

Culture and Belief (B) General Education Assessment Report

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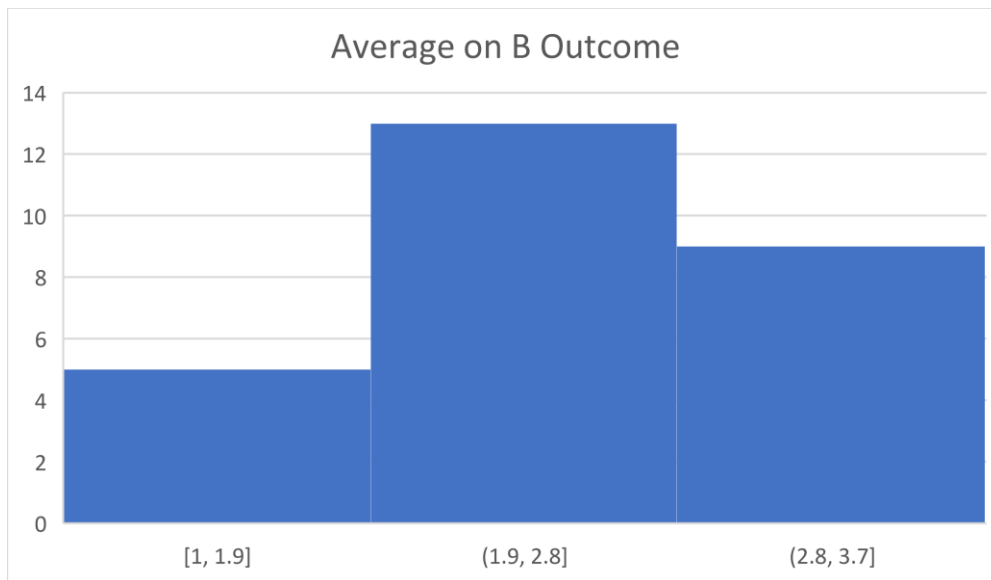
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Background and Methods

In September 2019 a team of faculty met to assess a random sample of 27 artifacts obtained from B course in the Spring of 2018. Evaluators were Josh Rust, Susan Peppers-Bates and Sam Houston.

As per best practices, the team first reviewed the rubric, then calibrated scores by using two samples for practice. The team achieved high interrater reliability during the calibration session. During the assessment portion, each sample was scored by two readers who did not see each other's ratings.

Results



Average by Criterion

| Criterion | Mean | Median | Number of Samples |
|---------------------|------|--------|-------------------|
| Perspective-Taking | 2.44 | 3 | 27 |
| Critical reflection | 2.15 | 2 | 27 |
| Overall | 2.3 | 2.5 | 27 |

The number of samples rated at an average of 2.5 or higher overall was 15/27 or 55.56% Given that we are using multiple dimensions on this rubric, we consider this to be equivalent to students performing at an “Acceptable” level on this GLO.

Discussion and Analysis

The B learning outcome was last assessed in September of 2011, In addition, both the GLO and rubric have been updated since then. So comparisons between the assessment results are probably not very relevant.

The number of samples received was very small (n = 27). There are several reasons for this, including lack of clarity during the transition in assessment leadership in the summer of 2018. However, another reason for this result is that faculty often do not turn in requested samples when asked. This lack of compliance remains a problem in all general education assessments.

As stated, the faculty were using the GLO and rubric (attached) for the first time during this assessment cycle. Initially there were three dimensions; Perspective Taking; Critical reflection, and Interpretive Humility. The faculty doing the scoring decided that separating Interpretive Humility from the other two dimensions was not wise, as it really was a part of Perspective Taking, so they folded it into this dimension and did not use it in scoring. Because the rubric was recently updated, the evaluators explicitly approached this assessment session as an opportunity to check the validity of rubric. The incorporation of the Interpretive Humility dimension into the Perspective Taking dimension was the principle change made to the rubric. A copy of the original rubric is available on request.

It is clear that students in general did better on Perspective Taking than Critical Reflection; it appears this is largely because of the type of artifacts which were submitted. For instance, in some cases these were short answers from exams, which would not demonstrate this dimension adequately. According to Dr. Joshua Rust, who led the scorers, “These problems might be solved if we ask instructors to give artifacts (and prompts) that best represent the pedagogical aspirations they have for their students, which for the most part would not include final exams--at least in the humanities.”

Recommendations:

- Work on faculty education for appropriate prompts and samples for this assessment.
- Ensure that faculty and staff instructors are aware of the B assessment results and are asked for input about making the results better.
- Communicate more effectively with instructors of B courses about expectations for assessment, stressing the importance of assessment for both accreditation and improvement of learning

The next assessment of the B learning outcome is scheduled to occur in the spring of 2021.

