasizing participatory action, in the Winter. The Honors College created a new curriculum for the 2019-20 academic year, however, where students took HON 1000, a course that directly connects Detroit's history with current urban problems, in the Fall, and an interdisciplinary first-year seminar of their choice in the Winter. We wished to determine the educational impacts of this change, and were therefore in need of refined assessment tools in order to identify differences between these curricular models.

Project activities:
The incumbent first-year assessment method for the Irvin D. Reid Honors College relied on faculty reporting on a range of values for student group projects. The assessment method produced consistent results, but we wanted to gauge student work more directly and to engage outside raters to eliminate inadvertent faculty bias in examining student outcomes. The initial idea was to get as large a sample of student work as feasible from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years, to create a rating rubric, and to enlist a team of coders to use the rubric to perform content analysis of student writing.

Beginning in the summer of 2019 we worked with James Morrissey and Zhe Jiang at the university Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (OIRA) to develop a stratified random sample of student essays from Honors College first year enrollments. This sample set allowed us to avoid cherry-picking student essays for analysis. The OIRA gave us a list based on student number rather than name, and Honors College faculty members pulled copies of the identified essays from storage on the Canvas learning management system and forwarded them to the assessment team. Personal identifying information was extracted from the essays before the sample set was stored.

At the same time, the assessment team began meeting to develop the base rubric, or codebook, to use in evaluation of the essays. Early ideas were discussed in a broad way, but always with a focus toward student critical thinking skills, research skills, and the academic quality of student writing. We created a relatively informal rubric based on student grading models, and when the rubric seemed fairly solid to us we enlisted an expert panel to evaluate and improve the rubric. We received assistance in shaping our ideas of the rubric and evaluating rubrics in general from Elizabeth Corah-Hopkins, Director of Accreditation and Assessment in the Wayne State College of Education. Following best practice recommendations, we were able to create a panel that included experts from Wayne State, from other universities, and from non-university agencies involved in educational assessment. The rubric became a much more formal and useful tool with their input, which included harmonizing evaluation of each category by asking for the same numbered levels of perceived quality in each instance, and by making the category questions and descriptions more uniform and less leading in their nature. The eventual rubric consisted of 12 evaluation criteria: argument, evidence, conclusion, citation, argument complexity, content: observation, content: analysis, evidence complexity, unification, voice, critical thinking, and grammar. Points are assigned corresponding to "excellent" (4 points), "good" (3 points), "fair" (2 points), or "poor" (1 point). The rubric and groups of essays to be rated were placed in the Canvas learning management system for eventual coding.

While the rubric was under development, we used a set of student essays that would not be included in the eventual rated group and the original draft rubric to determine the amount of time it should take to rate an essay in general. Student volunteers were asked to read and rate ten essays and to record the overall time it took to perform the activity. From this exercise we determined that a naïve rater should be able to evaluate an essay within 12 minutes on average. This allowed us to calculate how many essays our eventual panel of raters should be able to handle under our anticipated budget. We determined that we wanted each essay to be examined twice, by a different rater each time.

Coder recruitment was carried out in the spring of 2020 by Beth Fowler working with the College of Education. Four coders with Wayne State education degrees were hired in June, 2020, for part-time work to evaluate the student essays, and a sample set of five essays was created to evaluate inter-coder reliability. Initial coder training took place in the second week of July, and coders were able to complete the sample by late July; reliability calculations were performed in early August. Initial ratings on sample categories rated showed poor levels of reliability both using percentage of agreement (75 percent minimum required, 52 percent achieved) and Krippendorff's Alpha (Kalpha, 0.80 minimum required, 0.63 achieved). The results showed that we needed to clarify the rubric, further train the coders, or both.

A Zoom meeting with the coders led to input that the rubric criteria were, in some cases, being interpreted quite differently. We were able to clarify how the criteria should be interpreted in notes, though we were not able to physically alter the Canvas rubric due to the LMS restrictions that dictate that once a rubric has had data entered, it cannot be changed for later grading. We also found that some of the coders were adhering strictly to the rubric, while others were "grading" the essays based on academic disagreement with student expression of various topics. As a result, Beth Fowler posted her own ratings of one of the sample essays and the reasons for the various ratings to our coders to serve as an example. Coders re-rated two of the original set of essays and reliability scores using Kalpha improved, but not to acceptable levels. As the summer ended, two of the original coders had to drop out of the project due to other professional commitments. Percentage of agreement calculations between the remaining two coders showed an acceptable reliability rating, and analysis of the full set of essays was able to be completed by the end of 2020.

