

Annual Program Assessment Report

Academic Year(s) Assessed: 2023-2024

College: CLS

Department: Sociology & **Anthropology**

Department Head: Cody Warner

Submitted by: Craig Lee, Cody Warner (DH)

Program(s) Assessed

List all majors (including each option), minors, and certificates that are included in this assessment – add or subtract rows as needed – please use official titles:

Majors	Minors, Options, etc.
Anthropology	Anthropology

1. Past Assessment Summary.

Feedback from our prior assessment was positive with the recommendation that we “Keep doing what you're doing - look at program assessment from this creative space of what you would like to know about your students and how that can improve the program over all.” We also received specific feedback with regard to “writing” based on our evergreen observation of the need for students to establish and maintain the basics of a good writing practice prior to enrolling in our upper division courses. As we noted in our 22-23 assessment, the development of writing skills is not a specific part of our PLOs, but they represent a shoulder issue with regard to effective communication. Our 22-23 assessment review recommended continuing to engage campus Writing Center services as well as elevating student awareness through faculty dedicating classroom time to sharing strategies for success.

2. Action Research Question.

Following on our robust assessment in 22-23 and the reduction of our TT faculty by 50%, we focused on one research question for this assessment cycle: Student comprehension of fundamental, discipline-specific precepts in a lower division, introductory Core 2.0 “Diversity” course (ANTY-101D, Anthropology and the Human Experience), a marker for our program’s influence on university students *writ large* (as well as a source of prospective majors).

Assessment Plan, Schedule, and Data Sources.

- a) Please provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data).

ASSESSMENT PLANNING SCHEDULE CHART					
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Data Source*
#1 Students will recognize and differentiate the diversity of human cultures and languages and the principles and methods that anthropologists employ for studying them.			ANTY 101D		Multiple Choice Exam Questions
#2 Students will identify the biological principles and historical contingencies that explain and govern the deep history of humanity as revealed by the findings of human paleontology and archaeology.			ANTY 101D	X	Multiple Choice Exam Questions
#3 Students will describe the fundamental laws and processes of heredity and evolution, and their implications for individuals and populations.	X			X	Essay Exam
#4 Students will demonstrate knowledge of contemporary anthropological or archaeological theory.	X	X			Final Paper
#5 Students will demonstrate facility with critical thinking and cross-cultural competencies necessary for participation in today's globalized world.		X			Final Paper

*Going forward, we may try rotating evaluation of our PLOs (rank ordered by increasing complexity/sophistication), by one per year thereby generating annual overlap in PLO content assessment. This may create a basis for interannual cohort comparison, or prospectively a metric for "growth" in knowledge, year-over-year... particularly in our upper division classes, which tend to be dominated by students pursuing majors and minors.

- b) What are the threshold values for which your program demonstrates student achievement?

Threshold Values		
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	Threshold Value	Data Source
PLO#1: Students will recognize and differentiate the diversity of human cultures and languages and the principles and methods that anthropologists employ for studying them.	The threshold value for this outcome is for ≥ 80% of assessed students to tally the "correct" answer consistent with the rubric.	Percentage of correct responses for all test takers
PLO#2 Students will identify the biological principles and historical contingencies that explain and govern the deep history of humanity as revealed by the findings of human paleontology and archaeology.	The threshold value for this outcome is for ≥ 80% of assessed students to tally the "correct" answer consistent with the rubric.	Percentage of correct responses for all test takers

3. What Was Done.

- a) Self-reporting Metric (required answer): Was the completed assessment consistent with the program's assessment plan? If not, please explain the adjustments that were made.

XX Yes

__ No

- b) How were data collected and analyzed and by whom? Please include method of collection and sample size.

For PLO#1, faculty met in advance of a late-semester exam (ANTY 101D, Exam 3, Prof. Lee, Spring 2024) and selected *a priori* five (5) multiple choice questions to represent artifacts. The exam was available online through Brightspace (D2L) to all students enrolled in the course with the sample size equaling 100% of the test-taking participants/respondents (N=133). Note: The highest scores received on three (3) of the four (4) exams offered in the course were used to evaluate the test-based portion of the class ergo the number of “test takers” for a given exam is variable.

For PLO#2, five (5) *a posteriori* questions were selected as artifacts from an early-semester exam (ANTY 101D, Exam 1, Prof. Lee, Spring 2024) with review by all remaining TT faculty in the department. The exam was available online through Brightspace (D2L) to all students enrolled in the course with the sample size equaling 100% of the test-taking participants/respondents (N=147). (As noted above, the best scores received on three (3) of the four (4) exams offered in the course were used to evaluate the test-based portion of the class ergo the number of “test takers” for a given exam is variable.)

Please provide a rubric that demonstrates how your data were evaluated. (Delete example below and replace with program’s assessment-specific rubric.)

