

CORE ASSESSMENT REPORT TWU 2017-18

OBJECTIVES: PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SUMMARY

For the 2017-18 academic year, TWU assessed the objectives of *Personal Responsibility* and *Social Responsibility* in the following undergraduate general education areas as assigned by the state:

- Communications (Personal Responsibility only)
- Language, Philosophy, & Culture (both objectives)
- Creative Arts (Social Responsibility only)
- American History (both objectives)
- Government (both objectives)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (Social Responsibility only)

The objectives assessed in 2017-18 are defined by THECB as follows:

- **Personal Responsibility** (PR) – to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making;
- **Social Responsibility** (SR) – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Facets of each objective are captured through suites of narrower criteria. The objective of *Personal Responsibility*, for example, includes the criteria of Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally. *Social Responsibility* includes Apply Knowledge to Social Issues and Responsible Action. These criteria are assessed by volunteer raters in organized sessions, who employ a modified VALUE rubric on a three-point scale, with a 1 representing an unmet standard, a 2 indicating a mixed or partial success, and a 3 indicating clear success. Our currently published goal is that 65% of students will meet at least level 2 for any criterion.

For *Personal Responsibility*, 68.59% of students met that criterion for success.

- Among first-year students, just under 68% of constituents met the criterion for success. Over 80% of dual credit students met the criterion while 68.79% of transfer students met the criterion for success.
- Both full-time and part-time students met the benchmark of 65%.
- Among *Personal Responsibility* criteria that were often rated, Uses Information Purposefully (75.35%) and Reflection and Self-Assessment (76.19%) tended to have more robust reliability,
- Areas in which students received lower scores were in the criteria of Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts (57.69%) and Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts (58.33%).
- The criteria of Uses Information Purposefully (876 artifacts) and Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally (702 artifacts) were selected by instructors most frequently for this objective.

For *Social Responsibility*, 66.65% met the criterion for success.

- Notably first-year students (62.5%) and dual credit students (60.34%) did not meet the benchmark for this objective.

- All other populations scored at the benchmark.
- Students did better on this objective as they aged through the college experience, with seniors (73.58%) and juniors (68.8%) scoring higher than sophomores (67.46%) and first-year students (62.5%).
- In the objective of *Social Responsibility*, students showed the highest levels of mastery on the criteria of Interprets Intercultural Experiences with Empathy (86.59%) and Audience-Appropriate Approach & Structure (80.95%).
- Student mastery of Evaluates Social Impacts of Local Actions (52.48%) and Social Identity and Commitment (58.58%) were the weakest areas, with Use Multiple Perspectives in Problem Solving (60.68%) only slightly higher.

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
Recommendations.....	2
Participants.....	3
Students.....	4
Participating Faculty.....	4
Core-Academy Raters.....	5
Tables of Results.....	5
Results by Student Classification.....	5
Results by Criterion.....	6
Results by College and Component Area.....	8
History and Government.....	9
Contact Information.....	10

RECOMMENDATIONS

New recommendations will appear near the top of these lists in each report. Recommendations from previous reports may reappear later because they bear repeating or for the benefit of those new to the core community.

Foster academic integrity. When students take short cuts on readings and assignments, [they may miss out on the learning experiences faculty planned for them](#). Ensuring honest engagement may, conversely, [improve learning](#). Both of the resources just linked have suggestions for improving academic integrity without acting like police.

Set appropriate challenge levels. A heavy cognitive load impairs performance on all criteria, not just the one under stress. Give students a difficult analytical challenge and their grammar will suffer, too. We saw this sort of thing a lot in the assessed artifacts. First-year composition asked students to do something difficult: analyze two articles with competing opinions and make an argument for what value or principle was most driving the authors apart. A student’s organization scores for such an assignment will be lower than they would be for a class in which they were simply asked to summarize a textbook chapter, wherein the structure is already partly baked in. In some cases, a challenge may have been set too high. We saw several assignments that asked students to summarize, or in some cases even evaluate the methodology of, scientific articles from journals like *Nature*. Often students

responded to this challenge by plagiarizing or patch-writing what the article said, a response well-predicted by [research on plagiarism](#). Conversely, too low a bar keeps students from improving. The ideal learning situation tends to be [challenging but scaffolded](#) in such a way that students can navigate through it with the help provided by the scaffolding. One way to do this is to break up a challenging task into discrete steps. Our raters were impressed with the Social Action Project assignment created for one of the Women’s Studies core courses (WS 2013). Students are asked to analyze a social problem and recommend a research-supported social action that might effect change, neither of which are easy. But the assignment has a common template, a form broken up into specific tasks and questions, and these walk students through the process of responding to the challenge.

