History and Marketable Skills at the University of Texas at San Antonio and San Antonio College

(My attempt to translate history curriculum to a wider audience using the LEAP Value Rubrics and to communicate the relevance of historical inquiry to my students, particularly those who are interested in majoring in history.)

My focus as a LEAP-Texas (Liberal Education and America's Promise) fellow comprises how

the study of history develops marketable skills. As a Professor at San Antonio College, a large

urban community college, and a member of the original American Historical Association's

Tuning Project, I am committed to what Anne Hyde of the University of Oklahoma and the

Project's Director explains as the need for historians "to describe the skills, knowledge, and

habits of mind that students develop in history courses and degree programs" to students – either

our majors or others taking our classes, our colleagues and administrators, and to policy makers

influencing the future of higher education. "Our aim," she urges, "is to establish an ongoing

collaboration with a wide set of stakeholders about the essential nature of history in higher

education and the breadth of skills and knowledge that history students bring to the table."[1] I

reached out to fellow historians at public universities in the city and worked with them to use the

resources of the American Association of Colleges and Universities' LEAP initiative and the

Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) to translate the value of a history degrees and coursework

into a framework and language that describes what historians do and how these skills transfer to

our students' goals beyond college, particularly future careers. My initial findings, and I

strongly encourage you to review them, can be found here.[2] Afterwards, I met with several

faculty from the University of Texas at San Antonio's History department and reviewed their

---

[1] See "AHA History Tuning Project: 2016 History Discipline Core**."**
[2] This presentation was originally given at the Fourth Annual LEAP Texas Forum (February 19-21, 2017) on February 20 at El Centro College in Dallas, Texas.

program outcomes, numerous syllabi and materials from many classes to determine what marketable skills the program develops and how they do so, and how they might better articulate this.[3] I also reflected on what I can do to help prepare students who transfer to UTSA from my institution and major in history. What I concluded is that the discipline of history provides a rich pathway for students to attain many essential marketable skills, like those intended from the Texas Higher Education Strategic Plan: 60x30TX, whether a student majors in the field or simply takes classes, and that we are sometimes doing more than we assume and can work harder to articulate that.

After working with the head of the history department at the University of Texas at San Antonio to translate their program outcomes into marketable skills during the spring of 2017, I collected and reviewed syllabi, sample assignments, and several assessment instruments to determine to what extent and where these skills are embedded in a history majors' pathway at the institution. Earlier, considering the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board mandate that "By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills"[4] and its suggestion that programs leverage the LEAP initiative to ensure this is addressed, the chair and I reviewed LEAP's Essential Learning Outcomes – what the LEAP describes as "learning outcomes that both employers and faculty consider essential"[5] – and we selected the following marketable skills as best aligned with the program's outcomes – Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, Problem Solving, Written Communication, Civic Engagement, Intercultural Knowledge, and Foundations

---

[3] All information regarding UTSA's history program was either given to me by faculty or accessed on line through the publicly available UTSA Bluebook.
[4] The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Strategic Plan 2015-2030 – 60X30 TX, p 20.
[5] To review the all outcomes, see American Association of Colleges and Universities LEAP Resource Hub: Essential Learning Outcomes.

and Skills for Lifelong Learning.[6]   While by no means a comprehensive review, this examination did allow me to determine that many of these skills identified by the chair, particularly Inquiry and Analysis, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy, Problem Solving, and Written Communication are strongly entrenched in the program's curriculum, particularly in two required classes for history majors. Other skills such as Intercultural and Knowledge and Competency, Civic Knowledge and Engagement, and Foundations for Lifelong Learning were also noticeable if not as fully described and articulated as these others. Interestingly, I note a pattern of other marketable skills repeatedly emphasized in the material I reviewed – Teamwork, Reading, and Oral Communication - that were not originally identified. The following analysis will illustrate where and how these identified marketable skills are fostered and assessed in the history program at UTSA, suggest ways in which other marketable skills can be more clearly identified and stressed, and offer suggestions as to how the program can also promote the attainment of marketable skills – for majors and others - even if these skills are not necessarily captured in all classes or as prioritized as the others.

