

GEC Learning Outcomes (GLOs) Assessment Critical Thinking

Assessment Type: GEC

Year/Term: AY18

Course: SOC 205

Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking

Assessment Method/Tool: Common Rubric-EPCC

Measurement Scale: 3-1

Sample Size: 39

	Proficient (# of students %)		Adequate (# of students %)		Developing (# of students %)	
Identifies and explains Issues	15	38%	17	44%	7	18%
Recognizes contexts and assumptions	7	18%	20	51%	12	31%
Acknowledges multiple perspectives	13	33%	19	49%	7	18%
Effectively evaluates evidence to reach conclusions	18	48%	16	41%	5	13%
Median % (based on 39 student sample size)		36%		47%		17%

Benchmark:

85%

Institutional benchmark goal for median percentage of students to meet “Proficient” or “Adequate” levels in the GEC

Median % Achieving Benchmark:

83%

median percentage of students meeting “Adequate” or “Proficient” levels

Closing the Loop:

Summary. I have been assigning Orwell's *1984* for many years, because of the multiple dimensions that force students to think sociologically, and because it aligns well with the second half of the course, which focuses on social control (*1984* representing a coercive variant; McDonaldization at the societal level more of a *de facto* variant). Results from this particular class are slightly below the 85% target for "adequate" or "proficient" performance. The assignment is complex for a lower-division course, and students are asked to synthesize their learning in applying a social problems framework of questions to both the novel and contemporary American society. A figure of 83% is satisfactory given the nature of the assignment, and average for what students tend to score over the terms.

Accounting for results. The design of the assignment is specific and detailed, owing to the hundreds if not thousands of papers available on the web that cover this novel. I account for the slightly lower average for 2 or 3, based on experience, with lower-than-average class attendance. We go over the novel and its contemporary parallels during week 8 of the term, and attendance was averaging 60%. Those students who attended regularly and were tracking well in the classroom setting performed above average, and this includes students with a relatively wide range of aptitudes for sociological thinking, based on other assignments in the class. I ask students to assess the importance of assignments to their learning, and 15 said the *1984* paper was somewhat or very important, 7 responded that it was not important or should be eliminated (1). But only 22 of 45 students responded to that questionnaire item (and yes, six students did not submit a paper).

There was a lesser number of students reaching proficiency in "recognizing contexts and assumptions," mainly because it is the more difficult aspect of the paper. These students are not sociologists, most of them are not sociology majors. The assignment is challenging, but given the state of American society and the ease with which examples of parallels with the society of Oceania in *1984* can be found in contemporary news sources, I believe this assignment to be important both in helping students think about reflection both on the society within which they're living, and their places in it.

Action Plan:

I do not take role in class, nor do I require attendance. Students are presumably adults who will make those decisions. The students who attend regularly I believe find the discussion of Orwell and related concepts provocative and enlightening, often disturbing as well when considered alongside contemporary parallels. I believe that the scores for this class are within the normal range of variation that I've observed over the years. I do emphasize the importance of attendance, and may add some quantitative arguments to bolster the case. However, if students aren't in class to hear it ...

Program faculty should discuss issues associated with attendance and its connection to success, perhaps identifying sound practices for addressing them.