

Defining & Assessing Complex Learning

Institutional Effectiveness

Lea Campbell, Ph.D.

Contact:

campbellc@uhd.edu

Overview

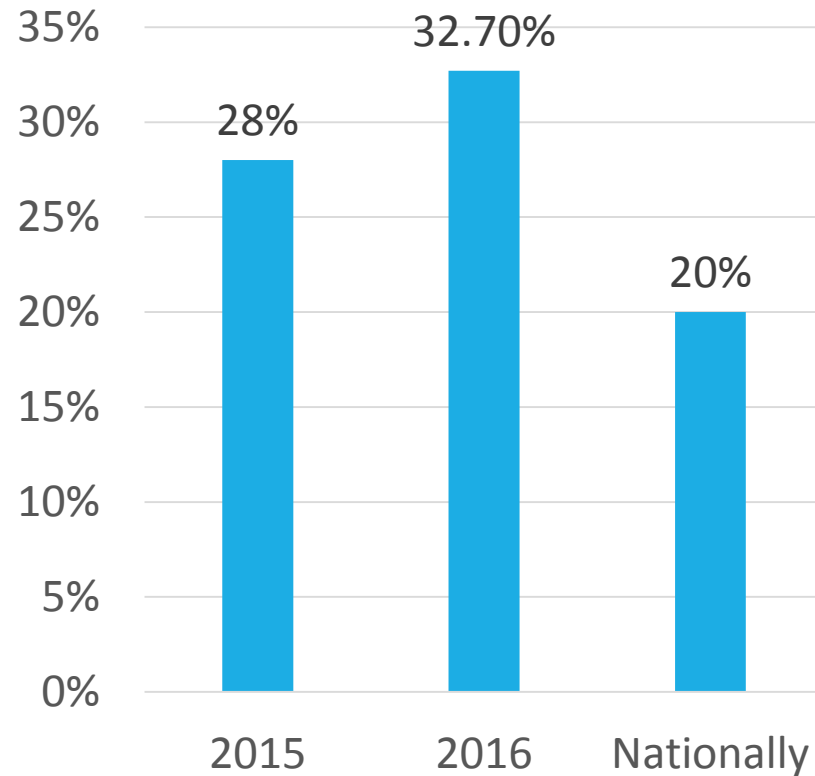
- ❖ Context in which UHD's core was created
- ❖ 11 Lessons learned implementing the revised core
- ❖ Strategies
- ❖ Benefits

About UHD

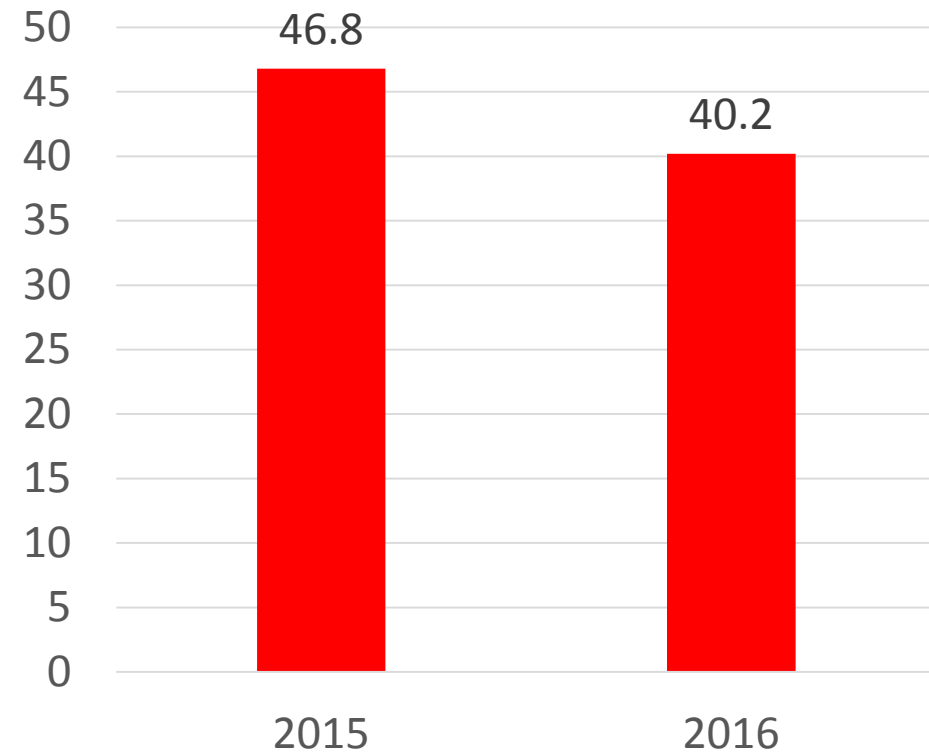
- 13,500 students
- Implemented entrance requirements F2013
- 918 students entered as FTIC Fall 2016 (90% full-time)
 - 55% Female; 43% Male
 - Ethnicity Profile:
 - 72% Hispanic
 - 8% African American
 - 9% Asian
 - 5% White
 - 6% Other