Not surprisingly, much of the material I reviewed encouraged Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, Problem Solving, and Written Communication as these LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes constitute the crux of what historians do. As Nancy Quam-Wickham states, we use "historical thinking skills … to pose appropriate historical questions" and use an "inquiry driven approach" to construct knowledge that helps answer these questions.[7] The historians who contributed to Improving Quality in American Higher Education: Learning Outcomes and Assessments for the 21st Century identified the essential concepts of historical

---

[6] Explanations and Rubrics for these outcomes can be referenced at the American Association of Colleges and Universities LEAP Resource Hub: Rubrics.
[7] Nancy Quam-Wickham, "Reimagining the Introductory U.S. History Course," The History Teacher, Volume 49 Number 4 August 2016, p. 533

thinking or the "complex ideas, theoretical understandings, and ways of thinking central to the discipline" as 1) History as and Interpretative Account, 2) The Relationship of the Past and Present, 3) Historical Evidence, 4) Complex Causality, and 5) Significance. The essential competencies or "disciplinary practices and skills necessary to engage effectively in the discipline" are 1) Evaluate Historical Accounts, 2) Interpret Primary Sources, 3) Apply Chronological Reasoning, 4) Contextualize, and 5) Construct Acceptable Historical Accounts.[8]

These disciplinary skills align with the LEAP Essential Outcomes listed in the above paragraph. According to the LEAP VALUE Rubrics, Critical Thinking is a "habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. "It requires the exploration of issues through the selection of evidence that has been analyzed and synthesized for context through which students draw conclusions and explore the limitations, implications, consequences of these conclusions." Inquiry is defined as "a systematic process of exploring issues/objects/works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions/judgments" and Analysis as "the process of breaking down complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding." It requires students to explore a topic through synthesizing existing knowledge using a disciplinary methodology, analyzing evidence, and reaching logical conclusions while recognizing the limitations and implications of these conclusions. Information Literacy is "the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, and evaluate effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand. Problem solving is a "process of designing, evaluating and implementing a strategy to

---

[8] Lendol Calder and Tracey Steffes, "Measuring College Learning in History," in Richard Arum, Josipa Roksa, and Amanda Cook, eds. Improving Quality in American Higher Education: Learning Outcomes and Assessments for the 21st Century (Josey-Boss, 2016), pp. 55-62.

answer open ended question and achieve a desired goal." And Written Communication is "the development and expression of ideas in writing" that includes following disciplinary conventions and "graceful language."

These LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes are accentuated in the two required classes for history majors at UTSA – History 2003 or Historical Methods, a sophomore level course that students are encouraged to take as early as possible and History 4973 or Senior Seminar, a senior level course. The Methods course serves as an entry point to the program for majors, although they likely may have already taken introductory history classes, particularly US History I and II or World Civilizations I and II to fulfill core curriculum requirements. History 4973 is the exit point for graduates from the program. The department also uses the student's research paper produced here to assess whether they have achieved the department's program goals. Instructors in both courses vary in which topic, time, and place they cover, but the primary focus is to introduce and use (in the case of History 2003) historical thinking skills and methodology and to thus serve as a capstone experience (in the case of History 4973) for students to demonstrate their attainment level of these skills. Each course's goals and assessments clearly demonstrate how the disciplinary goals and strategies map to more general marketable skills described in the paragraph above.

The course descriptions and Learning Outcomes seen in two syllabi for History 2003 Methods course were as follows.

This class introduces students to the "theory and methods" of history by examining immigration, migration, and settlement of peoples into the U.S from roughly 1880 to 2000. Students will learn how to frame historical questions, develop their research skills, analyze and evaluate historical	Course description This course is designed to guide history majors in developing and polishing various skills used by historians— including critical reading of both primary and secondary sources, research, and clear analytic writing. While working on these skills, students will engage in a study of early

