

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): Anthropology

Department: Sociology and Anthropology

Degree or Certificate Level: BA

College/School: College of Arts and Sciences

Date (Month/Year): August 2022

Assessment Contact: Joel Jennings, MBA PhD

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2022

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2021

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization? Yes

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please list the full, complete learning outcome statements and not just numbers, e.g., Outcomes 1 and 2.)

We assessed learning outcome 2:

2. Graduates will demonstrate a broad knowledge base in the subfield of archaeological anthropology.
 - a. Assess the nature of the practice of archaeology as a science, including inductive and deductive reasoning, the scientific method, and research design.
 - b. Explain the role of the environment in the development of human cultures.
 - c. Demonstrate how archaeologists act as anthropologists when studying human cultures and cultural change.
 - d. Distinguish the ways archaeologists can detect cultural change in the archaeological record.

3. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail and identify the course(s) in which they were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

We analyzed a randomly selected sample of 5 final research presentations from the course, ANTH 2240 Archaeology. These presentations were empirical works that required students to: 1) to tell the 'story' of an archaeological site of their choosing; 2) (and most importantly) to back up that information by identifying the archaeological methods used to document the evidence; 3) to give students practice for presenting at conferences and local outreach opportunities.

Madrid artifacts were not included. (That campus does not have an Anthropology major at this time; we will share our findings with them and invite dialogue, however.)

We also undertook qualitative interviews that asked students about their understanding and comfort with social science methodology. We explored which classes helped them understand the various methods used in social science, as well as what instructional techniques were helpful.

4. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

Direct Methods:

1) During June 2022, a committee (Dr. Amy Cooper and Dr. Mary Vermillion) evaluated a sample of final research project presentation slides (5 of 25) using a rubric that focused on the four learning objectives.

Indirect Methods:

A second committee (Dr. Richard Colignon and Dr. Joel Jennings) also conducted focus groups with graduating seniors to identify specific issues with the program’s delivery of methods courses and techniques.

5. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

A

3	3	1	1	3	4	5	5	1	4.5
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a) 3.05 / 5

B

2	3	1	2	2	3	5	1	2	4.5
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b) 2.55 / 5

C

2	2	2	2	3	4	4.5	5	1	5
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c) 3.05 / 5

D

3	2	1	3	1	3	4	5	1	5
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d) 2.80 / 5

The committee’s scoring of student artifacts was uneven. Much of the diverging assessment has to do with the chosen artifact and process: As the instructor for the course, Dr. Vermillion had the benefit of hearing the student presentations that accompanied the PowerPoint slides while Dr. Cooper could only assess the slides themselves. The tendency for slides to be light on text and citation made it difficult for Dr. Cooper to find evidence of certain learning outcomes (see scores of 1) much less assess the student’s overall level of complexity or mastery of a given competency. With these limitations in mind, I am inclined to give greater weight to Dr. Vermillion’s scoring in this instance. A different kind of artifact should be selected for evaluation in the future to avoid this difficulty.

During focus groups, students indicated that coursework helped to improve their writing and their related critical thinking skills such as evaluating the quality of reference materials and recognizing the importance of cross-referencing.

6. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

Both the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that Anthropology program is doing a good job of meeting its learning objectives around effective communication. Our findings in this assessment suggest that Anthropology students are both competent and comfortable with their ability to express themselves clearly in written and oral formats.

7. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

The full-time faculty for the Anthropology program convened in-person on August 22, 2022, to discuss the results of this assessment. Evaluators discussed the broader context of their evaluations and Dr. O'Neill further contextualized his synthesis. A productive discussion ensued as detailed below.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites

- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process

- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

From this assessment, we have determined the need to be more specific in the artifacts used to assess student learning. The key artifact was a final project that was primarily an oral presentation with accompanying slides. While the instructor of record benefitted from hearing the presentation alongside the accompanying PowerPoint, the second assessor could only refer to the slides.

Moving forward, we will require an artifact that does not rely substantially upon a presentation component.

We also agreed to revise learning objective 2A by dividing it into two, more-focused learning objectives as follows:

- a. Assess the nature of research design and method in archaeology.
- b. Assess inductive and deductive reasoning as it pertains to the archaeological record and practice.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

n/a

8. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

Based upon previous assessment cycles, our program has revised its learning goals to be clearer and easier to measure. The Anthropology Program fully restructured the program assessment protocol in 2021 to more fully capture the aims and intent of the program goals.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

Anthropology revised its learning outcomes in the past year. This process has provided an opportunity to assess our new learning objectives and has resulted in the further refinement as detailed above (7B). Faculty are evaluating changes to the assessment protocol as assessments are being completed, and changes to the protocol are being implemented for the subsequent cycle.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

The assessment process has pressed the faculty to think more clearly and succinctly about how we articulate our learning objectives so that we can more clearly score them.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

Based upon this assessment, we plan to change the kind of artifact used for assessment. We will also be more deliberate in having faculty beyond the instructor of record assessing the course. This will potentially provide a more even assessment by providing each evaluator with the same evidence (e.g. the artifact at hand).

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document.

Rubric for Assessing Goal #2

Paper # _____ Last Name _____

A) Is the student able to assess the nature of the practice of archaeology as a science, including inductive and deductive reasoning, the scientific method, and research design

<i>Poor</i>		<i>Adequate</i>		<i>Excellent</i>
<i>The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.</i>		<i>The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.</i>		<i>The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.</i>
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

B) Can the student explain the role of the environment in the development of human cultures?

<i>Poor</i>		<i>Adequate</i>		<i>Excellent</i>
<i>The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.</i>		<i>The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.</i>		<i>The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.</i>
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

C) Does the student demonstrate how archaeologists act as anthropologists when studying human cultures and cultural change?

<i>Poor</i>		<i>Adequate</i>		<i>Excellent</i>
<i>The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.</i>		<i>The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.</i>		<i>The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

Comments:

D) Can the student distinguish the ways archaeologists can detect cultural change in the archaeological record?

<i>Poor</i>		<i>Adequate</i>		<i>Excellent</i>
<i>The student provides no examples or misunderstands the examples.</i>		<i>The student provides examples, but they are somewhat brief, vague, or insufficiently supported with scholarly citations.</i>		<i>The student provides detailed and insightful examples that are supported with citations to scholarly literature.</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

Comments: