









Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU)
2014 - 2015

Philosophy BA

Goal	Improving Critical Thinking And Analytic Reasoning 1  Students completing the critical thinking and logic courses in our curriculum will develop a broad-based skills in critical thinking and formal logic.
Objective (L)	Demonstrate Critical Thinking Skills  Critical thinking skills are an essential component of philosophical work. Students will be able to analyze arguments and draw conclusions from available information.
Indicator	Response Scores On TACTS   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)s, 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. A copy of the current TACTS is attached. A copy of the credited responses is attached. The Philosophy Program Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that all faculty who teach PHIL 2303 effectively administer the pre- and post-tests in every section of their course. Dr. Sanford will be responsible for gathering pre- and post-test data from the faculty members who teach PHIL 2303.
Criterion	Statistically Significant Improvement From The TACTS Pre-test To The TACTS Post-test.  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.
Finding	Statistically Significant Improvement From The Pre-test To The Post-test (2303)   A paired two-sample t-test on our sample of 331 student scores, covering only those students who took both the pre-test and post-test, demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their scores. Data and basic analysis are attached. One professor did not submit data for any sections from 2014-2015.
Criterion	Improvement In Calculating Probabilities  The data from the team that developed the TACTS show that a knowledge gap exists with respect to decision making when an outcome depends upon the conjunction of two probabilistic events. Their data show that less than 20% of those tested correctly answered the following question: "George is waiting for two of his customers, Fuzzy Logic Computers, Inc.

and Stalking Horse Designs, to pay their bills. If either of them pays before the end of the month, then George can pay his supplier. But if neither of them pays, then George will have to take out a bank loan. George estimates that the chance that Fuzzy Logic will pay in time is 70% and the chance Stalking Horse Designs will pay in time is 60%. Assuming that his estimates are correct and that the two events are independent, what is the chance that George will have to take out a bank loan? (a) 12% (b) 40% (c) 65% (d) 42% (e) 88%" 2012-2013 will be the fourth year that the Philosophy Program will expect all faculty to evaluate this type of reasoning as part of the critical thinking course. We will consider this effort successful if there is at least a 75% improvement on this type of question from the pre-test to the post-test.

Finding

Improvement In Calculating Probabilities

The sample is limited to only those students who took both the pre-test and post-test. For students whose pre-test score was reported, 59 of 331 (17.8%) correctly answered the question.

On the post-test, 158 of 331 (47.7%) correctly answered the question. This represents a 168% improvement in the percentage of students who successfully answered the probability questions from the pre-test to the post-test. This is better than the 134.8% improvement seen in 2013-2014, the 127.0% improvement seen in 2012-2013 and the 126.2% improvement seen in 2011-2012. Recent results compare favorably to the 85.6% improvement seen in 2009-2010 and 106.5% seen in 2010-2011. Yet, remains a challenge to improve even further. The sample is limited to only those students who took both the pre-test and post-test. Additionally, one professor did not submit data for any sections from 2014-2015.

Action

Probabilities Calculation, New Instrument, And Data Completeness

The Program will continue to share teaching strategies among all faculty teaching PHIL 2303 with an eye toward further improvement in student outcomes with respect to calculating probabilities.

Professors Sanford and Wright are using an assessment grant from SHSU's Office of Planning and Assessment in an effort to develop a new instrument for assessing student critical thinking skills. The research is looking at the metacognitive outcomes of critical thinking instruction. The instrument should be available for use starting Fall 2015.

We expect to report the results of this work during the 2015-2016 academic year.

The professor who did not provide data for the PHIL 2303 sections from 2014-2015 is no longer employed at SHSU. In an effort to ensure data completeness for 2015-2016, the SACS Coordinator has meet with each person scheduled to teach PHIL 2303 during 2015-2016. Data completeness is scheduled to be an agenda item for each Program meeting

during Summer 2015. Additionally, the SACS coordinator will send a reminder email to all faculty prior to the start of each semester and at the end of each semester. Finally, as a means of catching issues early, the SACS Coordinator will request that all data from Fall 2015 be submitted before Spring 2016 classes start.

Goal
Understanding Of General Philosophical Concepts 1 

Ensuring that students acquire a general understanding of basic philosophical concepts.

Objective (L)
Demonstrate Basic Understanding Of Core Concepts In Philosophy 

As students progress through the Philosophy BA, they will acquire a basic understanding of metaphysics, epistemology, and moral theory. This basic information, provided by our introductory courses serves as the foundation for student success in upper-division courses.

Indicator
Statistically Significant Improvement Of Student Scores From Pre-test To Post-test (2361/2603)  

All students in PHIL 2361 and PHIL 2603 will be tested on their knowledge of basic concepts in metaphysics, 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 metaphysics, epistemology, and moral theory. The attached documents provide the assessment instruments for PHIL 2361 and PHIL 2603 as well as the credited responses for each.

