



SLO Assessment Cycle for PHIL 4

Critical Thinking SLO Modified: [05/14/2010]

Antonio Ramirez's Team Members:

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Additional Team members not on list/notes about team:

Additional Notes:

Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Statement Modified: [05/14/2010]

Identify and analyze a variety of rhetorical and argumentative techniques

Assessment Cycle Records:

Outcome 1: Assessment Planning Modified: [05/14/2010]

Assessment Strategy Used:

Quarter: Winter 2010

Assessors: Antonio Ramirez

Assessment Tools: Exams

Sections being assessed: 02, 03

Outcome 1: Reflect & Enhance Modified: [05/14/2010]

Number of people involved in Phase III: 3

Changes:

Methods:

Embedded within the final exam of the course was a section in which students were asked to identify rhetorical devices, logical fallacies, and deductive arguments within a lengthy written passage. Students were scored according to their ability to both identify and explain the function of persuasive techniques.

Summary:

Section 04.02 exhibited an average score of 11.4/15 on this portion of the exam, while section 04.03 exhibited an average score of 12.7/15. These results confirmed the instructor's suspicion that students had a working understanding of persuasive techniques, but that their ability to describe the functions of these techniques could improve significantly. Results indicate that the SLO was met satisfactorily, but further improvement is certainly appropriate here.

Enhancement (Part I):

Future iterations of the course will focus more carefully on identifying persuasive techniques in lengthy media (news reports, textual passages, speeches). The section assessed here focused primarily on brief persuasive passages, which may not be as effective in cultivating student understanding.

Enhancement (Part II):

This course is taught more frequently than any other in the department, and is unfortunately offered in classrooms featuring inconsistent technological capabilities. Multimedia argumentative assessment is easy to facilitate in 'smart classrooms', but more difficult in lesser-equipped rooms (such as L28). The instructor continues to develop 'work around' strategies to deal with this, but installing a media cabinet in L28 would help significantly here.

Outcome 2: Statement Modified: [05/14/2010]

Analyze and assess a variety of rhetorical and argumentative texts

Outcome 2: Assessment Planning Modified: [05/14/2010]

Assessment Strategy Used:

Quarter: Winter 2010

Assessors: Antonio Ramirez

Assessment Tools: Exams

Sections being assessed: 02, 03

Outcome 2: Reflect & Enhance Modified: [05/14/2010]**Number of people involved in Phase III:** 3**Changes:****Methods:**

This SLO is articulated very closely to SLO#1. The instructor interpreted the difference to refer to a closer analysis of student ability to distinguish between those forms of persuasion which provide legitimate reasons for accepting a belief, and those which do not. Accordingly, two assessments were embedded into the final exam. The first tested student ability to recognize arguments resting solely on rhetoric (i.e. providing no truth-conducive reasons for belief). The second tested student ability to distinguish between valid and invalid deductive arguments.

Summary:

For the 'rhetoric' portion, students exhibited an average score of 21/25 across both sections. For the 'validity' portion, students exhibited an average score of 17.5/25 across both sections. These data suggest that students were able to recognize rhetoric much more easily than they were able to recognize formal validity. Student performance can--and should--be improved for this second criterion in future sections of the course. Overall, however, results were satisfactory here.

Enhancement (Part I):

Formal reasoning will be approached differently in future sections of the course. The instructor suspects that this kind of reasoning differs considerably from the kind of 'critical thinking' to which students are accustomed, and intends to experiment with different methods of introducing validity.

Enhancement (Part II):

No recommendations.

Outcome 3: Statement Modified: [05/14/2010]

Develop your own complex arguments

Outcome 3: Assessment Planning Modified: [05/14/2010]**Assessment Strategy Used:**

Quarter: Winter 2010

Assessors: Antonio Ramirez

Assessment Tools: Performances/Demonstrations •
Papers/Essays

Sections being assessed: 02, 03

Outcome 3: Reflect & Enhance Modified: [05/14/2010]**Number of people involved in Phase III:** 3**Changes:****Methods:**

Students' ability to cultivate original arguments was assessed in two ways. First, students were asked to submit a brief argumentative paper pertaining to the rationality of the consumption of bottled water. Second, students were frequently presented with in-class debate topics to provoke improvised arguments.

Summary:

These methods provided a general sense that students improved in their ability to develop original arguments throughout the course. Unfortunately, it was difficult to collect much in the way of data here.

Enhancement (Part I):

Future sections of the course will alter the 'bottled water' assignment to include a detailed rubric, according to which student arguments will be assessed on the criteria of originality, coherence, and susceptibility to critical objections. This will facilitate the collection of data to better measure the SLO.

Enhancement (Part II):

No recommendations.

Outcome 4: Statement Modified: [05/14/2010]

Demonstrate an application of these tools to one's own actions and decisions

Outcome 4: Assessment Planning Modified: [05/14/2010]**Assessment Strategy Used:**

Quarter: Winter 2010

Assessors: Antonio Ramirez

Assessment Tools: Papers/Essays

Sections being assessed: 02, 03

Outcome 4: Reflect & Enhance Modified: [05/14/2010]

Number of people involved in Phase III: 3

Changes:

Methods:

The 'bottled water' assignment mentioned above was intended to provide students with an opportunity to reflect critically on a consumption choice likely to affect their own lives.

Summary:

Student submissions seemed to show that they have the ability to apply critical thinking tools to their own lives, but it is very difficult to imagine any assessment to show that they do in fact apply these tools in their lives.

Enhancement (Part I):

During our discussion of the assessment, the faculty agree to amend the SLO as follows: "Demonstrate the ability to apply these tools to your own actions and decisions."

Enhancement (Part II):

No recommendations.

[Number of Outcomes for PHIL 4: 4]