

Humanities Disposition Study

Fall 2017

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Beginning fall 2016 the Humanities Department included a series of disposition questions at the end of the pre- and post-tests designed to measure student point of view on varying topics associated with the course. All of the questions are ordinal in nature with response options of “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Neutral”, “Disagree”, and “Strongly Disagree”, and are aligned with other courses within the discipline (e.g., HUM 2211 and HUM 2250). Further, some disposition questions align with other courses within the Humanities Department. This report will focus on cross-discipline comparisons of disposition questions.

The Humanities courses undergoing assessment for fall 2017, ARH 1000, HUM 2211, 2235, 2250, MUL 1010, PHI 2010, 2103, 2600, and REL 2300, included common questions that overlap in some areas. Table 1 below lists each disposition prompt (and associated learning outcome) along with which courses include that question.

		ARH 1000	HUM 2211	HUM 2235	HUM 2250	MUL 1010	PHI 2010	PHI 2103	PHI 2600	REL 2300
Engage with the course material on a personal level.										
Q1	I often continue to think about ideas or issues covered in my classes after my instructor is finished with them.	X				X	X	X	X	X
Q2	I often feel that ideas or concepts that I study in my classes are relevant to my own life.	X				X	X	X	X	X
Q3	I allow what I learn in class to impact how I see the world.	X				X	X	X	X	X
Display open-mindedness.										
Q4	I'm comfortable when different perspectives on an issue seem equally valid.	X	X	X	X					
Q5	I value more perspectives on an issue rather than fewer	X	X	X	X					
Q6	I am willing to change my mind based on new evidence.	X	X	X	X					
Q7	I consider it valuable to have my beliefs challenged occasionally.	X	X	X	X					
Demonstrate willingness to inhabit the position of another.										
Q8	Instead of focusing on what I think is wrong about what someone is saying or writing I prefer to try to understand how the ideas might make sense.	X					X	X	X	X
Q9	I feel like those who disagree with me make me look more seriously at perspectives I'd otherwise dismiss.	X					X	X	X	X
Q10	I feel that reading a text from the author's perspective is essential for understanding it.	X					X	X	X	X
Relate the course material to life outside the classroom.										
Q11	I like to see connections between course material and current events.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q12	I often discuss ideas from my readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q13	I often find ways to relate ideas or concepts from my classes to something of interest to my friends.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Resist the urge for quick and easy answers.										
Q14	I'm ok feeling uncertain about ideas or issues.		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Q15	I don't think instructors should always give firm solutions to problems discussed in class.		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Q16	If an answer occurs to me right away, I still prefer to consider other possibilities.		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Seek knowledge independently.										
Q17	I often investigate ideas, issues, or concepts more deeply outside of my classes to learn more about them.					X				X
Q18	If something sparks my interest, I will look into it further on my own.					X				X
Q19	I don't believe knowledge is only valuable if it improves my grade.					X				X

Table 1. Organization of disposition questions by course.

Engage with the course material on a personal level

Results of changes in negative, neutral, and positive responses from pre-test to post-test for the first outcome “Engage with the course material on a personal level” shared by ARH 1000, MUL 1010, PHI 2010, 2103, 2600, and REL 2300 are shown in Figure 1 below. For question 1, REL 2300 exhibit positive growth (7%). MUL 1010 exhibits a polarizing effect for this question. For question 2, MUL 1010, PHI 2103, and REL 2300, exhibit positive growth (9%, 11%, and 6%, respectively). ART 1000 exhibits a neutralizing effect for question 2. For question 3, only REL 2300 exhibits positive growth (6%). PHI 2103 exhibits strong growth, but results focus on neutral responses from negative responses, as opposed to any positive response growth.

	Art			Music			Philosophy						Religions					
	ARH 1000			MUL 1010			PHI 2010			PHI 2103			PHI 2600			REL 2300		
	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+
Q1	0%	-1%	1%	3%	-6%	4%	2%	2%	-4%	4%	4%	-8%	1%	1%	-2%	3%	-10%	7%
Q2	4%	-9%	5%	2%	-11%	9%	2%	-2%	0%	2%	-13%	11%	1%	-3%	2%	0%	-6%	6%
Q3	0%	1%	-1%	4%	-1%	-3%	-1%	-4%	4%	-7%	7%	0%	1%	-4%	2%	-1%	-6%	6%

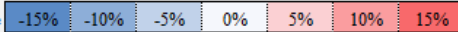
Scale 

Figure 1. Comparison of responses to disposition “Engage with the course material on a personal level.” Questions from left to right reflects the ordinal options “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, Neutral reflects “Neutral”, and + reflects “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree.”

Display open-mindedness

Results of changes in negative, neutral, and positive responses from pre-test to post-test for the second outcome “Display open-mindedness.” shared by ARH 1000, HUM 2211, 2235, and 2250 are shown in Figure 2 below. Note that due to data collection difficulties, no data is reported for these questions from HUM 2250. Question 4 and 6 exhibit minimal changes across all courses. For question 5, strong positive growth is exhibited in HUM 2235. For question 7, ARH 1000 exhibits strong positive growth while HUM 2235 exhibits strong negative/neutral growth.

