

From Data Beast to Beast of Burden: A Case Study of Learning Outcomes in Faculty-Led Assessment as a Tool for Undergraduate History Curriculum Design

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DURING THE 2000s, an insatiable creature known to us—not affectionately—as the Data Beast took up residence at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and began to menace the Department of History. It was a manifestation of the expansion of assessment activity by the university and its accrediting body; with no meaningful quantitative information on student progress in our undergraduate program to provide, we responded to its demands by throwing it meals of low-quality data so that it would go away—although, unfortunately, there was always another feeding time. Our approach exemplified what Peter Ewell, in an overview of the history of higher education assessment, presents as a common pattern: any formal assessment that took place was done because someone outside the department had demanded it, not from any belief in or commitment to the process; the department constructed its assessment practices in response to those external demands rather than its own needs; and assessment was carried out as an obligation, not “in the spirit of academic inquiry—directed towards collective improvement,” which Ewell describes as “the original heart of the movement.”¹ The utility

of formal assessment processes in higher education continues to be the subject of much debate.² However, our experience suggests that by careful combination of appropriate assessment protocols with clear articulation of departmental learning objectives, it is possible to transform the Data Beast into a beast of burden, usefully assisting with the work of undergraduate teaching. In this case study, we will show how a curriculum revision in the Department of History at UTC benefited from the use of a curriculum mapping assessment process and the articulation of clear learning goals based on the American Historical Association's Tuning Project. Together, these allowed us to develop a consistent, transparent program-level curriculum that organically integrates ongoing evaluation of student progress with teaching and learning in the classroom.³

The Challenge: Fighting the Impact of Opacity and Curricular Drift

College-level history curricula are inherently non-linear. The American Historical Association (AHA), acknowledging that our discipline lacks standard models for course content or sequences, describes a successful undergraduate major curriculum as one in which faculty and students have collectively engaged in the development and practice of clear organizing principles.⁴ However, without careful attention to the focus of the program and its ability to communicate its goals, rationale, and methodologies to students, faculty, and other stakeholders, curricula can easily fall victim to opacity and drift, obscuring the principles that would ideally guide student progress. In the early 2010s, both of these problems were evident in our history curriculum, which was showing its age. The last major update, the introduction of a three-semester world history survey sequence, had been instituted in the 1999-2000 academic year as part of a university-wide General Education revision, and other parts of the curriculum were much older.⁵ Its structure reflected its roots in the era before the information revolution transformed historical data from a relatively scarce resource to an instantaneously accessible flood of material that students needed to navigate and assess. The major was survey-heavy, requiring students to complete the world history sequence and a two-semester American history sequence, while upper-level differentiation of material followed an

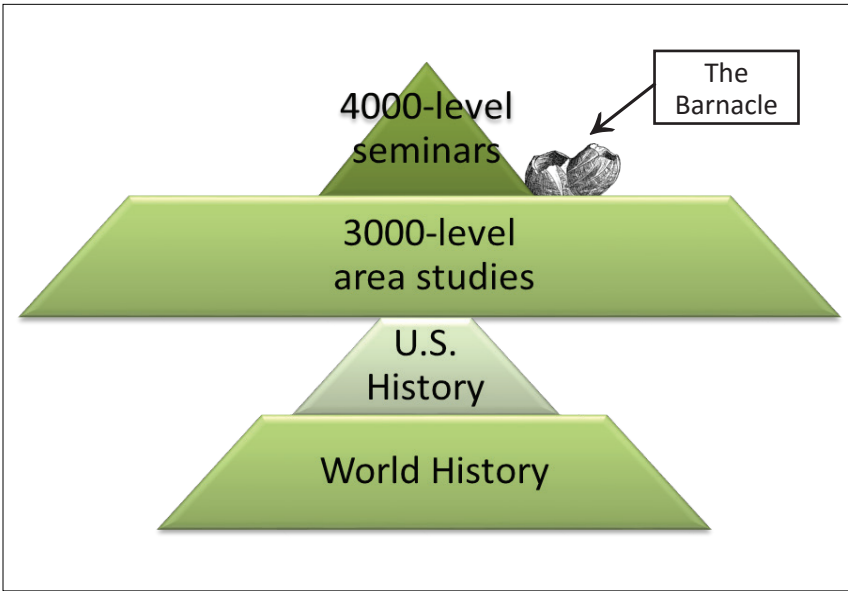


Figure 1: Visualization of pre-existing curriculum in the form of a misshapen Ziggurat.

area-studies model that gave limited formal attention to the research and analytical methods that are the tools of the historian’s trade. The department’s only historical methods class was designed to serve as an introduction to upper-level coursework to be completed during the junior year, but, without a requirement that it be completed at that time, it had long since become for many history majors a *de facto* capstone and/or final obstacle before graduation. Attempts to depict the curriculum visually only illustrated its opacity: rather than moving smoothly from broad base to focused apex, it took the form of a misshapen ziggurat (**Figure 1**), with the unsequenceable methods seminar growing on the side like a barnacle.

