

Instrumentation and Design Alternatives for Assessing Core Knowledge in Political Science

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Outline

- Background and Applicability of this Model
- Standard Assessment Techniques
- Description of the Alternative Model
- Advantages
 - Of the Instrument
 - Of the Design
- Implementation Update
- Discussion Questions

Applicability of this Model

- School type
- Core knowledge

Common Characteristics of Assessment of Core Knowledge

- Right or wrong answers
- Standardized exams
- Quantitatively measured
- National norms
- Benchmarking
- e.g., ETS Major Field Test

Key Features of the Alternative Model

- For a list of ten key terms students are asked to supply a one sentence definition to demonstrate their understanding of the term with respect to government and politics.
- Responses are evaluated by multiple coders on a zero to one scale (0=Incorrect/.5=Partial/1=Correct).
- The instrument is administered on the first day of class in half the introductory courses (US and Comparative) and in all introductory courses on the last day of class.
- This instrument is also given to all senior majors enrolled in upper level courses on the first day of class. Seniors majors not enrolled in political science courses are requested via email to stop by the department office to fill out a brief survey.

Advantages of the Instrument

- Customization
- Cost – Especially Start Up
- Increased Sensitivity To Concepts
- Faculty Control
 - Follow Through
 - Opportunity for Enhancement of Teaching

Drawback – Lack of National Norms

Advantages of the Design

Course Assessment			
Intro Pre/Post	X	O	X
Intro Post Only		O	X
Program Assessment			
Intro Major Pre	X	O	X
Senior Major Post			

- Standard Advantages
 - Pre-Post Comparison Demonstrates Learning
 - Testing Effects Controlled
 - Speed
 - Both Course and Program Assessment
- Drawback – Selection Bias and Mortality***

Implementation

- Development Process
- Data Collection
- Coding
- Analysis

Discussion Questions

- Is this assessment?
- Is this good assessment?
- What could be better?
- Is this exportable?
 - School type
 - Learning objectives