Annual Assessment Report Template

This form is intended to facilitate reporting program outcomes assessment to accrediting agencies, Board of Trustees, Strategic Planning Committee, and other internal or external audiences.

The department mission statement, PLO's, curricular map and multi-year assessment plan should to be posted on the departmental website.

Department: HISTORY
Date: September 11, 2014
Department Chair: Alister Chapman

   I.   **Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment**

Program Learning Outcome	Students will be able to read primary sources historically and use them effectively.
Who is in Charge	Alister Chapman
Direct Assessment Methods	In mid-November, Dr. Mallampalli asked each of his HIS198 students to bring to class a primary source related to their topic. He gave them an hour to analyze the source and write up their findings. Drs. Mallampalli and Chapman assessed these source analyses using a rubric prepared by Dr. Robins. We were looking for two things: did students instinctively use the appropriate categories of analysis (e.g. genre, author), and how well did they analyze the source? We deliberately did not prime students by telling them the categories we were looking for, wanting to know what questions they would ask of their own accord. In other words, we wanted to see whether they had developed good habits of examining primary documents.
Indirect Assessment Methods	
Major Findings	We assessed the work of eleven students. The results are below.

	Superior Analysis	Good Analysis	Needs Help Analysis	Really Needy Analysis
Author	1	4	3	3
Audience	1	1	4	5

Genre	1	1	3	6
Content	2	3	4	0
Context	0	7	4	0
Integration into Paper	1	8	2	0

Closing the Loop Activities

Discussion focused on what can be done in upper-division courses to reinforce what students learned in HIS1. Primary source assessment is already a central feature in several such courses, and two faculty spoke of recent, significant increases in the amount of primary source analysis required in one of their courses (HIS140 and HIS173). In addition, Rick Pointer spoke of increased emphasis on primary sources in HIS7 and HIS8. So there are reasons to hope that the next batch of seniors will have a firmer grasp on this skill than this year's crop.

Looking forward, we discussed:
- o Making the criteria for effective primary source analysis more explicit in pertinent assignments in all our courses.
- o Examining a wider range of genres in HIS1.
- o Making available HIS1 handouts on source analysis to the rest of the department.

Discussion

We were rather disappointed with the results. One of our aims in HIS1 Introduction to History is to help students develop certain reflexes when presented with a primary source, i.e. they will know to ask questions about genre, author, audience etc. That the students did not do this is a concern, as we feel these are basic historical skills that reflect important critical thinking abilities. We were not surprised that some students struggles to analyze their documents well, but we would have liked to see fewer students in the two right-hand columns.

Concluding Thought

Each year, the history department selects the best papers from HIS198 to decide who gets the Wilt Prize in historical scholarship. This year, we therefore each read the same five papers. Ironically, we were especially impressed this year by the excellent job that students had done incorporating primary sources into their work. So all is not lost! Nevertheless, we would like to see a greater number of our students graduating with strong abilities in the handling of primary sources.

II. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome	The preceding year, we had submitted our Six-year Report and developed our plan. We were therefore not following up on any earlier outcomes.
Who is in Charge	
Major Findings	
Closing the Loop Activities	
Discussion	

III. Other assessment or key questions-related projects (optional)

Project	We examined the shape of our major and some of our course titles. We also revised our mission statement and began work on the revision of our website.
Who is in Charge	The department.
Major Findings	
Action	- Our new mission statement is now on our website. - We adjusted our international studies track to make it feasible for students interested in the Middle East and Asia. - We changed the names of our two core courses. HIS1 is now Foundations in History; HIS198 is now Senior Research Seminar. - We began work on our the revision of our website, but were rather stymied when we learned that there will now be an official template for website designs. We plan to continue work within the new parameters this year.

Discussion

IV. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing
We did not continue our peer mentoring programme last year. It is unclear at this point whether we will pick this up again in the Spring		

V. Appendices
   A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data
   B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
   C. Relevant assessment-related documents/samples (optional)

Primary Source Assessment Rubric
History Department, Westmont College, November 2013

	Superior Analysis	Good Analysis	Needs help Analysis	Really Needy Analysis
Author	The author is clearly identified, **it is clear how this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**, and further evidence is drawn about the author from the text itself (such as issues of voice, understanding of the author's role…)	The author is clearly identified and **some but not all of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	The information on the author is not connected to the text. **Little of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	Minimal information that is not connected to the text.
Audience	The audience is clearly identified, **it is clear how this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source** and further evidence is drawn about the audience from the text itself	The audience is clearly identified and **some but not all of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	The information on the audience is not clearly stated and l**ittle of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	Minimal information that is not connected to the text.
Genre	The genre is clearly and precisely identified, and the **it is clear how this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	The genre is clearly and precisely identified and **some but not all of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	The genre is very broadly identified, but **little of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	Minimal information that is not connected to the text.
Content	The structure, the main argument and the intent of the text are identified**.**	The structure and the main argument of the text are identified.	The text is summarized and understood.	The text is not understood.
Context	The text is set in multiple contexts, and **it is clear how this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source** (for instance, a combination of religious, social, cultural, political or gender history)	The text is set in some elements of context - **some but not all of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	Some elements are mentioned, but they are restricted in their scope and in their depth. **Little of this information contributes to the student's interpretation of the source**	The text is not set its context
Integration	The source is integrated into the paper (or current research): it **furthers the argument of the paper** and is connected to the historiography	The source fits into the paper (or current research) –**its implications for the paper's argument are stated**	The source fits uneasily into the argument of the paper –**though it is related to the topic, its relationship to the argument is not clear**	The source has nothing to do with the argument of the paper