The extent to which opacity and drift had overtaken the department’s curricular structure was a growing problem, of which our poor relationship with the Data Beast of institutional assessment was merely a symptom. Lack of consistency and transparency complicated our efforts to convey to administrators, faculty colleagues, and even many of our students that the transmission of historical facts and narratives is only one aspect of the academic

study of history. Without a mechanism for producing meaningful data on student progress, members of the history faculty were unable to assess our collective effectiveness as teachers. Evolving university and state-level policy also put pressure on the curricular structure. A further revision of the university's General Education curriculum, implemented during the 2013-2014 academic year, eliminated the three-semester world history survey requirement from the General Education program and, by doing so, undermined the rationale for its continued inclusion as a major requirement. Beginning in 2011, the State of Tennessee enacted two programs designed to encourage students to begin their higher education at community colleges: the Tennessee Transfer Path, guaranteeing students who completed an A.A. degree at a community college a smooth transfer to a four-year school in the state system; and the Tennessee Promise, offering generous financial aid to students who enrolled in community colleges. We needed a mechanism to ensure that the flow of transfer students predicted to result from these programs would acquire the same foundation in historical research, writing, and methods as our native students. Finally, in an environment increasingly permeated by the expectation that undergraduate liberal arts education should serve as a form of career preparation, we needed a vocabulary with which to present our program to potential majors and their families in such a way that its broadly applicable analytical, communication, and information management skills were readily apparent.

As we began to reconsider the curriculum, our overall challenge was to re-center the program on the practice of thinking historically. From a methodological perspective, we felt that our curriculum needed to become more transparent; ideally, students should be able to articulate what they have learned in terms of skills and competencies as well as subject matter. Our teaching would need to balance transmission of factual information, understanding of how specific historical structures and processes are observed and interpreted, and instruction in the craft of creating structures from historical evidence.⁶ In order for the faculty to meet that goal, we would also need to clarify the curriculum for ourselves; before we could ensure that students understood the skills they were acquiring, we had to make certain that they received consistent training in historical techniques as they moved through the program, regardless of the topical content of the courses they elected to take.

Our initial discussions revealed a lack of this desired consistency among instructors and across curricular levels, which meant that we needed to assess our own goals. We also hoped that by improving the transparency and consistency of our instruction, we would be able to achieve the practical outcome of making the discipline more attractive for students—who would better understand the utility of training in history—and increasing the number of history majors.

Process: Curriculum Mapping and Tuning

All of the authors of this article were members of the committee that was created to recommend revisions and improvements to the department curriculum. Our first step in this process was the articulation of common goals for our students—our student learning outcomes. We were pushed to take that step, however, by the insatiable hunger of the Data Beast on one hand, and the university-wide Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness Committee on the other. During the 2013-2014 academic year, as part of a university-wide initiative, the department was asked to begin the process of curriculum mapping, a self-assessment exercise that allows programs to visually compare ideal outcomes with actual teaching practice at varying levels of granularity.⁷ A curriculum map illustrates real or ideal student progress towards a set of outcomes as they move through the curriculum from introduction, to reinforcement, to, in our case, bachelor's-level mastery. To compare actual student progress to the ideal, rubrics based on the map can also be applied to individual courses. In generating our outcomes, we were able to draw upon the core competencies and learning outcomes generated by the AHA's Tuning Project.⁸ The department settled on a set of five outcomes covering both content and method. We determined that, on completion of the major, our students should be able to:

1. Synthesize a body of historical knowledge with range and depth in terms of period, region, and perspective;
2. Assess dynamics of causation, contingency, and change over time in a variety of historical contexts;
3. Analyze, interpret, and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary source materials;

4. Generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise and carry out research strategies to answer them; and
5. Understand and use the formal styles of writing, narrative construction, and argument specific to the history discipline.

