

May and November 2008

History Program

Learning Outcomes Assessment Project 2007-2008

Preamble

As a discipline that documents and interprets continuity and change through time, California State University Channel Islands' History Program prepares students to search into the human experience, as well as to communicate and analyze historical interpretations and ideas, verbally and in the written form. An emphasis of the program is to examine events from local (i.e., the West Coast Region and North America) and global perspectives. In this regard, a defining aspect of the History Program consists of a cutting-edge series of courses that emphasize the United States' relationship with the Pacific Rim, encompassing the Americas, the Pacific Islands, and Asia.

In support of the University's commitment to an interdisciplinary education, the History Program affords students the opportunity to integrate into their plan of study cross-listed history courses as well subjects outside the discipline to be utilized as part of their electives. Furthermore, the History Program promotes community-based applied research by placing student interns within public, private, and non-profit institutions as part of its Capstone Course.

History Program Student Learning Outcomes

Students graduating with a B.A. in History should possess a:

- good understanding and knowledge of the history of North America.
- good understanding and knowledge of global history in other regions of the world.
- good knowledge and problem-solving skills in analyzing contemporary and historical events.
- good communication skills in oral and written forms.
- good skills in historical research, analysis, and presentations.

For the 2007-2008 AY, the History Program selected the following Learning Outcome for assessment:

- good knowledge and problem-solving skills in analyzing contemporary and historical events.

This Learning Outcome was assessed through a survey administered to history majors in HIST 280 Historian's Craft and HIST 491 Historiography, both required for history majors, as well as HIST 366 Oceans of World History. The survey broke this Program Learning outcome into two instructional outcomes, one assessing knowledge, the other assessing analytic skill.

Data and Analysis

On the student survey for history majors (see Attachment A) students self-identified by their year (FR, SO, JR, SR). The survey asked them to choose one event from among seven national and seven international contemporary events and answer the following questions in a paragraph: What happened? Does the contemporary event relate to a historical event or events? If so, which event/events? How and why is the contemporary event related to historical events?

The survey essays were evaluated according to a rubric with two instructional outcome criteria, each on a scale of 1-5: A. *knowledge* of relationship between contemporary and historical events; and B. *problem-solving skills in analyzing* relationship between contemporary and historical events, with a score of 1 meaning “inadequate” and 5 being “very good” (see Attachment B).

A total of fifty-three majors answered the survey (28 Seniors, 22 Juniors, 2 Sophomores, and 1 Freshman), with 33 of them choosing a national event and 18 choosing an international event. Broken down by class standing, 64% of Seniors and 71% of Juniors answered about a national event. The two sophomores both chose an international event (Iraq War), and the lone Freshman chose a domestic event (Mortgage Crisis). The fifty-three majors in the survey represent about 41% of declared history majors in AY 07-08.

Table 1 breaks down the averages for Instructional Outcomes for Juniors and Seniors by category of topic (national and international). Table 2 outlines the average Instructional Outcome scores for Juniors and Seniors by topic. Overall, the data suggests that history majors are achieving this learning outcome around the “good” range (i.e. 4.0), with the “knowledge” outcome average at 4.4 overall, and the “analytic problem-solving skills” average at 3.9. (The raw data are presented in Attachment C).

Table 1 shows that both Juniors and Seniors had more knowledge of the relationship between contemporary and historical events in the international arena than in the national arena (Instructional Outcome A), and were markedly better in exhibiting problem-solving skills in analyzing relationships between contemporary and historical international events (Instructional Outcome B) than national events. Of the 16 students answering about an international event, half were juniors and half seniors, and the median for Instructional Outcome A is identical for each. The Seniors performed slightly better than the juniors on Instructional Outcome B, halfway between “good” and “very good” problem-solving analytic skills. Twice as many students answered on national topics than international topics, with seniors performing slightly better than juniors.

TABLE 1. Average Scores by International and National Topics, Jrs. and Srs.

Topic	A Jr.	A Sr.	A Total	B Jr.	B. Sr.	B Total
International topics	4.63 (N=8)	4.63 (N=8)	4.63 (N=16)	4.25 (N=8)	4.5 (N=8)	4.38 (N=16)
National topics	4.19 (N=20)	4.36 (N=14)	4.26 (N=34)	3.62 (N=20)	3.71 (N=14)	3.68 (N=34)
All topics	4.36 (N=28)	4.45 (N=22)	4.4 (N=50)	3.82 (N=28)	4.0 (N=22)	3.9 (N=50)

TABLE 2. Average Score on Instructional Outcomes, Jrs. and Srs.