	Art			Humanities								
	ARH 1000			HUM 2211			HUM 2235			HUM 2250		
	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+
Q4	-1%	-1%	2%	-1%	1%	0%	-3%	3%	0%			
Q5	-4%	0%	4%	1%	-3%	3%	-2%	-7%	8%			
Q6	3%	-3%	0%	1%	0%	-1%	-2%	-2%	3%			
Q7	-6%	-5%	11%	-1%	-3%	4%	2%	7%	-10%			

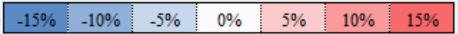
Scale 

Figure 2. Comparison of responses to disposition “Display open-mindedness.” Questions from left to right reflects the ordinal options “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, Neutral reflects “Neutral”, and + reflects “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree.”

Demonstrate willingness to inhabit the position of another

Results of changes in negative, neutral, and positive responses from pre-test to post-test for the third outcome “Demonstrate willingness to inhabit the position of another.” shared by ARH 1000, PHI 2010, 2103, 2600, and REL 2300 are shown in Figure 3 below. Question 8 exhibits a polarizing effect in ARH 1000 and, to a lesser extent, REL 2300. The same question exhibits a neutralizing effect in PHI 2103. Question 9 exhibits very strong positive growth in ARH 1000 (17%). Moderate to weak positive growth is exhibited in PHI 2010 and 2600 for this question as well. For question 10, ARH 1000 and REL 2300 exhibit moderate positive growth (both at 7%). PHI 2010 exhibits moderate negative growth.

	Art			Humanities									Religions		
	ARH 1000			PHI 2010			PHI 2103			PHI 2600			REL 2300		
	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+
Q8	3%	-8%	4%	-3%	0%	2%	-9%	11%	-3%	-2%	0%	2%	1%	-5%	4%
Q9	-4%	-12%	17%	0%	-4%	4%	2%	-3%	1%	-4%	-2%	6%	-4%	1%	3%
Q10	-5%	-2%	7%	4%	2%	-6%	2%	1%	-3%	1%	-1%	0%	4%	-11%	7%

Scale: -15% -10% -5% 0% 5% 10% 15%

Figure 3. Comparison of responses to disposition “Display open-mindedness.” Questions from left to right reflects the ordinal options “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, Neutral reflects “Neutral”, and + reflects “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree.”

Relate the course material to life outside the classroom

Results of changes in negative, neutral, and positive responses from pre-test to post-test for the fourth outcome “Relate the course material to life outside the classroom.” shared by all humanities courses are shown in Figure 4 below. Question 11 exhibits growth in HUM 2211 and MUL 1010. The same question exhibits negative growth in HUM 2235. Question 12 exhibits positive growth in REL 2300 along with a neutralizing effect in HUM 2235, HUM 2250, and PHI 2010. Also, PHI 2103 exhibits a negative growth for this question. For question 13, strong positive growth is exhibited in ARH 1000, HUM 2211, and REL 2300. MUL 1010 and PHI 2600 also exhibit growth for this question although to a lesser extent. Lastly, HUM 2235, PHI 2010, and PHI 2103 exhibit negative growth for this question.

	Art			Humanities						Music		Humanities						Religions									
	ARH 1000			HUM 2211		HUM 2235		HUM 2250		MUL 1010		PHI 2010		PHI 2103		PHI 2600		REL 2300									
	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+						
Q11	0%	-3%	3%	1%	-8%	6%	2%	5%	-7%	-4%	1%	3%	2%	-8%	6%	0%	3%	-3%	2%	0%	-2%	0%					
Q12	3%	0%	-3%	2%	1%	-3%	-2%	9%	-7%	-2%	8%	-6%	3%	-2%	-1%	-1%	9%	-8%	6%	-1%	-6%	0%	0%	1%	1%	-6%	5%
Q13	-7%	-2%	10%	-7%	-4%	11%	6%	-6%	0%	-3%	5%	-2%	-1%	-5%	6%	2%	4%	-6%	4%	4%	-8%	-1%	-5%	5%	-1%	-11%	12%

Scale: -15% -10% -5% 0% 5% 10% 15%

Figure 4. Comparison of responses to disposition “Display open-mindedness.” Questions from left to right reflects the ordinal options “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, Neutral reflects “Neutral”, and + reflects “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree.”

Resist the urge for quick and easy answers

Results of changes in negative, neutral, and positive responses from pre-test to post-test for the fourth outcome “Resist the urge for quick and easy answers.” shared by HUM 2211, 2235, 2250, PHI 2010, 2103, and 2600 are shown in Figure 5 below. Note that due to data collection difficulties, no data is

reported for these questions from HUM 2250. For question 14, HUM 2211 and HUM 2235 exhibit positive growth while PHI 2103 exhibits a neutralizing effect and PHI 2010 exhibits a small polarizing effect. For question 15, HUM 2211, HUM 2235, and PHI 2600 exhibit positive growth. For question 16, no courses exhibit positive growth. PHI 2103 exhibits a strong neutralizing effect.