Criterion
Statistically Significant Improvement From The Pre-test To The Post-test (2361/2603) 

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 in both courses will demonstrate a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.

Finding
Statistically Significant Improvement From The Pre-test To The Post-test (2361)  

A paired two-sample t-test on our sample of 212 student scores, covering only those students who took both the pre-test and post-test, demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their scores. Data and basic analysis are attached. One professor did not submit data for his sections of PHIL 2361.

Finding
Statistically Significant Improvement From The Pre-test To The Post-test (2306)  

A paired two-sample t-test on our sample of 455 student scores, covering only those students who took both the pre-test and post-test, demonstrated a statistically significant

improvement in their scores. Data and basic analysis are attached.

Indicator	<p>Improved Student Knowledge Of Kant 🔑</p> <p>Students will demonstrate increased understanding of Immanuel Kant's philosophy. Questions 10 and 12 on the pre-test and post-test were chosen to measure our Program faculty's ability to improve this targeted area.</p>
Criterion	<p>Improvement At Identifying Major Themes Of Kantian Philosophy 🔑</p> <p>After comparing students' pre-test and post-test performance on questions 10 and 12 of those tests, the Program will consider this effort successful if the data indicate at least a 75% improvement in student performance on each question. Anything less will be taken as an indication that the Program must improve its performance in this area. Regardless of performance, the 2012-2013 data will serve as a baseline for measuring future performance.</p>
Finding	<p>Improvement At Identifying Major Themes Of Kantian Philosophy 🔑</p> <p>24.5% of students chose the correct answer for question 10 on the pre-test. This improved to 53.5% on the post-test. This represented a 118.4% improvement, which compares favorably to the 85.3% improvement attained during 2012-2013. 28.0% of students chose the correct answer for question 12 on the pre-test. This improved to 58.4% on the post-test. This represented an 108.6% improvement, which compares favorably to the 86.7% improvement attained during 2012-2013.</p>
Indicator	<p>Improved Student Knowledge Of The Death Penalty Debate 🔑</p> <p>Students will demonstrate increased understanding of arguments related to the death penalty. Questions 19 and 20 on the pre-test and post-test were chosen to measure our Program faculty's ability to improve this targeted area.</p>
Criterion	<p>Improvement At Identifying Arguments Related To The Death Penalty 🔑</p> <p>After comparing students' pre-test and post-test performance on questions 19 and 20 of those tests, the Program will consider this effort successful if the data indicate at least a 75% improvement in student performance on each question. Anything less will be taken as an indication that the Program must improve its performance in this area. Regardless of performance, the 2012-2013 data will serve as a baseline for measuring future performance.</p>
Finding	<p>Improvement At Identifying Arguments Related To The Death Penalty 🔑</p> <p>20.7% of students chose the correct answer for question 19 on the pre-test. This improved to 42.3% on the post-test. This represented an</p>

104.3% improvement, which compares favorably to the 92% improvement achieved during 2012-2013. Likewise, 25.5% of students chose the correct answer for question 20 on the pre-test. This improved to 57.2% on the post-test. This represented an 124.3% improvement, which compares favorably to the 91.2% improvement achieved during 2012-2013.

Action**Assessment Of Students' Understanding Of General Philosophical Concepts** 🔑

The Program is undertaking a review of the instruments used to assess PHIL 2306 and PHIL 2361. These efforts will be undertaken by faculty members who teach these courses in consultation with the Program Coordinator. The processes may revise the instruments or retain them in their present form based on the faculty members' findings regarding the fit between assessment instruments, course content, and curricular goals.

Objective (L)**Demonstrate Advanced Understanding Of History Of Philosophy** 🔑

Well-educated philosophy students will demonstrate appreciation for the arguments and positions of earlier thinkers. Because so much of what is written in philosophy is a reaction to the metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions of earlier thinking, it is the core of well-rounded philosophical education.

Indicator**Pre-test Post-test Response Scores On Locally-Standardized Instruments (3364/3365)** 🔑









All students in PHL 3364 and PHL 3365 will be tested on their knowledge of general concepts in the history of philosophy. All faculty who teach these courses will administer a pre-test and post-test to all students. All Philosophy BA students are required to take PHL 364 (Ancient and Medieval Philosophy) and PHL 365 (Modern Philosophy). Together, these courses provide students with upper-level instruction covering the history of metaphysics and epistemology. 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 cover the range of concepts that are taught in peer departments. Instruction on these concepts promotes a well-rounded understanding of the history of philosophy.

