

General Education Assessment Feature

Professor: Jane Charles

Class: AMH 2020 American History

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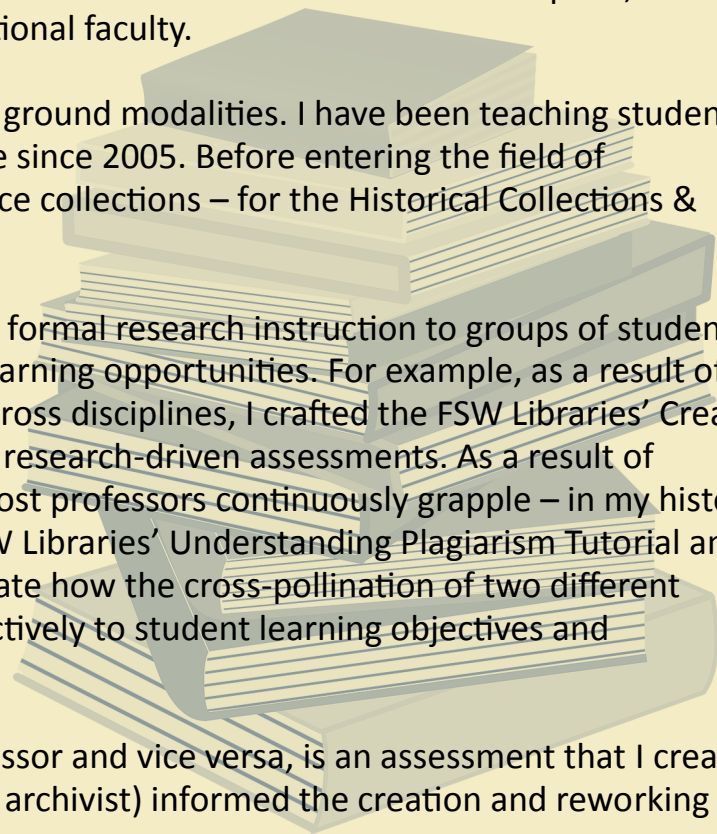
Author Neil Gaiman once said, "Google can bring you back 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one." The abundance of information immediately available to today's college students renders research instruction at institutions of higher learning paramount.

As a faculty librarian at FSW, I teach students how to formulate research questions, retrieve and evaluate resources, and ethically use information. As a faculty librarian at FSW who also teaches courses in a second discipline, I can identify firsthand with the pedagogical challenges faced by traditional faculty.

Since 2004, I have been teaching history part-time at Edison/FSW in both online and ground modalities. I have been teaching students how to effectively locate and evaluate information as a faculty librarian at the college since 2005. Before entering the field of librarianship, for four years I served as associate archivist – a curator of primary source collections – for the Historical Collections & Labor Archives within the Special Collections Library at Penn State University.

Helping students with their research endeavors on a one-on-one basis and providing formal research instruction to groups of students in the Rush Library's Instruction Lab and in the classroom, yields robust teaching and learning opportunities. For example, as a result of helping students interpret (and sometimes unravel) a variety of assessments from across disciplines, I crafted the FSW Libraries' Creating Effective Research Assignments Tutorial, which features tips on how to skillfully craft research-driven assessments. As a result of encountering both intentional and inadvertent plagiarism – a problem with which most professors continuously grapple – in my history courses, I developed tools to preclude and address plagiarism. These include the FSW Libraries' Understanding Plagiarism Tutorial and quiz, and a plagiarism contract for courses. The aforementioned examples demonstrate how the cross-pollination of two different teaching roles at FSW generates opportunities to observe, assess, and respond proactively to student learning objectives and pedagogical practices.

Another example of how librarianship influences and shapes my role as history professor and vice versa, is an assessment that I created for my American History course, discussed below. My experiences as a librarian (and archivist) informed the creation and reworking of the assessment over time.



General Education Assessment Feature Cont.

The Assignment

Students enrolled in my online AMH 2020 American History course must Create a Discussion (CAD), an assignment that requires them to work in groups of five to select and interpret at least one primary source; to contextualize the primary source with at least two (authoritative) secondary sources; and to initiate and sustain a thoughtful discussion that connects primary source material with historical analysis. Students can select any historical event or idea that played a role in shaping U.S. History between the 1870s and early 1990s. The assessment mirrors the content and workflow of the required Weekly Discussions, which feature primary and secondary source content and reflective, open-ended question sets that connect to the primary sources. To effectively complete the Weekly Discussions, each week students must compose three posts: 1) an initial response post to the Weekly Discussion question set, 2) a peer post, and 3) a response post to my Weekly Wrap Up, wherein I shed light upon the main subject of the discussion, include some relevant pop culture/multimedia information, and excerpt poignant responses to the original question set. The CAD requires students to role flip: student becomes instructor and I take on the role of student throughout most of the assignment, which I break up into three parts. CAD Week 1/Part 1 requires students to post their collectively created, original discussion. For CAD Week 2/Part 2, students individually respond to their fellow groups' CAD question sets. During CAD Week 3/Part 3, each group collectively crafts and posts a Weekly Wrap Up based on fellow students' and my responses to their original group discussion. However, unlike the Weekly Discussions, students are not required to post individual response posts to the Weekly Wrap Ups for the CAD.

