

Ethics Minor

Knowledge and Application of Ethical Principles

Goal Description:

Students participating in the Ethics Minor will gain an understanding of ethical theories and develop skills related to ethical decision making and providing ethical arguments.

Providing Department: Ethics Minor

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Understanding Ethical Theory and Its Applications

Learning Objective Description:

As students progress through the Ethics Minor, they will acquire a basic understanding of ethical theory and its applications. As part of this work, they will be introduced to meta ethical questions. The basic information, provided by our introductory courses, serves as the foundation for student success in upper-division courses.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

PHIL 2306 Assessment

Indicator Description:

All students in PHIL 2306 will be tested on their knowledge of basic concepts in metaethics, epistemology, and moral theory using a locally standardized pre-test and post-test for each course. Following a review of best practices for the teaching of these courses, a group of Program faculty chose the questions for the assessment. The questions asked cover the range of concepts that are taught in peer departments. Instruction on these concepts promotes a basic competence in moral metaphysics, moral epistemology, and moral theory.

Attached is the assessment used in both Fall and Spring Semesters

Attached Files

 [Phil 2306 Assessment 2022 Revised Version.pdf](#)

Criterion Description:

A paired two-sample t-test will be performed on the scores of all students who take the pre-test and the post-test. Students will demonstrate a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.

Findings Description:

Our goal of demonstrating a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test was achieved. This was seen in both the the online and face-to-face populations, as well as in the cumulative population of students as a whole.

The average student score in face-to-face section of Phil 2306 showed an increased from 69.47% on the pre-test to 79.74% on the post-test, for an increase of 10.50%. This increase was statistically significant ($p = .008$)

The average student score in online sections of Phil 2306 showed an increase from 50.83% to 70.42%, for an increase of 19.59%. This increase was statistically significant ($p < .001$)

Students enrolled across all sections of Phil 2306 showed an increase in test scores from 59.07% to 74.53%, for an increase of 15.46%. This increase was statistically significant ($p < .001$)

See attached for an analysis helpfully prepared by the office of assessment.

Attached Files

 [PHIL 2306 2023-2024 Report.pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

PHIL 2306 Assessment

Action Description:

In AY 2023-24 we were successful in showing a statistically significant improvement on the Phil 2306 assessment.

In AY 2024-25 we will again aim for a statistically significant improvement in post- test scores when compared to pre- test scores.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Phil 2303 Assessment

Indicator Description:

Critical thinking is a key component in moral reasoning. All students who take PHIL 2303 will be tested on their critical thinking skills. All faculty who teach PHIL 2303 will administer the Texas Assessment of Critical Thinking Skill (TACTS), an externally validated test of critical thinking skills, in a pre-test/post-test format. The TACTS is a broad-based assessment of critical thinking skills that goes beyond the current scope of PHIL 2303. This will allow the faculty to determine areas that may be added to our current curriculum in the future. In addition, it allows for substantial flexibility in what is taught, thereby ensuring academic freedom for instructors to design individual sections around their own expertise and interests.

Criterion Description:

A paired two-sample t-test will be performed on the scores of all students who take the pre-test and the post-test. The philosophy program expects to see a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.

Findings Description:

Our goal of demonstrating a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test was not achieved. While students showed an improvement in scores from pre- to post-test, this improvement was not statistically significant.

Students in face-to-face sections of Phil 2303 improved from an average of 35% on the pre-test to 35.91% on the post-test. This improvement was not statistically significant ($p = .803$).

Students in online sections of Phil 2303 improved from an average of 33.33% on the pre-test to 37.50% on the post-test. This improvement was not statistically significant ($p = .122$).

The aggregate of students in both face-to-face and online sections of improved from an average of 33.78 on the pre-test, to 37.07 on the post-test. Again, this increase was not statistically significant ($p = .130$).

See attached for a report prepared by the office of assessment.

Attached Files

 [PHIL 2303 \(TACTS\) 2023-2024 Report.pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action - PHIL 2303 Assessment

Action Description:

In AY 2023-24 we were not successful in showing a statistically significant improvement on the Phil 2306 assessment.

In AY 2024-25 we will again aim for a statistically significant improvement in post- test scores when compared to pre- test scores.

