

Annual Assessment Report 2019

The Economics and Business (EB) department mission statement, Program Learning Outcomes (PLO's), curricular map and our multi-year action plan are posted on the EB department website.

Department: Economics and Business
Date: September 16, 2019
Department Chair: Rick Ifland

I. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) Assessment

Program Learning Outcome	Core Knowledge. Students will exhibit active intellectual engagement in and application of the core Economics and Business curriculum.
Who is in Charge	Edd Noell
Direct Assessment Methods	Comprehensive exam covering baseline and advanced microeconomic (Exam A) and macroeconomic concepts (Exam B).
Indirect Assessment & Methods	Embedded assessment utilizing exam questions and assignments in EB 11 Principles of Macroeconomics (Noell) and EB 12 Principles of Microeconomics (Asher)
Major Findings	This year the emphasis was placed on assessment of student performance on the Field Exam B. Thirty-three students took this exam that were in the Intermediate Macroeconomics course. The student average was 62.9, compared to 65.8 on the Spring 2018 exam. The median was 66.07, as compared to 62.50 for the 2018 cohort. The standard deviation was 8.38, as compared to 6.75 for the 2018 cohort. The test reliability score was .86, as compared to .78 for the 2018 cohort. Analysis of the exam results indicates that 23 of the 24 new questions had a positive biserial correlation.

Closing the Loop Activities	Noell engaged in item analysis regarding the form and content of the questions on field exam B as well as the specific economics concepts tied to them. Four questions had a negative point biserial correlation on the 2018 field exam B were removed, lowering the total number of questions from 60 to 56. Out of the 56 questions on the 2019 exam, 24 new questions were utilized, with an emphasis placed on using graphical analysis. Fourteen of these new questions were related to Intermediate Macro material, six were related to principles of macro material, and four were related to principles of micro material. Particular concepts for which questions were revised included market equilibrium, monetary functions and monetary policy, and consumer surplus.
Discussion	Noell and Asher discussed particular strategies to improve student performance on field exam B to achieve the established benchmark of 70%. Of particular concern was the relatively weaker performance by several of the students in the top 10% of the Intermediate Macroeconomics course who did not score in the top 10% on field exam B. Asher decided to address the incentive structure for students taking field exam B by adopting the 5% weighting used in the course grade that Noell currently employs for students taking the Intermediate Microeconomics course (field exam A).

II. Follow-Ups

Program Learning Outcome	Communication Skills (<u>writing</u>). Students will produce verbal presentations in debates, reports, and dialogues in economics and business, and will <u>write executive summaries and papers in economics and business.</u>
Who is in Charge	Rick Ifland

Major Findings

We find the top three categories (Highly Developed (93-100), Developed (84-92) and Emerging (80-83) as acceptable for the written rubric, though we monitor this to be sure that the majority (80%) of students fall into the two highest categories. We discussed only accepting the two highest categories, though in this written communication rubric, the “emerging” category is a substantially higher standard - and thereby an acceptable milestone - than the “emerging” category in the oral communication rubric, hence its inclusion.

Student performance for the 2018/2019 school year for each of the five categories is found in Appendix B.

Specifically:

1. 9.2% to 14.8% of students (depending on the category) met the “highly developed” standard;
2. 59.2% to 72.2% of students (depending on the category) met the “developed” standard;
3. 7.4% to 18.5% of students (depending on the category) met the “emerging” standard; and
4. 3.7% to 11.1% of students (depending on the category) landed in the “initial” category.

Our established benchmark for all (100%) of our students to achieve a score of 80% or higher (Highly Developed, Developed or Emerging) was not met (ranging from 88.9% to 96.3% of students who met the standard depending on the category).

Our other established benchmark that the overwhelming majority (4 out of 5 students, or 80%) of those students land in the Highly Developed or Developed categories was partially met (ranging from 79.1% to 90.2% of students who met the “highly developed” or “developed” standard depending on the category).

**Closing
The Loop
Activities**

This PLO was previously monitored by an adjunct (MacCulloch from 2008 until 2014, and Tynan from 2015 until 2017), using rubrics that were good but not standard. Further, the course in which they were evaluated (EB 180 Principles of Management) was recently dropped to a Lower Division course (now called EB 080 Principles of Management). The primary assessment therefore shifted from this course and is now performed in two upper division writing intensive courses that are being taught by full-time faculty: EB 140 Executive Leadership and EB 191 Entrepreneurship and New Venture Development. Both classes use the new, standard rubric listed in our six-year annual report. Further, our department is working with the CUPA assessments via essays and discussions in our EB 195 Senior Seminar course so that we can compare how our students might be doing relative to their peers in other majors.

The new rubric has allowed us to better assess our students in each of the five criteria (context of and purpose for writing, content development, genre and disciplinary conventions, sources and evidence, and control of syntax and mechanics).

