

# CULTURES AND IDEAS 1 CORE ASSESSMENT REPORT

OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT

JUNE 17, 2017

## Introduction

The Core student learning objectives identify the educational priorities for all undergraduates in Santa Clara University's Core Curriculum. Assessment of student learning is ongoing in the Core—we seek to understand in what areas of the learning objectives students are challenged or excel, and how the Core can offer better support for faculty teaching in these areas.

This assessment report summarizes the process and findings from an assessment of the four learning objectives for the Cultures and Ideas 1 (C & I 1) Core requirement. When the 2009 Core was approved, the Cultures and Ideas 1 & 2 two-quarter "Foundations" sequence, was described in the following way: [The sequence] "considers the nature and development of human cultures and ideas and provides a foundation from which students explore the complexities of human societies. Students are introduced to the study of significant texts, ideas, issues, and events in their historical context, while considering how they resonate for us in the contemporary situation." Four learning goals formed the basis for the learning objectives for the two areas.

- Global Cultures: The intertwined development of global ideas, institutions, religions, and cultures, including Western cultures.
- Arts and Humanities: The production, interpretation, and social influence of the fine and performing arts, history, languages, literatures, philosophy, and religion.
- Critical Thinking: The ability to identify, reflect upon, evaluate, integrate, and apply different types of information and knowledge to form independent judgments.
- Perspective: Seeking out the experience of different cultures and people, striving to view the world through their eyes.

## The Assessment Process

In 2016-17, the Office of Assessment asked faculty teaching C & I 1 classes in the core curriculum to gather student work related to the four C & I 1 learning objectives. Student work was collected from a random sample of students from 22 of the 26 C & I 1 classes taught during Fall quarter, 2017. Of the 693 students enrolled in C&I 1 courses, 20% were sampled for the assessment. Faculty teaching the courses identified the assignments or exam questions providing the clearest evidence for student learning with respect to the four learning objectives:

- 1.1 *Students will identify significant elements of the cultures examined.*
- 1.2 *Students will recognize the complexity of the cultures examined.*
- 1.3 *Students will analyze and/or interpret significant objects, texts, ideas, issues and/or events in their historical contexts, using at least one disciplinary method.*
- 1.4 *Students will examine and analyze both shared and diverse human experiences across cultures and historical periods in order to comprehend the relevance of the past to the cultural present.*

Nine faculty and one staff member participated in two norming sessions in the Winter quarter of 2017. A rubric (see Appendix) was used to score student work and student learning for each objective was scored on a four-point proficiency scale.

After the norming sessions and discussion, student work was distributed among the raters and each piece of student work was scored by two raters in order to examine whether the rubric was applied consistently across raters. Inter-rater reliability (IRR) was calculated using the software program AgreeStat® for the three learning objectives. The agreement coefficient Gwet’s AC2 was interpreted, using simple ordinal weights and Landis-Koch benchmarks (see Table 1). Overall, it appears the faculty raters were consistent with one another in their scoring and their use of the rubric.

Table 1. Agreement Coefficients

Learning Objective	Gwet’s AC2	Benchmark
LO1	0.71	Moderate
LO2	0.76	Substantial
LO3	0.84	Substantial
LO4a	0.74	Moderate
LO4b	0.64	Moderate

There were eight instances where rater scores differed by three points (e.g., 1 and 4). These scores were reviewed by a third rater who served as a tie-breaker.

### What We Learned

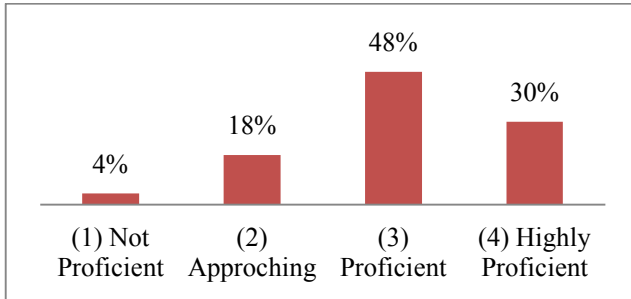
The scores given for work for each learning objective were tabulated and converted into percentages.

#### ***LO 1.1 Students will identify significant elements of the cultures examined***

A vast majority of student work was judged as proficient or highly proficient for learning objective 1.1 (combined 78 percent, see Figure 1). Another 18% of student work was judged as approaching proficiency and 4% was not proficient. In general, it appears students are able to

identify significant elements of the cultures they are studying and the assignments represent this.

