

Spring Term 2010: Assessment of the Learning Outcomes

The Washington and Lee University Quality Enhancement Plan:
“Revitalizing the Spring Term”

Initial Report after First Year of the Revitalized Spring Term

1 September 2010

Overview: The first running of the Revitalized Spring Term came in the spring of 2010, with classes beginning on Monday, April 26 and ending on Friday, May 21, with one day of exams on Saturday, May 22, 2010. We offered a total of 127 academic courses, every one of which had been newly conceived, proposed to the Courses and Degrees committee, and approved over the past 2 years. The four-week format proved to be intense, challenging, invigorating, exhausting, exhilarating—often all at once. Students and faculty reported that they produced some of their best work in the intensive teaching and learning format, though certainly there were challenges to overcome and issues to be resolved in the inauguration of such a bold academic undertaking.

The Spring Term carries many aspects with it, but our main focus has always been on our central learning objective for the Spring Term: *to enhance our students’ critical and creative thinking skills*. This is at the very heart of our Spring Term mission, and all of our assessment efforts associated with the Spring Term focus on this key issue.

We put in place a range of assessment strategies, some aimed at the particulars of each given course, some aimed at the overall experience of the Spring Term; some targeted students for their perceptions of and reactions to the Spring Term, some targeted faculty; some seek to capture in a quantitative manner the Spring Term experience, some in a qualitative or affective manner; some focus on only this particular Spring Term, and others seek to understand the cumulative effect of four years’ worth of Spring Term experiences for our students. With each approach, our goal is to see to what extent the Spring Term experience affects students’ abilities in critical and creative thinking. As we state in the Quality Enhancement Plan proposal, “Revitalizing the Spring Term,” “Critical and creative thinking constitutes the essence of the liberal arts educational ideal.” The “Liberal Education and America’s Promise” (LEAP) initiative, sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, establishes the premise that “critical and creative thinking” is the central “Intellectual and Practical Skill” to be found under the category of “Essential Learning Outcomes” to be derived from the educational efforts of a Liberal Arts institution. Consequently we established the following guiding principle for the Spring Term: *“Every course taught in the spring term will seek to enhance our students’ critical and/or creative thinking skills.”* The following assessment strategies were all developed with this aim in mind.

Main methods of assessment

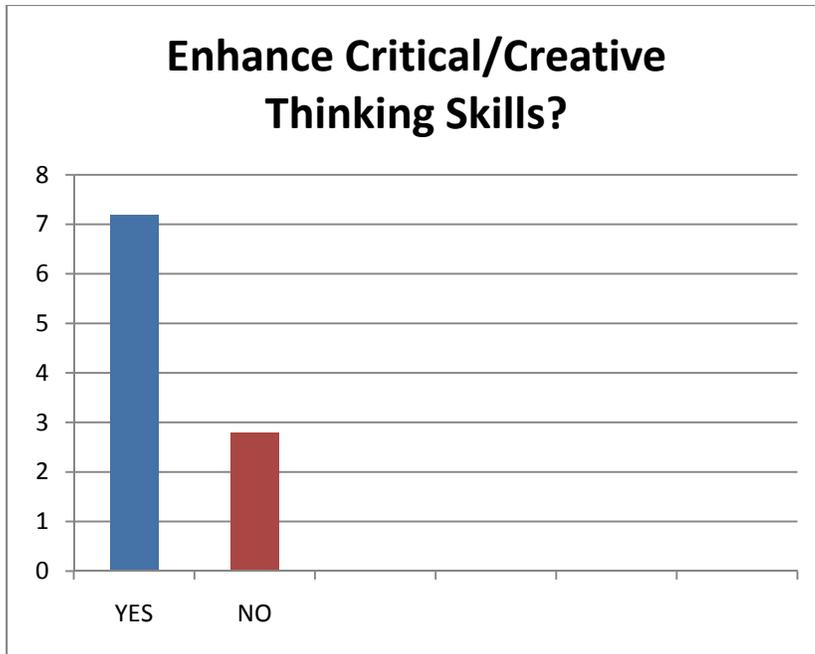
I. The Student experience survey: We developed a 28-question student experience survey that was administered to all students enrolled in a Spring Term course near the end of the term. Over 700 students replied to the survey (total enrollment in the Spring Term = 1,489). Our questions focused on the student learning experience, particularly the teaching methods employed in

their classes, the kinds of work and assignments given, and how well the course enhanced their critical and/or creative thinking abilities. The overall portrait this tool gives us of the student experience shows an impressive success so far in the academic aims of the Spring Term.

- **What sorts of pedagogies did this course employ?** Nearly 73% of the students checked both “seminar-style discussion” and “lecture,” with another 59% checking “small group work.” So these traditional teaching methods still dominated the classrooms, though many other more innovative methods were used, including lab work, problem solving, rehearsal and performance, and the use or creation of web-based tools. Students were invited to describe “other” teaching methods, and the list (over 140 entries) of these is fascinating, ranging from “individual creation of artworks” to “movie making” to field trips to hands-on medical experiences. Clearly from the student experience, the teaching was both traditional and innovative, with ample opportunity to explore various approaches and techniques.
- **The teaching of writing** forms a key component in our Spring Term conception. Writing is at the very center of critical thinking in any discipline, so we have focused a good deal of attention on this issue in our Spring Term course development and assessment. We asked students “in what ways did this course emphasize the teaching of writing?” Nearly 60% of the classes employed essays reviewed and graded by the professor; 37% included a research essay; 50% had short essay assignments of some sort; and multiple other writing strategies were employed, including revision, peer-review, wikis and blogs, and many courses made use of some sort of journal assignment. The dominance of writing in the spring term signals the commitment to rigor and engaged learning.

Response/Action Items: We presented a “Faculty Academy” training session on 25 August 2010 that focused specifically on “Teaching Writing in the Spring Term.” Five faculty gave brief presentations about their experiences with writing assignments and pedagogies in the Spring Term, followed by discussion with other faculty about what worked well and what did not in this teaching/learning environment. We will then schedule follow-up sessions in the fall, including in particular a session on how to teach a research essay assignment in the Spring Term. We hope to help faculty find new ways to teach writing in the intensive term, as well as to expand our conversation about intensive pedagogies and learning strategies in general.

- The fundamental question we asked was, “Did this course enhance or improve your ‘critical thinking abilities,’ defined as your abilities to reason and problem-solve according to the framework of the course’s specific discipline?” This question also serves to focus students on the centerpiece of the Spring Term. Student responses were certainly encouraging, with 72% answering “yes” and only 28% answering “no”:



- This indicates that the overall experience was successful in our primary learning goal. Yet it also indicates that there is room for improvement, part of which may consist in ongoing education of the students as to what exactly “critical thinking skills” are. In our follow-up question—“What specifically did this course do to enhance or improve your ‘critical thinking abilities?’”—many responses indicated a lack of clear understanding of how we were using this term. At the same time, these responses give some indication of where improvement can be made.

Response/Action Item: we will educate the faculty further, through expanding the faculty focus groups who do intensive assessment on the spring term, about “critical thinking skills” and seek ways to connect this concept to the students’ sense of what they are doing intellectually.