Ifland and Tynan reviewed and reported the findings of the older rubric to the department. We developed a new standard rubric that is widely used within the college. We then discussed particular strategies to improve student performance in both the “emerging” and “initial” categories to achieve two goals: move the “emerging” students into the “developed” category and move the “initial” students into the “emerging” category. We will do this by better utilizing the Writer’s Corner and by providing more detailed, earlier feedback to students.

Tynan assessed EB student writing skills using the older rubric in EB 080 in Spring 2018. Ifland assessed EB student writing skills using the new rubric in EB 140 and EB 191 in Spring 2019, and supplemented by the prompt used in CUPA assessment in EB 195 Senior Seminar. A report for our 2019 findings is provided in Appendix B that includes an updated and detailed description of the writing performance criteria, details as to what is expected at benchmark points, the particular rubric employed, and presentation alongside interpretation of the results of student writing performance.

Discussion

The new rubric appears to be a superior tool to the older version. The amount of writing for EB 140 and EB 191 is significantly higher than what was required in EB 180 (now EB 080) so we have both more students to evaluate and more papers in which to evaluate them. The combination of more students and more papers should provide a more accurate assessment of each students' written communication abilities.

Per the suggestion of the PRC, we now report our assessment results in percentages rather than in absolute numbers, we now categorize "below standard" as "needs improvement" in the "initial" category, and we have reversed the levels of the rubric, starting with "highly developed" on the left.

III. Other Assessment Projects

Project	Review Curricular Map, Multi-Year Action Plan, and Student Learning Outcomes from EB Website (as recommended by PRC response to previous report)
Who is in Charge	Rick Ifland
Major Findings	Curricular Map, Multi-Year Action Plan, and Student Learning Outcomes from EB Website have been revised and can be viewed on the website.

Action	We revised the Curricular Map and Multi-Year Action Plan on the EB website; We discussed PLOs assessment reports and how to improve and expand our assessment in our four areas of focus. Specifically, we expanded our assessment substantially, to include assessment of Research (Manlapig and Asher), Christian Synthesis (Harmon and Ifland), Oral Communication (Ifland), incrementally improve the Core Knowledge assessment (Noell) and modify/improve the rubric for the Writing Communication (Tynan and Ifland) and Oral Communication (Ifland). We will report on each issue in future years based on the action plan as outlined in our six-year program review
Discussion	Most of our findings were reflected in the most recent six-year report. The other items will appear in future annual assessments as stated in our six year report.

IV. Appendix

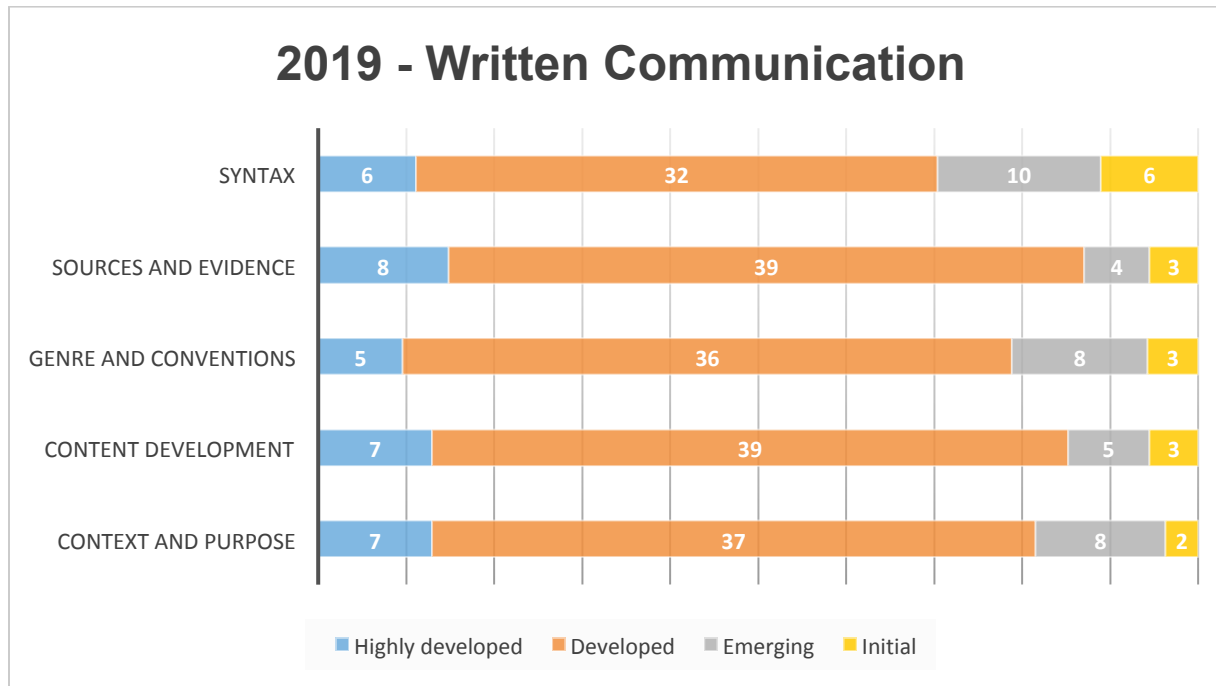
- A. Table of Department Economics Field Exam Content and Discussion of Item Analysis
- B. Writing Intensive benchmark and rubric