The ethics program coordinator will attempt to put a committee together to review the Phil 2306 assessment to ensure that the assessment matches content taught in Phil 2306.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Phil 4363 Assessment

Indicator Description:

All students in PHIL 4363 will be tested on their knowledge of concepts in ethical theory using a locally standardized pre-test and post-test for each course. This tool was built to measure student learning of advanced moral principles and concepts covered in Ethical Theories. A copy of the instrument and rubric used to grade it are attached.

Attached Files

 [Phil 4363 Assessment Rubric.docx](#)

 [Phil 4363 Assessment \(updated Fall 2022\).docx](#)

Criterion Description:

A paired two-sample t-test will be performed on the scores of all students who take the pre-and the post-assessments. Students will demonstrate a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.

Findings Description:

Our goal of demonstrating a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test was achieved.

A total of 22 students took the pre-test and 20 students took the post-test (out of a total of 22 enrolled in the course). Of these students, 20 took *both* the pre- and post- test. All statistical analyses were performed only on those students who took both pre-and post-tests.

A parametric dependent samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre- to post-test scores for students enrolled in Phil 4363 in Fall 2023. The average student score on the pre-test was 15.8 out of 35 (45%); the average student score on the post-test was 26.06 out of 35 (76%). This difference amounts to an average increase of 10.8 (31%) from pre- to post-test. This is a statistically significant increase ($p = 1.37^{-05}$).

Attached is an in-depth analysis of the data prepared by the Ethics Minor program coordinator as well as a spreadsheet with the hard data.

Attached Files

 [23-24 Phil 4363 Assessment Report.docx](#)

 [2023 Phil4363 Assessment Grades.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action - Phil 4363 Assessment

Action Description:

The ethics minor program was successful in its goal of showing a statistically significant improvement on the Phil 4363 assessment.

For the 2024-25 school year, the ethics minor will again aim to show a statistically significant improvement on the Phil 4363 assessment.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Improve student participation in online sections

Performance Objective Description:

Student participation in pre- and post- assessments of online sections of courses has been lower than student participation in face-to-face sections. Faculty will create strategies to increase student participation in online sections.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Improve Student Participation in Phil 2303 Student Assessment

KPI Description:

Online Phil 2303 faculty will actively encourage students via email to participate in the Phil 2303 assessment.

Target Description:

Our target for success is a 10% improvement in online student participation in the pre- and post-assessment.

Results Description:

We were not successful in achieving our target of a 10% improvement in online student participation in the pre- and post- assessment.

In AY 2022-23, total student enrollment in online sections of Phil 2303 was 286. A total of 52 students took both the pre-and post assessment. This is a 18.18% participation rate.

In Ay 2023-24, total student enrollment in online sections of Phil 2303 was 344. A total of 30 students took both the pre-and post- assessment. This is a 8.72% participation rate.

The change in participation between AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24 is -52.03%. See table below and attached spreadsheet.

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Enrollment	344	286
Assessment participation	30	52
Participation percentage	8.72%	18.18%
Change in participation	-52.03%	

Attached Files

 [Assessment Participation Fall 2022- Spring 2024.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action - Improve Student Participation in Phil 2303 Assessment

Action Description:

Faculty will double down on their efforts to improve online student participation in Phil 2303. Faculty will send out emails and we will also engage in a brainstorm for how to improve student participation.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Improve Student Participation in Phil 2306 Student Assessment

KPI Description:

Online Phil 2306 faculty will actively encourage students via email to participate in the Phil 2306 assessment.

Target Description:

Our target for success is a 10% improvement in online student participation in the pre- and post-assessment.

Results Description:

We did not meet our goal of improving online student participation by 10% in the Phil 2306 pre- and post assessment.

In AY 2022-23, online student participation in the Phil 2306 pre- and post- assessment was 28.21%.

In AY 2023-24 online student participation in the Phil 2306 pre- and post-assessment was 10.96%.

This is a 61.15% reduction in online student participation in the Phil 2306 pre- and post-assessment. See table below as well as attached excel sheet.

