

Loyola University Chicago 2008 Core Assessment Project

June 2008

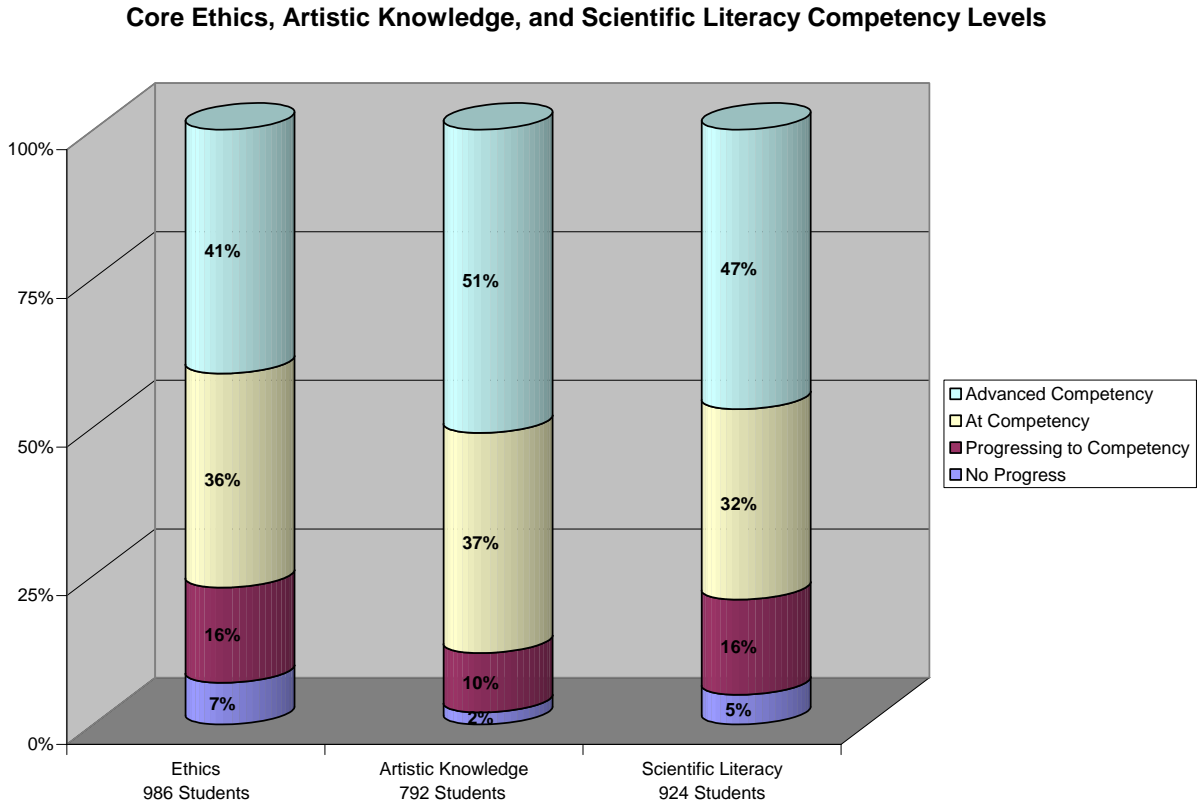
In the spring of 2008, Loyola University Chicago's Office of the Provost and the University Core Curriculum Committee (UCCC) launched a three-year project of Core Curriculum assessment. The aim of this project is to determine whether Loyola Core courses are achieving their identified learning outcomes. The first year included assessment of three Core areas: Ethics, Scientific Literacy, and Artistic Knowledge & Experience.

The current Core Curriculum was inaugurated in 2005, with ten knowledge areas and four values areas that focus on learning outcomes addressed across various university departments. The university needs systematic, cross-departmental information on student achievement in the Core in order to enhance Core decision-making at all levels: from the pedagogy of individual Core instructors to the projected course offerings of departments to the priorities of the university administration. In addition, because Core assessment is mandated by accrediting agencies for higher education, we recognize that core assessment will become a regular feature of the undergraduate curriculum at Loyola.

Instructors in each of the three Core areas received from the UCCC sample questions and responses and a general common grading rubric. Instructors were permitted to adapt the sample questions and the general rubric to their own course content, as long as they graded the responses in accordance with a general common rubric for a Core area. The general common rubric had a four point scale: no progress, progress toward competency, at competency, and advanced competency. Core assessment questions were either embedded in the spring 2008 final exams or administered separately in class. Instructors reported results to their department chairpersons, who, in turn, sent summaries for tabulation to the UCCC.

Graph of Overall Core Assessment Results

The following graph represents the general results of our 2008 Core assessment project.



Conclusion

The 2008 Core assessment project reveals that Core teaching at Loyola in Ethics, Artistic Knowledge, and Scientific Literacy is largely successful relative to achieving the advertised learning outcomes. The UCCC will continue its Core assessment with the kind of methodology outlined here, while fine-tuning as needed. In addition, the UCCC will identify ways to make our achievement of the advertised Core learning outcomes even more successful.

Proposed Three-Year Core Assessment

YEAR	Knowledge Area 1: Ethics									
1	Communication	Philosophy	Theology							
	Knowledge Area 2: Artistic Knowledge and Experience									
	Classical Studies	Dance	English	Fine Arts	Literature	Music	Physics	Theater		
	Knowledge Area 3: Scientific Literacy									
	Anthropology	Biology	Honors	Natural Science	Philosophy	Physics	Psychology			
YEAR	Knowledge Area 4: College Writing Seminar									
2	English									
	Knowledge Area 5: Historical Knowledge									
	Anthropology	Classical Studies	Computer Science	Education	Fine Arts	History	Honors			
	Knowledge Area 6: Quantitative Analysis									
	Computer Science	Business	Mathematics	Philosophy	Statistics					
	Values Area 1: Understanding and Promoting Justice									
	Anthropology	Bioethics	Communication	English	History	Philosophy	Political Science	Psychology	Theology	
	Values Area 2: Understanding Spirituality or Faith									
	Classical Studies	Nursing	Philosophy	Sociology	Theology					
YEAR	Knowledge Area 7: Societal and Cultural Knowledge									
3	Anthropology	Asian Studies	Classical Studies	Women's Studies	Communication	Child Psychology	Economics			
	Literature	Philosophy	Political Science	Psychology	Sociology	Social Work				
	Knowledge Area 8: Philosophical Knowledge									
	Communication	Education	Philosophy	Political Science						
	Knowledge Area 9: Theological & Religious Studies Knowledge									
	Classical Studies	Philosophy	Sociology	Theology						
	Knowledge Area 10: Literary Knowledge and Experience									
	Classical Studies	English	Literature							
	Values Area 3: Promoting Civic Engagement or Leadership									
	History	Honors	International Studies	Mathematics	Education	Business	Natural Sciences			
	Philosophy	Political Science	Psychology	Sociology	Social Work	Theater				
	Values Area 4: Understanding Diversity in the United States or the World									
	Anthropology	Asian Studies	Child Psychology	Education	English	History	Honors			
	Literature	Management	Psychology	Women's Studies	Sociology	Theology				