PLO #1 Students will recognize and differentiate the diversity of human cultures and languages and the principles and methods that anthropologists employ for studying them.					
PLO #2: Students will identify the biological principles and historical contingencies that explain and govern the deep history of humanity as revealed by the findings of human paleontology and archaeology.					
Indicators	Level 1: Not Competent	Level 2: Fairly Competent	Level 3: Highly Competent	Level 4: Sophisticated	
	≤ 39% of the students will tally the correct responses.	40 % to 59 % of the students will tally the correct responses.	60% to 79% of the students will tally the correct responses.	≥ 80% of the students will tally the correct responses.	Threshold Values: ≥ 80% of assessed students will tally the “correct” answer on the rubric. 80% of students will meet or exceed Level 3 competency

4. What Was Learned.

- a) Based on the analysis of the data, and compared to the threshold values established, what was learned from the assessment?

Regarding PLO#1, a total of 133 responses were obtained for the five (5) *a priori* target questions identified by faculty as artifacts for this assessment. Percent correct response for each question “Q#” (ANTY 101D, Exam 3, Prof. Lee, Spring 2024) were:

Q11	90.31%
Q13	94.04%
Q17	96.28%
Q34	75.38%
Q51	90.31%

The threshold value of 80% was exceeded on four of the five questions.

The test questions were as follows:

11) Franz Boas compared categories of Races, Language and Culture and found that classifications of them _____.

- *A. would not work; different criteria resulted in different classifications!
- B. could be expressed through “universal laws!”
- C. demonstrated many common themes!
- D. B and C

13) The map of Sitka, Alaska area Tlingit Native place names created by Tom Thornton illustrates what about descriptive place names?

- A. Naming (including place naming) is a cultural universal.
- B. Names for things describe, distinguish, and distill important information.
- C. Places names provide a unique window on the world without which we would literally be disoriented.
- *D. All of the above

17) As described in class, the famous anthropologist Marcel Mauss identified which of the following as the most basic of practices reflecting and reinforcing social bonds between groups or individuals?

- A. Mana
- B. Balanced Reciprocity
- C. Redistribution
- *D. Gift Giving

34) Which of the following can help revitalize cultures and allow indigenous peoples to reclaim elements of their pasts?

- A. Sister exchanges
- B. Non-governmental organizations
- C. Market exchanges
- D. Linguistic diatribes
- *E. Ethnographies

51) What is the primary principle of cultural relativism in anthropological research?

- A. The belief that all cultures share the same universal set of values.
- B. The idea that certain cultures are naturally superior to others.
- C. The idea of judging a culture based on your own cultural norms.
- *D. The idea that each culture must be analyzed within its own cultural context.

Regarding PLO#2 , a total of 147	Q19 – 82.31%
responses were obtained for the five (5)	Q25 – 89.12%
<i>a posteriori</i> target questions identified	Q41 – 85.03%
as artifacts by faculty for this	Q52 – 78.91%
assessment. Percent correct response	Q56 - 87.07%
for each question “Q#” (ANTY 101D,	
Exam 1, Prof. Lee, Spring 2024) were:	

The threshold value of 80% was exceeded on four of the five questions.

The test questions were as follows:

19) Turkana Boy, a Homo erectus found in the Great Rift Valley in Africa, is perhaps the most significant paleoanthropological find regarding early hominin origins because:

- A. It demonstrated that Homo erectus had controlled use of fire.
- B. The endocast of the skull revealed the brain was significantly larger than that of previous hominins.
- *C. It was comprised of a nearly complete skull and skeleton which gave scientists an unprecedented amount of data from which to derive early hominin behavior.
- D. It provided the first bona fide proof that Homo erectus migrated out of Africa.

25) What is the chronological order, from oldest/most ancient to youngest, of these three key players in hominid evolution?

- A. Sahelanthropus tchadensis, Homo erectus, Australopithecus afarensis
- B. Australopithecus afarensis, Homo erectus, Sahelanthropus tchadensis
- *C. Sahelanthropus tchadensis, Australopithecus afarensis, Homo erectus
- D. Homo erectus, Australopithecus afarensis, Sahelanthropus tchadensis

41) As presented in class, the theory of evolution offers an explanation for the existence of all living organisms on the Earth today and in the past. It holds that:

- A. Present day organisms have all been derived from organisms that lived in the past.
- B. New species have developed from previous species by a series of very small changes over millions of years.
- C. Humanity, life, the Earth, and the universe are the creation of a supernatural being.
- *D. A and B

52) What period sees the rise of heavily symbolic burials, bone needles and rock art?

- *A. Upper Paleolithic
- B. Middle Paleolithic
- C. Lower Paleolithic
- D. Osteodontokeratic period

56) Why is A. afarensis so crucial?

- A. Represents an evolutionary bridge linking major patterns of early hominin evolution.
- B. Represented by many well-preserved fossils, well studied.
- C. Potentially, the ancestor of all later hominins.
- *D. All of the above.

b) What areas of strength in the program were identified from this assessment process?