evidence (including the skill of differentiating between "fake" and "real" information), and improve written and oral communication skills.	Mexico, focusing on two regions. The first region is central Mexico—the location of Mexico City, formerly known as Tenochtitlan, which was the capital of the Aztec Empire and has long been the largest city in the Americas. The other region, the Yucatan peninsula, was (and is) home to various Maya communities. It is also now a center of tourism and offshore oil drilling. Although we will be partly concerned with Iberian processes of conquest, we will give greater emphasis to indigenous processes of survival in both cultural and political spheres. Course materials emphasize writings by native people. All required readings are available in English or English translation. Work will also include three formal papers, occasional quizzes (typically, group quizzes) and short written homework, and oral presentations.
In this course, students will have the opportunity to master the following: 1. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view 2. Develop research skills in locating and interpreting relevant primary and secondary sources 3. Develop skill in expressing oneself in writing (including writing drafts and revising) 4. Build arguments and support them with primary and secondary evidence 5. To encourage students to think historically, understanding the connections between present-day concerns and the past.	While one objective is for students to learn about the history of early Mexico, particularly Nahua and Yucatec Maya cultures, the emphasis of the course is on skills that can be applied in studying any field of history. Thus, objectives are also for students to learn to: 1) Discuss history using the terms primary source, secondary source, and synthetic source 2) Analyze primary sources critically 3) Analyze secondary sources in history critically, identifying their primary sources 4) Read articles and books in history strategically, effectively, and efficiently 5) Locate books and articles in the library and in online databases 6) Work with texts in English translation 7) Interpret citations of non-English-language sources 8) Work with primary and secondary sources to build a critically-informed research paper

	9) Cite sources in a standard and consistent format
	10) Distinguish between empirical and theoretical approaches in research
	11) Organize, write, and format a research paper
	12) Offer constructive critique of a peer-authored paper
	13) Revise their analysis and writing in response to peer and instructor suggestions
	14) Develop oral presentations based on historical research
	15) Write even more elegantly than when they started the course

Each section asks students to collect information (both primary and secondary), analyze and evaluate it using historical methods to pursue open ended questions formulated by the student. They also require them to and reach logical conclusions, and to communicate these arguments effectively using the writing standards of the discipline including proper citation.

I reviewed assessments associated with the course description and objectives in the right-hand column above that fostered these skills through a series of well-designed exercises that introduce and reinforce Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, Problem Solving and Written Communication from a disciplinary perspective. The objectives for the final 3-5 research paper assigned in this section are

1. Students will be able to develop an analytical research question that asks "why" something (historical event or situation) happened in the way that it did.
2. Students will be able to write a clear thesis statement that answers the "why" question, using some variation of "I argue _____ because_____.
3. Students will be able to collect and present evidence to support their thesis statement, as well as look at alternative interpretations of the evidence. (These three steps are the fundamentals of historical analysis)
4. Students will be able to use primary and secondary sources to analyze a topic of historical significance.

5. Students will be able to assess the value of evidence by considering the attitudes of sources, the political motives of sources, etc.
6. Students will be able to write in a clear and cogent manner--free of grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and wordiness.

In order to build that product, students begin by producing a research proposal that "has three main components: the research question, a tentative thesis (statement that ANSWERS the research question), and description of some of the main issues the paper will address in proving the thesis. Additionally, the proposal should discuss some of the historical context for the research question and explain the significance of the topic." The proposal is evaluated "upon how well the writer states the paper's main research question, provides the historical context for that question, and then offers a preliminary answer (or thesis) to the question. The proposal then sketches out some of the main points that will be used to prove your thesis. The final paragraph is to convince the reader that they need to read the whole paper—why does this topic matter?" Students are encouraged to focus on the following questions:

What is your topic and how is it defined (thematically, chronologically)?

What is/are your principal research question(s) and why?

Why is your project interesting and important?

What preliminary conclusions have you formed?

What do you expect your reader to learn from your project?

Students then develop an annotated bibliography "to help you evaluate the relevance and quality of the sources you are going to use for your research paper. It should help researchers answer the question: "What would be the most relevant, most useful, and/or most up-to-date sources for this topic?" These tasks all go the heart of the LEAP Essential outcomes of Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, Problem Solving, and Written Communication. Students are challenged to develop open-ended questions and design strategies to answer them,

identify and locate information and evaluate it effectively considering the context in which it was produced, to analyze this evidence before accepting a conclusion, to explore a topic using disciplinary methodology, and to reach logical conclusions, and to convey in written communication.

The History 4973 Senior Seminar builds on these skills introduced in the History 2003. Like the methods course, instructors leading the senior seminar teach a variety of historical topics and eras. (The following analysis is based on three sections "Women and the Military," "Black Life in San Antonio," and "World War I or the Great War.") But this course requires the student to produce a much more comprehensive 20-30-page research paper in the end. And this work is assessed by a common rubric that is used to determine the student's attainment of the history program's outcomes. (To review this rubric, see the Appendix.) Every instructor for the Senior Seminar crafts their overall learning outcomes, but the following were particularly illustrative of the higher expectations from the methods course.