- We asked a range of questions about what sorts of projects students completed or produced as part of their spring term class, with the follow-up question of how well the course enhanced students’ abilities to perform each particular project or assignment. In every case, students indicated a significant improvement in their abilities with these assignments, which indicates that these enhanced skills may well carry over into their regular term coursework. Particularly in the more specific projects, such as “artwork” or “producing installations,” the progress students reported was significant.
- We asked if a given course focused more on breadth of topic or on depth; 72.4% of the students indicated a depth-oriented academic experience, which fits with our goal of creating courses that follow specific intellectual paths into depth of study, as opposed to broad-ranging courses that treat subjects only in breadth.

Response/Action Item: our follow-up sessions on pedagogy and teaching strategies in the fall and winter Faculty Academies will focus on ways in which faculty can offer intriguing

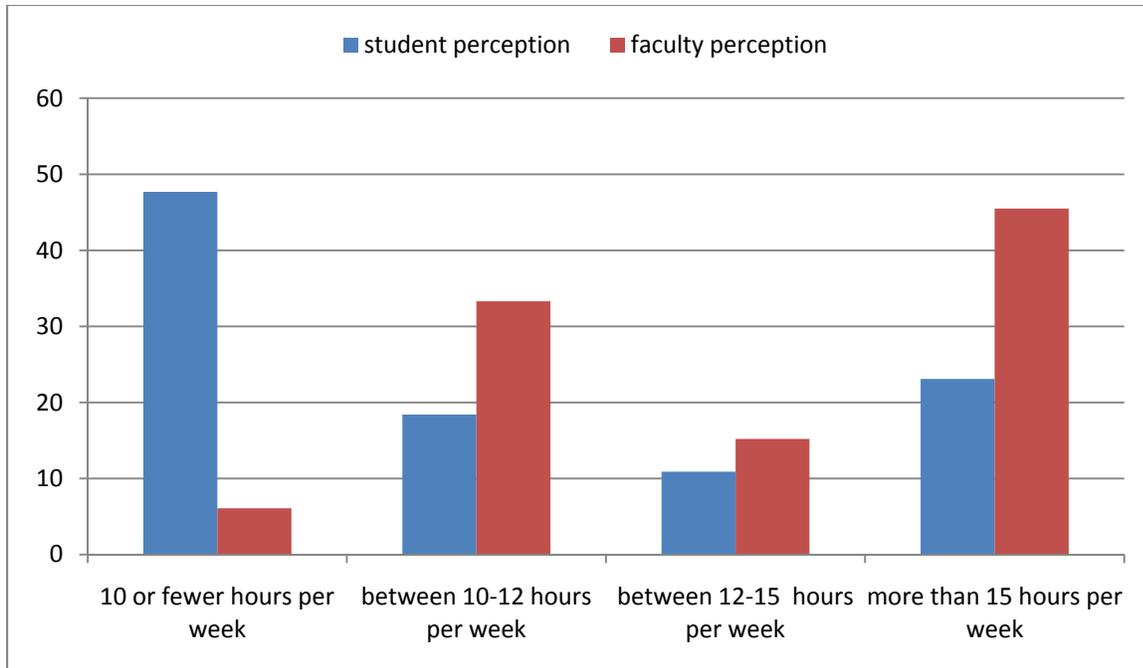
projects or assignments, best practice teaching strategies in the Spring Term, and how best to maximize the Spring Term possibilities through depth-oriented course ideas. The 30 August session, “Spring Term Teaching: War Stories and Battle Plans” session was an excellent step in this direction.

- Finally, we asked students to estimate the amount of time they spent *in class* (our guideline for faculty was to aim for 8-10 hours of in-class time per week) and the amount of time they spent *outside of class* on course-related work (our guideline here was 20-25 hours per week). The in-class time was between 6-10 hours per week for nearly 50% of the students; the other 50% exceeded this, with 11% reporting 12-14 hours per week and 23% reporting more than 14 hours per week—significantly more in-class time than we had aimed for. The outside-class time showed the opposite direction: 61% reported 14 or fewer hours per week spent outside of class working on the course, with only 24% reporting 18+ hours per week, or more in line with our goals.

Response/Action items: in our ongoing pedagogical training sessions with faculty, we will continue to emphasize the aim of engaging students for 8-10 hours each week, and then setting up an additional 20-25 hours of work outside of class for them each week. The key here seems to be to help faculty think creatively of innovative pedagogy strategies that will engage the students in meaningful ways without necessarily involving the faculty in every step of the way. Our 30 August Pedagogy session, “Spring Term Teaching: War Stories and Battle Plans” was a good example of this sort of discussion. We will schedule more events like this in the fall and winter.

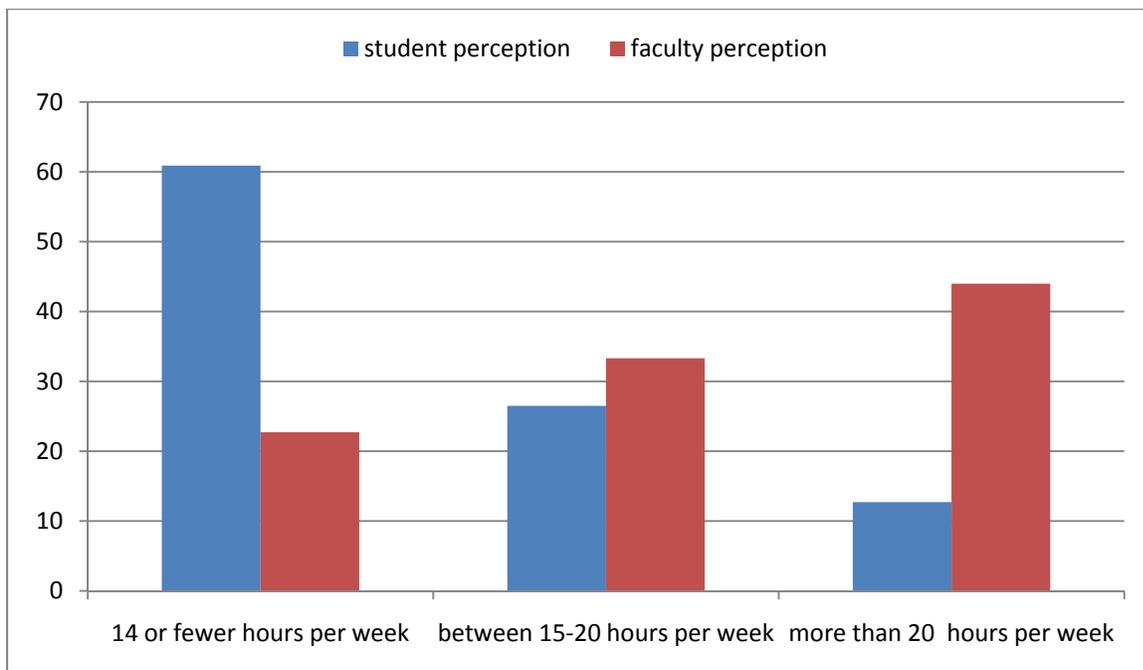
We also administered a **Faculty experience survey** that mirrored the student survey in many ways. By examining both the student and the faculty perception of the spring term courses, we are able to get a more complete picture of how these courses worked.

- The faculty response to contact time, both within the classroom and outside of the classroom, contrasts with the student experience. Faculty reported spending much more *time per week in the classroom* than did the students:



This indicates that 48% of the students felt they put in less than the aimed-for amount of hours per week, whereas 47% of the faculty perceived they were actually exceeding 15 hours per week of in-class time.