The curriculum committee's goals focused on providing greater transparency through a methodologically and pedagogically more current curriculum, offering more effectively defined and consistent outcomes, and devising a plan to attract and retain majors. During our early discussions, the authors were able to participate in an AHA Tuning Project workshop, where the sessions and exchanges among faculty from different institutions provided the foundation to reevaluate the organization, contents, and transparency of the department curriculum as well as identified effective means to assess teaching styles, course syllabi and assignments, and student learning outcomes. Our initial curriculum map (**Figure 2**) revealed that, in practice, there were significant gaps between the proficiencies we believed our students should develop and the opportunities afforded them to do so through completion of a history degree. Its visualization of self-assessment by the faculty teaching at various levels indicated that, even theoretically, students moved smoothly from introduction to reinforcement to bachelor's-level mastery in only one outcome; for three of the outcomes, the map showed no opportunities at all for students to reach mastery. Participation in Tuning accomplished two important goals as the departmental curriculum committee began to devise new courses, reassign course levels, and align overall goals for assignment components, teaching styles, and class sizes with different curriculum outcome levels. First, these AHA sessions highlighted the importance of our primary stakeholders—the students—and their specific needs to understand the purpose of assignments, obtain discipline-specific critical thinking and writing skills, and succeed beyond degree completion. The student learning outcomes became the focal point of the revision process. Second, faculty workshop discussions advanced our mission to streamline course goals, design effective and consistent assignment structures, and develop a rigorous and cohesive course level organization.

Just as students often perform better on assignments when grading rubrics clearly explain instructor expectations, we thought we should

Outcomes	1) Synthesize a body of historical knowledge with range and depth in terms of period, region, and perspective	2) Assess dynamics of causation, contingency, and change over time in a variety of historical contexts	3) Analyze, interpret, and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary source materials	4) Generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise and carry out research strategies to answer them	5) Understand and use the formal styles of writing, narrative construction, and argument specific to the history discipline
HIST 1010: World to 1000	R	R	R	I	I
HIST 1020: World 1000 to 1800	I / R	I / R	I / R	x	x / I
HIST 1030: World 1800 to present	R	I	I	x	I
HIST 2000: Intro to Research and Writing	x	x	I	I	I
HIST 2010/20: U.S. survey	I	I	R	I	I
HIST 3xxx: U.S.	R	R	R	I	R
HIST 3xxx: Non-Western	R	R	R	I	R
HIST 3xxx: Europe	R / M	R	R	R	R
HIST 3010: Seminars in History	R	R	R / M	R	R / M
HIST 4xxx	R	R / I	M	R / x	M

Figure 2: The results of our initial departmental curriculum mapping exercise, illustrating the lack of a clear path from introduction, to reinforcement, to mastery in almost all of our chosen learning outcomes.

do the same by making our curriculum transparent—especially since curriculum mapping usually assumes that skills will build on one another over the course of a program. We chose to make our student learning outcomes the centerpiece of our curriculum reform and truly try to make what we say we do obvious to students, administrators, and other stakeholders in a history degree. We began to reassess and restructure course levels and articulate specific course outcomes, and developed a visual curriculum map and materials for students that link course goals, assignments, and skills with professional competence and success beyond the history degree.

Outcome: Re-Envisioning the Curriculum from Opaque to Transparent

Based on the results of our initial curriculum mapping and our goals of transparency, consistency, and increasing the attractiveness of the major, our department set out to envision a reformed and renewed history curriculum that would clearly reflect what we wanted to teach our students, and why. Once we developed student learning outcomes and mapped our curriculum, we realized that we needed to restructure the entire history major in order for it to make sense. This restructuring was a conscious effort on the department's part to address the problems of opacity and curricular drift and to bring the classes we teach into a logical format. Using the curriculum map, which revolves around our learning outcomes, we were able to construct a student-centered curriculum that shows a clear progression from introduction to mastery of skills. As straightforward as this process seems in this article, the road to our results was fairly organic, occurring through multiple meetings, faculty discussions, institutional comparisons, and quite a bit of brainstorming. It is worth noting that this new curriculum received university approval during the 2015-2016 academic year, so the process itself is just beginning.

Our first round of mapping meetings revealed that faculty members could not assume any specific level of student knowledge regarding historical analysis or writing, even from a history major, no matter what level of class they were in. This made for redundancy of instruction and sometimes pushback from students (in the form of “that’s not how Dr. X taught us”). The easiest solution seemed

to be creating a new set of courses for our majors that would cover analytical and writing skills and ensure that students would not reach their senior year unable to construct a historical argument or write a thesis-driven paper. We split “the barnacle” that was our research and methods course (see **Figure 1**) into a required introductory methods course and a capstone seminar, which together will guarantee that they are exposed to these topics. The methods-capstone sequence begins with a 2000-level introduction to historical research and writing course which, while introducing students to the basics of academic writing in history, is conceptualized broadly enough to meet one of the University’s General Education requirements in rhetoric and composition. Ideally, students will complete it as part of their General Education during their first two years of coursework, or at the beginning of the junior year for transfer students. At the 4000 level, students will be required to complete a capstone seminar with a rigorous research and writing requirement.