Emphasize foundational criteria. It’s difficult to explain something without first comprehending it. It’s difficult to develop content that hasn’t been sufficiently researched or analyzed. Which is to say, some of the criteria on our rubric may be more deserving of emphasis than others, simply because growth in those areas is likely to have trickle-out effects to other criteria. Comprehension is one such criterion for *Communication*. Evidence Analysis is one for *Critical Thinking*.

Build background knowledge. [Research in educational psychology](#) emphasizes the critical relationship between background knowledge and reading comprehension, critical thinking, and evaluation. What you already know determines to large extent what you are ready to understand. Background knowledge not only includes specialized terminology or statistical concepts but also easy-to-overlook elements like the organizational structure of a typical peer-reviewed scientific article. (Students without this knowledge often misinterpret the opening literature review as a thesis-bearing introduction and will report as findings what was meant to be historical background.)

Take advantage of the “teaching effect” to build student background knowledge. Most faculty have experienced the phenomenon in which, by teaching a subject, they learn it better than they ever would have understood it if they had spent that same time continuing to study as a student. [Students experience this, too](#). By giving students more opportunities to explain content, faculty can take advantage of this effect. One powerful method for encouraging student explanations is [Writing to Learn](#): short, informal written tasks, performed in-class or in preparation for class, which instead of being graded or commented on are instead, more often, used during group or class activities and perhaps recorded as credit/no-credit. (Writing to Learn combines powerfully with [Team-Based Learning](#) in-class activities.)

Make assignment expectations clear in written instructions. Even if expectations are transmitted orally, they should also be communicated in writing for reference. Assignments for which such information was scant often had weaker student performances.

Volunteer to rate artifacts. Many of the above observations stem from discussions that bloomed during rating sessions. Faculty participants often came away from their rating experiences with new ideas for assignments or plans to revise assignments. It is one thing to see how your own students react to your own course, and quite another to see how many students respond to many different kinds of requests. You get a sense of what all students seem to struggle with, and of what kinds of work students are capable of when they’re challenged but have the right kind of scaffolding.

PARTICIPANTS

The subsections below shed light on the range of participants, in terms of assessed students, submitting faculty, and core-academy raters.

STUDENTS

For AY 2016-17, students to assess were selected by Institutional Research and Data Management through a stratified random sample of face-to-face students in main-campus core curriculum courses, with the sample sizes calculated so as to produce a margin of error of 5%.

- Female: 91.84%, Male: 8.16%
- FTIC: 67.12%, Transfer: 28.76%, Dual Credit: 4.12%
- Full-Time: 87.77%, Part-Time: 12.23%

Student Classification	Percentage
First-Year	45.40%
Sophomore	30.61%
Junior	15.18%
Senior	8.63%
Post-baccalaureate	0.19%
Grand Total	100.00%

Student Ethnicity	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	1.22%
Asian, non-Hispanic	9.91%
Black, non-Hispanic	24.68%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	0.12%
Hispanic/Latino	32.46%
International	0.48%
Unknown	0.72%
White, non-Hispanic	30.41%
Grand Total	100.00%

Student College	Percentage
Arts and Sciences	35.07%
Business	3.89%
General	5.76%
Health Sciences	15.57%
Nursing	30.19%
Professional Education	9.52%
Grand Total	100.00%

PARTICIPATING FACULTY

Core faculty tend to come from the College of Arts and Sciences. Of faculty teaching the core during the academic year in question, 29.9% held doctoral degrees or equivalents. The remainder of core faculty comprise mostly adjunct faculty and (particularly for first-year composition) graduate teaching assistants.

Faculty Department	Percentage
Dance	1.80%
English, Speech, and Foreign Language	13.37%
General	10.80%
Health Studies	0.81%
Kinesiology	9.67%
Music and Drama	2.95%
Psychology and Philosophy	17.52%
Sociology and Social Work	6.50%
Visual Arts	1.47%
Women's Studies	35.10%
Grand Total	100.00%

CORE-ACADEMY RATERS

Our volunteer rater pool comprised 22.87% full-time faculty, 38.27% staff, and 20.62% graduate students, with the remainder filled out by a combination of adjunct faculty, guests, and administrators.