- Similarly, the faculty felt the students put in on average more *time per week outside of the class* than the students did:



It is worth noting that nearly 70% of the faculty felt the amount of time they spent with the students was “just the right amount,” but just under 40% felt the amount of time they spent outside of the classroom was “just the right amount,” and over 60% felt it was “too much.” This apparent discrepancy in intensity of time will be discussed in the fall Faculty Meetings and also in the follow-up sessions on pedagogy and teaching strategies in the fall and winter Faculty Academies

- Another intriguing area of reporting dealt with how well students were able to respond to the reading assignments for the classes. Though very few faculty felt students were completely unable to handle the reading load, 43.5% reported that students “had some problems but mostly managed to complete the assignments,” and another 43.5% reported that students “were well able to handle the assignments.” In general it seems faculty hit the work-load element of reading about right.
- Faculty were asked to describe their OWN experience, and also the STUDENTS’ experience, in the Spring Term. The most common terms used for each were “intense” (74.2% for faculty, 65.6% for students), “challenging” (56.1% for faculty, 57.8% for students), “enjoyable” (57.6%/62.5%), and “fully engaged” (65.2%/62.5%). “Overwhelming” was lower on the list (31.8%/29.7%). In the Q.E.P. proposal, we claimed that the revitalized Spring Term “represents a new model for intensive, rigorous, innovative and challenging teacher-student interaction,” and these results indicate that the overall experiential aims of our project are being met.
- Successful Pedagogies, Inadequate Pedagogies, and Experimental Teaching Methods: The faculty were asked to state the different pedagogies they used in the spring term, and which ones worked well and which did not work well; the list generated is a virtual catalog of teaching methods in an intensive learning experience, and we will post this list for the campus community to review, to show the various ways in which learning can occur in the short term. Just shy of 60% of the faculty reported that they employed innovative methods that they do not usually use in the longer terms.

Response/Action Items: we will continue to discuss intensive teaching strategies in our follow-up sessions on pedagogy and teaching strategies in the fall and winter Faculty Academies.

- Scope and Satisfaction: 35% of faculty described their class as “in-depth/narrowly focused”; 19.7% as “broadly focused”; 45.5% as “neither one exclusively.” Of great significance is the result that **66.7% of faculty said they were “able to accomplish all that you had planned for your Spring Term course.”** Finally, we gave them an open-text question, “Are you satisfied with what was accomplished in your Spring Term course.” 61 responses were sent in of varying length and detail, which we will randomly select to give the campus community a sense of faculty response to the term. 52 responses said a version of “yes,” and 9 said “no.” **That translates to a success rate of 85%, a superb result for the first running of the term.**

II. The Faculty Focus Group: This is the very heart of our assessment work, a tool that will allow us to gain a more penetrating and depth-oriented view of the Spring Term learning experience. Each department selects **one course** every other year to serve as their Focus Group course for the

Spring Term; smaller departments select one course every third year. (With about 40 departments in the undergraduate part of the University, this will yield roughly 15 classes, or around 225 students, or roughly 12 percent of the student body, each Spring Term; over a five-year period, we will be able to assess a sizable majority of the students participating in the Spring Term experience.) This process guarantees a representative sample group across disciplines, departments, and undergraduate year. The focus groups conduct and make available their assessment work to help us determine the extent to which their courses are meeting their departmental, discipline-specific learning objectives, as well as ***the primary learning outcome of enhancing students' critical and creative thinking.***

The first Focus Group, consisting of 12 faculty, met throughout the academic year in round-table discussions facilitated by the Spring Term Coordinating Committee (STCC). In these sessions, faculty strategized about the best ways to assess their students and courses in the spring; we conducted assessment workshops and syllabus-swaps to help faculty generate effective assessment means; we discussed assessment strategies (particularly course-embedded assessment, the subject of an entire mid-winter workshop we ran); we formulated a **general template** for our assessment gathering and reporting (see below); and we planned an overall assessment structure that results in each class providing their assessment data to the Spring Term Coordinating Committee at the end of the Spring Term. At the conclusion of Spring Term 2010, each faculty member of the Focus Group wrote up the results of her or his assessment work and submitted it to the Director of the Spring Term and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness. Two examples follow to indicate the kind and depth of assessment work we have generated.

Basic Template for Submitting Assessment Results for Spring Term 2010

- 1. Please list your Learning Objectives for this course. (This can be a comprehensive list of all LO's your department has stipulated for this course, or just a selection of the ones you specifically assessed for this project.)**

- 2. Please describe briefly, in just a sentence or two each, how you have assessed these LO's in this Spring Term 2010 course.**

- 3. Please add here the specific results of your assessment work. This could include before/after quizzes, results from exams, comparative essays, minute papers, and much more. You can paste these materials directly into this document, or you may append them as hard copies, or you can send them electronically to Debbie Dailey.**

- 4. Please comment briefly—a short paragraph or even a few sentences would suffice—on how these assessment results will impact the way you might teach the course in the future. (The “close-the-loop” question—how might your assessment of your learning objectives alter your teaching next time?)**

Two examples of Faculty Focus Group Assessment work:

I. For Psychology 214: Psychology of Humor (Professor Julie Woodzicka)

1. Please list your Learning Objectives for this course.

The following were learning objectives for *PSYC 214: Psychology of Humor*.

Students were expected to:

- 1) Acquire an understanding of humor elicitation and appreciation from several psychological perspectives.
- 2) Acquire an understanding of how sense of humor develops and is measured.
- 3) Appreciate the empirical research process involved in examining humor.
- 4) Discover how humor acts as a mediator of life stress.
- 5) Become proficient in coding true markers of amusement from false ones.
- 6) Apply this knowledge to themselves and the world around them.

2. Please describe briefly, in just a sentence or two each, how you have assessed these LO's in this Spring Term 2010 course.

The learning objectives listed above were assessed primarily in three ways. First, students completed a pre-post test which measured learning of concepts and theory (objectives 1, 2, 4, 5). This pre-post test had a maximum of 12 points, and was given on the first (pre) and last (post) days of the course. Second, ability to design a research study was assessed thru a pre-test which was compared to a final project in which students proposed and designed a study (objective 3). This research design objective was measured on a 10-point scale, where students were given points for correctly identifying IVs, DVs, providing a sound research methodology, etc. Third, students perceptions regarding their ability to apply the information they learned in the course to the world around them was measured with a 10-item pre-post test. Each item (e.g., "I can apply theories of humor elicitation to the world around me") was rated on a 5-pt Likert scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Extremely). Please see Appendix for a copy of the pre-post measures.

In addition, student learning of weekly material was assessed by an in-class exam given on the Friday of each of the 4 weeks.

3. Please add here the specific results of your assessment work.

Based on the data collected, each of the learning objectives was achieved.

Pre-Post tests of student learning of concepts and humor theory suggest that the course led to greater understanding of how humor works. **The mean score (out of 12) on the pre-test was 3.7 (SD = 1.5) and on the post-test was 10.7 (SD = .89).** This change in pre-post test scores was statistically significant, $t(14) = 19.17, p < .0001$.

In addition, student learning of experimental design also increased dramatically. **The mean pretest score was 5.8 (SD = 2.8) out of 10, and the mean score on the final experimental design project was 9.9 (SD = .26).** Again, this difference was statistically significant, $t(14) = 5.72, p < .0001$.

