Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

1. Assessment information collected

_Per our 2012 SLOA plan:_

- All students enrolled in the capstone course (ANTH F411: Senior Seminar) are given a standardized, summative exercise (10 questions) designed to assess facility in four areas:
  1. A basic understanding of particular national traditions of anthropological research, major research paradigms, and the importance of the introduction of particular methods.
  2. An understanding of methods of fieldwork, comparative and social and cultural analytical methods and their limitations and ethical dimensions.
  3. Knowledge of a range of social and cultural configurations and critical perspectives on folk concepts.
  4. Exhibit effective skills in written and oral communication.
- All students enrolled in ANTH 411 will be given an exit survey with emphasis on student’s overall assessment of the content and quality of education received in anthropology.
- Alumni survey will be sent to graduates the year after they complete the program with emphasis on success in continuing education and/or employment in a related field.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

- **Summative exercise:**
  The standardized, summative exercise was administered to all BA students enrolled in ANTH 411 in 2015 and 2016. The students were given ten questions and asked to respond to six in short essay format and the rest as short answers with bullet points or brief sentences. The resulting answers were scored by the instructor of Senior Seminar (2015) and the BA Outcomes Assessment Coordinator on the following scale: W= substantial wrong information; U= unsatisfactory; UP= unsatisfactory but partial; SP= satisfactory but partial (missing some pertinent information); S= satisfactory; VS= very satisfactory.
In summarizing we ranked as satisfactory all answers scored “VS”, “S” and “SP”. Similarly we ranked as unsatisfactory those scored as “U”, “UP” and “W”.

1. A basic understanding of particular national traditions of anthropological research, major research paradigms, and the importance of the introduction of particular methods.

   • Three questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective. The questions in this category that the students chose to answer were also the most broad and related to the most important idea the student had learned as an anthropology major. All students (100%) wrote answers that were scored as satisfactory.

   These results show an improvement in relation to the 2014 SLOA report (45% of unsatisfactory answers). This is a sign that the new version of ANTH384 (History of Anthropology), introduced in 2013-14, has helped our students increase their awareness of different national traditions of anthropological research, as well as their understanding of the introduction of major concepts and methods in the course the history of anthropology.

2. An understanding of methods of fieldwork, comparative and social and cultural analytical methods, as well as their limitations and ethical dimensions.

   Four questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective. Overall, 79.3% of the answers scored as satisfactory, and 20.7% as unsatisfactory. These results show an improvement in relation to the 2014 SLOA report (satisfactory: 73%; unsatisfactory: 27%). We recognize that understanding various methodologies and the multiple methods of anthropological research, as well as on their ethical dimensions, is an important dimension that needs to be emphasized systematically.

3. Knowledge of a range of social and cultural configurations and critical perspectives on folk concepts.

   • Three questions on the exercise addressed this learning objective. Overall, the results show 72.7% of satisfactory answers and 27.3% of unsatisfactory answers. While this shows an improvement compared to the 2014 scores in this category (67% satisfactory; 33% unsatisfactory), we believe that more folk concepts (such as ‘gender’ and ‘ritual’) and analytical concepts
(‘genre’ and ‘linguistic ideology’) need to be explicitly recognized and discussed in undergraduate cultural and linguistic anthropology courses. Some of the weakness in this area can be attributed to the fact that the seniors in ANTH411 in 2015 had not been required to take a linguistic anthropology or sociolinguistic course. However, in the fall of 2014, we changed the program requirements so that all majors have to take ANTH223 (Sociolinguistics). None of the students in Senior Seminar/ANTH411 (2015) had had that new requirements applied to them. We anticipate that this area will improve as students who are completing the new requirements progress through the curriculum.

4. Exhibit effective skills in written and oral communication

- As discussed in our 2014 assessment report, the current format of the summative exercise does not allow it to be an effective means for judging communication skills. In order to account for the new Communications Learning Outcomes, the department has drafted a new assessment plan that will involve multiple faculty members evaluating a semester-long research/writing project prepared by Senior Seminar students. The new SLOA plan will be submitted once the department received feedback on its draft Communications Plan (presumably in Fall 2016).

- The Exit Survey

  In our 2014 outcomes assessment report, we noted that due to extenuating circumstances, an exit was not administered. For this assessment cycle, an exit survey was developed by Brian Hemphill (Senior Seminar instructor) and Ben Potter (Chair) and was provided to Senior Seminar students at the end of the semester. The exit survey comprises eight questions that ask student to reflect upon their experiences in the program.

  Completion of the survey was optional. Responses are summarized below:

  • Re: their overall experiences in the program: students who responded were overwhelmingly positive, mentioning the quality of instruction and support from faculty.
  • Re: department strengths/weaknesses: students enjoyed the diversity of course offerings and the focus on critical thinking. The fact that faculty are supportive and accommodating was noted as a strength by two students, while another student enjoyed the opportunity to take classes in all of the
subfield of anthropology. Less enjoyable aspects identified by one student were “cold classrooms and technology glitches.”

- Re: curriculum: as discussed above, students appreciated the diversity of offerings. Suggested additions to the curricular offerings include: a marine archaeology class, and more classes pertaining to food practices and art. Students generally felt challenged (in a positive way) by their courses. One student had some difficulty understanding the expectations for group projects in one class.

- Re: preparation for the job market: two students felt that their experiences had helped prepare them for jobs in the field and/or in the “real world”, mentioning the value of critical thinking, and the importance of learning how to identify and formulate research interests. A third student felt ready to apply to Graduate School.

We are encouraged by the fact that students expressed satisfaction with the quality of education and felt that the degree had helped prepare them for their professional future.

- The Alumni Survey
  After the 2014 assessment summary, we intended to remove the alumni survey from our SLOA plan, as current email addresses for past majors from the alumni office are difficult to obtain. The revised SLOA has not yet been submitted; however, the SLOA must be revised to include the new Communications Plan learning outcomes, so we will remove the alumni survey from our SLOA plan at the same time (submission Fall 2016).

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

The changes we prepare have more to do with revising the SLOA Plan than with changes to the curriculum. As discussed above (Point 2.4), the current format of the summative exercise does not allow it to be an effective means for judging communication skills. In order to account for the new Communications Learning Outcomes, the department has drafted a new assessment plan that will involve multiple faculty members evaluating a semester-long research/writing project prepared by Senior Seminar students. We will submit a revised version of our SLOA plan as soon as we receive feedback on our Communications Plan (presumably in Fall 2016).
4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting

   Jamie Clark, BS coordinator
   Patrick Plattet, BA coordinator
   Robin Shoaps, Senior Seminar instructor (2015)
   Ben Potter, Department Chair