Changes to the project plan: The original assessment project had contemplated having a visit or at least a remote consultation with a nationally prominent individual in the assessment field as a consulting scholar who could provide education on assessment to faculty and staff. This portion of the project faced unexpected difficulty. It was very hard to identify a scholar who could provide this contact, and then the arrival of the COVID pandemic put the project under severe constraints and disrupted things at many different levels. We determined that enlisting a national expert was beyond the budget and scope of the project, and scrapped that portion of the assessment program in order to concentrate resources on rubric development and coding of the essays.

Program-level impact : First, we need to acknowledge that none of the differences between 2018 and 2019 were statistically significant at the level of $p=0.05$, so it is possible that we are simply seeing random variation that looks like pattern. The consistency of the patterns, however, suggests that what we are seeing is small but meaningful patterns in change based on our interventions.

The first big takeaway is that we saw a mix of gains and losses across categories but that most of the big gains we saw were in the areas of greatest need. As Figure 1 shows, the biggest gains came in the three categories with the lowest initial scores. We can regard this as evidence of at least some degree of success, since we were able to improve performance in the areas where it was worst. Since these are arguably also the most important aspects of paper writing, the gains are especially important. On the other hand, we note that there seems to be (at least in our case) something of a zero-sum process here: we were not able to make those gains without shifting attention away from other goals and seeing declines in those areas. The good news is that we made improvements in the areas where we most wanted them and where they will do the most good so the reallocation of effort seems entirely warranted.

The second big takeaway involves the shift in scores within each category. If we look at why the overall average scores improved on the three categories where they improved most, we see significant increases in the upper-middle category 3 accompanied by declines both in the lowest category and (to a lesser extent) the highest category. This is consistent across all three categories. Here again, we're seeing what seems to be a degree of tradeoff. Why we are seeing a decline in the highest category is not clear to us, but it is more than compensated for by a greater decrease in the lowest category, which gives us some indication that we are on the right track with this effort. [See Figures 1 and 2 for more detail.]

In terms of our original research questions:

RQ 1: Is there a baseline for First Year student output that can be established in terms of evidence of critical thinking, skills development, and learning retention?
	The baseline appears to be between a 2.5 and 3.5 in most categories.

RQ 2: Can evidence be seen that these skills predict future success in the Honors College program and, if so, how can they best be categorized?
This question will require further rating of fourth-year Honors student theses, which we did not have the capabilities to complete during the grant period.

