

Classics Program Assessment Report 2018-2019

submitted by Rebecca Resinski

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Classics program assessment activities 2018-2019

Because Classics is an interdisciplinary program rather than a department, we were not given time during Fall Faculty Conference to work on a rubric together. During Fall Faculty Conference Professors Rauh, Resinski, and Shedd were required to meet with the Languages department, and Professors Campolo and Falls-Corbitt were required to meet with the Philosophy department.

During a separate assessment meeting, however, the Classics program discussed formats that will enable us to record and reflect on data for assessment purposes. We have adapted our standard form (in use for a number of years), which records chart-friendly, quantitative data, into a second form, which we can use for case studies. Both are sent as separate attachments along with this report.

We are also submitting a third form, one for recording targeted changes to our courses based on various kinds of evidence. This form complements our other assessment work: because the changes recorded on this form do not need to be tied to the particular learning goal(s) being assessed in a given year, it allows us to document and follow up on our ongoing work on all the learning goals. Professors Campolo, Rauh, Resinski, and Shedd each submitted an evidence-based change report form this year; information from those reports is included in the sections on assessment-informed changes below.

The Classics SAP was revised to reflect these additions to our assessment toolbox. An updated SAP is sent as a separate attachment along with this report.

We assessed the Classics capstone course this year. Each assignment in the course was correlated to specific program learning goals, and the professor for the course (Professor Resinski this year) used the case-study version of the Classics assessment form to write a descriptive summary of each student, detailing their degree of achievement of each learning goal based on their performance in the different assignments. The assessment indicates that the Classics program overall prepares students for their capstone activities and that students in the capstone demonstrate solid to high achievement of the program's learning goals associated with the capstone on our curricular map:

learning goal #1: to acquire a knowledge of Latin and Ancient Greek vocabulary, morphology, and syntax, including the technical terminology used to describe grammatical phenomena

learning goal #2: to translate authentic Latin and Ancient Greek texts into English

learning goal #3: to interpret and analyze Greek and Roman texts, whether read in the original language or in English translation

learning goal #8: to express interpretive and analytic ideas in oral and written forms

learning goal #9: to undertake research activities appropriate to the field of Classics

Changes to the capstone informed by this assessment are included among the discussion of other changes below.

Assessment-informed changes implemented in 2018-2019

An abbreviated lexical analysis assignment was included in LATI 210 for the first time by Professor Rauh; Professor Resinski had already implemented this change in her recent offerings of LATI 210. Evidence from the capstone this year suggests that this introduction to lexical analysis early on better prepares students for related assignments in upper-level Latin courses.

The course enrollment cap for CLAS 200 (Classical Mythology) was lowered to 20 (from 30-40). This promoted more active, in-class practice with literary interpretation on the part of all students. The results of essay tests and other written assignments indicate that the change in class size helped students work toward and achieve learning goal #3: “to interpret and analyze Greek and Roman texts, whether read in the original language or in English translation.” Indirect assessment measures (an in-class survey as well as comments on the course feedback form) also indicated that students felt that the smaller class size facilitated their learning.

Students in LATI 410 (the capstone course) had individual presentation practice sessions with the professor. These sessions increased students’ effectiveness at communicating their ideas orally.

Assessment-informed changes to be implemented in 2019-2020

Professors Rauh and Resinski will discuss changes to LATI 410 (the capstone course) informed by this year’s assessment and by the need to have the course assignments fit wholly into one semester. In the past, students completed drafts of all their portfolio components by the end of the fall semester but didn’t need to turn in final revisions until

early in the spring semester. College policy is phasing out this option, so Classics will need to retool its expectations for the capstone.*

We will reconsider how we explain the date-focused portion of the Classics comprehensive exam in the preparation sheet which we give to seniors.*

*There are no rising Classics seniors, so next year is a particularly good opportunity to discuss and decide on changes to implement in 2020-2021.

Some assignments in CLAS 302 (Roman Civilization) and PHIL 206 C1 (Stoics, Skeptics, and Epicureans) will be redesigned to provide more in-class, structured practice at interpretation and analysis, aimed at helping students with learning goal #3: “to interpret and analyze Greek and Roman texts, whether read in the original language or in English translation.”

