

Asian American Studies Assessment
June, 2013

Overview

In spring 2013 individual programs within the Department of Ethnic Studies focused assessment efforts on Content Mastery, Area C: Concepts and Theories/Old and New in Ethnic Studies. Assessment within the Asian American Studies program was conducted in ETHN 110 Asian American Experience. In this area are three learning objectives:

1. understanding and ability to analyze the concept of "race" and the evolution of the human species
2. ability to subject concepts such as melting pot, culture of poverty, deprivation, and assorted socio-pathological models to rigid analysis
3. understanding and ability to apply new models and paradigms to the study of the ethnic group experience.

Groups were asked to address all three of the above learning objectives in within a 3-page writing assignment with the following prompt: *Briefly discuss the "Push-Pull" theory of migration and critically analyze at least two weaknesses of the theory as it relates to the Asian American experience in the United States.*

There were 59 students enrolled in this course, with 13 students who were identified as Ethnic Studies majors. Of the 13 Ethnic Studies majors, five were general concentration, one was Asian American concentration, two were Chicano/a Studies concentration, three were Pan African Studies concentration, and two were Education concentration.

It is important to note that in ETHN 110 all groups were assigned weekly quizzes and a final paper. There also were four 3-4 page group writing assignments that were assigned, including the work that was assessed for this report. In total there were 15 groups and there was at least one Ethnic Studies major in 10 of the 15 groups. All groups were randomly assigned by SacCT.

There are both strengths and weaknesses to assessing group assignments. The Importance of discussion and collective effort needed to adequately answer the prompt is a strength of the group process. A weakness is there is impossible to know precisely the effort by individual members of the group. Nonetheless, this assessment provides baseline knowledge as the Asian American Studies program and the Department of Ethnic Studies progress in future assessments.

Summative Assessment

Overall, the majority of groups with at least one Ethnic Studies major were able to explain the simplistic "push-pull" theory and adequately analyze at least two weaknesses. In particular, many groups specifically highlighted discriminatory laws that served to control the flow of immigrants from Asia to the United States and often artificially created a gender imbalance among several Asian ethnic groups. Some groups compared and contrasted early periods of

limited immigration the number and the types of workers from Asians to the U.S. with contemporary laws that openly privilege family reunification and highly educated Asian immigrants. Other groups focused on the distinct periods of Southeast Asian refugee migration and the uneven number and flow of refugees that came to the U.S. due to U.S. foreign policy decisions rather than just the desire of people wanting to leave their war-torn home countries.

Table 1: Summative Assessment Scores of Groups with Ethnic Studies Majors

	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Influence</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Conclusion</u>
Group 1	3	3	3	3	3
Group 2	3	2	2	3	2
Group 4	4	4	4	4	4
Group 5	2	2	2	2	2
Group 7	3	3	3	3	3
Group 8	4	4	4	4	4
Group 9	3	2	2	3	3
Group 10	2	3	3	3	2
Group 13	3	3	3	3	3
Group 14	3	2	2	2	3
% scores of 3 and above	7/10 = 70%	6/10 = 60%	6/10 = 60%	8/10 = 80%	7/10 = 70%

In contrast, a review of groups that did not have an Ethnic Studies major showed a lower percentage of success with this written assignment prompt that required both explaining and analyzing skills necessary for critical thinking.

Table 2: Summative Assessment Scores of Groups **without** Ethnic Studies Majors

	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Influence</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Conclusion</u>
Group 3	4	4	4	4	4
Group 6	2	2	2	2	2
Group 11	2	2	2	2	2
Group 12	2	2	2	2	2
Group 15	3	3	3	3	3
% scores of 3 and above	2/5 = 40%	2/5 = 40%	2/5 = 40%	2/5 = 40%	2/5 = 40%

Conclusion and Recommendations

Assessment of Ethnic Studies majors in ETHN 110 shows a generally positive influence on the group assignment that focused on theory and critical thinking. Although not as precise an assessment as an individual written assignment, the data presented indicate that groups with at least one Ethnic Studies major may well have impacted the dynamics of the group discussion and final write up.

Table 1 shows a lower percentage of assignments addressed the Critical Thinking Rubric Criterion 3: Influence of Context and Assumptions. This criterion requires “analysis of own and

others' assumptions." This criterion was a bit more difficult when reviewing the assessed group assignment for ETHN 110 and may need to be revised in the future.

At the same time, Table 1 showed a lower percentage of groups adequately addressed Criterion 2: Evidence. This criterion requires "selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion." Some groups relied more heavily on lecture than readings as the basis of their evidence, while others cited information from course readings but not as much or as well as other groups. More attention on emphasizing to students the need to directly and appropriately cite information needs to be addressed in the future.