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Enrollment	219	156
Assessment participation	24	44
Participation Percentge	10.96%	28.21%
Change in participation	-61.15%	

Attached Files

[Assessment Participation Fall 2022- Spring 2024.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action - Improve Participation in 2306 Assessment

Action Description:

Faculty will double down on their efforts to improve online student participation in the Phil 2306 assessment. Faculty will continue emailing student reminders and also brainstorm ways to increase participation rates in online classes.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Improve Student Participation in Phil 4363 Student Assessment

KPI Description:

Because Phil 4363 is a writing heavy course, and because the assessment involves additional writing, faculty will offer extra credit points for participation in both the pre- and post- assessment.

Target Description:

Our target for success is a 25% improvement in student participation in the pre- and post-assessment.

Results Description:

Our goal of increasing student participation by 25% in the Phil 4363 assessment was successful.

In Fall of 2022, 60% of students (18 of 30) enrolled in Phil 4363 took both the pre- and post-assessment. In Fall 2023, 90.9% (20 of 22) took both the pre and post assessment. This is a 51.5% improvement in student participation in the assessment.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Action - Improve participation in Phil 4363 assessment

Action Description:

Faculty were successful at improving student participation in the Phil 4363 pre- and post-assessment. Faculty will continue offering extra credit for completing the assessment.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Increase student learning in Phil 4363

Performance Objective Description:

Phil 4363 faculty will try a new teaching technique in Phil 4363 in an attempt to increase student learning.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Employ retrieval practice in Phil 4363 to improve student learning

KPI Description:

Faculty in Phil 4363 will employ low-stakes, regularly scheduled retrieval practice in an effort to improve student learning and retention of information in the course.

Target Description:

Our target for success is to show a statistically significant improvement in student learning compared to Fall 2022. We will measure this by comparing scores for students who took both the pre- and post test in Fall 2022 to the scores for students who took both the pre- and post-test in Fall 2023.

Results Description:

There was not a statistically significant improvement in student learning in Fall 2023 compared to Fall 2022. When comparing questions covered in both years (questions 1-5), students in Fall 2023 showed an average improvement of 143%. In Fall 2022, students showed an average improvement of 157%.

For raw data, see Excel page titled "without 6&7" on the attached excel workbook.

Attached Files

 [2023 Phil4363 Assessment Grades.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Employ retrieval practice in Phil 4363 to improve student learning

Action Description:

Even though the use of retrieval practice did not increase scores on the Phil 4363 assessment for students enrolled in Phil 4363 in Fall 2023 when compared to students enrolled in 4363 in Fall 2022, faculty teaching Phil 4363 will continue to use regular low-stakes retrieval practice.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

In AY 2023-24, the Ethics Minor program faculty will do the following:

1. Continue to collect data on assessments for Phil 2303, 2306, and 4363
2. Continue employing strategies for increasing student participation in online sections of Phil 2303, 2306, and 4363.

In addition, the Ethics Minor program coordinator will do the following:

1. Reevaluate the Phil 2303 assessment tool. If the 2303 assessment tool is found to no longer accurately reflect what faculty are currently teaching in Phil 2303, or if the assessment tool is found to be defective in some other way, the Ethics Minor program coordinator will begin the process of revising the assessment tool.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

In AY 2023-24, the Ethics Minor program did the following:

1. Continued to collect data on assessments for Phil 2303, 2306, and 4363
2. Continued employing strategies for increasing student participation in online sections of Phil 2303, 2306, and 4363.

A reevaluation of the Phil 2303 assessment tool was undertaken during AY 2022-23. It was decided that the philosophy program, in conjunction with the office of assessment, would analyze the data collected over the last several years with the aim of determining the following:

- a. Does the metacognitive question data together with the critical thinking question data reveal evidence of the Dunning-Kruger effect?
- b. How has the pandemic, increase in faculty turnover, and transition from paper to online assessment affect scores.

The philosophy program decided that it would focus its efforts on updating the Phil 3365 assessment.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

1. Continue to collect data on Phil 2303, 2306, and 4363
2. Continue employing strategies for increasing student participation in online sections of Phil 2303, 2306, and 4363.
3. Again consider evaluating the Phil 2303 assessment instrument.