A second problem revealed by the mapping process was the progression of the curriculum through the levels from 1000 to 4000. In sum, the question that arose was “what does the 2000 level mean?”—to which no one had a reply. In a traditional college history curriculum, the 1000 level is usually made up of broad world history or Western civilization surveys. The 2000 level is reserved for surveys that are less broad in geographical scope and chronology; in our case, solely for the United States surveys. The upper divisions are populated with area or thematic studies; under our established system, courses like “Under Hitler’s Shadow” and “Sub-Saharan Africa from 1800 to the Present” were housed at the 3000 level, and the 4000-level courses were small seminars on a narrow topic that usually require some heavy research and writing on the part of the student. As we sought to place our student learning outcomes at the center of our curricular redesign, this arrangement of levels by content expressed through geographic scope, rather than progress from introduction to mastery of outcomes, became problematic. Our new system, informed by the mapping assessment process, seeks to resolve these problems.

Visual images have played an important role in the process of re-envisioning the curriculum. We have conceptualized the new curriculum as a pyramid (**Figure 3**) that clearly illustrates how students will acquire, practice, and master disciplinary skills, in

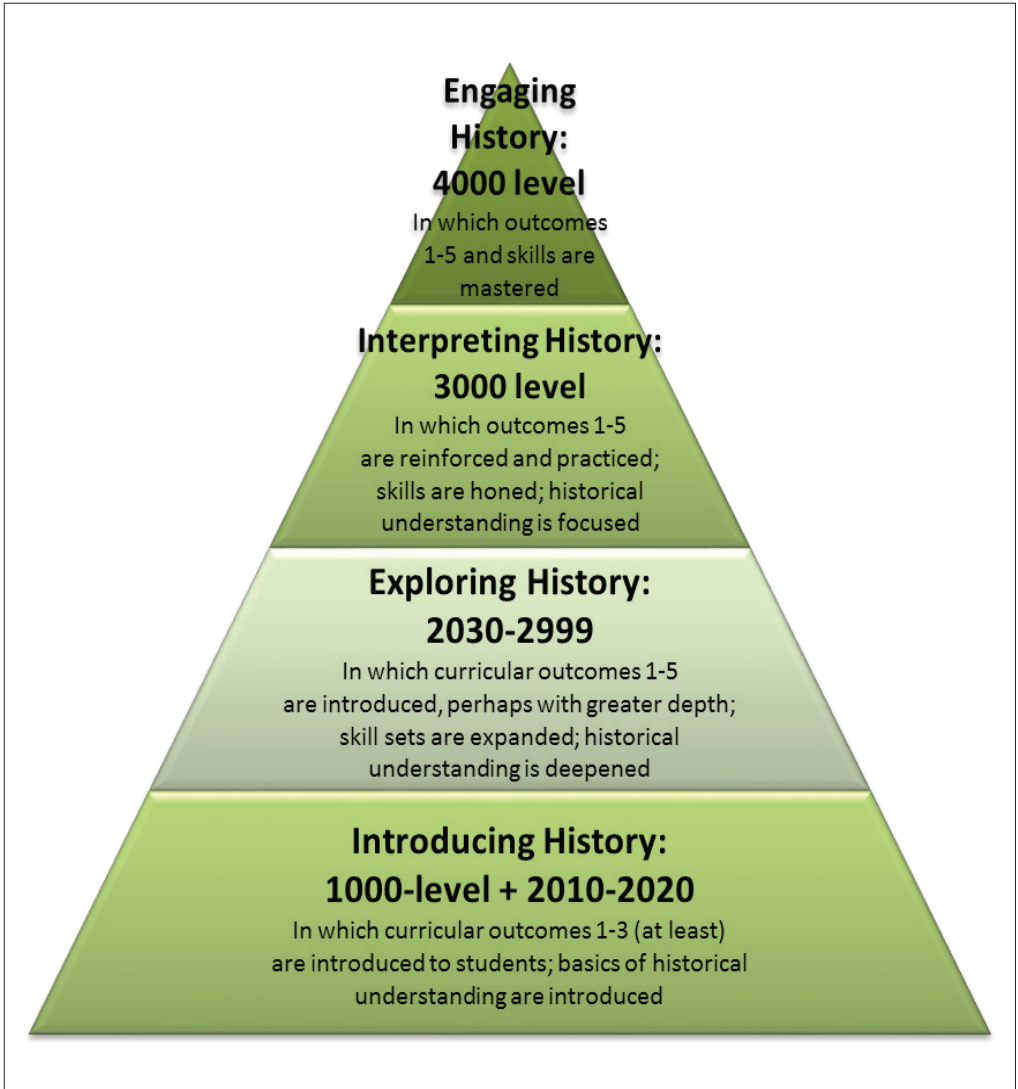


Figure 3: Visual representation of our revised curriculum, structured around progress towards mastery of the five departmental outcomes through exploration of a wide range of historical topics.