> Specific Course Objectives Skills that students learn from writing their research paper should help them in years to come. After this course, students should be able to
>
> - write short analytical essays that assess various points of view
> - write long, in-depth papers that require the use of complex (and sometimes contradictory) evidence
> - formulate historical questions and establish criteria for analysis of appropriate historical documents
> - distinguish between essential and incidental information
> - establish criteria for determining whether evidence is sufficient in quality and quantity to justify a particular conclusion
> - locate and organize information from a wide range of primary and secondary sources
> - identify principal factors affecting reliability of evidence
> - position historical questions and arguments within existing historiography

These outcomes suggest deeper expectations in terms of Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, and Problem Solving than the methods course, particularly the call for "the use of complex (and sometimes contradictory evidence)," establishing "criteria for determining whether evidence is sufficient in quality and quantity to justify" conclusions, identifying "principal factors affecting reliability of evidence," and positioning "historical questions and arguments within existing historiography."

Like the methods course, each instructor in the Senior Capstone course creates specific exercises designed to help students eventually produce this final product. Throughout the semester, students complete a variety of activities where they analyze *and* evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine how these works "speak to your research topic?" Another task has students produce research proposals that "include the following information:"

> Working title
> Brief description
> Summary of Its Significance
> Discussion of Primary Sources and Secondary Sources
> Goals of Project
> Greatest Challenges with Project.

At multiple points in the courses, students submit progress reports that could be in the form of the first several pages of their final paper or some form of annotated bibliography or workbook through which they keep a journal on their exploration of sources they reviewed to explore their question.

While both the Methods and the Senior Seminar courses provide a framework that fosters the habits of mind and skills defined in the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes of Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, Problem Solving, and Written Communication (key marketable skills) identified in conversation with the program Chair, in

reviewing the materials associated with the courses, I determined that other marketable skills identified with the program - Civic Engagement, Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, and Foundations for Lifelong Learning - were more implicitly embedded and perhaps not to the full extent of the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes definitions and scope. Department faculty might want to further explore how to make them more explicit in their course outcomes and use the LEAP value rubrics *as guidelines* in doing so. In other words, can they craft outcomes for courses and assessments using their disciplinary language and framework but with stronger linkage to these other identified marketable skills?

The lack of clarity when embedding and assessing Civic Engagement is not surprising and illuminates the difficulty a discipline may have in articulating how their ways of thinking and methodology contribute to broader learning outcomes. For example, LEAP and the American Historical Association's Tuning Project address the issue of Civic Engagement differently. LEAP defines Civic Engagement as "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.' In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community." The expectation here is that students will demonstrate their knowledge and skills through some activity beyond the classroom. While I did note that there was an upper division course at UTSA – History 3253 – that had service learning component, one could argue that it would difficult to combine such a requirement in the Methods or Senior Capstone course. However, the AHA's Tuning Project Disciplinary Core statement from 2016 offers perhaps another gateway for incorporating some of

the components of LEAP's Civic Engagement into these courses. The AHA asserts that "History

majors can … use historical perspective as central to active citizenship" by applying **"**historical

knowledge and historical thinking to contemporary issues" and/or "developing positions that

reflect deliberation, cooperation, and diverse perspectives."[9]   For example, one of the History

2003 course outcomes above states that the class will "encourage students to think historically,

understanding the connections between present-day concerns and the past." The instructor might

add the phrase "to encourage active citizenship" to this outcome to further elaborate how this

skill encourages Civic Engagement. Another thought is that the Senior Seminar courses do link

to Civic Engagement in that they all encourage students to develop "positions that reflect

deliberation, cooperation, and diverse perspectives." Students are expected to present their

findings to their classmates and to provide constructive feedback to each other. One instructor

even encourages students to share their research "with the larger community via blogs,

publications, and conference presentations." These examples demonstrate that Civic

Engagement is encouraged in these classes, but perhaps could be more clearly articulated as to

how by using the AHA Tuning Disciplinary Core document along with the LEAP framework.