Last, student perceptions regarding their learning and their ability to apply what they learned to the world around them increased over the course. Below are pre and post-test means for each of the 10 items. Again, each item was rated on a 5-pt scale where 1 = Not at all and 5 = Extremely. Please refer to the Appendix for the complete item.

	<i>Mean</i>		<i>p</i>
	Pre-test	Post-test	
Understand why find things funny	2.9	4.2	.0001
Know how sense of humor develops	1.8	4.3	.0001
Understand theories of humor	1.4	4.5	.0001
Apply theories to world around me	1.2	4.4	.0001
Able to decode nonverbal behavior	2.9	3.9	.004
Understand social functions of humor	2.1	4.1	.0001
Understand physical health and humor	2.1	4.5	.0001
Understand mental health and humor	2.2	4.5	.0001
Can explain why stand-up comic is funny	2.4	4.0	.0001
Proficient in designing research	1.5	4.0	.0001

In addition, weekly tests were given and students performed very well on them. Mean test scores across the four tests ranged from 88% to 90%.

4. Please comment briefly—a short paragraph or even a few sentences would suffice—on how these assessment results will impact the way you might teach the course in the future.

Based on the collected data, the learning objectives for Psychology of Humor were met. However, the one area that students seemed to want to learn more about was coding nonverbal behavior associated with true emotion. One lab was devoted to this topic. In the future, more time (perhaps two labs or one lab and a lecture) will focus on nonverbal indicators that distinguish between false and genuine smiling.

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II. For English 388: Spring Term in Ireland (Professor Marc Conner, Department of English)

1. Please list your Learning Objectives for this course.

My **Primary Learning Outcome** for the course: *to enhance critical and/or creative thinking through this course* (the defining Learning Outcome for all Spring Term courses)

Two **departmental Learning Objectives** and the **Course-Specific Objectives** that match these, as appropriate to the aims of my course:

1. English department learning objective:

Students studying English will seek out further knowledge about literary works, authors, and/or contexts

- In THIS course (derives from this objective):

Students will demonstrate an increase in their knowledge of the history, culture, geography, and politics of Ireland

2. English department learning objective:

Students studying English will write clear, persuasive analytical essays driven by arguments about texts

- In THIS course (derives from this objective):

Students will improve their ability to analyze, interpret, and understand modern Irish literature

2. Please describe briefly, in just a sentence or two each, how you have assessed these LO's in this Spring Term 2010 course.

For Learning Objective #1: I administered a short initial knowledge quiz at the start of the winter term orientation class. This consisted of 10 questions that represent the level of knowledge of Irish history, culture, geography, and politics that I want the students to know by the end of their immersion in Irish culture. Then, at the end of the spring term experience, I administered to the students this same quiz again, to measure the extent of their improvement in their understanding of Irish history, culture, geography, and politics, demonstrating (one hopes) a dramatic gain in knowledge of Irish culture.

For Learning Objective #2: During the winter term orientation class, I assigned to the students a "5-minute paper" on a selected text from a major Irish modernist writer, whom we would study in greater detail during the course. I gave the students a short lyric poem from this author (Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney), asked them to analyze the poem, and to write a paragraph of interpretation "trying in particular to emphasize its specifically Irish elements." Then, at the end of the spring term experience, I had the students write another "5-minute paper" on the same major Irish modernist writer (but analyzing a different poem). The two papers can be compared to demonstrate a significant gain in the students' ability to analyze, understand, and articulate the major meanings of these writings. For these short interpretive writings, I developed the following rubric:

(On a scale of 1-10, 10 showing the most accomplishment)

1. [How well – scale] Does the student identify several significant ideas, themes, and issues in the selected writing?
2. Does the student articulate clearly the important elements in the selected writing?
3. Does the student demonstrate clear understanding of the selection's meaning and importance?
4. Does the student provide analysis of the selection's technical elements (style, narrative voice, metrical structure, voice, descriptive passage, etc.)?

5. Does the student demonstrate a broader understanding of the cultural context out of which the writing emerges and upon which it comments?

3. Please add here the specific results of your assessment work.

On the Irish History Assessment Quiz #1, the average student grade was 23.25%; on the end-of-term Quiz #2, the average student grade was 68.59%. *This reflects an improvement of over 45%, showing a substantial increase in the students' grasp of the fundamental concepts and facts of Irish history, politics, geography, and culture that the course aimed to convey.*

On the Poetry Analysis project, the scores received by the students on the first Poetry Assessment and the second Poetry Assessment averaged as follows, according to each part of the Assessment Rubric:

	Ideas, themes	Articulate important elements	Understands meaning	Technical analysis	Cultural context (Irish context)
Assessment #1	3.8	3.7	3.5	0.9	4.3
Assessment #2	6.9	6.9	6.7	5.4	6.4
Improvement	+3.1	+3.2	+3.2	+4.5	+2.1

The improvement in all five areas is substantial: *students demonstrated much greater ability to understand and articulate the key ideas, elements, and meanings in the second poetry analysis; their command of technical analysis was significantly improved; and their ability to situate the poem in its Irish historical and cultural context also increased.*

4. Please comment briefly—a short paragraph or even a few sentences would suffice—on how these assessment results will impact the way you might teach the course in the future. (The “close-the-loop” question—how might your assessment of your learning objectives alter your teaching next time?)

The growth in understanding of Irish history, politics, culture, and geography is impressive—that key learning objective was clearly fulfilled. In future offerings of the course, I will want to get the average student grade to go up further, and to that end I will articulate more clearly from the start the specific elements I want them to know by the end of the term. Laying out these expectations more clearly should enhance retention and produce even better scores on the end-of-term quiz.

The improvement in ability to analyze and interpret modern Irish literature is significant, but I would like to have evidence of greater sophistication in this learning objective. Towards that end, I will expand the assessment to include fiction as well as poetry, and give students more time—probably 8 or 10 minutes—for these exercises, which should allow them to show greater evidence of their skills and learning.

Overall results of the Faculty Focus Group:

This was a highly successful and rich method of gathering assessment data on the Spring Term learning experience. Each of the 12 professors involved developed an assessment plan that was keyed to the specific learning objectives of his or her own department/discipline. Although these objectives and the methods for assessing them vary widely, all relate to the overall objective of enhancing students' critical thinking abilities. The assessment strategies and results were chronicled in detail in each professor's report, which may be viewed individually at the request of the Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. (These will be placed on the SACS server for the five-year impact report.) In addition to describing the assessment results, each professor reported on the changes she or he will make to the course in the future in response to the assessment, thereby aiming for even more enhanced success at attaining the learning objectives in the future.

The only easily quantifiable question on this rubric is #3, which basically inquires whether or not the learning objectives were attained. Of the 12 faculty who participated, 11 showed in their assessment results that their learning objectives were attained. Several faculty—at least 4—reported a tremendous success in this; at least 3 reported partial success (usually 2 learning objectives were attained, but 1 could use improvement); the remaining 4 reported good success. The one negative response indicated difficulty fitting this course into the Spring Term, but showed less evidence that the actual learning objectives were not met. **In sum, from the Focus Group, 92% of the faculty participants stated that their course met their learning objectives.**

Response/Action Items: The Faculty Focus Group were the presenters in the Faculty Academy pedagogy training session titled “Spring Term Teaching: War Stories and Battle Plans,” on 30 August, at which they shared their own experiences with other faculty and generated further discussion among the faculty about Spring Term teaching. We videotaped this entire 90-minute session and it may be viewed at <http://tegr.it/y/1gno>. We will also schedule a follow-up discussion with this group to understand better how their assessment work has helped them think further about ways to enhance student learning, and to chart the changes and improvements they plan to make in their Spring Term courses in the future.

