Office of Academic Planning and Assessment

A Report of the Course-Embedded American Government Assessment

Fall 2017

Description of the Course Embedded American Government Assessment

Each fall, a locally developed pre- to post-test is administered within sections of POLS 2305: American Government. The instrument used in POLS 2305: American Government consisted of 12 multiple-choice questions and was administered to students enrolled in those courses at the start and end of the fall semester. The instrument was developed by the faculty of the Department of Political Science for use as part of their on-going programmatic assessment. As the instrument was locally developed by faculty from the Department of Political Science, it is assumed that instrument has content-related validity (Banta & Palomba, 2015). Additionally, as this test was embedded within the POLS 2305: American Government courses, the student scores represent authentic student work (Banta & Palomba, 2015; Kuh et al. 2015).

The student data presented within this report reflect student performance regarding the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Core Learning Objective of Social Responsibility (THECB, 2018). The THECB (2018) defines Social Responsibility as "intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities." Data from this assessment may therefore be used to address one element of the broader concept of Social Responsibility, the element of "knowledge of civic responsibility." These data should therefore be used in conjunction with other data to fully understand student knowledge and ability with regards to this Core Learning Objective.

Methodology

A total of 1,119 students took the pre-test and a total of 833 students took the post-test for POLS 2305: American Government in fall 2017. However, not all student test scores were used for analysis. In order to determine whether student performance increased from pre-to-post, a dependent samples *t*-test was used for analysis. Student SamID's were collected along with student scores in order to identify each student's score on both the pre- and post-test. A total of 750 students provided their SamID's and took both the pre- and post-test for POLS 2305: American Government. All statistical analysis was therefore conducted on only those students for whom both pre- and post-test scores could be identified.

Prior to conducting inferential statistics to determine whether differences were present between the students' pre- to post-test scores, checks were conducted to determine the extent to which these data were normally distributed. All four standardized skewness and kurtosis coefficients, (i.e., the skewness and kurtosis values divided by their standard error) were outside the limits of normality of +/-3 (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2002) for the POLS 2305: American Government data; therefore, a non-parametric Wilcoxon's dependent samples *t*-test (Huck, 2007) was conducted to analyze student performance on this assessment from pre-to-post for that course.

Results

A non-parametric Wilcoxon's dependent sample *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the pre- to post-scores for students enrolled in POLS 2305: American Government for fall 2016, $z = -9.86$, $p < .001$. This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.48 (Cohen, 1988). The average student score increased from 74.8% on the pre-test to 81.42% on the post-test, for an increase of approximately 7% points. Readers are directed to Table 1 for the descriptive statistics for student pre- and post-test scores

Table1

Descriptive Statistics for Student Pre- and Post-Scores on Course-Embedded Assessments in POLS 2305: American Government

Course	*M %*	*SD %*
POLS 2305: American Government		
Pre-test Scores	74.80	14.73
Post-test Scores	81.42	12.90

Note. The number of students in the sample was 750.

References

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