

Humanities Assessment
HUMN 210, “Classics in Literature”
Spring 2016
Submitted by Grant Smith

What was assessed:

HUMN 210 is assessed here because it is an option in both the General Education Core Requirements and in the Humanities major. It is a survey course that satisfies List 1 requirements in the GEGR area of Humanities and Fine Arts.

This assessment will address the first student learning objective listed for the program – i.e., “Students will distinguish basic forms and strategies of philosophy, literature, and at least one of the arts and of the social sciences.”

Several assessment tools are used routinely in HUMN 290—i.e., “quizzes,” one in-class paper, discussion reports, and two or more out-of-class papers for each student. This assessment report focuses on the quizzes and specifically on student growth in reading comprehension. While discussion/writing topics focus on critical thinking, quizzes focus on reading and comprehension of a range of major concepts and modes of expression found in the art, literature, and philosophy of Renaissance, with special attention to influences from other cultures.

The purpose of quizzes is to develop effective reading habits by students. The administration of the quizzes is based on the assumption that if students write down information while they read, their comprehension and retention will be enhanced. Therefore, all reading assignments have lists of “reading questions” (at least one question per assigned page average) which students can print and write down answers as they read. The “quizzes” then repeat a selection of the “reading questions,” and students are allowed to use their answers. About 15% of the quiz questions are based on lectures but can always be answered by looking at the whiteboard. At the end of the quarter, quiz scores, including the summary quiz, are simply added up, and 75% is required for a 2.0 grade. A 4.0 grade is usually 97% or higher.

Assessment procedures:

To reflect growth of reading skills, this report compares the total points lost in the first four (of eighteen) quizzes and the last four quizzes in two sections of HUMN 210 in the spring of 2016 (each with beginning enrollments of 45 students). The scores of students who dropped the course are omitted from these comparisons. Absences are also omitted because they were distributed unevenly among quizzes that varied in the number of points available (between 15 and 39). However, the number of total points available in the first four quizzes was exactly the same as the total points available in the last four quizzes.

Results:

<u>Total points lost by all students</u>	<u>First Four Quizzes</u>	<u>Last Four Quizzes</u>
HUMN 210-01	463	391
HUMN 210-02	465	407

Thus, both classes improved their reading skills as a group by an average of 14%, and the

performance by the two classes was very similar, illustrating a high level of statistical reliability.

Individual scores confirm a general pattern of improvement. In HUMN 210-01, twenty students showed improvement, sixteen scored one or more points lower in the last four quizzes, and three scored the same. In HUMN 210-02, twenty-five students showed improvement, seventeen scored one or more points lower in the last four quizzes, and one scored the same. In both classes, students who scored well in the first four quizzes generally scored well in the last four. The biggest adjustment was almost always after the first quiz.

Interpretation of results:

The consistency of these scores illustrates the reliability of the quizzes in measuring possible student achievement in the course objectives. More importantly, when based on preassigned “reading questions,” they are a practical way to get students to write down information as they read. They are thereby very useful in teaching reading skills and in enhancing comprehension and retention of reading assignments.