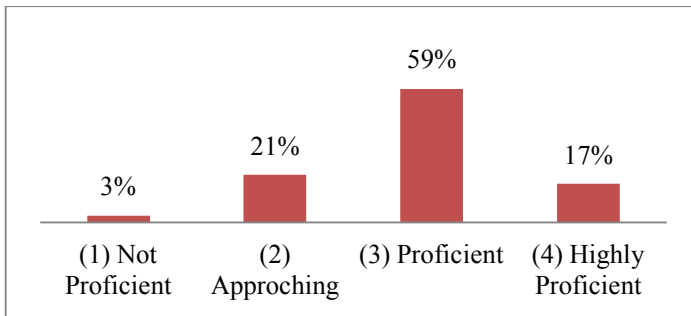
Figure 1. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.1



***LO 1.2 Students will recognize the complexity of the cultures examined.***

Similar to LO 1.1, proficiency was scored high for LO 1.2 with 76% of the student work receiving a score of 3 or 4 (See Figure 2). An additional 21% of the work was scored as approaching proficiency. Only 3% was scored as not proficient.

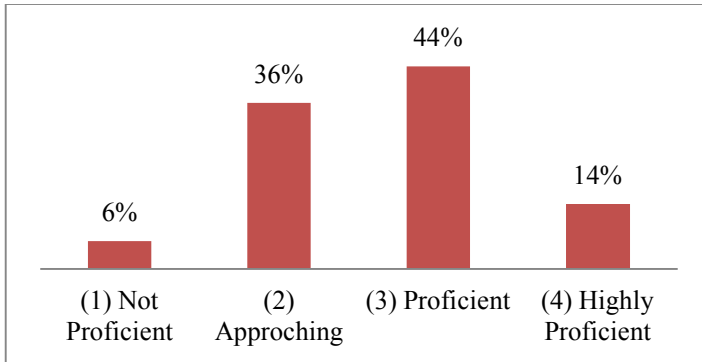
Figure 2. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.2



***LO 1.3 Students will analyze and/or interpret significant objects, texts, ideas, issues and/or events in their historical contexts, using at least one disciplinary method.***

LO 1.3 asks student to analyze and interpret, which is a more difficult cognitive task than those asked in LO 1.1 and LO 1.2. This may help explain why 58%—a slightly lower number of students—were scored as proficient or highly proficient on LO 1.3 (See Figure 3). Just over a third (36%) of the student work was scored as approaching proficiency. Six percent of the work was rated as not proficient.

Figure 3. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.3

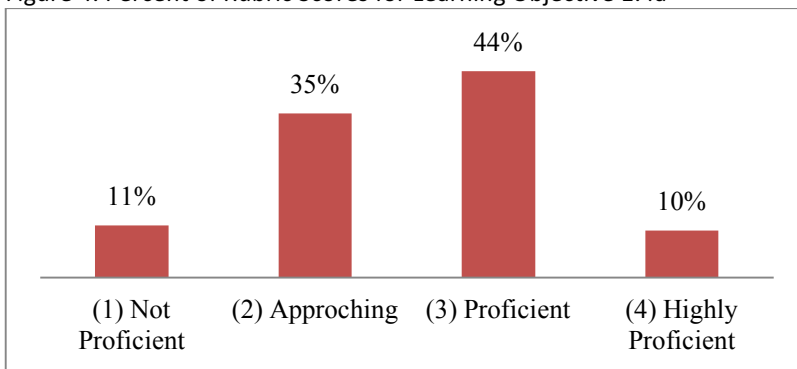


***LO 1.4 Students will examine and analyze both shared and diverse human experiences across cultures and historical periods in order to comprehend the relevance of the past to the cultural present.***

This learning objective proved more difficult to score as the coders found they needed to evaluate two different outcomes. The coders decided to apply two distinct scores. The first part of the objective (LO 1.4a) addressed whether students examined and analyzed both shared and diverse human experiences across cultures and historical periods. The second score (LO 1.4b) was given for how proficiently students made a connection between the past and the cultural present.

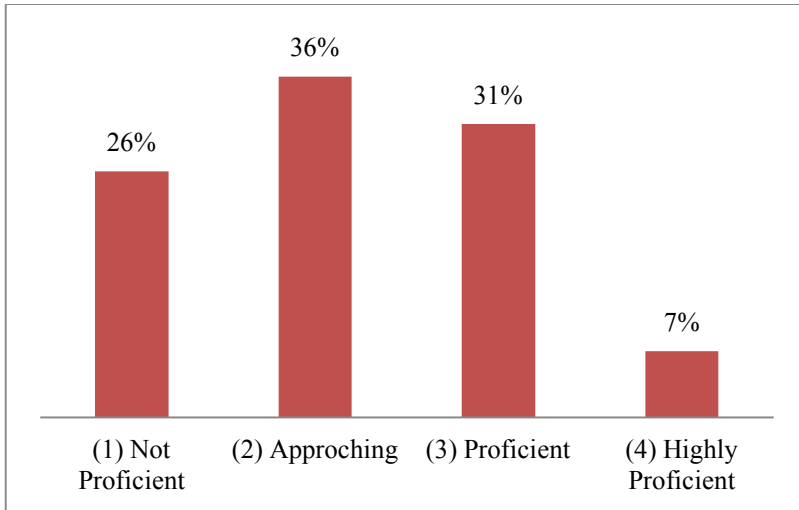
Scores for LO 1.4a were similar to what was observed for LO 1.3, with 54% of student scored as proficient or highly proficient. Another 35% of the work approached proficiency. Nine percent was scored as not proficient.