Required Group Communication & Assessment

I require students to not only communicate with their fellow group members via Canvas Conversations, but also to copy me on their group messages. In addition, students have the option of using Google Docs. All students are responsible for their contributions (and sometimes lack thereof) to the CAD assignment. I assess student participation by reviewing each group's correspondence and working documents, course analytics, and peer response posts, which helps to ensure accountability and grading fairness – challenges that are inherent to group work. Thus, members of the same group often do not earn the same grade. I enumerate how many points students will lose, and why, in the assignment instructions, which most students appreciate.

Learning Outcomes

Over the past few years, students have produced many thought-provoking and creative CADs, ranging in historical topic from the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, forced sterilization in various U.S. States, and the birth control movement to the depiction of Prohibition in popular culture and the history of the treatment of the mentally ill. Although the assignment is labor intensive for everyone, students benefit from thinking creatively, working collaboratively, and taking on the role of instructor.

General Education Assessment

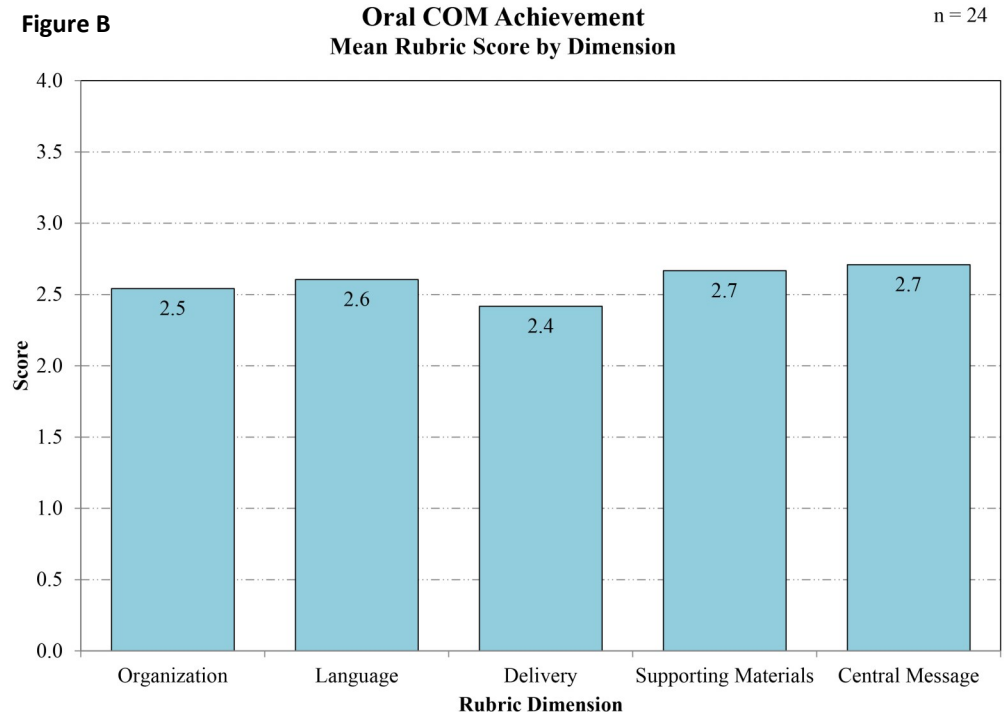
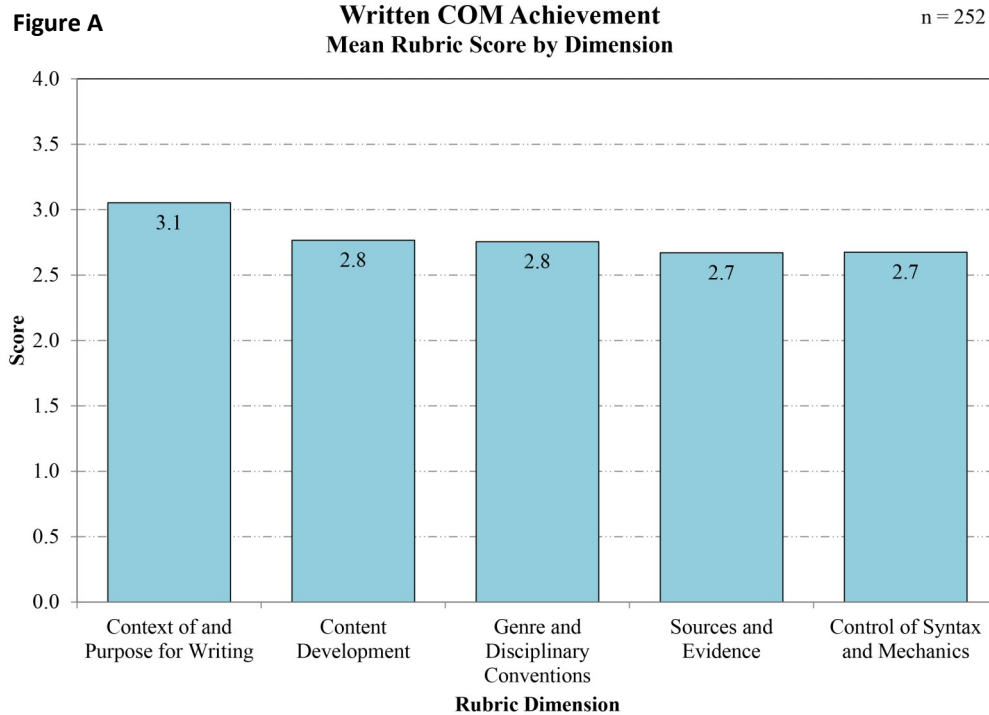