Culture and Belief Learning Outcome and Rubric

Learning Outcome Statement:

Students can reflect critically on their own and/or others' cultural beliefs and practices.

Rubric Dimensions:

1. *Perspective-taking.* Students empathetically *interpret* the practices, beliefs, and/or values that are distinctive of a cultural or social group (including one's own) or an individual thinker within that group. Interpretation attempts to reconstruct the group's or individual's *own point of view*. Students' interpretations attempt to *surpass and/or avoid banal or stereotypical understandings* of these phenomena and are framed by expressions of *interpretive humility*.¹

2. *Critical reflection.* Students *reflect critically* on their interpretations of a group's practices, beliefs, and/or values. The notion of critical reflection is broadly understood to include *comparison, explanation, application or evaluation*, as defined below. Such critical reflections must be undertaken *according to scholar norms*² and are *sufficiently creative*.³

Comparison. Students can elaborate on a group's distinctive practices, beliefs, and/or values through cross- or intra-cultural comparison⁴ or through a comparison with other interpretations of the same social phenomenon.

Explanation. Students can explain a group's practices, beliefs, and/or values by describing some of the historical background or possible causes of these phenomena.

Application. Students can apply a group's practices, beliefs, and/or values to a different context, including contemporary social and political problems.

¹ Interpretive humility involves acknowledgement of difficulty of the interpretive task and might be subtly expressed, taking the form of hedges or qualifications ("One interpretation of x...", "As I read x...", etc.).

² Minimally including but not limited to appropriate citation practices, although these may be waved under certain circumstances (e.g., in-class exams).

³ The expectation is not that the student makes a unique contribution to our collective understanding of these phenomena, but that they manifest some degree of creativity in the way they combine and build from sources.

⁴ For example, a student might compare the social order as proposed in Plato's *Republic* with the caste system in India. Alternatively, the student might use their own practices and assumptions as a basis for comparison. This is what Clifford Geertz does (in part) in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1977), where he argues that a Balinese cockfight is not *really* what it is as it appears to *us*—a sporting event or a game (412).

Evaluation. Students can *critically interpret* a group's practices, ideas and/or values. Such evaluations should be approached cautiously and should adhere to academically acceptable standards of critique.⁵

⁵ For example, the student might unearth the negative, distorting effects a practice might have on democratic communication.

| | Capstone | Milestone | Approaching | Developing | No Basis for Review |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Perspective-taking | The student empathetically <i>interprets</i> the practices, beliefs, and/or values that are distinctive of a cultural or social group <i>from the point of view of those within the group.</i> The interpretation also attempts to <i>surpass and/or avoids banal or stereotypical understandings</i> of these phenomena and is framed by expressions of <i>interpretive humility.</i> | The student empathetically <i>interprets</i> the practices, beliefs, and/or values that are distinctive of a cultural or social group <i>from the point of view of those within the group.</i> The interpretation either attempts to <i>surpass and/or avoids banal or stereotypical understandings</i> of these phenomena or is framed by expressions of <i>interpretive humility.</i> | The student empathetically <i>interprets</i> the practices, beliefs, and/or values that are distinctive of a cultural or social group <i>from the point of view of those within the group.</i> The interpretation neither attempts to <i>surpass and/or avoids banal or stereotypical understandings</i> of these phenomena nor is framed by expressions of <i>interpretive humility.</i> | The student blatantly mischaracterizes the practices, beliefs, and/or values of a cultural or social group (including one's own) from the point of view of those within the group or fails to adopt the internal point of view. | |
| 2. Critical Reflection | The student <i>reflects critically</i> on their interpretation of a group's practices, beliefs, and/or values. The | The student <i>reflects critically</i> on their interpretation of a group's practices, beliefs, and/or values. The | The student <i>reflects critically</i> on their interpretation of a group's practices, beliefs, and/or values. The | The student fails to <i>reflect critically</i> on the interpretation of a group's practices, beliefs, and/or values. In other words, the | |

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| | <p>notion of critical reflection is broadly understood to include <i>comparison, explanation, application or evaluation</i>. The critical reflection is <i>justified according to disciplinary norms</i> and is <i>sufficiently creative</i>.</p> | <p>notion of critical reflection is broadly understood to include <i>comparison, explanation, application or evaluation</i>. The critical reflection is either <i>justified according to disciplinary norms</i> or is <i>sufficiently creative</i>.</p> | <p>notion of critical reflection is broadly understood to include <i>comparison, explanation, application or evaluation</i>. The critical reflection is neither <i>justified according to disciplinary norms</i> nor is <i>sufficiently creative</i>.</p> | <p>interpretation provided (if provided) is not developed by way of comparison, explanation, evaluation, or application.</p> | |
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