Raters	Percentage
Adjunct	13.41%
Admin	2.47%
Faculty	22.87%
Grad Student	20.62%
Guest	2.37%
Staff	38.27%
Grand Total	100.00%

TABLES OF RESULTS

Rates of success generally increased as students progressed through grade ranks, from first-year to senior, with *Social Responsibility* seeing the greatest gains between freshman and senior status.

RESULTS BY STUDENT CLASSIFICATION

CORE OBJECTIVE Student Start Term	MEETS STANDARD	
	No	Yes
Personal Responsibility	31.41%	68.59%
FR	33.39%	66.61%
SO	29.53%	70.47%
JR	29.23%	70.77%
SR	27.74%	72.26%
Social Responsibility	33.35%	66.65%
FR	37.50%	62.50%

SO	32.54%	67.46%
JR	31.20%	68.80%
SR	26.42%	73.58%
Grand Total	32.25%	67.75%

RESULTS BY FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME STATUS

Objective	MEETS STANDARD	
	No	Yes
Class Load		
Personal Responsibility	31.35%	68.65%
Full time	31.93%	68.07%
Part time	26.44%	73.56%
Social Responsibility	33.36%	66.64%
Full time	33.53%	66.47%
Part time	32.04%	67.96%
Grand Total	32.23%	67.77%

RESULTS BY FIRST-TIME IN COLLEGE OR TRANSFER STATUS

Objective	MEETS STANDARD	
	No	Yes
Admission Status		
Personal Responsibility	31.35%	68.65%
FTIC	32.13%	67.87%
HS	19.25%	80.75%
Transfer	31.21%	68.79%
Social Responsibility	33.37%	66.63%
FTIC	33.61%	66.39%
HS	39.66%	60.34%
TRNS	32.64%	67.36%
Grand Total	23.83%	76.17%

RESULTS BY CRITERION

Count of MEETS STANDARD Objectives	Percentages	
	No	Yes
Personal Responsibility	31.35%	68.65%
Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally	34.51%	65.49%
Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	41.67%	58.33%
Connect Concepts to Experience	28.34%	71.66%
Content Development	34.76%	65.24%
Ethical Issue Recognition	26.36%	73.64%
Ethical Self-Awareness	33.33%	66.67%
Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically	31.85%	68.15%

Reflection and Self-Assessment	23.81%	76.19%
Transfer	31.14%	68.86%
Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	42.31%	57.69%
Use of Evidence	32.56%	67.44%
Uses Information Purposefully	24.65%	75.35%
Social Responsibility	33.36%	66.64%
Apply Knowledge to Social Issues	25.18%	74.82%
Asks and Pursues Questions about Cultures	36.67%	63.33%
Audience-Appropriate Approach & Structure	19.05%	80.95%
Comparing Cultures	33.08%	66.92%
Comprehension	21.82%	78.18%
Cultural self-awareness	24.76%	75.24%
Evaluates Social Impacts of Local Actions	47.52%	52.48%
Interprets Intercultural Experiences with Empathy	13.41%	86.59%
Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks	33.09%	66.91%
Perspective Taking	36.62%	63.38%
Responsible Action	36.85%	63.15%
Social Identity and Commitment	41.42%	58.58%
Understanding Social Systems	37.58%	62.42%
Use Multiple Perspectives in Problem Solving	39.32%	60.68%
Grand Total	32.23%	67.77%

FREQUENCY OF CRITERIA SELECTION BY PARTICIPATING FACULTY

Objective	
Criteria	Number of Ratings
Personal Responsibility	5675
Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally	702
Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	655
Connect Concepts to Experience	669
Content Development	240
Ethical Issue Recognition	431
Ethical Self-Awareness	306
Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically	518
Reflection and Self-Assessment	603
Transfer	219
Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	347
Use of Evidence	109
Uses Information Purposefully	876
Social Responsibility	4663
Apply Knowledge to Social Issues	627