	Humanities						Humanities											
	HUM 2211			HUM 2235			HUM 2250			PHI 2010			PHI 2103			PHI 2600		
	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+
Q14	-3%	-2%	5%	-11%	4%	6%				4%	-6%	2%	-11%	10%	1%	0%	-3%	3%
Q15	1%	-9%	8%	-5%	-3%	8%				4%	-1%	-2%	0%	-1%	1%	0%	-8%	8%
Q16	2%	0%	-2%	6%	-2%	-5%				1%	3%	-4%	-2%	12%	-10%	-1%	1%	0%

Figure 5. Comparison of responses to disposition “Display open-mindedness.” Questions from left to right reflects the ordinal options “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, Neutral reflects “Neutral”, and + reflects “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree.”

Seek knowledge independently

Results of changes in negative, neutral, and positive responses from pre-test to post-test for the fourth outcome “Seek knowledge independently.” shared by MUL 1010 and REL 2300 are shown in Figure 6 below. Both courses exhibit strong growth in question 17.

	MUL 1010			REL 2300		
	-	Neutral	+	-	Neutral	+
	Q17	-5%	-7%	12%	-2%	-5%
Q18	2%	2%	-5%	-1%	-3%	3%
Q19	-2%	-1%	3%	0%	-5%	5%

Figure 6. Comparison of responses to disposition “Display open-mindedness.” Questions from left to right reflects the ordinal options “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”, Neutral reflects “Neutral”, and + reflects “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree.”

Summation

Table 2 below lists each disposition prompt (and associated learning outcome), courses include that question, and positive increases (red) or negative increases (blue) greater than five percentage points in a positive sense (e.g., -5% Negative response coupled with +2% Neutral and +3% Positive response is included here as a 5% positive increase). Of the 100 disposition offerings over all courses (number of ‘X’s in the table), 32/100 of them exhibit 5% positive increases or higher. Another 13/100 exhibit 5% negative increases or higher. By comparison, in fall 2016, 21/100 exhibited 5% positive increases or higher and 13/100 exhibited 5% negative increases or higher. These changes are likely a result of amplified responses due to revisions made on negatively worded questions in the fall 2016 version of the survey (Roszkowski and Soven, 2010).

		ARH 1000	HUM 2211	HUM 2235	HUM 2250	MUL 1010	PHI 2010	PHI 2103	PHI 2600	REL 2300
Engage with the course material on a personal level.										
Q1	I often continue to think about ideas or issues covered in my classes after my instructor is finished with them.	X				X	X	X	X	X
Q2	I often feel that ideas or concepts that I study in my classes are relevant to my own life.	X				X	X	X	X	X
Q3	I allow what I learn in class to impact how I see the world.	X				X	X	X	X	X
Display open-mindedness.										
Q4	I'm comfortable when different perspectives on an issue seem equally valid.	X	X	X	X					
Q5	I value more perspectives on an issue rather than fewer	X	X	X	X					
Q6	I am willing to change my mind based on new evidence.	X	X	X	X					
Q7	I consider it valuable to have my beliefs challenged occasionally.	X	X	X	X					
Demonstrate willingness to inhabit the position of another.										
Q8	Instead of focusing on what I think is wrong about what someone is saying or writing I prefer to try to understand how the ideas might make sense.	X					X	X	X	X
Q9	I feel like those who disagree with me make me look more seriously at perspectives I'd otherwise dismiss.	X					X	X	X	X
Q10	I feel that reading a text from the author's perspective is essential for understanding it.	X					X	X	X	X
Relate the course material to life outside the classroom.										
Q11	I like to see connections between course material and current events.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q12	I often discuss ideas from my readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q13	I often find ways to relate ideas or concepts from my classes to something of interest to my friends.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Resist the urge for quick and easy answers.										
Q14	I'm ok feeling uncertain about ideas or issues.		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Q15	I don't think instructors should always give firm solutions to problems discussed in class.		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Q16	If an answer occurs to me right away, I still prefer to consider other possibilities.		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Seek knowledge independently.										
Q17	I often investigate ideas, issues, or concepts more deeply outside of my classes to learn more about them.					X				X
Q18	If something sparks my interest, I will look into it further on my own.					X				X
Q19	I don't believe knowledge is only valuable if it improves my grade.					X				X

Table 2. Organization of disposition questions by course with positive response increases greater than 5% points (red) and positive response decreases greater than 5% points (blue).

References

Roszkowski, M. J. and Soven, M. 2010. Shifting gears: Consequences of including two negatively worded items in the middle of a positively worded questionnaire. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(1), 113-130.