Figure 4. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.4a



Scores for LO 1.4b were comparatively the lowest, with only 38% of student work rated as proficient or highly proficient. An additional 36% was rated as approaching proficiency and 26% was rated as not proficient.

Figure 5. Percent of Rubric Scores for Learning Objective 1.4b



#### Group differences

Scores were also examined by group differences to see if there were statistically significant differences by student gender or race/ethnicity. No statistically significant differences were found for scores by gender or race/ethnicity.

#### **Conclusions**

Overall, over three-quarters of the sampled students are meeting the C & I 1 learning objectives as demonstrated by their work, especially LO 1.1 and 1.2--students can identify significant elements of the cultures examined and recognize their complexity. A lower percentage of the student work demonstrated proficiency for LO 1.3 and even less for LO 1.4. Both of these learning objectives emphasize historical context and ask students to engage in a critical analysis of cultures within and across cultures and time periods. Faculty raters noted that a substantial percentage of student work (26%) did not make connections between cultural experiences or elements across historical periods, up to and including the present. From the type of student work received, the faculty scoring the work surmised that students were not asked explicitly to address this in the work submitted, although they noted that in their own classes that this often is a topic of discussion. Additionally, the faculty observed that the type of learning that constitutes LO 1.3 and 1.4 continues to develop in the sequence's second course and that it's likely that students will reach deeper levels of analysis in that course. The assessment of C & I II will take place in winter quarter, 2018, and that will provide an opportunity to examine this possibility. C & I faculty who read a draft of this report also expressed interest in discussing these findings together, creating an electronic record of the recommendations, and possibly developing a repository to share assignments and materials developed for these courses.

**Acknowledgments:** The Office of Assessment thanks the C&I 1 & 2 FCC, the faculty teaching Core courses who participated in the assessment, the faculty members who participated as scorers for the student work, and our student assistants who contribute to the assessment process beginning from sampling to redacting the student and faculty identifiers from student work.

Appendix: Scoring Rubric for C & I 1 Assessment of Student Learning (2016-17)

Objective	Highly proficient (4)	Proficient (3)	Approaching proficiency (2)	Not proficient (1)
<b>C &amp; I 1.1</b> Identify significant elements of the cultures examined.	Significant elements of the culture are stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Significant elements of the culture are stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Significant elements of the culture are stated, but description leaves some components undefined, ambiguous, or unexplored.	Elements are identified, but may not be significant, or no clarification or description is provided.
<b>C &amp; I 1.2</b> Recognize the complexity of the cultures examined.	Provides a sophisticated and nuanced description of multiple cultural elements related to one or more of the following: history, art, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Provides a clear description of multiple cultural elements related to one or more of the following: history, art, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Provides a limited description of multiple cultural elements related to one or more of the following: history, art, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.	Provides an ambiguous or inaccurate description of multiple cultural elements OR provides a description of primarily one culture related to one or more of the following: history, art, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.
<b>C &amp; I 1.3</b> Analyze and/or interpret significant objects, texts, ideas, issues and/or events in their historical contexts, using at least one disciplinary method.	Ideas/practices/issues/events are clearly and comprehensively described within their historical context. Information is presented with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.	Ideas/practices are clearly described within their historical context. Information is presented with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Ideas/practices are stated but description lacks historical specificity or leaves some terms undefined, ambiguous, or unclear. Information is presented with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis.	Ideas/practices are stated without sufficient clarification, description, accuracy, or attention to historical context. Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation.
<b>C &amp; I 1.4</b> Examine and analyze both shared and diverse human experiences across cultures and historical periods in order to comprehend the relevance of the past to the cultural present.	<b>1.4a:</b> Provides a sophisticated analysis of similarities and differences of multiple cultures/worldviews.  <b>1.4b:</b> Students' make connections between cultural experiences or elements across historical periods, up to and including the present.	Provides an analysis of similarities and differences of multiple cultures/worldviews in some depth.  Students' make connections between cultural experiences or elements across historical periods, up to and including the present, although the analysis may be limited.	Provides a limited analysis of similarities and differences of multiple cultures/worldviews.  Students' make connections between cultural experiences or elements across historical periods, up to and including the present, but the connection is weak or underdeveloped.	Provides some description of similarities and differences of multiple cultures/worldviews, but no analysis.  Students' do not make connections between cultural experiences or elements across historical periods, up to and including the present.