accordance with the logic of curriculum mapping. The revisions also embrace the AHA's goal of defining and articulating the results of a successful completed history degree, as defined by the Tuning Project. Our revised curriculum explicitly communicates to students

and other stakeholders that the study of history is a discipline that develops transferable skills in addition to providing deeper understanding of the past and the world around us. The curriculum pyramid was created by one of us (Kira Robison) as a way to see both a progression and a hierarchy of courses. Coupled with our learning outcomes, it naturally suggested the advancement intended by the project of mapping, and represents the ideal sequence of skills as a map in itself. The pyramid inadvertently became our most powerful tool in advocating for curricular overhaul and explaining these changes to fellow faculty and administrators. The ziggurat (see **Figure 1**) was Robison's (tongue-in-cheek) way to reverse-engineer the ideal into the current curricular reality, which is an even more powerful image in its disorder.

The ziggurat illustrated additional problems with the current geographical and chronological approach to curricular structure, and invited us to imagine solutions. Its lower levels are small, but its 3000 level is huge, housing all of the topical courses that are not surveys or seminars (71% of the topical courses in the 2015-2016 course catalog). In a curriculum centered on student learning outcomes, this visual imbalance represents an obstacle to student progress through the major. The department faculty initially determined to resolve the question of lack of differentiation between 1000- and 2000-level survey courses by moving the U.S. surveys to the 1000 level, reflecting the fact that, like world history surveys, they introduce student learning outcomes. This would have left the 2000 level completely vacant, creating a clear opening within which to address our need to balance chronological and geographical coverage with progress through the outcomes by revising and updating our approaches to course content. In practice, system-wide demands required that the U.S. surveys remain at the beginning of the 2000 level, occupying the catalog numbers 2010 and 2020. By drawing the line between our entry-level "Introducing History" courses and second-level "Exploring History" courses after 2020, however, the new system still reserves the bulk of the 2000 level for "advanced surveys" introducing students to American, European, African, Asian, and Latin American histories in greater detail and narrower geographical and chronological focus than can be accomplished in the introductory surveys, as well as housing our introductory methods course. 3000-level "Interpreting History" courses will now

be able to introduce more sophisticated thematic and methodological approaches across geographical and chronological content areas as they reinforce our five outcomes.

To use Europe as an example, our established curriculum reflected older historiographical thought on the development of European history. Medieval Europe was split into two courses; the dates for the split were up to the instructor, but the original intent seems to have been “Early Middle Ages” and “Central Middle Ages.”⁹ Several problems presented themselves: first, this is a difficult division to teach thematically—topics such as papal power, which fit into both sections, are truncated. Secondly, the next chronological class was “The Renaissance,” labeled from 1350-1500. It has been a very long time since “the Renaissance” has been considered a chronological category. In addition, the dates favored the Italian Renaissance and left out its effects on the rest of Europe, where this period is now considered the Late Middle Ages. This system needed a cleanup to bring it in line with twenty-first-century historiography. The new system combines the two medieval courses into one 2000-level “advanced survey” and revises the Renaissance class to include Europe as a whole, to be taught at 3000 level. Other areas of the curriculum were similarly reperiodized and reclassified, leading to a relatively even distribution of 35% of topical courses at the 2000 level and 48% at the 3000 level. These courses are now bookended by the entry-level surveys and the 4000-level seminar courses that emphasize discussion and writing, which will guide students to bachelor’s-level mastery of the disciplinary competencies identified in our curriculum outcomes.

Outcome: Experimentation and Assessment in the Classroom

The combination of curriculum mapping and Tuning principles also provided tools to experiment within the classroom and with assessment of student progress, in keeping with the broad goal of transparent and consistent curricular structure. Each of the authors was inspired differently by participation in the Tuning workshops, and we were able to apply Tuning principles to a range of course types.

Sara Jorgensen has developed the introductory research and writing course, which will be foundational to the revised curriculum.

Her goal for the first semester of practice was to replace the illusion of transparency created by conventions like including formal statements of course outcomes or General Education outcomes on syllabi with clear explanations of what she was doing and why, and what she hoped students would gain from each course element. In particular, she wanted to make clear that studying history involves the development of a set of intellectual tools that allow scholars (and others) to assess and make sense of information. She set out to teach these students that the process of doing history is about making and defending factually grounded arguments, and that this skill set has very broad applications. Their assignments, which included an exercise in narrative argument and participation in Wikipedia editing as well as a traditional academic research paper, were designed to provide them with evidence that the craft of history is a toolbox and not solely an academic endeavor.