Similarly, many aspects of the LEAP Essential Outcome of Intercultural Knowledge and

Competence are strongly evident in the courses described above, but – again - perhaps not as

clearly articulated or developed as others. The LEAP definition for Intercultural Knowledge and

Competence is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support

effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts." This includes, but is not

limited to, "cultural self-awareness" whereby students can demonstrate "sophisticated

understanding … of another culture in relations to its history, values, politics, communications

---

[9] See "AHA History Tuning Project: 2016 History Discipline Core**."**

styles, economy, or beliefs and practices" while exhibiting "openness and curiosity," towards other cultures and "empathy" where a student "interprets experience from … more than one world view …." Empathy is a skill specifically mentioned in the AHA Tuning Project's Disciplinary Core Statement when it comes to developing historical methods. History students, it states, "develop empathy towards people in the context of their distinctive historical moments."[10] While LEAP defines empathy as a way of gaining great Intercultural Knowledge and Competency, the AHA statement stresses the importance of using empathy to contextualize people – their actions, beliefs, and decisions - in the past in a variety of culture settings as a means of developing historical methods. Nevertheless, the goal is the same. To understand a cultural construction beyond a student's present contemporary outlook in the past or present requires the ability to empathize. Several of the courses explored above specifically deal with culture outside the United States or with perhaps different cultural frameworks from the dominant culture in US history. The course description for Historical Methods course focused on early Mexican history clearly requires students to demonstrate "a sophisticated understanding … of another culture" particularly indigenous people in early Mexico. Some of the course objectives could thus perhaps better emphasize how the historical skills and perspectives practiced in these classes promote Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, particularly the skill of empathy.

I also saw a strong correlation to the marketable skill of Foundations for Lifelong Learning when comparing the Methods and Senior Seminar courses. LEAP defines this as "all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. An endeavor of higher education is to prepare students to be

---

[10] Ibid.

this type of learner by developing specific dispositions and skills … while in school." The habits of mind of a lifelong learner are defined as "curiosity, initiative, independence, transfer, and reflection." It might be possible to assess student's performance not only to what extent they demonstrate strong historical thinking skills and methodological practices in the Senior Seminar, but also how they apply prior learning from the Methods class or other history classes in the Senior Seminar as well as how their mastery of these skills improves after completing the senior seminar. Instructors in the Senior Seminar might ask students to reflect upon prior learning of a low stakes assessment task such as a short paper or survey at the beginning and end of the semester. Conversely, the department could utilize e-portfolios of student works to assess student acquisition and comprehension of historical skills and methodology improves over time. Many faculty teaching these courses already ask students to reflect on what they learned during the semester. One Senior Seminar instructor asks students to present to the class what their greatest challenge was in their research project. Another asks them to keep an evolving "Reading and Research" Journal to be periodically reviewed by the instructor. These activities encourage habits and dispositions of lifelong learners. Ideally the program might think of ways to extend them across the student's journey to a degree, not just a class.

This leads to another issue regarding the development of historical thinking skills and methods (and marketable skills) in the UTSA History program – the role of other upper division courses. These consist of classes covering a range of time and place offered at the 3000 and 4000 levels. History majors are required to take at least six of these classes, with a minimum of one focused on US history, another on European history, and one focused on another region. In other words, a history major can design a unique pathway between the methods and senior seminar courses. These upper division classes are not limited to history majors; thus they

provide an opportunity to translate the relevance of historical thinking and methodology to a wider audience. For majors, when reviewing the materials from these classes I saw several exemplars of instructors continuing to foster historical thinking skills introduced in the Methods course. These courses (like the Methods Course and Senior Seminars) were strongest in promoting Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, and Written Communication essential to marketable skills. However, I note many innovative ways, different from the two required classes, in which instructors promoted historical thinking and key marketable skills that the program might want to capture more fully or where at least the instructors might try to articulate more strongly the types of marketable skills they are cultivating, to both history majors and other students.

The upper division courses I reviewed continue to promote historical thinking skills and methodology introduced in the Methods course. For example, the outcomes for History 3433 – US History from 1877 to 1914 are to:

> 1. develop an understanding of and appreciation for American history as it moves toward modernity.
>
> 2. learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, types of evidence, and points of view.
>> a. learn the difference between a primary and a secondary source.
>> b. manage information from a variety of sources and use the information in effective historical arguments.
>> c. navigate through source bias and learn to identify the difference between facts, opinions, and inferences.
>
> 3. understand how to discern and critique historical argument -
>
> 4. understand how to construct a sound historical argument

The last three outcomes continue to develop the historical thinking skills and methodology introduced in the Methods course and promote the marketable skills of Critical Thinking, Inquiry

and Analysis, Information Literacy, Problem Solving, and Written Communication. To promote

and assess these ways of thinking, students are asked to complete a "mini-research paper" which

includes one secondary source and six primary sources that they collect, analyze, and evaluate.