Figure 1. Change in Assessed Quality by Category, 2018-19

Aggregate Score by Category

Amount of Change

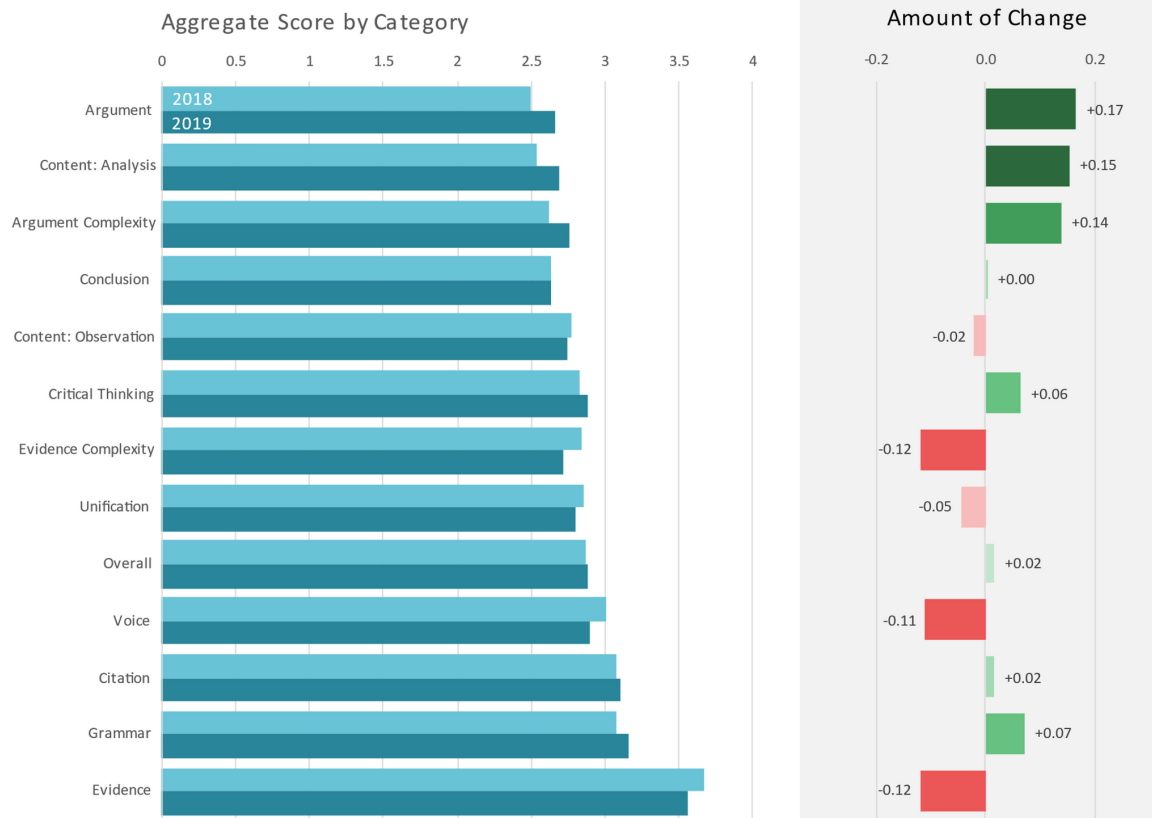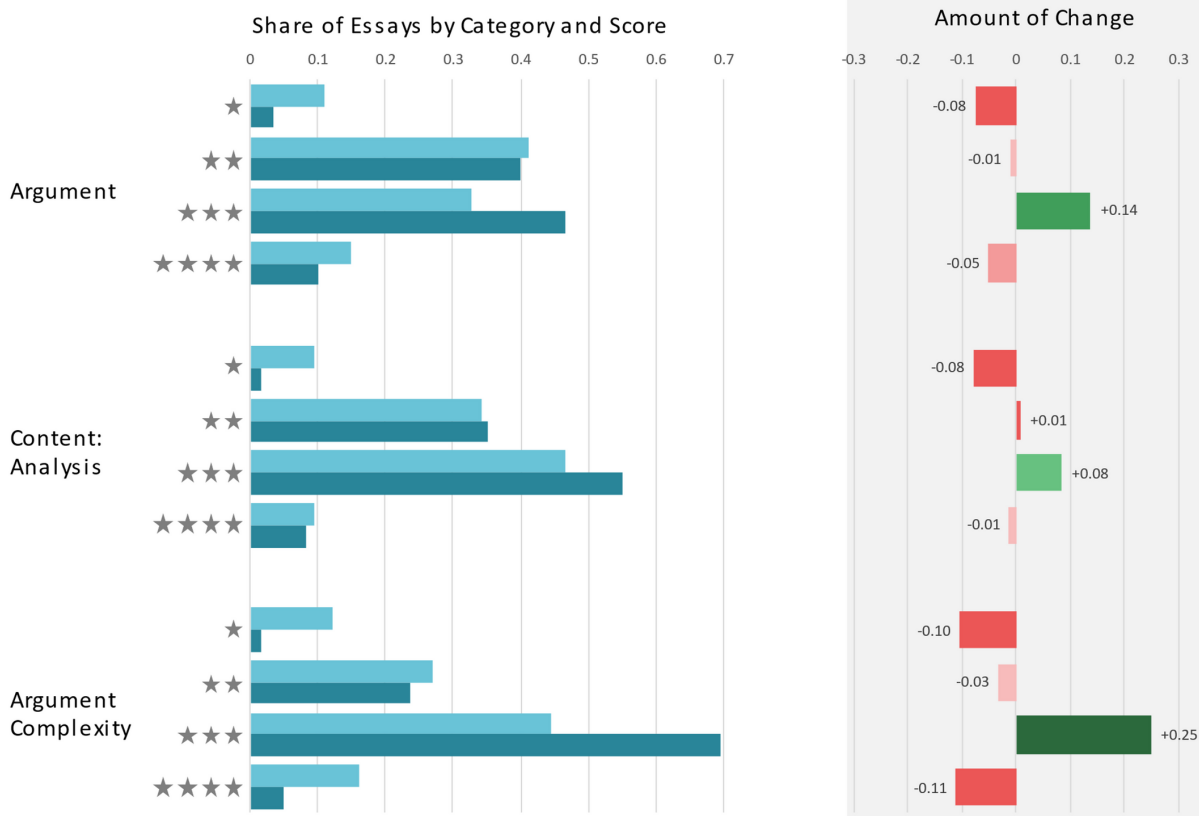| Category	Amount of Change
Argument	+0.17
Content: Analysis	+0.15
Argument Complexity	+0.14
Conclusion	+0.00
Content: Observation	-0.02
Critical Thinking	+0.06
Evidence Complexity	-0.12
Unification	-0.05
Overall	+0.02
Voice	-0.11
Citation	+0.02
Grammar	+0.07
Evidence	-0.12

