

Scholarship of Assessment Grant Final Report

Dr. Sonyia Richardson

Amy Peters

University of North Carolina Charlotte

Project Summary

In spring 2019, the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program participated in a pilot program implementing part of term courses. Part of term courses are 7.5-week condensed courses that assist students with timely completion and matriculation through academic programs and graduation requirements. Bottleneck courses were selected as these can delay students from starting within upper-division programs timely or from timely graduation. All part of term courses were offered in an online format by the School of Social Work. Dr. Richardson and Professor Peters utilized their trained experiences as Quality Matters Peer Reviewers and Faculty Fellows for faculty advisement regarding development and alignment with the online content. To date, we have offered eight sections of part of term courses over three semesters. For this project, we collected and analyzed SOWK 1101, SOWK 2182, and SOWK 2183 course data from spring 2019 and fall 2019. As we continue to offer these courses, it is pertinent for us to evaluate whether the outcomes for part of term courses are similar to full-term course offerings. These outcomes will provide additional insight regarding student matriculation in these courses.

Information Learned

As a result of this assessment project, we were able to learn the following new information:

- In SOWK 1101, when the course was offered in all three formats, there were no statistically significant differences across section types for student paper assignment scores or quizzes.
- There were no statistically significant differences for quiz scores within the varied sections types for any of the three courses assessed.

- The results for SOWK 2182 and SOWK 2183 indicated statistically significant differences for the paper assignments for the varied course sections types. For example, students enrolled in Full Term - Face to Face SOWK 2182 fared better on paper assignments than those in Part of Term courses, while students in Part of Term - Online SOWK 2183 fared better on papers than those in Full Term - Online SOWK 2183.
- The condensed time period of Part of Term courses may make it more challenging for students to complete particular assignment types such as longer writing assignments.
- There was a statistically significant difference in quiz scores across the varied formats between courses. The mean quiz score for students in SOWK 1101 was the highest for students in the online sections, while they were higher for students in the face to face section for SOWK 2182. Students in SOWK 2183 scored slightly higher on the quiz in the part of term course than the full term online course section.
- Overall, D and F rates were higher in Part of Term - Online courses than Full Term - Face to Face courses and the rates were similar overall to Full Term - Online courses.

Incorporation into Instructional Practice or Curriculum

We are planning to incorporate these findings into our instructional practices and curriculum in several ways. The strategies are explained briefly below.

- As a result of the successful outcomes in part of term courses, we will consider expanding the part of term online format to other courses.
- We will revisit the design of part of term courses with a particular focus on the volume of learning material in a given module to ensure it supports necessary learning outcomes.
- We will revisit the rubrics and grading process for papers to support consistency with

grading related to assessment.

- Assignment timelines in part of term courses will be reviewed to ensure students have enough time to prepare for quizzes, write papers, or complete more intricate projects.
- Given that D and F grades do appear to be higher in Part of Term - Online and Full Term - Online courses, we recommend continuing to offer face to face courses and hybrid formats to support student success.

Student Impact

This work and assessment project has had an overall positive impact. Through a review of quantitative and qualitative feedback on part of term student course evaluations, students have provided positive feedback and are demonstrating overall success with these courses. Part of Term courses have provided students with an additional option for how they can earn course credit and progress toward their degree. Additionally, these courses assist students in progress more quickly to graduation because they have options to complete both a Session A and Session B courses. On the other hand, if they are not successful with these courses then it can delay graduation. Lastly, we found that most students have adapted well to the condensed 7.5-week format and have risen to the challenge of completing more work in less time, but not all. As a result, it is important to monitor D and F rates in these courses.

What We Plan to Do Differently

As a result of this project, we plan the following strategies to improve student outcomes:

- As a result of the variation in quiz test scores across section types, we will encourage instructors to provide similar settings in Canvas for the rendering of quizzes. For example, some instructors may have permitted students to take the quiz more than once,

while other instructors permitted one attempt. Additionally, some instructors may have permitted open notes, while others may not have. To ensure consistent outcomes for students in the same courses, it would be helpful to have similar Canvas quiz settings in the varied sections. We will stress this with faculty during course preparations.

- Along the same lines, it is important to confirm consistency in assessment processes, including the development and use of the same rubrics across sections. This is particularly important with paper assignments.
- We will consider adding live support to the part of term courses to assist students with improving outcomes and decreasing D and F rates. It might also be helpful to integrate Disciplinary Communication Consultants in the courses to provide support to students.
- We will explore additional ways to support students such as through advising, course design, and instructor-learner engagement. Advisors can be informed about the benefits and challenges of Part of Term courses so that they can assist students with making informed choices about which format to select.
- Late and missing assignments appear to be factors that contribute to students not being successful in Part of Term courses. Since instructor-learner engagement is critical in Part of Term courses, instructors will be encouraged to focus more on engaging learners.
- We will continue to be mindful of potential barriers to success and help students overcome challenges such as placing textbooks on reserve at the library and referring students to campus resources. As these courses are fast-paced, it is important that students do not get behind after the course is launched.