The goal is to use the primary sources to "confirm or refute" the argument identified in the

secondary source.

As with the two required classes, note that many of upper division courses also linked

strongly towards key marketable skills such as Civic Engagement, Intercultural Knowledge and

Competence and Foundations for Lifelong Learning. However, these were not as articulated or

obvious upon first glance. For example, the objectives for History 3253 – The United States

Since 1945 - are listed as

- • To help students gain a deeper understanding of this part of American history.
- • To enable students to improve their ability to analyze and critically evaluate ideas and arguments.
- • To introduce students to the variety of sources historians use to learn about the past.
- • To encourage students to think historically; to encourage them to analyze and critically evaluate current events as part of a larger process of historical change and to recognize that historians' interpretation of the past often is shaped by present-day concerns.
- • To help students improve their writing and analytical skills, both of which can be applied to other areas of study.

The last two objectives link to many aspects of the marketable skills of Civic Engagement,

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, and Foundations for Lifelong Learning and the

instructor's assessments provide a nice framework for introducing/reinforcing them. One of the

assessments for the course has students browse the front section of the New York Times on their

birthday between 1940 and 2000, then to select two articles from two different years,

contextualize them, and explain their historical significance. The instructor might more

explicitly ask the students to examine how the issues examined relate to the present to further

Civic Engagement or "applying historical knowledge and thinking to contemporary issues" as

the AHA Disciplinary Core defines "historical perspective as central to active citizenship."

Another assessment has students craft and conduct an oral history of someone old enough to

remember certain events or issues that unfolded in the 1970s and 1980s. The assignment asks

them to determine "how did the interviewee experience the event that is the subject of the

interview? For example, what was their experience? How do they remember the event?" In

asking the question how the interviewee experienced the event, this assignment is particularly

adept at helping a student develop and practice empathy, an important aspect of Intercultural

Knowledge and Competence as well as historical methodology. Also, it is likely that a student

needs to consider the interviewee's cultural framework when working to understand factors that

determine how that person experienced the event and how perhaps that person's cultural

framework is different from their own. Finally, the instructor's course outcome of improving

students' writing and analytical skills that they can then apply to other areas of studies is a prime

example of encouraging students to think about Lifelong Learning beyond their college career.

But are there ways for the program to capture how that outcome can be assessed? For instance,

how might a history major in that course use these skills in another history class or in the senior

seminar? How might another major apply the learning from this class to another field?

Upper division courses focused on regions outside the West are also prime opportunities

for the program to promote Intercultural Knowledge and Competency. The course "Revolutions

in Latin America" provides many good examples of how this competency can be assessed and

align with the goals of this marketable skill when not only exploring the past, but also exploring

the past in what is probably for many students radically different cultural framework than their

own.   Multiple assessments I reviewed promote historical thinking and methodology while at the same time explicitly encouraging students to be empathetic – to be cognizant of other people's frameworks and attitudes regarding social justice - when exploring the impact and goals of revolutionary movements on various Latin American societies. "Document Paper #1' ask students to review assigned primary sources to formulate and answer a question regarding the goals of the Guatemalan Revolution and the successes and failure and overall impact of this movement on the social, economic and political structure of that country. Although the instructor's objectives for the assignment – developing a research question, gathering information to answer that question, evaluating those sources – mirrors the methodology introduced in the methods course, they expressly state that students will be evaluated on how well they are "able to assess the value of evidence" considering the attitudes and political motives of the sources. Students are also expected to "explore some element of social relationships or power relationships in Latin American society." A similar assignment on the Cuban Revolution ask students to consider "how ordinary people experienced" that revolution and suggest that students consider developing questions that can explore the impact of the revolution on class relationships, political organization, and gender roles.   The attitudes, motives, and relationships observed in the primary sources most likely provoke a wide range of reactions from students and they will have to reflect on their own values and assumptions to effectively evaluate them.   Thus, these assessments constitute exemplars of how historical thinking and methodology, especially when dealing with sources reflecting another or unfamiliar culture. They encourage, in turn, and improve students Intercultural Knowledge and Competency – particularly the ability to "adapt empathically and flexibly to unfamiliar ways of being" as expressed in the LEAP framing language.