Topic	A Jr.	A Sr.	A Total	B Jr.	B. Sr.	B Total
Hurricane Katrina	3.91 (N=9)	4.25 (N=4)	4.0 (N=13)	3.45 (N=9)	3.5 (N=4)	3.47 (N=13)
U.S. Presidential Election	4.17 (N=6)	4.2 (N=5)	4.18 (N=11)	3.66 (N=6)	3.6 (N=5)	3.64 (N=11)
Immigration Rights Marches	5.0 (N=3)	4.5 (N=4)	4.71 (N=7)	4.0 (N=3)	3.75 (N=4)	3.86 (N=7)
Jenna 6 case	5.0 (N=2)	5.0 (N=1)	4.5 (N=3)	4.0 (N=2)	5.0 (N=1)	4.0 (N=3)
Iraq War	4.5 (N=4)	4.83 (N=6)	4.58 (N=10)	4.0 (N=4)	4.67 (N=6)	4.33 (N=10)
2008 Olympics	5.0 (N=1)	4.0 (N=2)	4.33 (N=3)	5.0 (N=1)	4.0 (N=2)	4.33 (N=3)
Bhutto Assassination	4.0 (N=1)		4.0 (N=1)	4.0 (N=1)		4.0 (N=1)
Palestinian <i>Intifada</i>	5.0 (N=1)		5.0 (N=1)	5.0 (N=1)		5.0 (N=1)
Kenyan 2008 Elections	5.0 (N=1)		5.0 (N=1)	5.0 (N=1)		5.0 (N=1)
All topics	4.36 (N=28)	4.45 (N=22)	4.4 (N=50)	3.82 (N=28)	4.0 (N=22)	3.9 (N=50)

Taking up analysis of the data at the topical level represented in Table 2, in the cases where 3 or more students answered on a given event, Hurricane Katrina was the most popular (13 answers), followed by the U.S. Presidential election (11 answers), the Iraq War (10 answers), Immigration Rights Marches (7 answers), with the Jenna 6 case in Louisiana and the 2008 Olympics each with 3 answers. Of these six events, the Immigration Rights Marches elicited the greatest “knowledge of the relationship between the contemporary and historical events” (Instructional Outcome A) with an average score of 4.71. The second highest score for Instructional Outcome A was the Iraq War with an average of 4.58. The lowest average scores for Instructional Outcome A was in the answers for Hurricane Katrina (average 4.0), which had the most respondents (13), with more Juniors than Seniors (9 and 4 respectively).

As for Instructional Outcome B, the answers regarding the Iraq War and the 2008 Olympics showed the highest level of “problem-solving skills in analyzing relationships between contemporary and historical events” (Instructional Outcome B) with average scores of 4.33 each. The lowest average score for Instructional Outcome B was again for Hurricane Katrina, with an average of 3.47.

Conclusions and Implications for Program Modification

The survey created to measure the degree to which history majors are achieving the program learning outcome “good knowledge and problem-solving skills in analyzing contemporary and historical events” before graduation was a suitable instrument for the purpose. By breaking the outcome into two distinct parts, we are able to determine that students are stronger in showing knowledge of current events and their links to past events than they are on analyzing those relationships. By including both national and international events as options students to answer the survey questions about, we are able to weigh the relative ability to relation contemporary and historical events within two of the pillars of the history major (i.e. North American history and World history).

Recommendation 1: That essays on international events elicited stronger responses than those on national events suggests that **more attention to relating contemporary issues to their roots in the nation’s past is needed in U.S. survey courses** (as well as those at the upper division). This strategy will mainly impact our native students, as many majors come to CSUCI with the U.S. surveys already taken.

Recommendation 2: That there is some difference in achieving this learning outcome between juniors and seniors is not surprising, though the difference is not as great as one might have expected. Indeed, for some events, juniors wrote stronger answers than seniors. Nonetheless, junior scores on the analytic half of the outcome hover between the “fair” to “good” range overall, lower on the national than the international topics. All history faculty, then, should strive to **include exercises and class sessions dedicated to the mastery of problem-solving skills for analyzing topics across time in all courses in the program**, so that students have the context in which to understand relationships between contemporary issues and events in the past.