Kira Robison applied Tuning strategies to an introductory world history survey. She created a “Mini Critique” assignment rubric that asked students to assess assigned primary sources in light of basic historical inquiries like “who is the author,” “where was it written,” and “why do you think this source is important for the study of its culture?” She presented these critiques as the basic questions historians ask every source we look at, whether it is text or material culture. Her idea was that a series of these tasks, asking the same questions, would reiterate analytical questions for the students until they could internalize it and bring it to their other assignments for class; however, she discovered that her students seemed to see each assignment as an isolated project rather than an application of tools that could be applied and reapplied to different sources and assignments. She intends to further emphasize the holistic nature of these assignments.

Finally, Susan Eckelmann applied principles of pedagogical transparency to a capstone-level, research-based seminar. She included close reading assignments that asked students who had read an excerpt from a secondary source to identify and evaluate the strength of the topic sentence, the various primary sources the author used to support his or her argument, the persuasiveness of analysis, the effectiveness of transitions, and nuanced and pointed prose. To sharpen students’ understanding and critical analytical reading competence, she collaborated with a curator at the local art museum,

where students practiced visual reading skills and honed interpreting historical changes and human experiences through paintings and photographs. To advance students' research abilities, Eckelmann worked closely with two university librarians designing workshops in which students practice primary and secondary source research.

To evaluate student progress in the curriculum that faculty members *practiced* during the academic year 2014-2015, our department assessed two of the five student learning outcomes in our curriculum map—Outcome 1, “Understand and use the formal styles of writing, narrative construction, and argument specific to the history discipline,” and Outcome 2, “Analyze, interpret and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary source materials”—using student written work produced at the 2000, 3000, and 4000 levels. Faculty assessors reviewed an anonymous sample of student papers along with course assessment materials such as assignment sheets and grading rubrics. We devised rubrics with which to evaluate each of the outcomes (see **Appendices A and B**). Outcome 1 was measured using 2000-level work, including the assessment of students' effective incorporation of sources and citations, presentation and organization, as well as argument and use of evidence. We applied Outcome 2 to upper-level work, assessing students' historiographical analysis, identification and evaluation of evidence, and interpretation and synthesis of evidence. In both cases, our samples were scored on a scale from 1 to 12, with a score of 0-3 being deemed “unsatisfactory,” 4-6 as “developing,” 7-9 as “proficient,” and 10-12 as “excellent.” Our results suggested that students are making progress as they move through the curriculum. For Outcome 1, students at the 2000 level demonstrated overall developing skills. For Outcome 2, students at the 3000 and 4000 levels demonstrated overall proficiency and met this learning outcome (see **Appendix C** for complete explanation of outcomes).

As we move forward, instructors on all levels will review syllabi, assignments, and grading rubrics according to the new curriculum changes. Full-time faculty across the department will discuss clear and deliberate advisement strategies to ensure student progress and awareness of any important curriculum changes. Instructors will also be encouraged to offer practical workshops with the assistance of the UTC library staff to develop and further research and writing skills of majors and minors. The department will ensure that our

teaching faculty implement the revised curriculum map, assessment processes, and course outcomes in order to ensure consistency and provide our students—the stakeholders—with a more explicit and transparent curriculum. The department curriculum committee will continue to reassess teaching effectiveness across outcome categories to document student proficiency and learn which curriculum areas require adjustment.

Conclusion: Domesticating the Data Beast

Our department's journey through the process of curriculum mapping and revision began with the problem posed by demands from UTC's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Institutional Research for data that we were structurally ill-equipped to provide. The process of self-assessment through curriculum mapping and the articulation of our student learning outcomes allowed us to develop a clearer sense of the gaps in our program, rebalance our course content, and place greater emphasis on the provision and articulation of historical methodologies; it also equipped us with tools with which to hold ourselves accountable through ongoing evaluation of our students' progress in meeting our outcomes, and of our own effectiveness as teachers in helping them to do so. We have begun to shift the culture of our department from an adversarial relationship with assessment, as defined by the demands of institutional and accrediting requirements, to an embrace of self-directed evaluation as a part of our commitment to a consistent, transparent curriculum. In doing so, we have also domesticated the Data Beast, which has begun to do useful work in exchange for a consistent, high-quality diet. That work includes provision of meaningful data to the external assessment bodies which, seen in light of the process we have begun, are simply one of a number of stakeholders in the teaching and learning of history. Although the rebuilding of our curriculum is still a work in progress, and is designed around the principle of ongoing assessment and review, our initial experience suggests that student learning outcomes are an effective tool in the construction of a history program that is both rigorous and responsive.

