

Course Assessment Summary Report COMM 1003: Film Lecture

The department completed pilot testing the assessment plan for COMM 1003 during the 2016-2017 academic year. This pilot test involved four of the eight sections offered during regular academic sessions. Though the data from these sections were not reported in the same format, the instructors offered significant insights on the process. Overall, the data indicate the course achieves its objectives.

Course performance

Two sections were assessed in Fall 2016 (sections 003 and 005), each taught by different instructors. Section 003 used a 10-item pretest/posttest format (items were drawn from the midterm and final exams in the course). Overall, the assessment scores showed positive gains in students' achievement:

- Pretest: $\bar{x} = 4.85/10$ (48.5%, N = 184)
- Midterm posttest: $\bar{x} = 5.55/9$ (61.6%, N = 180)
- Final exam posttest: $\bar{x} = 4.15/5$ (83.0%, N = 180)

Additionally, this instructor tracked the percentage of students correctly answering each question. Nine of ten items showed an increase from the pretest (range = 0.5% - 83%) to the posttest (range = 49% - 98%). One item showed a decrease in percent-correct from 63% to 49%. We cannot yet determine if this is due to something about the course or something about that test question, so that item has been tagged for closer analysis in future assessments.

Section 005 used a 10-item pretest/posttest format (not counted toward course grade). Here, too, the average overall score increased between the pretest ($\bar{x} = 2.46$, N = 81) and the posttest ($\bar{x} = 6.18$, N = 66). In this section, all items showed an increase in the percentage of students answering correctly from the pretest (range = 7.4% - 45.7%) to the posttest (range = 27.3% - 86.4%).

Two sections were assessed in Spring 2017, and both were taught by the same instructor. This instructor used the same ten items included in the Fall 2016 assessments. Section 001 enrolled 199 students (though the instructor did not report the number completing the assessment. This section showed positive gains in student achievement from the pretest ($\bar{x} = 3.80$) to the posttest ($\bar{x} = 9.00$). Section 004 showed similar gains from pretest ($\bar{x} = 4.30$) to posttest ($\bar{x} = 8.70$). No item analyses were conducted in these sections.

Achievement on course objectives

Two instructors (Fall, sec. 003, Spring secs. 001 and 004) analyzed scores on the three principal course objectives. The results of this analysis indicate positive gains on all three objectives.

1. To understand formal film analysis and apply technical terminology (measured by 7 items):
 - Fall 16: percentage of correct answers increased from pretest (46%) to posttest (93%)
 - Spring 2017: all items showed increases in percent-correct; on average, 88.17% of students answered each item correctly (range = 61 - 98%)
2. To build and/or develop a strong appreciation of the technical and socio-cultural aspects of film (measured by 9 items):
 - Fall 16: percentage of correct answers increased from pretest (50%) to posttest (80%)
 - Spring 2017: on average, 83% of students answered each item correctly (range = 61 - 99%)
3. To explore various influences (i.e. socio-cultural, economic, and political) that shape how film depicts gender, race, ethnicity, class, ability, and sexual orientation. (two items)
 - Fall 16: percentage of correct answers increased from pretest (56%) to posttest (85%)

- Spring 2017: both items showed increases in % correct; on average, 90.5% of students answered each item correctly (range = 81 – 97%)

Conclusions

The instructor of the Spring 2017 sections offered several observations that seem to characterize the results across both semesters:

The significant improvement in total average scores suggests a positive outcome for the course objectives. Each assessment question suggested marked improvement over the course of the semester, though one did reflect a flat outcome. The course seems to do well emphasizing technical terminology peculiar to film studies, but could improve its emphasis on broader concepts, such as the varied responsibilities of a cinematographer. Assessment tools could also be improved, creating a high likelihood of assessing actual knowledge rather than “common-sense” responses.

Based on these data and feedback from the instructors, the goals listed below have been set for course assessment in COMM 1003 during the 2017 – 2018 academic year. Implementation should ensure a more meaningful comparison of student outcomes across sections of the course.

- Assess only those learning objectives common to all sections of the course. Course instructors wishing to measure section-specific outcomes should do this by adding to the instrument, not by substituting items.
- Develop a larger pool of assessment questions for each objective. Instructors will approve these items for use, then choose a common set for each semester’s assessment instruments.
- Analyze data on the same units of analysis to permit comparisons across sections/semesters. This should include overall scores, scores for item-sets in each course objective, and item analyses (both difficulty and discrimination index scores).
- Implement a report template for the reporting of results and conclusions of each assessment.

Submitted on August 10, 2017

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