

2018-2019 Philosophy Department Assessment Report for GEP Courses

Since the Department was assessing these three courses as part of its program assessment, we also used the data to assess these three courses with regard to for student achievement with respect to UMBC General Education Functional Competency III: Critical Analysis and Reasoning. See findings and suggested changes below. The data is in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

COURSES: PHIL 100, PHIL 150, and PHIL 152	Functional Competency III: Critical Analysis and Reasoning	Functional Competency III: Critical Analysis and Reasoning
Course-specific goals linked to FC	Course-specific goal: knowledge of the difference between premises and conclusions.	Course-specify goal: the ability to identify conclusions of arguments.
How do you assess or measure achievement of those goals?	Students were tested on their knowledge of the difference between conclusions and premises (Question 1 in Tables 1, 2, and 3). Students were sent an online test close to the end of the semester and asked to complete the test. The test was not part of their grade, and the same test was sent to all students in all three courses.	Students were tested on their ability to identify conclusions of arguments (Questions 2 and 3 in Tables 1, 2, and 3). Students were sent an online test close to the end of the semester and asked to complete the test. The test was not part of their grade, and the same test was sent to all students in all three courses.
What did you find?	See Tables 1, 2, and 3. All three courses seem to do a good job helping students master the knowledge of the difference between premises and conclusions of arguments. Around 90% of students from all three courses were able to answer Question 1 correctly. However, the response rate for PHIL 152 was quite low (8.54%), so it isn't clear we have an adequate sample to draw anything	See Tables 1, 2, and 3. The students in all three courses appear not to be mastering the ability to identify conclusions in arguments. This is a skill that is essential to critical analysis and reasoning, which is also a skill central to all philosophy courses. Students in PHIL 152 appear to do better on this. 64.7% of students who took the test from PHIL 152 got both Question 2 and 3 correct. However, the response rate for this course

	conclusive from the data for that course.	was quite low, so it isn't clear we have an adequate sample to draw anything conclusive from the data. Students from the other two courses appear not to be mastering this important learning goal. Only 51.5% of students from PHIL 100 who took the test got both Questions 2 and 3 correct; and only 41.4% of students from PHIL 150 who took the text got both Questions 2 and 3 correct.
Changes proposed based on assessment results	No changes are recommended.	The Department recommends separating this goal from the learning goal of teaching students what premises and conclusions are. It is clear from the data (see Table 2) that knowledge of the difference between premises and conclusions is not sufficient to master the ability to identify conclusions of arguments. Students who got Question 1 correct were not more likely to get questions 2 and 3 correct. The Department plans to look closer at how the skill of identifying conclusions of arguments is actually being taught in the various sections of these three courses in order to assess which of these methods is most effective in teaching this skill.

** Suggested by Barbara Walvoord during a consultation at UMBC

Table 1

	PHIL 100	PHIL 150	PHIL 152	Overall
% of Correct Answers to Question 1	91.8%	89.7%	88.2%	91.5%
% of Incorrect Answers to Question 1	7.2%	10.3%	11.8%	7.4%
% of No Response to Question 1	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
% of Correct Answers to Question 2	63.4%	58.6%	70.6%	63.6%
% of Incorrect Answers to Question 2	36.6%	41.4%	29.4%	36.4%
% of No Response to Question 2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
% of Correct Answers to Question 3	74.6%	65.5%	88.2%	73.9%
% of Incorrect Answers to Question 3	24.6%	34.5%	11.8%	25.6%
% of No Response to Question 3	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
% of Students Who Got Both Question 2 and Question 3 Correct	51.5%	41.4%	64.7%	51.1%

Table 2

% of students with Q1 correct who got both Q2 & Q3 correct	51.55%
% of students with Q1 incorrect who got both Q2 & Q3 correct	53.85%

Table 3

Course	Enrollment	Number of Responses	Response Rate
PHIL 100	409	134	32.76%
PHIL 150	80	29	36.25%
PHIL 152	199	17	8.54%
Total Responses	688	176*	25.58%

*4 of the respondents were in more than one course -- 2 of those taking PHIL 100 were also taking PHIL 150 and 2 of those taking PHIL 100 were also taking PHIL 152; their data was included in both courses, though they were not double counted in the overall data.