Liberal Arts Essentials Course Assessment Report

Course: CRMJ 101: Introduction to Criminal Justice

Writing Unit: No

Instructor: Parker

Methods: Examination & Faculty Evaluation Assessment Tool

LAE Category: Social Foundations

Goal: Muskingum students will develop skills in perception, analysis and expression.

Learning Objective: A Muskingum College student will be able to define a meaningful issue (or problem) related to an academic area of study, formulate a position (or solution or argument) on that issue, and communicate his or her position effectively to a professional audience.

Departmental Perspective (if applicable):

Departmental Perspective 2: Students will develop the ability to analyze questions related to major concepts covered in a field of study.

Departmental Perspective 1: Students will develop the ability to communicate information in a meaningful way related to a field of study.

A. Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective or Departmental Perspective</th>
<th>Number and percentage of students exceeding expectations</th>
<th>Number and percentage of students meeting expectations</th>
<th>Number and percentage of students failing to meet expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(^{st}) Stream of Evidence</td>
<td>8 (25%)</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
<td>14 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(^{nd}) Stream of Evidence</td>
<td>21 (75%)</td>
<td>7 (25%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Student work examined

Summarize the tasks used to measure the objective (e.g., exams, research project/paper assignments, presentation, or class assignment) and attach a copy of each (from Departmental assessment instrument or other approved assessment plan).

The three components of the criminal justice system will be examined in class as well as the foundational aspects of the measurements of crime and theories of crime. Exams given in class
will test the components, measures and theories through objective and essay questions. The final exam includes the following essay question:

“The aspect of deterrence is fundamental within the criminal justice system. Discuss the historical foundation and the impact of deterrence and how it informs your understanding of the three components of the criminal justice system. Make sure to pull in relevant material from the lectures, textbook, and class discussion.”

A second stream of evidence that will be used is the Course Evaluation Form given to students during the final week of class. This form includes a question on how well the class did in providing students the tools to develop skills in perception, analysis and expression. Using both a self-reported measure (the faculty evaluation form) and a measure assessed by the faculty member (the final exam essay question) ensures that multiple streams of data are being used to develop a sense of how well the course is meeting the goals of the LAE.

C. Scoring Criteria

Explain the criteria used to evaluate student performance in relation to the learning objective (i.e., what constitutes advanced, proficient, partially proficient, not proficient, etc.) Attach copies of measurement instrument or rubric (Departmental assessment instrument or other approved assessment plan).

Exam Rubric

**Advanced** will be defined as students being able to find, identify, and explain meaningful connections between deterrence and the three components of the criminal justice system.

**Proficient** will be defined as students being able to find, identify, and explain meaningful connections between deterrence and the three components of the criminal justice system with one area being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.

**Partially proficient** will be defined as students being able to find, identify, and explain meaningful connections between deterrence and the three components of the criminal justice system with two areas being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.

**Not proficient** will be defined as students being able to find, identify, and explain meaningful connections between deterrence and the three components of the criminal justice system with fewer than two areas fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.

Students who score in the advanced category (13-16) will be considered exceeding expectations. Those who score in the partially proficient category (9-12) will meet expectations, while those who score 8 and below will be considered failing to meet expectations.
The course evaluation form is based on a 5 point scale with 5 being the high score and 1 the low, and an added category for not applicable. Scores of 4 or 5 for this question will be considered exceeding expectations, scores of 3 will be considered meeting expectations, and scores of 2, 1, will be considered failing to meet expectations. Those categories that are not applicable will not be factored into the assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>4 (Advanced)</th>
<th>3 (Proficient)</th>
<th>2 (Part. Prof.)</th>
<th>1 (Not Prof.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination response demonstrates how the student finds meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS</td>
<td>Student found meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with one area being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
<td>Student found meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with two areas being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
<td>Student found meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with fewer than two areas fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination response demonstrates how the student identifies meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS</td>
<td>Student identified meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with one area being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
<td>Student identified meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with two areas being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination response demonstrates how the student explains meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS</td>
<td>Student explained meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with one area being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
<td>Student explained meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with two areas being less than fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
<td>Student explained meaningful connections between deterrence &amp; the 3 components of the CJS with fewer than two areas fully found, identified, and/or fully explained.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination response follows formal standard English guidelines</td>
<td>Professional standards for grammar and mechanics met with headings and subheadings used to enhance the paper</td>
<td>Professional standards for grammar and mechanics mostly met with appropriate headings and subheadings used</td>
<td>Standards for grammar and mechanics somewhat met with attempts at appropriate headings and subheadings</td>
<td>Many errors in grammar and mechanics with little attention paid to organization</td>
</tr>
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D. Reflections on the course outcomes

Why do you think students performed as they did in this class? What might be done to improve course outcomes?

I believe the main reason so many students failed to meet the expectations is because the LAE assessment was significantly different from the assessment of students throughout the semester. Specifically, all regular tests during the semester consisted of objective questions. In order to facilitate the LAE assessment, a comprehensive final examination was added to the course which consisted of objective questions as well as short essays and the long essay that was the LAE assessment measure. Students had little practice in writing throughout the semester, and this was evident when reading the essay answers. The lack of writing experience
is not the only factor to explain student performance. Many students simply did not attain the level of knowledge that they should have during the course; however, as will be explained later in the assessment, I think the bigger problem is the disconnect between what the faculty expect of Intro to CJ students and what the Liberal Arts Essentials may expect of the same students.

The students’ evaluations indicated that the course met or exceeded expectations of the LAE. Perhaps the students rated the course as they did because they enjoyed the course. Obviously, their assessment results and those from the test question differed dramatically.

I think to improve the course outcomes, the class would need to be taught and tested differently throughout the semester. I cannot recommend this, however. I believe the purpose of this course is to provide students majoring in Criminal Justice with the basics of the criminal justice system so they can delve into issues of analysis and communication in later courses. Many students struggle in this course as it is currently taught. To try to increase the expectations of faculty to comport with the requirements of the LAE would likely set more students up to fail the course.

E. Reflections on the assessment

How might the course-embedded assessment process be improved to provide more meaningful feedback?

I think the assessment would need to be altered to better reflect the realities of how the course is taught and what is generally expected of students. Adding an analysis and synthesis assessment to a primarily fact-based course is problematic. Additionally, this particular assessment question is so broad and overarching that it may hide the fact that students can actually perform analysis because it asks so much of the students. It is essentially a 1-question comprehensive examination question unlike something I would ever ask a student to do at the end of a course.

F. Plan of action

Please detail any specific changes that will be implemented as a result of this assessment. (Planned changes in course content, delivery, etc. and/or planned changes in the assessment process such as new rubrics, surveys, etc.)

My primary recommendation is to remove the Introduction to Criminal Justice course from the Liberal Arts Essentials. It appears that the true goals of the course are not completely consistent with the goals of the LAE.

The course content is consistent with any credible Intro to CJ course and should not be changed. The delivery method used in this particular section included lecture and numerous active-learning techniques including quizzes and group work. I think that these delivery methods are appropriate and, while they should be improved upon every time the course is taught, they
should not be changed. Any changes in the course should be of the assessment process itself. The examination question could be changed to a paper assignment or the question could be much more limited and realistic in scope. Of course, the LAE goals could be amended to be more realistic to assess and measure.

Finally, no matter what else is changed, I believe the Criminal Justice Program may want to reassess the “Department Perspective.” Honestly, I was unsure of where this fit with the rest of the assessment plan.