Attachment A:

Survey of Learning Outcome on knowledge and analysis of contemporary and historical events

CSUCI History Program

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Project AY 2007-08

About the history major student: FR SO JR SR (circle one)

Choose one of the following events, and in a paragraph answer the following questions:

What happened?

Does the contemporary event relate to a historical event or events? If so, which event/events?

How and why is the contemporary event related to historical events?

Hurricane Katrina

U.S. 2008 Presidential Election

Immigrants Rights Marches

Mortgage Crisis

Firing of U.S. Attorneys

Jena 6 case in Louisiana

Bear Stearns buyout deal

Assassination of Benazir Bhutto

Iraq War

2008 Olympics

Palestinian *intifada*

Turkey's bid to enter European Union

Violence around Kenyan elections 2008

AIDS epidemic

Attachment B.**Evaluation Criteria of Survey Answers**

CSUCI History Program

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Project AY 2007-08

Instructional Outcomes	Score
A. knowledge of relationship between contemporary and historical events	
B. problem-solving skills in analyzing relationship between contemporary and historical events	

Scoring Criteria:

1. Inadequate.
 - A. No knowledge shown about relationship between contemporary and historical events.
 - B. No problem-solving skills apparent, shows no understanding of how to analyze relationship between contemporary and historical events.
2. Poor.
 - A. Minimal knowledge shown about relationship between contemporary and historical events.
 - B. Minimal problem-solving skills apparent, shows little understanding of how to analyze relationship between contemporary and historical events.
3. Fair.
 - A. Some knowledge shown about relationship between contemporary and historical events.
 - B. Some problem-solving skills apparent, understands to a limited extent how to analyze relationship between contemporary and historical events.
4. Good.
 - A. Good knowledge shown about relationship between contemporary and historical events.
 - B. Good problem-solving skills apparent, clearly understands how to analyze relationship between contemporary and historical events.
5. Very Good.
 - A. Detailed knowledge shown about relationship between contemporary and historical events.
 - B. Strong problem-solving skills apparent, understands at a high level how to analyze relationship between contemporary and historical events.

 Evaluator Initials and Date

Attachment C.

Event description	Student	Outcome A	Outcome B
Mortgage Crisis	F	3	3
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	4	4
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	3	3
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	3	3
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	3	3
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	5	4
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	5	4
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	5	4
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	4	3
Hurricane Katrina	Jr	3	3
US 08 Pres. Election	Jr	5	4
US 08 Pres. Election	Jr	5	4
US 08 Pres. Election	Jr	3	3
US 08 Pres. Election	Jr	4	4
US 08 Pres. Election	Jr	4	3
US 08 Pres. Election	Jr	4	4
Immigrant Rights Marches	Jr	5	4
Immigrant Rights Marches	Jr	5	4
Immigrant Rights Marches	Jr	5	4
Jena 6 case	Jr	5	4
Jena 6 case	Jr	5	4
Iraq War	Jr	4	3
Iraq War	Jr	5	5
Iraq War	Jr	4	4
Iraq War	Jr	5	4
2008 Olympics	Jr	5	5
Palestinian intifada	Jr	5	5
Kenyan elections 2008	Jr	5	4
Bhutto assasination	Jr	4	4
Iraq War	So	4	4
Iraq War	So	4	4
Hurricane Katrina	Sr	3	3
Hurricane Katrina	Sr	4	3
Hurricane Katrina	Sr	5	4
Hurricane Katrina	Sr	5	4
US 08 Pres. Election	Sr	4	3
US 08 Pres. Election	Sr	3	3
US 08 Pres. Election	Sr	4	4
US 08 Pres. Election	Sr	5	4
US 08 Pres. Election	Sr	5	4
Immigrant Rights Marches	Sr	5	4
Immigrant Rights Marches	Sr	3	2

Immigrant Rights			
Marches	Sr	5	5
Immigrant Rights			
Marches	Sr	5	4
Jena 6 case	Sr	5	5
Iraq War	Sr	5	5
Iraq War	Sr	5	5
Iraq War	Sr	5	5
Iraq War	Sr	5	5
Iraq War	Sr	5	5
Iraq War	Sr	4	3
2008 Olympics	Sr	5	5
2008 Olympics	Sr	3	3