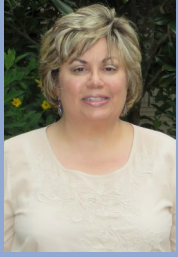
Figure A

This figure displays the achievement results for the written communication (COM) competency. For AY 2015-2016, faculty again used the AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric measuring Content & Purpose of Writing, Content Development, Genre & Disciplinary Conventions, Sources & Evidence, and Control of Syntax & Mechanics. These results are an improvement from AY 2014-2015 data and will be discussed in upcoming Learning Assessment Committee meetings to determine their significance going forward with the new General Education Competencies.

Figure B

This figure displays the achievement results for the oral communication (COM) competency. Similar to written communication, scoring was based on the AAC&U Oral Communication Value Rubric measuring Organization, Language, Delivery, Supporting Materials, and Central Message. Results will serve as a baseline for future studies using the new General Education Competencies.

LAC 2015-2016 Highlights



As I reflect on my first year as chair of the Learning Assessment Committee, I am grateful for the amazing support of the FSW faculty. This committee has worked diligently and completed many remarkable objectives. None of the following would have been possible without your commitment to the assessment process. There is so much I can say about the honor of working with extraordinary professionals, but it can be expressed in one simple phrase: thank you.

Amy Trogan, Ed.D. English Professor
Chair, Learning Assessment Committee

Course Level Assessment

- Every department administered assessment in their focus course(s).
- The Office of Academic Assessment continued to provide analyses and presentations to faculty.
- Assessment Coordinators: Jane Charles, Marius Coman, Sarah Lublink, Michael Engdahl, Fernando Mayoral, Kristi Moran, Colleen Moore, Katie Paschall, Caroline Seefchak, Eric Seelau, Amy Trogan

General Education Assessment

- The Office of Academic Assessment assessed the COM competency through continued use of the AAC&U rubric model.
- The General Education Sub-Committee led 6 teams in the scoring of artifacts that were voluntarily submitted by FSW faculty.
- The Office of Academic Assessment collected and analyzed 59 sets of artifacts.
- Scoring Team Members: Fernando Mayoral, Barbara Miley, Colleen Moore, Katie Paschall, Donald Ransford, Eric Seelau, Anjali Misra, Melanie Ulrich, Eileen DeLuca, Joseph van Gaalen, Richard Worch, Amy Trogan
- Committee members: Fernando Mayoral, John Meyer, Barbara Miley, Colleen Moore, Katie Paschall, Donald Ransford, Eric Seelau

Professional Development

- Assessment Workshop 101 – piloted and implemented (Amy Trogan, Donald Ransford, Katie Paschall, Joseph van Gaalen, Eileen DeLuca)
- Uncovering the Capabilities of the FSW Student (Joseph van Gaalen)
- Engendering "Truth-Seeking" Dispositions in General Education (Jane Charles and Eileen DeLuca)
- Ciphering and Decoding: Quantitative Reasoning Can Be Fun! (Kristi Moran)
- Developing Effective Research Assignment Guidelines (Amy Trogan, Joseph van Gaalen)
- Quantitative Reasoning in Non-STEM and STEM Courses (Don Ransford)
- Committee members: Stuart Brown, Jane Charles, Marius Coman, Michael Engdahl, Sarah Lublink, Kristi Moran

Assessment Newsletter

- We have shared assessment updates, communicated our professional development offerings, and highlighted the exemplary assessment work of our peers by publishing seven newsletters.
- Committee members: Marty Ambrose, Caroline Seefchak, Amy Trogan, Joseph van Gaalen, Eileen DeLuca
- Special Thanks: Jennifer Young