

20/21 Theatre Arts and Dance Department
Hendrix College

Overview

On April 3, 2021, the Theatre Arts and Dance Department met for the annual assessment meeting. Present were Ann Muse and Antonio Horne. Our department assessed the following learning goals for AY 20-21.

Our evaluation included direct and indirect assessment for two learning goals:

1. Contextualize Theatre and Dance in the history of the human condition

- The learning goal assesses the students' knowledge in the area of theater history.
- Direct Assessment Course TART 310 Theater History— individual student achievement by professor
- Indirect Assessment Senior Exit interview questions concerning the students' confidence in their ability to contextualize theatre in the history of the human condition. Data from 2020 graduates is also included as requested by the committee.

2. Develop critical and creative thinking skills and intellectual depth by reading, analyzing and producing theatre and dance

- The learning goal assesses the students' skills in analyzing a script.
- Direct Assessment Course TART 210 Script Analysis Fundamentals—individual student achievement by professor.
- Senior Exit interview questions concerning the students' confidence in their ability to think critically and creatively about plays through reading and analyzing plays. Data from 2020 graduates is also included.

Learning Goal: Students will learn to Contextualize Theatre and Dance in the history of the human condition.

DIRECT ASSESSMENT

Category of Student Achievement	Description of Student Achievement	# of students at this level
Exemplary	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to communicate through analytical writing and discussion understanding of the development of theater and modern issues relating to the context of culture, literature, and the craft of Theatre.	4
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an understanding of the development of theatre history and is able to examine modern issues through dramatic literature.	9
Basic	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an understanding of the development of theatre history through context of dramatic literature.	2

The discussion was a productive one as it allowed Professors Horne and Muse to examine all history courses in the department. A newly formed major includes the required course TART 310 Theater History as well as an elective chosen from the following TART 335 Women Writing for the Stage and TART 350 American Musical Theater (more courses will be developed.) We agreed that while the structure of each course should remain independent to that instructor; however we have the opportunity to unify the learning goals. In Fall 2021 we will develop learning goals in Fall 2021. Sharing our expectations for the students in this area during this discussion proved to be especially useful. During this process, our goal will be understand the content and context of one another's courses well enough to complement the material for the students as well as improve skills used in each course.

Of the students in the class, five are majors and at least three are minors. These students' assessment are in the notes for the rubric for the class. We can observe the performance of the students in the future.

Learning Goal: Students will learn to Contextualize Theatre and Dance in the history of the human condition.

INDIRECT ASSESSMENT: Senior Survey

My experience in Theatre Arts and Dance courses contributed toward the development of the following kinds of knowledge

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Contextualizing Theatre and Dance performance in the history of the human condition	2/2	2				
Critical thinking: understanding the processes of analyzing a dramatic text.	3/3					
The basic structure of theatrical production.	2/3	1				
Development of Drama in the western world from Greeks to Modern	2/2	1/1				

The graduating seniors from 2020 and 2021 were three in number. The above survey notes the students' perceptions of their abilities in the four significant areas—the first and last are pertinent to this assessment.

- We were pleased that all students in 2020 and 2021 saw their experiences in Theatre Arts and Dance courses contributed positively toward the development of knowledge in all four areas which they indicated by all marking strongly agree or agree.
- The graduates in 2020 and 2021 were exceptional in their abilities and their work in the department. The students were reasonably accurate regarding their abilities overall.
- We speculated their assessment might be a little high concerning the Modern Era.
- We determined that as more history courses develop addressing the Modern Era, students' confidence in this area would increase.
- Our conversation regarding the history courses in the direct assessment above is pertinent here.

DIRECT ASSESSMENT

Learning Goal: Develop critical and creative thinking skills and intellectual depth by reading, analyzing and producing theatre and dance.

Category of Student Achievement	Description of Student Achievement	# students at this level
Exemplary	<input type="checkbox"/> Able to communicate through analytical writing and discussion understanding of the development of theater and modern issues relating to the context of culture, literature, and the craft of Theatre.	3
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an understanding of the development of theater history and examine modern issues through dramatic literature.	3
Basic	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop vocabulary and skills specific to script analysis.	1

Script analysis is a bedrock in all areas of theatre. TART 210 Script Analysis Fundamentals is our foundational course for majors and minors. Analysis is part of our entire curriculum. It is introduced in TART 140 Acting Fundamentals, applied TART 280 Costume and Make-up, TART 430 Stage Directing, and TART 450 Production Design.

Our evaluation of the report was productive and focused on how we are teaching analysis in all of the courses. Our department has changed due to retirement and new hire. We acknowledged that as a faculty we need to understand how script analysis is being taught throughout the departmental offerings. Professors Horne and Muse are responsible for teaching all but TART 280 and 450—an adjunct teaches both of these courses. In AY 21-22, we will examine how analysis is in being taught and utilized in all pertinent courses. We will address these questions:

- Is it necessary to have a uniformed vocabulary that is introduced and reiterated in all courses?
- What materials are the students producing in each of the courses to demonstrate their understanding of analysis?
- Will the students benefit from our being able to reference one another's approaches as valid approaches if we are using different methods?
- How do we improve students' ability to converse with theater artists in all areas of production and outside of Hendrix College?

Of the students in the class, three are majors and two are minors or potential minors.

INDIRECT ASSESSMENT

Skills: My experience in Theatre Arts and Dance courses contributed toward the development of the following kinds of skills

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
Contextualizing Theatre and Dance performance in the history of the human condition.	2/3	1				
Critical thinking: understanding the processes of analyzing a dramatic text.	3/3					
The basic structure of theatrical production.	2/3	1				
Development of Drama in the western world from Greeks to Modern.	2/3	1				

In the above survey, the second area concerns to the learning goal in question. All students mark their ability to analyze a text as Strongly Agree. We are very pleased with this positive outcome. Because the students are required to use this skill in all areas of theatre it is fairly accurate that of the two classes the students are in the first and second category.

We still want to improve the teaching and the strength of the skill for the students. However, we came to the conclusion that the clearer understanding we have about one another's approach to analysis the better we can serve the students. It is true that the students have a firm understanding of analyzing a text. Our questions above will allow us to provide a more unified approach to the students' experience through vocabulary, scaffolding project difficulty, and developing communication skills in the broader context of theatre.