Working & Financial Security

% Working 21+ Hrs/week



Sense of Financial Security



Core Revision: 2012-2014

Desire to:

- Expand course options
- Engage faculty from across the institution
- Implement a Freshman & Transfer Seminars
 - Narrowly-focused academic topic wrapped around application of study skills, career exploration
 - Acculturation
 - Intended to enhance student success

Assessment of the Core

Overseen by University Curriculum Committee & Gen Ed Committee

- Core courses include Signature Assignments (SA) aligned with assigned Core Objectives
- Faculty submit SA student work to an electronic archive
- Faculty evaluators assess student work using AAC&U rubric
- Results are shared with faculty at large & decisions to improve are identified and implemented

Lesson 1: Not everyone understood the purpose of the core.

Lesson 1B: The adjuncts REALLY didn't understand the purpose of the core

Lesson 2: Can't teach what we can't define

Complex learning is the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes; coordinating qualitatively different constituent skills; and often transferring what was learned in school or training to daily life and work.

<http://web.mit.edu/xtalks/TenStepsToComplexLearning-Kirschner-VanMerriënboer.pdf>

Lesson 2: Can't teach what we can't define

Foundational knowledge & skills often defined in unrelated & discipline-specific ways

Lesson 2: Can't teach what we can't define

Critical Thinking: It's like porn...you just know it when you see it.

Lesson 3: Can't align a signature assignment to a rubric if you don't know how to use a rubric or draft an assignment prompt.

Lesson 4: Experience varied



Ruu... what?

Use'em everyday



.....prompt? What for?

We got this

Lesson 5: Must teach what we want students to know/do/value

Does putting students into teams teach teamwork?

Lesson 6: Rubrics can be great teaching tools

Lesson 6b: Giving students the rubric is not like giving them answers to a test

Lesson 7: Faculty may not be equipped to teach assigned objectives

Critical Thinking	Written/Oral Comm	Empirical & Quant	Teamwork, Social & Personal Responsibility
All	STEM Creative Arts Social Sciences	Social Sciences	English: Collaborate, don't team Natural Sciences

Lesson 8: Norming and evaluation sessions
make GREAT professional development

Lesson 9: UHD has a unique group of adjuncts

Overwhelming number of:

- Professors emeritus
- Retired faculty
- Professional staff that teach adjunct
- Long-time adjuncts (like 15-20 years long-time)

Embrace UHD's mission

- Committed to providing the best for our students
- Want to contribute

Lesson 10: Money helps

Lesson 11: The core can't run on autopilot

Strategy 1: Professional Development

Critical thinking

Writing effective assignment prompts

Assignment development

Rubrics

On-going professional development for new faculty

Targeted both full-time and contingent faculty

Strategy 2:

Core course coordinators in the disciplines

- Help faculty create Signature Assignment prompts
- Work with adjuncts
- Help with the archival process
- Reinforce communication

Strategy 3:

Creation of common Signature Assignments
within disciplines

Strategy 4:

Engage as many faculty as possible in the evaluation sessions

- Norming session
- Applying rubric
- Discussion of what they observed in student work & how to improve

Strategy 5:

Engage the academic chain of command

Benefit:

- Assessment of the core has forced us to:
 - Engage broad groups of faculty
 - Have substantive conversations about what students need to know/do/value as freshmen and sophomores
 - Reach consensus on definitions of complex learning
 - Integrate deliberate, transparent instruction

Benefit:

- Enhance pedagogical and assessment skills within faculty
- Closely examine what students learn and how they perform in core courses

Benefits: There's a trickle up & out effect

Faculty are applying lessons learned in upper division courses

Stealth improvement....

Closing thought:

“It ain’t a party till someone uses a rubric.”

Lea Campbell

Director – Institutional Assessment

University of Houston – Downtown

713-226-5548

campbellc@uhd.edu