Appendix A Table of Department of Economics Field Exam Content

The economics field exam is administered in the Senior Seminar course. This exam represents an attempt to establish a baseline of understanding for the economics portion of the major. The content and style of the exam is patterned after the Council for Economic Education's, TUCE (Test of Understanding in College Economics), a nationally normed test for Principles of Economics courses. Content on the TUCE covers the concepts of scarcity, opportunity cost, choice, supply and demand, utility, elasticity, price ceilings and floors, theory of the firm including revenues, costs, marginal analysis, market structures, wages, rents, interest, profits, income distribution, the microeconomic role of government including public goods, maintaining competition, externalities, taxation, income redistribution, public choice, comparative advantage, trade, and exchange rates. These are all topics that are part of the Principles of Microeconomics and Principles of Macroeconomics lower-division required courses for the Economics and Business major. These concepts are examined and applied more fully in the upper division courses. Content coverage on the department field exam is similar to the TUCE with the additional feature of material from the Intermediate Microeconomics (Exam A) and Intermediate Macroeconomics (Exam B) courses. The department believes that the content distribution for the field exam is true to the goal of economic literacy for our EB majors.

Appendix B Written Communication Student Learning Outcome

In the two classes that were measured, 54 students were evaluated. The following break down for each area is as follows:



Our observation is that most students appear to be operating at or above standard, though we have too many students who still struggle with written communication. Specifically:

1. Syntax

- a. 11.11% (6/54) of the students performed at a highly developed rate
- b. 59.25% (32/54) of the students performed at a developed rate
- c. 18.52% (10/54) of the students performed at an emerging rate
- d. 11.11% (6/54) of the students performed at an initial rate
- e. 88.89% (48/54) of the students performed at or above our target rate (goal: 100%)
- f. 79.17% of the students who performed at or above our target rate achieved highly developed or developed status (goal: 80%)

2. Sources and Evidence

- a. 14.81% (8/54) of the students performed at a highly developed rate

- b. 72.22% (39/54) of the students performed at a developed rate
- c. 7.41% (4/54) of the students performed at an emerging rate
- d. 5.56% (3/54) of the students performed at an initial rate
- e. 94.44% (51/54) of the students performed at or above our target rate(goal: 100%)
- f. 79.17% of the students who performed at or above our target rate achieved highly developed or developed status (goal: 80%)

3. Genre and Conventions

- a. 9.26% (5/54) of the students performed at a highly developed rate
- b. 66.67% (36/54) of the students performed at a developed rate
- c. 14.81% (8/54) of the students performed at an emerging rate
- d. 5.56% (3/54) of the students performed at an initial rate
- e. 94.44% (51/54) of the students performed at or above our target rate (goal: 100%)
- f. 83.67% of the students who performed at or above our target rate achieved highly developed or developed status (goal: 80%)

4. Content Development

- a. 12.96% (7/54) of the students performed at a highly developed rate
- b. 72.22% (39/54) of the students performed at a developed rate
- c. 9.26% (5/54) of the students performed at an emerging rate
- d. 5.56% (3/54) of the students performed at an initial rate
- e. 94.44% (51/54) of the students performed at or above our target rate (goal: 100%)
- f. 90.19% of the students who performed at or above our target rate achieved highly developed or developed status (goal: 80%)

5. Context and Purpose

- a. 12.96% (7/54) of the students performed at a highly developed rate
- b. 68.53% (37/54) of the students performed at a developed rate
- c. 14.81% (8/54) of the students performed at an emerging rate
- d. 3.70% (2/54) of the students performed at an initial rate
- e. 96.30% (52/54) of the students performed at or above our target rate (goal: 100%)
- f. 84.61% of the students who performed at or above our target rate achieved highly developed or developed status (goal: 80%)

Since our goal is to have all (100%) of our students at 80% or higher (highly developed, developed or emerging), we have some work to do with our students on the lower end of the scale with written communication. Two ways to close the loop are to” (a) refer those students in the “initial” category to the Writer’s Corner as soon as we see issues and (b) give early, detailed feedback to students operating at the “initial” and “emerging” levels to see if they can improve in these five areas to “developed” status over the course of the semester.