In the upper division course "Latin America since Independence" the same instructor also provides good examples of how historical courses can address the issue of Problem Solving in formats other than writing research papers. During the semester, the instructor creates real world scenarios for teams of students to address using historical thinking skills and methods. A survey conducted in 2014 of 400 employers by the Hart Research firm for the American Association of Colleges and Universities found that 80% of these employers valued graduates who could apply college learning to real-world settings, but only 23% believed that recent graduates are well prepared to do so.[11] To apply historical thinking and methodology to real world settings, students in this course are asked to use evidence found in their reading to address the following scenarios. In one, students are assigned the role of Mellon Foundation researchers. Their task is to use evidence from a novel published in nineteenth century Peru to "explain the long history of indigenous inequality in Peru" so that the organization can "decide about possibilities to invest in rural development in Peru." In another, students are assigned roles as members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Guatemala that is reviewing a case about "the alleged massacre of two villages in the Costa Cuca region." Groups of students are required to create and present a position to another group of students who serve as judges. These judges ask the other groups various questions based on their view of how best to rebuild the nation and will ultimately assign responsibility for the massacres. These scenario exercises demonstrate how historians' methods and ways of thinking can be applied to the marketable skill of Problem Solving using real world scenarios. Indeed, they are excellent examples of how instructors can promote the relevance of historical inquiry beyond a traditional academic setting and encourage history majors to think about a variety of ways they can use the tools, strategies, and knowledge they acquire in

---

[11] See Association of American Colleges and Universities LEAP Resource Hub - Presentation: Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success.

completing a degree to careers beyond academia. They alternatively illustrate to other majors

the relevance of historical inquiry to Problem Solving.

These exercises illuminate other marketable skills that history majors at UTSA acquire or

perhaps can acquire that not necessarily captured in the program's stated outcomes – especially

Teamwork.   In each scenario described above, students work in teams. The 2014 Hart survey

revealed that employers value the ability to work in teams more than any other marketable skill

except oral communication.[12] Several other materials I reviewed beside these also included

some form of teamwork. One of the Methods courses and an Introduction to South Asia

sophomore level course include "group quizzes. An upper division course in Women/Gender in

Latin American History included group assignments. And perhaps most thorough, one freshman

level US History: Civil War to the Present course has students work in groups to analyze and

source primary documents. More importantly, each student in the group has a chance to assess

their teammates' contributions to the process of doing so and part of the student's final grade is

assessed based on these contributions. According to LEAP's definition, Teamwork is not about

the final product a team produces, but rather "behaviors under the control of individual team

members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the

quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions."   While Teamwork is not

something the American Historical Association's Tuning Project or UTSA listed as something a

history major can do, many history majors graduating from UTSA have had or will have a course

or courses that embed this important marketable skill into their curriculum.

---

[12] Ibid.

Similarly, Oral Communication is a fundamental aspect of many of the courses I reviewed, particularly the Methods and Senior Seminar Courses. According to the Hart Survey mentioned above, 85% of employers (the most) listed good Oral Communication skills as essential skills. In many of the senior seminars, oral presentations comprise an important part of the students work and help students hone their ability to create, explain, and justify an argument. One of the Methods courses reviewed requires an oral presentation that is nearly as important to the student's final grade as the research paper and is evaluated with a rubric closely aligned with the LEAP Value Rubric suggestions for Oral Communication. I also observed Oral Communication requirements in many upper division syllabi. Perhaps the program could consider including this skill in their outcomes, or minimally the department might want to find ways of explaining to students how valuable this skill is and to seek out classes through which they have opportunities to develop such skills.