PLO#1 reflects an exam (Exam 3) occurring later in the term than PLO#2 (Exam 1), which was assessed based on the first exam given in the term. While four (4) of the five (5) artifacts included in each PLO pool individually met the threshold of 80% competency, it is interesting to note the percentage of "correct" response on the second exam (measuring PLO#1) were higher on average than those on the first exam. This could suggest cumulative accumulation of program knowledge based on the duration of exposure to the content. Caveat: This positive trend may also reflect a self-selected, stronger test taking population and concomitant lower number of participants taking part

in Exam 3 due to class attrition, e.g., withdrawals, and/or increasing familiarity on the part of the students with the delivery and testing proclivities of the professor.

- c) What areas were identified that either need improvement or could be improved in a different way from this assessment process?

Numerous considerations can be employed in the development of PLO assessments based on percentages of correct responses in a multiple-choice question environment. If the department were to decide to codify this process using a relatively static test bank for PLO#1 and PLO#2, we could reduce subjectivity and nuance introduced by faculty variability through a consensus-determined format and phrasing for the specific questions that was sensitive to sound pedagogical practice including avoiding “trick” questions and “negative” wording. Testing “advice” could also be given to students with regard to selecting the “best answer” as opposed to the “correct answer.” We could also consider a “pretest” given at the very start of term to ascertain incoming student competencies as a foil for apparent increases in competency.

5. How We Responded.

- a) Describe how “What Was Learned” was communicated to the department, or program faculty. How did faculty discussions re-imagine new ways program assessment might contribute to program growth/improvement/innovation beyond the bare minimum of achieving program learning objectives through assessment activities conducted at the course level?

The results were discussed by the two remaining TT faculty. While we believe this was a useful exercise, in light of the current program bottleneck (loss of 50% of the TT faculty as noted above), we are interested in: 1) getting a new hire (or hires) in place, and then 2) practicing intentional inclusivity with our new colleague(s) to set any major new course(s) of action.

- b) How are the results of this assessment informing changes to enhance student learning in the program?

As described in our 22-23 Program Assessment, we followed through with assessing PLO#1 (Students will recognize and differentiate the diversity of human cultures and languages and the principles and methods that anthropologists employ for studying them) by using data from our introductory course (ANTY 101D). *A priori*, we selected a targeted subset of five multiple choice questions for one of the exams (Exam 3... given near the end-of-term) that were relevant to the PLO and administered the exam electronically via the D2L platform which likely reduced most (all) transcription or tabulation errors. Without belaboring the rationale and details, we decided to pull a second set of questions *a posteriori* from the same ANTY 101D class from Exam 1 (given near the start of the term) to explore our PLO#2 (Students will identify the biological principles and historical contingencies that explain and govern the deep history of humanity as revealed by the findings of human paleontology and archaeology) as intended based on our 22-23 assessment. Through these assessments, we have had cause to reflect on the impact our Core 2.0 course offerings have on shaping the overall college experience for MSU students.

Humanities “big questions” do not have disciplinary boundaries, and in keeping with our place in the College of Liberal Arts and our mission as a land grant university, for our next program assessment, we intend to explore another one of our Core 2.0 offerings, ANTY 212CS, as well as a PLO related to a more nuanced, program major/minor serving course.

- c) If information outside of this assessment is informing programmatic change, please describe that.

Not applicable.

- d) What support and resources (e.g. workshops, training, etc.) might you need to make these adjustments?

Nothing appears to be particularly applicable at present, but with some growth in the department, that will likely/hopefully change.

7. Closing the Loop(s). Reflect on the program learning outcomes, how they were assessed in the previous cycle (refer to #1 of the report), and what was learned in this cycle. What action will be taken to improve student learning objectives going forward?

- a) Self-Reporting Metric (required answer): Based on the findings and/or faculty input, will there be any curricular or assessment changes (such as plans for measurable improvements, or realignment of learning outcomes)?

Yes

No

- b) In reviewing the last report that assessed the PLO(s) in this assessment cycle, what changes proposed were implemented and will be measured in future assessment reports?

If we follow the timeline presented in 3.a. (above), the next reporting cycle will bring up a PLO with a writing component. In keeping with advice received on our 22-23 Program Assessment, we will endeavor to engage and promote the campus Writing Center to aid in honing the writing basics that facilitate the best delivery and assessment of program-specific content.

- c) Have you seen a change in student learning based on other program adjustments made in the past? Please describe the adjustments made and subsequent changes in student learning.

We are sorely missing the contributions (potential or otherwise) of our retired and vacated colleagues, both of whom specialized in “cultural” anthropology, one of the four subfields of “Boasian” or “Americanist” anthropology that our department espouses and teaches. In the absence of those TT faculty members, we are backstopping with a stalwart NTT colleague, but at present, that is not letting us set a long-term course for the future. The students interested in “cultural” anthropology are being underserved, but we are doing the best we can.

Submit report to programassessment@montana.edu

Update Department program assessment report website.

Update PLO language in CIM if needed ([Map PLOs to Course LOs](#))