Notes

1. Peter T. Ewell, "Assessment of Higher Education Quality: Promise and Politics," in *Assessment in Higher Education: Issues of Access, Quality, Student Development and Public Policy*, ed. Samuel J. Messick (New York: Routledge, 1999), 148.

2. For recent examples, see Erik Gilbert, "Does Assessment Make Colleges Better? Who Knows?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 14, 2015, <<http://chronicle.com/article/Does-Assessment-Make-Colleges/232371/>>; Christopher B. Nelson, "Assessing Assessment," *Inside Higher Ed*, November 24, 2014, <<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/11/24/essay-criticizes-state-assessment-movement-higher-education>>, and their associated comments.

3. This ideal closely resembles L. Dee Fink's model of Integrated Course Design, in which teaching and learning, learning goals, and feedback and assessment form a closed circuit. See Fink, "Foreword" to James R. Davis and Bridget D. Arend, *Facilitating Seven Ways of Learning: A Resource for More Purposeful, Effective and Enjoyable College Teaching* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2013), xi-xii.

4. Michael J. Galgano, "Liberal Learning and the History Major (2007)," American Historical Association, <<https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/governance/divisions/teaching/liberal-learning-and-the-history-major>>.

5. One large problem that results from the age of parts of the curriculum is outdated names: for example, "Afro-American history." These were freshened in the new curriculum proposal.

6. Alan Booth, *Teaching History at University: Enhancing Learning and Understanding* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 16; also see Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, "What Does it Mean to Think Historically?" *Perspectives on History* 45, no. 1 (January 2007), <<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically>>.

7. For a detailed explanation of the curriculum mapping process, see the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, "Assessment How-to: Curriculum Mapping/ Curriculum Matrix," October 25, 2013, <<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm>>.

8. American Historical Association, "AHA History Tuning Project: History Discipline Core," 2013, <<https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning/history-discipline-core>>.

9. The particular dates for "The Middle Ages" can vary, depending on the instructor, but for the whole period, they generally run from 300 or 500 to 1400 or 1500. There are ongoing, lively discussions about periodization and what these labels mean—the discussion in this article is not meant to simplify or ignore these debates. Unfortunately, undergraduate instruction is not the best venue to delve into the intricacies of medieval periodization.

Appendix A

**Survey Assessment Instrument #1
History Department Core Course: HIST 2000**

Assessment Outcome: Understand and use the formal styles of writing, narrative construction, and argument specific to the history discipline.

Instructor: _____ Course: _____ Semester: Spring 2015

Objectives	Sources & Citations	Presentation & Organization	Argument & Use of Evidence
Excellent (4)	Deliberate and effective identification of a wide range of different primary sources. Provides a cogent synthesis of secondary sources that persuasively support an argument. Shows discipline-specific forms of citation, documentation, and follows all formatting standards.	Offers a clear introduction, persuasive analytical body of paragraphs, and sound conclusion. Employs a sophisticated prose.	Has a clear, insightful line of argument, where one point leads to the next. Analysis integrates a wide range of different sources as well as counterevidence persuasively to support a compelling thesis statement.
Proficient (3)	Offers relevant and a varied body of primary sources. Links a discussion of secondary sources to support a position or argument. Employs discipline-specific citation styles and follows formatting guidelines.	Constructs the writing with a clear introduction, analytical body, and conclusion. Offers good prose and clear sentences structures that link paragraphs analytically.	Has a mostly clear line of argument, where one point usually leads to the next. Offers a sound analysis of primary sources that support the thesis statement.
Developing (2)	Provides some relevant primary sources, offers some discussion of secondary sources that may not fully support the main argument. Shows some familiarity with discipline-specific citation styles, but has some errors and formatting issues.	Offers most of the key organizational components, such as introduction, main body, and conclusion. Fair prose style (weak word choices, unclear sentence construction and paragraphing) that limits cohesive flow of analysis.	Argument may be unclear or too simplistic, although student may make some good individual points. May have a line of argument, but one that doesn't fit the topic and analysis of evidence remains at the surface.
Unsatisfactory (1)	Does not utilize relevant or any primary sources, does not offer any discussion of secondary sources in support of a position or argument, and does not demonstrate familiarity with discipline-specific citations styles and indicates formatting problems.	May be missing other structural elements or have no formal structure. Has an unacceptable number of spelling and grammar errors, shows poor prose style and insufficient length.	Has no clear line of argument or does not answer the question, has not identified relevant primary sources and analyzes evidence ineffectively.
Score (S=student)	S 1) _____ S 2) _____	S 1) _____ S 2) _____	S 1) _____ S 2) _____

Appendix B

Survey Assessment Instrument #2
History Department Core Courses: HIST 3010 and HIST 4000-level

Assessment Outcome: Analyze, interpret, and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary source material.