Figure 2. Change in Share of Papers at Each Quality Level for Three Most Improved Categories, 2018-19

RQ 3: Does assessment fine-tuning allow us to identify best practices and to enhance student experience while selecting curriculum for student success?
Yes, we can see from these results that shifting to a scaffolded paper assignment, and including smaller assignments focused on argument development, have revealed small but meaningful increases in Argument, Content Analysis, and Argument Complexity between 2018 and 2019. These increases are especially meaningful since these categories were the lowest scored in the 2018 batch.

RQ 4: Is there a distinction in first-year student output between 2018 and 2019 in terms of critical thinking skills?
Critical thinking skills increased by a small amount, but content analysis and argument complexity, which may also be considered aspects of critical thinking, increased by the largest amount.

RQ 5: Is there a distinction in first-year student output between 2018 and 2019 in terms of writing skills?
No: writing skills, as measured in the unification, voice, and grammar categories, either remained stable or decreased to a small extent. Since students already tended to score high in these categories, our team believes that these assignments focused more on critical thinking and argument development, which rendered writing capabilities to remain somewhat stable.

RQ 6: Is there a distinction in first-year student output between 2018 and 2019 in terms of content retention?
No, content retention, as measured by the content observation category, remained stable.

RQ7: Which curriculum changes may have resulted in these distinctions?
Our team believes that introducing a scaffolded research assignment, with smaller papers focused on argument development, are responsible for the increases in previously lower-rated categories.

RQ8: How can we use this information to fine-tune our curriculum for Fall 2021 and beyond?
We fully intend to continue assigning a major scaffolded work with smaller assignments focused on argument development, but we would like to continue assessment practices to figure out how to increase these numbers further, and how to support increased content retention as well.

Individual impact: This grant allowed Beth Fowler and Tim Moran leadership opportunities in the form of running the project, and to learn about the assessment process within the Honors College in great detail. It also allowed all recipients the ability to view our learning outcomes and assessment practices from different perspectives, which will help to shape our work on curriculum design for the upcoming academic year.

Clicking to Assessment Success: Formative Assessment in Law

Recipients: Michelle Taylor, Lance Gable, Susan Cancelosi, Meghan Short, and Christopher Lund, Law

Description of project goals: Our accrediting body, The American Bar Association (ABA) requires that all law schools implement both summative and formative assessments of J.D. programs. While Wayne Law has processes in place for summative assessment, we did not have an agreed-upon process for gathering formative data. The overall goal of the grant project was to review the way law courses were assessed formatively to make sure that we were meeting our program goals. For the 2019 academic year, we decided to implement iClicker software and tools into a few selected courses for incoming first-year students. The goal was to monitor the type of formative assessment data that we could collect that would help faculty in teaching and giving students mini-progress reports throughout the semester.

Project activities:
- Determine which courses would allow us to assess student understanding of core law concepts
- Faculty, staff and Office for Teaching and Learning (OTL) meeting to discuss use of iClickers for assessment and how to write questions to extract the information you need
- Distribution of tools to students
- Survey of student attitudes regarding clicker usage
- Review sample of data reports captured through iClicker software to determine if usable data was collected.

Changes to the project plan: We met some obstacles: 1) Our final fall 2019 schedule had to be adjusted, which caused the original course that we planned on using to be substituted, and 2) We received our clickers in mid-October instead of late-August. Due to these two setbacks we decided to begin the project in winter 2020. We used the "extra" time in September through December to meet with OTL as a group to discuss the types of questions faculty could ask students to gain useful information. Once we introduced the tools, students seemed to like the instant feedback they received from classes. One of the two professors originally involved in the project continued to use the iClicker tool throughout the semester (pre-COVID closure). The other faculty member used the tool twice and decided that he was no longer interested in this type of formative assessment. He found it difficult to write questions that he felt were sufficient.