III. Spring Term Scholars: This is our primary long-range, “**First-Year-to-Senior-Year**” **Assessment Tool**. In addition to the annual assessment of our spring term learning objectives, we have developed and administered a first-year-to-senior-year assessment rubric that measures the impact of the Spring Term experience on a student over her four years at W&L. We invited 20 students in their first year, identified by the dean of students, dean of first-year students and director of the Spring Term to offer as much breadth and diversity as possible, to participate in this program. These students have been designated Spring Term Scholars, and at the end of their four years of participation will receive a certificate of completion and a \$100 stipend for their work over the course of four Spring Terms. Our assessment of their four years' of work will consist of an ongoing electronic portfolio: these students will compile each year a portfolio of their Spring Term course work. This material will be stored electronically and archived each year, and at the end of their four years it will be assembled into a portfolio of their entire four-year experience of the Spring Term.

We will invite two outside evaluators to campus who have expertise in interdisciplinary and experimental education to assess the quality and content of these portfolios, in order to determine how well the student work over four years fulfills the central learning objective of the Spring Term. The first such outside evaluation will coincide with our five-year self-study and Impact Report of the Spring Term.

Under our concept of the e-portfolio, each year the students in our Spring Term Scholars focus group will:

- Compile, in chronological order, every formal assignment they undertake for their Spring Term course;
- Describe, in brief narrative form, every group project they undertake;
- Provide a brief narrative describing and evaluating their work in the course;
- Organize e-portfolios of their Spring Term work over the course of their four Spring Term experiences, from their first year to their senior year. This will offer a view of the Spring Term as it has worked for a W&L student over the course of her entire career.

We estimate that a minimum of 10-15 complete portfolios will be an adequate resource for outside evaluation.

For this spring of 2010, 18 students participated in the first year of this project. Each placed into an electronic archive all **the formal, graded work** from their Spring Term 2010 course. (Students may have had many other sorts of assignments and exercises during the term, but we determined early in the process that we would archive only work that their professor would see and respond to in some manner.) We have in this archive well over 100 examples of the kinds of work students accomplished in the Spring Term. Initial observations reveal that the work is quite varied, that multiple kinds of assignments were completed, and that the sheer quantity of work reflects the highly intense nature of the courses. Two examples of what students archived follow:

Student: Cassie McGinty

Course: Anthropology 377, "Archaeological Field Methods"

Archived work: 3 journal entries of 2-3 pp. each; 2 response papers of 1-2 pp. each; 1 quiz.

Student: Alicia Bishop

Course: Classics 201, "Classical Mythology"

Archived work: 4 essays, 1 final exam, 20 ½-page "discussion prompts"

Student: Kahena Joubert

Course: Art History 180, "History of Photography"

Archived work: 1 essay of 8 pages; 3 2-page "art response" papers

Response/Action Items: At this point, our key question is how best to organize this material. Our current setup in the SAKAI course management system is very efficient: each student has a series of drop-box folders for each of her 4 years at W&L, and they can easily place their materials in there by category (essay, quiz, journal, etc.) and year. We need to determine how best to present this material for our 5-year impact report to be read and evaluated by outside evaluators. In the early fall, a sub-committee of the STCC consisting of Joel Kuehner, Marc Conner, and John Blackburn will review the entire site and develop a sequence for continuing the project,

including possibilities for presenting this work to various audiences. In the fall, we will meet with the 18 students when they return to campus and discuss the portfolio process as well as their spring term experience; we will refine our methods for archiving this material; and we will begin to format the material into a readable e-portfolio that can be shared and evaluated with outside evaluators who will help us determine how well this work reflects a successful move towards accomplishing our Spring Term learning outcomes, particularly the enhancement of critical thinking.

IV. Spring Term Festival: On the final day of the spring term, Friday May 21, from 12 noon until 2 pm, all the on-campus classes were invited to bring their students to the Canaan Green at the center of campus for a celebratory festival of all we had accomplished in this first running of the spring term. Several student music groups performed, President Ruscio delivered a series of remarks on what we had undertaken and what accomplished in the revitalized spring term; a tremendous barbecue luncheon was served to the entire campus community (students, faculty, staff, administration); and a number of courses presented “poster sessions” that displayed their student work and projects. This was not only a wonderful culminating event for a project that had occupied much of the campus community for the past two years; it also served as an opportunity to present in a public way much of the work that had been accomplished in the first spring term.

Psychology Professor Karla Murdock, who directed the poster presentations, stated that particularly strong presentations that would be well worth capturing in a more permanent format included: Christa Bowden (photos of Paris), Robert Humston (statistical modeling for ecological issues), Genelle Gertz (bible as literature), Lenna Ojure/Haley Sigler/Fred LaPierre (teaching science in elementary classrooms), Simon Levy (flying robot), James Mahon (Roe v. Wade), Christine Winschel (chemistry of cooking; liquid nitrogen ice cream), Holly Pickett (Shakespeare), Tim Gaylard (films of Kubrick), and Nathaniel Goldberg (time travel). In addition, Professor Scott Hoover also put together a slide show of study abroad courses that would be great to show.

The following contemporary account by Professor Murdock, dated May 23, 2010, captures the flavor of the Festival:

Hi Marc.

June has beat me to it, but I did want to let you know what a great success the spring term festival was. After a rainy week, the skies cleared and the weather was sunny (a little humid, but fine). The setup went very smoothly, the performers were fantastic, the food lines stayed pretty short, and the crowd moved through the food/music part and the poster session part in a more balanced way than I had imagined. Both places were filled from about 12-1:15 or so, and then everyone dispersed. I was especially excited about the poster session. We held the dessert hostage in the Warner Center, and I think that drew a lot of folks in to see the posters. The crowd seemed to be fairly equally comprised of students, faculty and staff. The variety of presentations was fabulous... Simon Levy had a flying robot, Holly Pickett had students performing Shakespeare, two fine arts courses had a whole installation of oil paintings on easels, and I think every department

at the University participated in one way or another. The liquid nitrogen ice cream was a HUGE hit (and it was delicious).

I saw Patrick Hinely and Kevin Remington moving through the event the whole time, so hopefully there will be some good documentation.