Instructor: _____ Course: _____ Semester: Spring 2015

Objectives	Historiographical Analysis	Identification & Evaluation of Evidence	Interpretation & Synthesis of Evidence
Excellent (4)	Examines historical and theoretical viewpoints that provide a perspective on the past sophisticatedly. Soundly engages with other scholars' main arguments.	Has lots of specific evidence drawn from the text, giving multiple specific examples for each generalization, and analyzes it persuasively; takes contradictory evidence into account.	Engages credible and relevant primary and secondary sources. Employs appropriate evaluative standards of text in terms of credibility, position, and perspective. Reads and contextualizes materials from the past with sophisticated precision and detail.
Proficient (3)	Explores some historical and theoretical viewpoints that provide a perspective on the past. Summarizes other scholars' main arguments.	Has some specific evidence drawn from the text and analyzes it fairly well; takes at least some contradictory evidence into account.	Uses credible and relevant primary and secondary sources. Applies appropriate evaluative standards of text in terms of credibility, position, and perspective. Reads and contextualizes materials from the past.
Developing (2)	Superficially summarizes historical and theoretical viewpoints. Offers general overview of other scholars' arguments.	Has some evidence, but the evidence may not be germane or well analyzed; does not take contradictory evidence into account.	Identifies some credible primary and secondary sources, some of which may not be relevant to the chosen topic. May apply appropriate evaluative standards of text in terms of credibility, position, and perspective inadequately. May read and contextualize some materials from the past insufficiently.
Unsatisfactory (1)	Provides insufficient or no historical and theoretical viewpoints at the surface. Does not present accurate overviews of other scholars' arguments.	Does not provide sufficient or any evidence for points or refer much to the assigned materials.	Selects irrelevant and insufficient primary and secondary sources. Does not apply appropriate evaluative standards of text in terms of credibility, position, and perspective. May read and contextualize some materials from the past incorrectly or not at all.
Score (S=student)	S 1) _____ S 2) _____ S 3) _____	S 1) _____ S 2) _____ S 3) _____	S 1) _____ S 2) _____ S 3) _____

Appendix C

Explanation of Initial Assessment of Student Progress using the Curriculum Map

The following criteria serve to measure each learning outcome:

HIST2000 @ Introductory level:

- Select and utilize appropriate primary sources as evidence.
- Select and utilize appropriate secondary sources as evidence or in support of a position or argument.
- Employ discipline-specific (Chicago style) forms of citation, documentation, and formatting.
- Formulate a clear and specific thesis statement and support it with persuasive evidence and use of examples.
- Construct the essay with clear introduction, analytical body paragraphs, and conclusion.

HIST3010 @ Reinforcement and HIST4000 @ Mastery levels:

- Explore multiple historical and theoretical viewpoints that provide perspective on the past.
- Identify and summarize other scholars' historical arguments.
- Identify and apply appropriate evaluative standards to primary and secondary sources in terms of credibility, position, and perspective.
- Read and contextualize materials from the past with appropriate precision and detail.
- Recognize the ongoing provisional nature of knowledge.
- Seek a variety of sources that provide evidence to support an argument about the past.
- Develop a methodological practice of gathering, sifting, analyzing, ordering, synthesizing, and interpreting evidence.

Data Evaluation

Outcome #1:

HIST2000

Instructor #1

Student #1: 2, 3, 2 = 7/12 = Proficient

Student #2: 1, 2, 1 = 4/12 = Developing

Evaluation: Students in this course demonstrated overall developing skills. To further ensure that outcome is met, department staff may consider new assignments and other methods to convey content and introduce skills sets.

Outcome #2:

HIST3010

Instructor #2

Student #1: 3, 3, 3 = 9/12 = Proficient

Student #2: 3, 4, 3 = 10/12 = Excellent

Student #3: 3, 2, 3 = 8/12 = Proficient

Evaluation: Students in this course demonstrated overall proficiency and met outcome.

HIST4310

Instructor #3

Student #1: 1, 4, 4 = 9/12 = Proficient

Student #2: 3, 4, 4 = 11/12 = Excellent

Student #3: 2, 3, 3 = 8/12 = Proficient

Evaluation: Students in this course demonstrated overall proficiency and met outcome.

HIST4000-Level

Instructor #4

Student #1: 2, 3, 3 = 8/12 = Proficient

Student #2: 3, 4, 4 = 11/12 = Excellent

Student #3: 4, 4, 3 = 11/12 = Excellent

Evaluation: Students in this course demonstrated overall excellence and met this outcome.