Asks and Pursues Questions about Cultures	122
Audience-Appropriate Approach & Structure	39
Comparing Cultures	173
Comprehension	87
Cultural self-awareness	336
Evaluates Social Impacts of Local Actions	464
Interprets Intercultural Experiences with Empathy	180
Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks	179
Perspective Taking	394
Responsible Action	820
Social Identity and Commitment	412
Understanding Social Systems	562
Use Multiple Perspectives in Problem Solving	268
Grand Total	10,338

RESULTS BY COLLEGE AND COMPONENT AREA

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING CRITERION FOR SUCCESS, BY COLLEGE		
CORE OBJECTIVE	MEETS STANDARD	
	No	Yes
College		
Personal Responsibility	31.35%	68.65%
Arts and Sciences	32.98%	67.02%
Business	39.05%	60.95%
General	19.29%	80.71%
Health Sciences	32.22%	67.78%
Nursing	29.68%	70.32%
Professional Education	34.42%	65.58%
Social Responsibility	33.36%	66.64%
Arts and Sciences	33.79%	66.21%
Business	42.58%	57.42%
General	29.31%	70.69%
Health Sciences	31.03%	68.97%
Nursing	30.58%	69.42%
Professional Education	40.69%	59.31%
Grand Total	32.23%	67.77%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING CRITERION FOR SUCCESS, BY FOUNDATIONAL COMPONENT AREA OF THE CORE CURRICULUM

CORE OBJECTIVE Foundational Component Area	MEETS STANDARD	
	No	Yes
Personal Responsibility	31.35%	68.65%
Communications	23.08%	76.92%
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	32.80%	67.20%
Social Responsibility	33.36%	66.64%
Creative Arts	24.26%	75.74%
Language, Philosophy, & Culture	36.46%	63.54%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	20.71%	79.29%
Grand Total	32.23%	67.77%

HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

The History and Government programs, housed in a common department, have elected to submit their general education artifacts separate from other general education courses. The sample of students to be assessed in History and Government is generated the same way, at the same time, and in the same batch as are the samples for the rest of the core curriculum. The list of criteria, scales of performance, benchmarks for success, and the rubrics used are the same as for the rest of the core. However, instead of having than instructors individually submit artifacts to the university’s core assessment rating system, these programs submit their scores to a single faculty member liaison, who then provides them to the assistant director of academic assessment through an Excel spreadsheet. Note that because of this segregation, neither students nor faculty associated with the History and Government elements of the core curriculum are included in the data in the above sections of this report.

The scores are based on standardized assessments used across all sections of HIST 1013, HIST 1023, GOV 2013, and GOV 2023. Students are provided with a reading and a series of multiple-choice questions, each of which is coded as aligning with one of the criteria in the table below, with each criterion corresponding to three questions. For instance, Textual Analysis has three questions associated with it. If a student answers all three correctly, the student’s score for this criterion is 3. If the student answers two correctly, the score is 2. Otherwise, the student doesn’t meet the criterion for success and the score is a 1.

All students take the same test in every core History and Government class, which means some students may take it as many as four times. For this reason, data from these programs are segregated from the data in the main core assessment system. In this inaugural year, students also were permitted to take the test as many times as they wanted, though we are told that policy will not continue. Possibly as a partial result of the above policies, criterion-of-success rates are higher here than in the core community at large, though Use Information Purposefully (58.33%) shows an area where additional action might improve student achievement.

Fall 2017*	No	Yes
Personal Responsibility	35.91%	64.09%
Evaluate Information and Its Sources Critically	26.92%	73.08%
Uses Information Purposefully	41.67%	58.33%
Ethical Issue Recognition	39.13%	60.87%
Social Responsibility	30.11%	69.89%
Perspective Taking	35.71%	64.29%
Responsible Action	25%	75%
Asks and Pursues Questions About Cultures	29.63%	70.37%

Spring 2018	No	Yes
Personal Responsibility	19.28%	80.72%
Evaluate Information and Its Sources Critically	21.43%	78.57%
Use Information Purposefully	23.08%	76.92%
Ethical Issue Recognition	13.33%	86.67%
Social Responsibility	26.67%	73.33%
Perspective Taking	33.33%	66.67%
Responsible Action	26.67%	73.33%
Asks and Pursues Questions About Cultures	20%	80%

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about core assessment results, consult on assignment design for assessments, or learn more about joining our volunteer community of raters, Core Rater Academy, please contact Dr. Gray Scott, assistant professor of English and assistant director of academic assessment, at grayscott@twu.edu or (940) 898-2327.