Criterion**PHL 3365 Assessment** 🔑

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 in both courses will demonstrate a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.

Finding**Statistically Significant Improvement From Pre-Test To Post-Test** 🔑

A paired two-sample t-test on our sample of 17 student scores, covering only those students who took both the pre-test and post-test, demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their scores. Data and basic analysis are attached.

Criterion	PHL 3364 Assessment  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 in both courses will demonstrate a statistically significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.
Finding	Statistically Significant Improvement From Pre-Test To Post-Test (3364)   A paired two-sample t-test on our sample of 13 student scores, covering only those students who took both the pre-test and post-test, demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their scores. Data and basic analysis are attached.
Action	Ongoing Assessment Of Students' Understanding Of Advanced Philosophical Concepts  The Program will continue to gather data on student outcomes in PHIL 3364/3365 in an effort to obtain a dataset that is large enough to facilitate analyses capable of shedding light on specific trends within these courses.
Goal	Revision Of PHIL 3362 And Development Of A New Assessment Tool  In Fall 2013, PHIL 3362 will be taught by two new faculty members who have been asked to revise both the content of the course and the assessment instrument. The Program's goal is to establish a new standard for teaching PHIL 3362.
Objective (P)	Creation Of Revised On-line And In-person PHIL 3362 Courses  The Program plans to implement revised versions of PHIL 3362 in on-line and in-person formats that take advantage of the talents of our new faculty for 2013-2014.
KPI Performance Indicator	Delivery Of On-line And In-person PHIL 3362 Sections  The Program will meet this objective if it is able to offer students revised versions of PHIL 3362 in on-line and in-person formats.
Result	Successfully Offered On-line And In-person Versions Of Contemporary Logic  The course number for PHIL 3362 was changed to PHIL 2352 mid-year. The Philosophy Program successfully offered on-line and in-person sections of PHIL 2352, the new course number for Contemporary Logic that was created in order to allow students with disabilities an option to take the course as a substitution in the Core Curriculum.

**KPI
Performance
Indicator**

**Development Of A New Assessment Tool For PHIL
3362**

Upon completion of their course revisions, Dr. Diaz and Dr. Brommage, who will be teaching PHIL 3362 for the foreseeable future, are tasked with development an appropriate assessment technique for PHIL 3362. We will consider these objectives successful when the assessment protocol has been finalized.

Result

**Completion Of New Assessment Instrument For
Contemporary Logic**

The course number for PHIL 3362 was changed to PHIL 2352 mid-year.

Professors Brommage and Wright created an assessment instrument for PHIL 2352. Dr. Wright was hired after Dr. Diaz announced her departure. The attached document shows sample questions related to each student learning outcome.

Action

Assessment Of Contemporary Logic Sections

During 2015-2016, all sections of PHIL 2352 will be assessed using the instrument created during the 2014-2015 cycle.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

The Program will gather data indicating student performance on individual questions in PHIL 3364/3365 as a means of identifying areas for improving both those courses and the student preparation provided for those courses by PHIL 2306/2361.

The Program will begin gathering data on student outcomes in PHIL 3362 as a means of continuing our efforts to assess and improve student learning related to logic and critical thinking.

The Program will begin investigating the need for establishing expected learning outcomes for PHIL 2303, 3364, and 3365 that go beyond statistically significant improvement from pre-test to post-test.

Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.

The Program gathered data on both PHIL 3364 and PHIL 3365; however, the overall dataset remains too small to draw specific conclusions about student outcomes. The Program will continue to collect data on these courses in an effort to expand the dataset.

The Program did not gather data in PHIL 2352 (formerly PHIL 3362). This resulted because of a disruption in our faculty caused by Dr. Diaz's departure. The Program opted to delay finalizing the new assessment instrument until after we knew who would be on faculty for 2015-2016, and how this might affect the course revision that was under way. With the successfully hiring of Dr. Wright, the instrument was finalized, and it will be administered in all sections of PHIL 2352 starting Fall 2015.

The Program did not establish expected learning outcomes beyond statistically significant improvements from pre-test to post-test for PHIL 2303, 3364, and 3365. The dataset for PHIL 3364 and PHIL 3365 remains insufficient for robust analysis. The Program is in the process of

developing an assessment instrument for metacognitive improvement in PHIL 2303 as part of an assessment grant from the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment. We expect to continue these efforts and produce a viable strategy for assessing efforts to improve metacognitive judgement in PHIL 2303.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.

The Program will finalize an instrument for assessing metacognitive judgement in PHIL 2303.

The Program will continue gathering data on student outcomes in PHIL 3364 and 3365 in an effort to identify specific trends in those courses.

The Program will complete its review of the curricular goals and assessment instruments for PHIL 2306 and PHIL 2361.

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