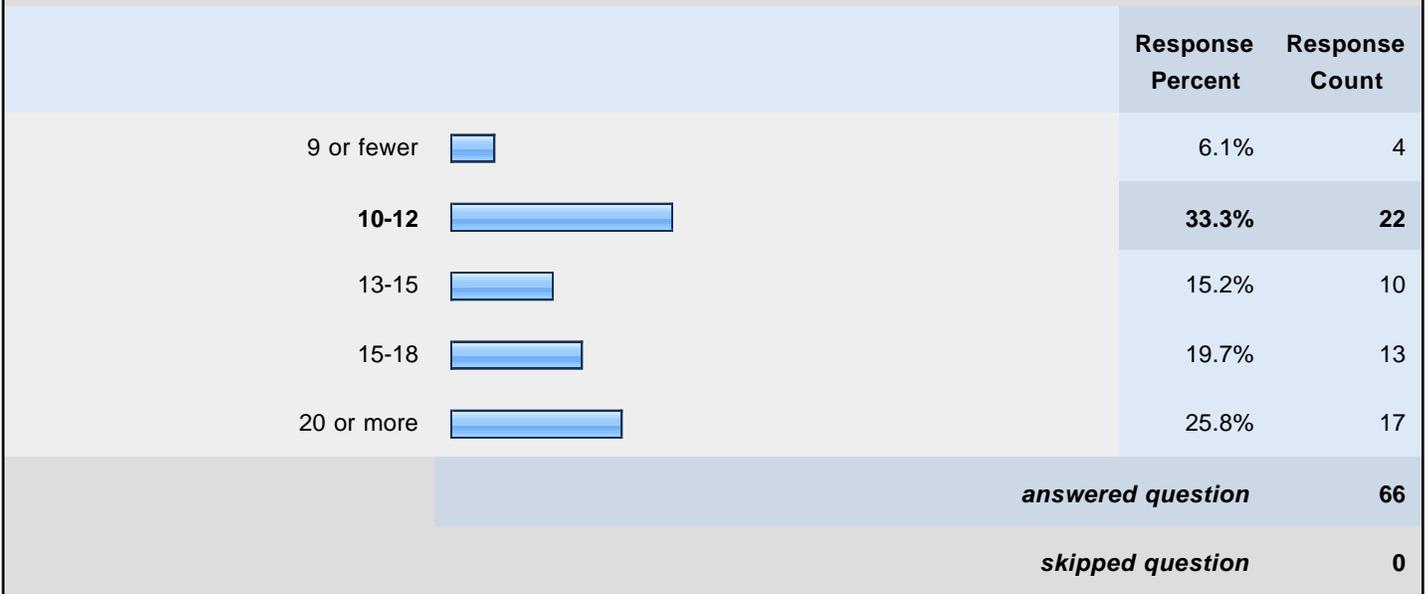
Enjoy the rest of your travels.....

Karla

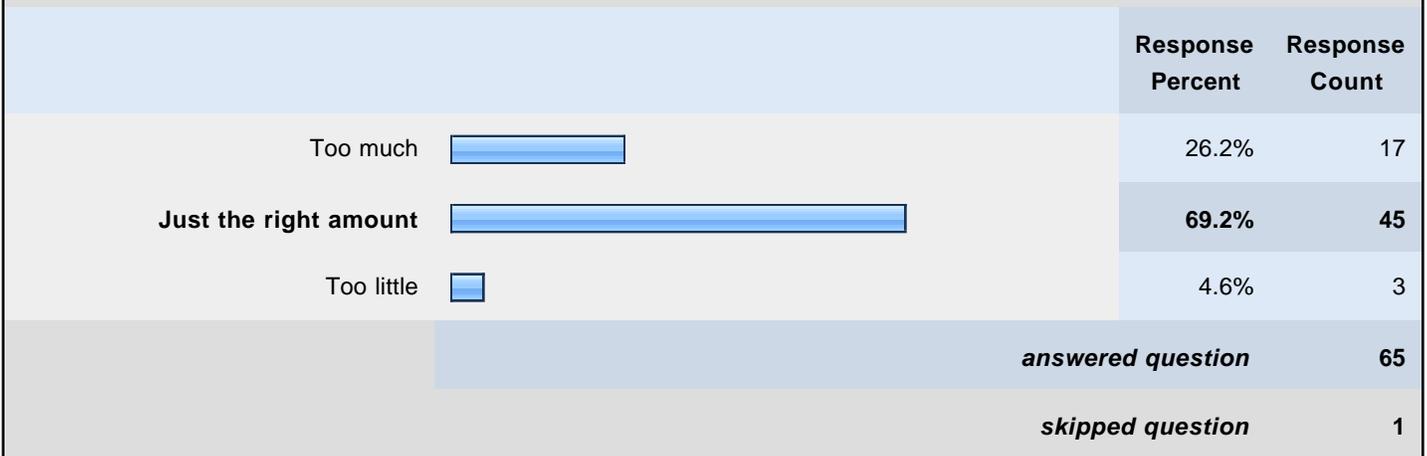
Response/Action items: The STCC, along with Associate Provost Robert Strong and Director of Communications Jeff Hanna, will produce a web-based presentation of the strongest posters produced at the Festival. This material will run on the W&L web site for the Spring Term, as well as be available for outside evaluators to examine as evidence of the kinds of academic work being produced by our students in the spring term.

Copies of the Faculty and Student Surveys follow.

1. Approximately how many hours per week do you estimate you spent in direct contact with your students (in class time or in the field or lab)?



2. From your perspective, the amount of time spent in class was:



3. In your best estimation, how many hours per week would you say your students put in doing work for your class, NOT COUNTING the direct class time estimated above?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Fewer than 15 	22.7%	15
15-20 	33.3%	22
21-25 	16.7%	11
26-30 	10.6%	7
31-35 	10.6%	7
36 or more 	6.1%	4
answered question		66
skipped question		0

4. The amount of time YOU spent outside of the classroom working on class-related activities was:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Too much 	60.3%	38
Just the right amount 	39.7%	25
Too little	0.0%	0
answered question		63
skipped question		3

**5. Approximately how many pages of reading did you assign per week?
Please respond, even if your course was not reading intensive.**

	Response Count
	64
<i>answered question</i>	64
<i>skipped question</i>	2

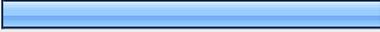
6. What was the longest reading assignment for a single night?