We will more strongly advise Classics majors to take CLAS 200 (Classical Mythology) sooner in their college careers. This course provides foundational work in literary interpretation, and when students delay taking it they may be less prepared for higher-level interpretive work (for instance, in the capstone) than their peers.

Other proposed assessment work for 2019-2020

Following our SAP, we rotate through the program learning goals, picking one or more each year to focus on in our assessment. We have not yet assessed #7—“to develop skill at analyzing and/or synthesizing evidence from a variety of genres or media”—so that should be our focus for 2019-2020.

We will move to a shared digital archive of the program’s assessment documents. A digital resource bank will promote transparency and ease of access for all members of the program. It will also make it easier to track and record changes across time (for instance, a professor will easily be able to return to an old evidence-based change report and add follow-up information after a change has been implemented). Material from 2018-2019 on will be included in the archive.

Response to targeted feedback from the Assessment committee

Italicized portions are quotations from the Assessment committee’s feedback.

The committee would like you to provide us with more information about exactly what your indirect and direct evidence is for student learning and how it is being used.

Indirect evidence takes a variety of forms: e.g., mid-semester in-class questionnaires, end-of-semester feedback, reflective activities and assignments, and one-on-one meetings between student and professor. Which indirect measures are used depends on the professor, course in question, and learning goal being assessed. Our forms have space where professors explain what kind(s) of indirect evidence they used for assessment purposes and what that evidence indicates. As examples of the role indirect measures may play: the recent decisions to lower the CLAS 200 enrollment cap and to offer individual practice sessions for capstone presentations were influenced by indirect assessment measures (end-of-semester feedback for the CLAS 200 decision and one-on-one meetings with students for the capstone decision).

Direct evidence takes a variety of forms: e.g., tests, quizzes, presentations, papers, and other written assignments. When the learning goal to be focused on in a particular year is determined, we identify specific assignments closely correlated to that learning goal which will provide clear evidence of student progress toward and achievement of that goal. For the most part we use assignments in courses associated with the designated learning goal on the curricular map, though sometimes other courses may provide ancillary evidence as well. Our forms have space where professors explain what kind(s) of direct evidence they used for assessment purposes and what the assessment may suggest about changes to courses or the program to better help students achieve the learning goal.

We share and discuss our direct and indirect measures, as well as our findings, with one another, identifying trends and also brainstorming possible improvements to individual courses and the program as a whole.

We hope that the copies of the forms submitted with this report will give the committee a clearer idea of how we record, reflect, and make plans to act on direct and indirect evidence in our assessment process.

We would like you to develop (or explain to us if you already have one) a more formalized mechanism for recording the results of your discussions of case studies.

We adapted our assessment form so that there are now two versions of it: one for quantitative, chart-friendly data, and one for case studies. Copies of both are sent as separate attachments with this report.

We understand that the Capstone may not be the best mechanism for assessing the department's learning goals. What other avenues might better help you do so?

We think that our annual assessment process accomplishes this:

- We focus on a different learning goal (or goals) each year.
- Using the curricular map as our guide, we trace the chosen learning goal(s) throughout the program's curriculum, gathering data from direct and indirect measures to determine students' progress toward and/or achievement of the goal(s). See above for what we use as direct and indirect measures.
- We record the gathered information on the forms submitted separately with this report. The forms also prompt reflection on the data and what it might suggest about possible changes to courses and/or the program's overall curriculum.
- We share our findings with one another and discuss changes we can implement in the future, both in specific courses and in the program as a whole.

We also think that the new evidence-based change report form will complement our annual assessment focus by documenting our ongoing work on all the learning goals.

The strengths of this approach seem to us to be the following:

- Most of the students in our courses are not Classics majors. Our assessment plan ensures that all students taking courses throughout the program—whether they are majors, minors, or one-time students of Classics—are supported in their work toward the program's learning goals.
- It provides a larger set of students—and hence richer evidence—than if we focused solely on Classics majors and the capstone.
- It allows us to calibrate direct and indirect measures to particular courses, levels, and learning goals.
- It responds to the fact that the learning goals are spread throughout the curriculum and ensures that the various courses in the curriculum do their

part to contribute to student progress toward and achievement of the learning goals.

Sent as separate attachments with this report

Updated Classics SAP

Classics assessment form (for quantitative, chart-friendly data)

Classics assessment form (for descriptive data)

Evidence-based change report form