Program-level impact: Due to the COVID-19 closure in March 2020, the physical tool could no longer be used, but the pandemic helped to open discussions among faculty and other the law school administrators on how to assess student remote learning. The iClicker project really helped as a foundation for discussion as faculty were more open to using similar tools like poll anywhere, zoom polling, and others. We are now discussing the implementation of similar formative assessment tools within the curriculum of other law school programs.

Individual impact: This project has opened the door to conversations with faculty about how they will handle formative assessment within their classrooms. It has led to comfort in using polling devices and software. It has also given our students a way to monitor their understanding of core concepts as they move through the semester. Even faculty who were not involved in the program are now much more familiar with the type of assessment tools that are available to use and recognize the benefits to them and our students.

Composition Learning Community: How LC Participation During BC and ICN Courses Impacts Students' Academic Success

Recipients: Nicole Guinot Varty, Adrienne Jankens, and Jule Thomas, Composition Learning Community and English, and Sarah Primeau, English

Description of project goals: The goal of this project was to better understand the impact of the student support provided by the Composition Learning Community (CLC) throughout the semester, both within composition courses and through the semi-annual Writing Showcase event. To that end, we proposed a mixed methods assessment of student participation (and non-participation) in the CLC in connection with student academic success in the Composition Program. Additionally, we designed assessment methods to provide insight into maintaining or revising the CLC peer mentor program and the CLC sponsored Writing Showcase to maximize our impact for students. Improving our focus with this assessment can inform current learning community practices, the development of training and materials for instructors and peer mentors, as well as future funding requests to better serve Wayne State students. To achieve our goal, the CLC Assessment Team generated and disseminated surveys to CLC students, developed and implemented an interview protocol for the Writing Showcase event, and partnered with a COGNOS report writer to generate data regarding student success in the Composition Program.

Project activities:

Surveys: A pilot survey was designed by the CLC Assessment Grant Team and disseminated in Fall 2019. Based on partial results of the pilot survey, the survey questions were revised. The revised survey questions covered student attitudes toward and plans for communication with peer mentors, perceived value of peer mentor support, support systems available to students (peer mentor and otherwise), perceived value of writing class content and knowledge, perceived knowledge transfer, student attitudes toward collaboration in writing classes, perceived value of collaboration to the writing process/growth, and specific areas of comfort and discomfort regarding the writing process. The revised survey was fully disseminated pre- and post- semester in Winter 2020, with minor changes to reflect future or past experiences. The project lead (Nicole Guinot Varty) completed analysis of the survey data.

Interviews: The CLC Assessment Grant Team developed a protocol for generating student-to-student interviews that were audio-recorded. An interview protocol was drafted and implemented at the Fall 2019 Writing Showcase. Students were given a menu of interview questions covering class enrollment, the displays and writing presented at the Showcase, collaboration and mentoring in composition courses, as well as general learning outcome questions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it became unfeasible to host an in-person Winter

2020 Writing Showcase. The Winter 2020 Writing Showcase format was revised and the event was held online via Facebook Live. The interview protocol was necessarily revised to adapt to the online format. Data from these interviews, both student-to-student and online, were collected and analyzed by the project lead and a co-coordinator of the CLC.

COGNOS reporting system: C&IT collaborated with the project lead to develop a report able to aggregate and extract CLC participant demographics, Early Academic Assessment grades and other course-related data. After three planning meetings with the COGNOS team, we were able to access data from not only the year of the assessment grant (AY 2019-2020), but also AY 2017-2018 and AY 2018-2019. Any face-to-face sections reflected in the report are from 2017-2019 only, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency online teaching enacted in Winter semester 2020.The report provided data for the analysis phase of the project. The project lead completed COGNOS training and worked with an independent statistical analysis engineer to complete data analysis.