	Response Count
	64
<i>answered question</i>	64
<i>skipped question</i>	2

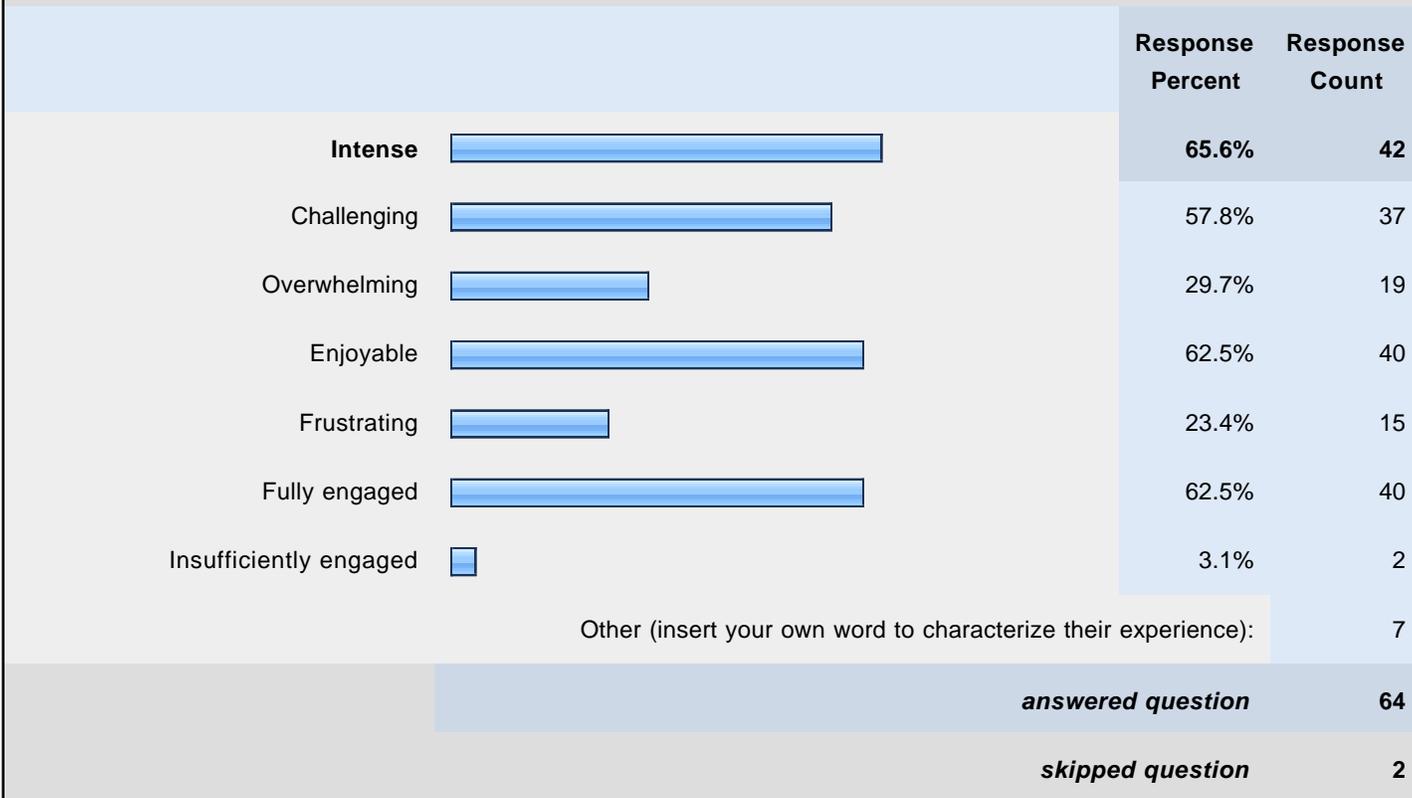
7. From your observations and student comments or preparedness, overall how did your students respond to the reading assignments?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very poorly, were overwhelmed by the assignments 	1.6%	1
Poorly, were not able to complete the assignments 	1.6%	1
Fairly well, had some problems but mostly managed to complete the assignments 	43.5%	27
Well, were able to handle the assignments 	43.5%	27
Very well, were easily able to handle the assignments 	9.7%	6
<i>answered question</i>		62
<i>skipped question</i>		4

8. Which word (or words) do you think best characterizes your OWN experience during the Spring Term? You may choose more than one.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Intense 	74.2%	49
Challenging 	56.1%	37
Overwhelming 	31.8%	21
Enjoyable 	57.6%	38
Frustrating 	12.1%	8
Fully engaged 	65.2%	43
Insufficiently engaged	0.0%	0
Other (insert your own word to characterize your experience):		12
<i>answered question</i>		66
<i>skipped question</i>		0

9. Which word (or words) do you think best characterizes the experience of your STUDENTS during the Spring Term? You may choose more than one.



10. What pedagogies did you use that worked the best for the Spring Term?



11. What pedagogies did you use that worked less well during the Spring Term?

	Response Count
	41
<i>answered question</i>	41
<i>skipped question</i>	25

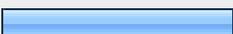
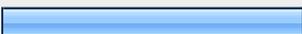
12. Did the Spring Term give you an opportunity to employ experimental teaching methods, that perhaps you are not able to employ in the longer terms?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	57.8%	37
No 	42.2%	27
<i>answered question</i>		64
<i>skipped question</i>		2

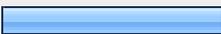
13. Please list or explain any experimental methods you attempted or employed.

	Response Count
	37
<i>answered question</i>	37
<i>skipped question</i>	29

14. How would you describe the scope of your Spring Term class?

	Response Percent	Response Count
In-depth/narrowly focused 	34.8%	23
Broadly focused 	19.7%	13
Neither one exclusively 	45.5%	30
<i>answered question</i>		66
<i>skipped question</i>		0

15. Were you able to accomplish all that you had planned for your Spring Term course?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	66.7%	44
No 	33.3%	22
<i>answered question</i>		66
<i>skipped question</i>		0

16. Are you satisfied with what was accomplished in your Spring Term course?

	Response Count
	61
<i>answered question</i>	61
<i>skipped question</i>	5

17. Please explain or describe any other elements of the Spring Term that you feel worked well or could be improved.

	Response Count
	52
<i>answered question</i>	52
<i>skipped question</i>	14

**1. What sorts of pedagogies (teaching methods) did this course employ?
Please check all that apply.**

	Response Percent	Response Count
seminar-style discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	72.7%	516
lecture <input type="checkbox"/>	72.7%	516
small group work <input type="checkbox"/>	58.6%	416
lab work <input type="checkbox"/>	20.8%	148
problem solving <input type="checkbox"/>	21.3%	151
rehearsal and performance <input type="checkbox"/>	9.7%	69
use or creation of web database tools <input type="checkbox"/>	10.8%	77
use or creation of web communication tools, such as wikis, blogs, chats, forums <input type="checkbox"/>	10.1%	72
Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	20.0%	142
answered question		710
skipped question		2

2. In what ways did this course emphasize the teaching of writing? Please check all that apply.

	Response Percent	Response Count
essays reviewed and graded by the professor	58.7%	398
essays that were peer-reviewed by class members	12.4%	84
a research paper	36.9%	250
one-on-one conferences with the professor	24.9%	169
a revision process	19.3%	131
short essay assignments (3 pages or fewer)	50.0%	339
wikis or blogs created by class members	8.6%	58
Other (please specify)	23.5%	159
<i>answered question</i>		678
<i>skipped question</i>		34

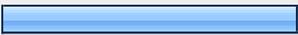
3. Did this course enhance or improve your "critical thinking abilities," defined as your abilities to reason and problem-solve according to the framework of the course's specific discipline?

	Response Percent	Response Count
yes	71.9%	503
no	28.1%	197
<i>answered question</i>		700
<i>skipped question</i>		12

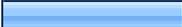
4. What specifically did this course do to enhance or improve your "critical thinking abilities"?

	Response Count
	406
<i>answered question</i>	406
<i>skipped question</i>	306

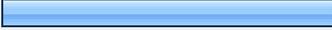
5. The next few questions ask you about the specific types of projects you completed or produced as part of this spring term class? Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report 	44.7%	314
Case study 	6.7%	47
Presentation (for class or other group) 	30.5%	214
Performance (theatrical or other) 	2.0%	14
Work of art 	2.6%	18
Installation (for example, a gallery showing) 	0.7%	5
Design project (construction or software development) 	3.4%	24
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets) 	4.7%	33
Other 	4.7%	33
<i>answered question</i>		702
<i>skipped question</i>		10

6. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to write a paper or lab report?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	11.0%	51
Somewhat 	48.4%	224
Not much 	27.2%	126
Not at all 	13.4%	62
	<i>answered question</i>	463
	<i>skipped question</i>	249

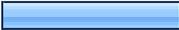
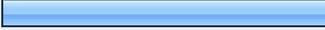
7. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Case study 	5.4%	24
Presentation (for class or other group) 	33.7%	151
Performance (theatrical or other) 	1.6%	7
Work of art 	0.4%	2
Installation (for example, a gallery showing)	0.0%	0
Design project (construction or software development) 	0.9%	4
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets) 	4.0%	18
Other 	3.8%	17
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey 	50.2%	225
	<i>answered question</i>	448
	<i>skipped question</i>	264

8. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to do a case study?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	39.4%	41
Somewhat 	43.3%	45
Not much 	9.6%	10
Not at all 	7.7%	8
	<i>answered question</i>	104
	<i>skipped question</i>	608

9. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report 	16.2%	17
Presentation (for class or other group) 	26.7%	28
Performance (theatrical or other) 	1.0%	1
Work of art	0.0%	0
Installation (for example, a gallery showing)	0.0%	0
Design project (construction or software development) 	1.9%	2
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets) 	1.9%	2
Other 	2.9%	3
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey 	49.5%	52
	<i>answered question</i>	105
	<i>skipped question</i>	607

10. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to do a presentation?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	17.3%	74
Somewhat 	46.7%	200
Not much 	25.9%	111
Not at all 	10.0%	43
	<i>answered question</i>	428
	<i>skipped question</i>	284

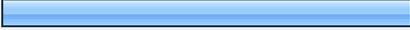
11. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report	25.8%	107
Case study	5.8%	24
Performance (theatrical or other)	3.9%	16
Work of art	2.7%	11
Installation (for example, a gallery showing)	0.2%	1
Design project (construction or software development)	4.3%	18
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets)	4.8%	20
Other	4.6%	19
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey	48.0%	199
<i>answered question</i>		415
<i>skipped question</i>		297

12. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to do a performance?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	20.8%	10
Somewhat 	35.4%	17
Not much 	16.7%	8
Not at all 	27.1%	13
	<i>answered question</i>	48
	<i>skipped question</i>	664

13. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report 	10.0%	5
Case study	0.0%	0
Presentation (for class or other group) 	6.0%	3
Work of art 	2.0%	1
Installation (for example, a gallery showing) 	2.0%	1
Design project (construction or software development) 	2.0%	1
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets) 	4.0%	2
Other 	12.0%	6
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey 	62.0%	31
	<i>answered question</i>	50
	<i>skipped question</i>	662

14. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to create a work of art?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	44.4%	16
Somewhat 	38.9%	14
Not much 	5.6%	2
Not at all 	11.1%	4
<i>answered question</i>		36
<i>skipped question</i>		676

15. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report 	13.9%	5
Case study	0.0%	0
Presentation (for class or other group) 	8.3%	3
Performance (theatrical or other) 	5.6%	2
Installation (for example, a gallery showing) 	8.3%	3
Design project (construction or software development) 	2.8%	1
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets)	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey 	61.1%	22
	<i>answered question</i>	36
	<i>skipped question</i>	676

16. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to do an installation?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	41.7%	5
Somewhat 	41.7%	5
Not much 	8.3%	1
Not at all 	8.3%	1
<i>answered question</i>		12
<i>skipped question</i>		700

17. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report	0.0%	0
Case study	0.0%	0
Presentation (for class or other group) 	42.9%	3
Performance (theatrical or other)	0.0%	0
Work of art 	14.3%	1
Design project (construction or software development)	0.0%	0
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets)	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey 	42.9%	3
answered question		7
skipped question		705

18. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to do a design project?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly		39.2%	20
Somewhat		47.1%	24
Not much		5.9%	3
Not at all		7.8%	4
		<i>answered question</i>	51
		<i>skipped question</i>	661

19. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report <input type="checkbox"/>	14.6%	7
Case study	0.0%	0
Presentation (for class or other group) <input type="checkbox"/>	16.7%	8
Performance (theatrical or other)	0.0%	0
Work of art <input type="checkbox"/>	6.3%	3
Installation (for example, a gallery showing)	0.0%	0
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets) <input type="checkbox"/>	6.3%	3
Other	0.0%	0
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey <input type="checkbox"/>	56.3%	27
answered question		48
skipped question		664

20. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to do an analytical study?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	41.8%	33
Somewhat 	46.8%	37
Not much 	7.6%	6
Not at all 	3.8%	3
	<i>answered question</i>	79
	<i>skipped question</i>	633

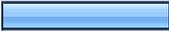
21. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report <input type="checkbox"/>	3.9%	3
Case study	0.0%	0
Presentation (for class or other group) <input type="checkbox"/>	28.9%	22
Performance (theatrical or other)	0.0%	0
Work of art <input type="checkbox"/>	1.3%	1
Installation (for example, a gallery showing)	0.0%	0
Design project (construction or software development)	0.0%	0
Other <input type="checkbox"/>	1.3%	1
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey <input type="checkbox"/>	64.5%	49
<i>answered question</i>		76
<i>skipped question</i>		636

22. What other type of project did you complete or what did you produce as part of this spring term class?

	Response Count
	64
<i>answered question</i>	64
<i>skipped question</i>	648

23. How did THIS spring term course enhance your ability to do this?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Greatly 	51.5%	35
Somewhat 	25.0%	17
Not much 	19.1%	13
Not at all 	4.4%	3
<i>answered question</i>		68
<i>skipped question</i>		644

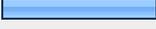
24. Select another type of project you completed as part of this spring term class. Choose one and then you will have the opportunity to select others, or click 'No other'.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Paper or lab report <input type="checkbox"/>	9.1%	6
Case study <input type="checkbox"/>	3.0%	2
Presentation (for class or other group) <input type="checkbox"/>	4.5%	3
Performance (theatrical or other) <input type="checkbox"/>	1.5%	1
Work of art	0.0%	0
Installation (for example, a gallery showing)	0.0%	0
Design project (construction or software development) <input type="checkbox"/>	1.5%	1
Analytical study (mathematical analysis or problem sets)	0.0%	0
No other types of projects - Continue to end of survey <input type="checkbox"/>	80.3%	53
<i>answered question</i>		66
<i>skipped question</i>		646

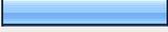
25. Some courses cover a wide range of material, i.e., greater breadth, whereas others cover a much more narrow set of material in detail, i.e., greater depth. How would you characterize your spring term course?

	Response Percent	Response Count
1 Greater Breadth 	14.7%	97
2 	12.9%	85
3 	26.3%	173
4 	27.0%	178
5 Greater Depth 	19.1%	126
<i>answered question</i>		659
<i>skipped question</i>		53

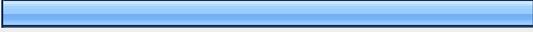
26. How many hours per week did you spend in class?

	Response Percent	Response Count
6-8 	11.1%	73
8-10 	36.6%	241
10-12 	18.4%	121
12-14 	10.9%	72
>14 	23.1%	152
<i>answered question</i>		659
<i>skipped question</i>		53

27. How many hours per week did you spend on work outside of class?

		Response Percent	Response Count
6-10		36.2%	239
10-14		24.7%	163
14-18		15.3%	101
18-22		11.2%	74
>22		12.7%	84
answered question			661
skipped question			51

28. Was this the course you wanted?

		Response Percent	Response Count
This was my first choice		80.8%	534
This was not my first choice but it was still a course I was happy to take.		11.6%	77
I couldn't get into any courses I actually wanted but was still happy with this course.		4.2%	28
I couldn't get into any courses I actually wanted and was unhappy with this course.		3.3%	22
answered question			661
skipped question			51