Data analysis: The project lead completed descriptive statistics independently, and carried out other analyses of the data collaboratively. Key results include:
- Students maintain positive perceptions of peer mentors from the beginning of the semester to the end (70% in both pre-semester [n=54] and post-semester [n=20] surveys).
- Students' positive responses regarding knowledge transfer increase from the beginning of the semester to the end (from 35.2% pre-semester [n=54] to 78.9% post-semester [n=20]).
- Students' positive responses regarding collaboration increase from the beginning of the semester to the end (from 18.5% pre-semester [n=54] to 52.6% post-semester [n=20]).
- Student engagement with the face-to-face Writing Showcase [n=35 interviews completed] is fundamentally different than engagement with the online Writing Showcase [n=132 comments], particularly in terms of composition course concepts articulated. The most-articulated concepts by students in the face-to-face Showcase interviews were writing process and collaboration, where the most articulated concepts by students in the online Showcase comments were metacognition and genre. Additionally, the online Showcase produced new categories of communication in relation to the virtual format (e.g. typed greetings, exclamations, emojis, etc.)
- Student engagement with the online Writing Showcase shows significantly fewer student-to-student interactions, and greater student-to-instructor interactions.
- When comparing EAA grades to final grades, students in face-to-face CLC courses [n=7 sections] (versus all other f2f non-CLC composition courses [n=57 sections]) have a statistically significant greater percentage of staying the same or increasing.

- When comparing EAA grades to final grades, students in face-to-face CLC courses [n=7 sections] (versus all other f2f non-CLC composition courses [n=57 sections]) have a statistically significant lower percentage of decreasing.
- When comparing EAA grades to final grades, students in online CLC courses [n=16 sections] (versus all other online non-CLC composition courses [n=33 sections]) have no statistically significant difference in percentage of either staying the same/increasing or decreasing.
- A large majority of students in CLC courses (both f2f and online) are first-year students (U1), followed in smaller numbers by U2, U3 and U4 students.
- A large majority of first year students in CLC courses are in traditional (face-to-face) courses, followed by a smaller number in online courses.

Changes to the project plan: The post-semester pilot survey data was lost due to technical difficulties and user-error with regard to the software platform used. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the winter semester Writing Showcase was revised to be an entirely online event, which necessitated revision of the interview protocol. The shutdown of campus due to the pandemic in March, 2020, also limited the COGNOS report to only Phase 1 of a planned 3-phase data collection.

Program-level impact: The high percentage of first year writing (FYW) students in CLC courses is consistent with the CLC's mission to engage students in the composition community as well as the mission of peer mentor support and guidance for FYW students. It also suggests that peer mentor recruitment out of these General Education FYW courses should continue to maintain outreach to these students.

The results of shifting the Writing Showcase event to an online platform (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) demonstrate that revisions are needed to create an online event that better achieves the goals of the CLC in community-building and collaborative engagement.

Data about the impact of CLC support on student success indicated that the CLC should continue practices and training regarding traditional face-to-face composition classes, while revising our practices and training regarding online composition classes. Descriptive and correlational analysis indicate that participation in face-to-face CLC classes is a statistically significant factor in student success. However, CLC participation for online classes is not a statistically significant factor in student success. In the current academic climate of majority online courses, the data suggest a need for specialized peer mentor training and mentoring practices to meet the needs of students that are unique to online learning environments.

Future assessments and analyses should include more mixed methods approaches to better understand why participation in traditional CLC classes factors into student success, while participation in online CLC classes is not statistically significant. Additionally, future assessments and analyses should include more longitudinal data to better understand the effects of CLC participation on retention.

Individual impact:

This assessment project has given us insight into our learning community's effect on student success, while also providing us with new directions for future inquiry. The project also provided scholarly and professionalizing opportunities for faculty and graduate students, as well as institutional impacts. In terms of scholarship and advancing knowledge, our CLC Assessment Team was able to develop, pilot, and test methodological frameworks for future data collection and analysis of the CLC's impact on student success in composition courses. Our future work will be critical to understanding how to replicate the positive effects of traditional CLC support in online CLC environments. In terms of professionalization, our work has generated two national conference presentations and one regional conference presentation, and we plan on publishing initial and future findings. Institutionally, our project has provided us with previously unknown avenues for support and collaboration. Our work with the departments of assessment and analytics have proved fruitful and given us insight into ways we can continue toward our assessment goals in the future.

Recognition/Appreciation:

We are grateful for the work of Catherine Barrette in her responsiveness and encouragement throughout the project. We are grateful to Carly Cirilli and her team for meeting with us and helping us shape parameters for much of the quantitative data for this project. Additionally, Dr. Jeff Guinot was instrumental in helping to generate the correlative analysis of the quantitative data.