Finally, although it is implicit, the history program at UTSA's curriculum strongly aligns to the LEAP Essential Outcome "Reading." Texts, according to LEAP must be "located, approached, decoded, comprehended, analyzed, interpreted, and discussed, especially complex academic texts used in college and university classrooms for purposes of learning." History graduates are not only thoughtful writers, they are excellent readers required to analyze and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary sources for evidence, for perspective, for validity, and for purpose. As the instructor of the upper division Women/Gender in Latin American History states in their syllabus "At its heart this is a reading course. The emphasis is on reading and discussion of assigned readings. If you do not enjoy reading, or if you are not prepared to spend a substantial amount of time reading outside the classroom, then this course is not for you." Indeed, from my discussion with several instructors, motivating students to read, not just

how to approach their reading as an historian, is a constant challenge, particularly at the early stages of the major. Interestingly, an upper division course on "European Cultural History" includes a service learning project whereby students work with the San Antonio Youth Literacy program to help struggling children learn to read. Thus, not only does this course provide students with the opportunity to develop and improve marketable skills most obviously connected to the major (Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, etc.) but they also get the chance to practice Civic Engagement and through a project that promotes reading!

These examples demonstrate that the History Program at UTSA strongly promotes multiple marketable skills, whether they are clearly identified with the program or are easily mapped to the department's program outcomes or not, and should consider strategies for communicating to students the variety of ways that their experiences in the program – both history majors and others - enhance their college experience, particularly as it relates to careers after graduating. When considering how to translate a college major into a job, Jim Tankersly, Economic Policy Correspondent for the Washington Post, argues "You might not know which jobs will be plentiful when you graduate, but economists have decent predictions for which types of jobs will be — and which skills you'll need to land them." Those types of jobs, he elaborates, according to economist Frank Levy of MIT and Richard Murnane of Harvard, require "solving unstructured problems and working with new information." College graduates need to "read critically; to sort the important information from the junk quickly; to try new approaches until you find a solution. Murnane says students need to learn to work in teams and "to write very, very well." Levy says students should select classes that build those skills, with strict evaluation: 'Look for courses where there's an emphasis on project work that is taken seriously and graded

seriously.'"[13] Clearly, the history program at UTSA address these needs, for history majors and others taking history classes, but will students know how to articulate these attributes they have gained from their experience to future employers?

Considering the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Strategic Plan, 60x30TX](), regarding marketable skills, the program might want to incorporate the LEAP Essential Outcomes initiative, particularly their defining language and rubrics, to communicate the value of history classes and the major to students at UTSA and a wider audience.   Communicating to students how the history program promotes the acquisition of marketable skills does not require structural changes to the program. Instructors might think more about how the discipline's ways of thinking and methodology promote key cognitive abilities that can help students in all facets of life after graduating (including the pursuit of successful and rewarding careers.) This could come in the form of working with advisors and career counselors (especially when dealing with history majors) to explain which and how key LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes are embedded in the program and its classes and how they enhance a student's profile to future employees. Instructors might consider ways of further articulating their course and/or assessment outcomes in ways that address these concerns for all their students. They might employ the language of the LEAP Value rubrics, particularly those for Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, and Information Literacy to help translate what they are doing in their classes to a wider audience on their campus. Instructors also might adapt and adjust the language and criteria of LEAP Value Rubrics to help them assess their student's work, particularly in areas they might be unfamiliar with such as Teamwork or Oral Communication.   And, as many of the instructor's material I reviewed demonstrated, they might consider incorporating strategies to enhance a student's

---

[13] [Jim Tankersley, "Starting college? Here's how to graduate with a job," Washington Post Magazine, August 9, 2013.]()

23

marketable skills in areas not traditionally associated with the discipline such as oral communication and teamwork. I also emphasize that students should be encouraged to seek opportunities to enhance these skills beyond the classroom. History majors, or students passionate about historical inquiry, have numerous opportunities to practice Civic Engagement, Teamwork, Problem Solving, and a variety of communication formats in organizing, participating in, and promoting campus activities surrounding initiatives such as Black, Women's, and LGBT History Months, for example. The goal should be that when students graduate as history majors or successfully complete history courses, they understand how these experiences give them a set of knowledge and skills that they can then communicate to a broader audience beyond the historical profession.   In short, they need to be able to communicate that they are prepared to apply their learning in a variety of settings, including their careers.

When I began this project, I was keenly interested in gaining insight as to what I could provide to students as a community college instructor teaching core curriculum classes in U.S. and World history to better prepare history majors for upper division course work when transferring to senior colleges. What I learned was that in my discussion with instructors at UTSA and from reviewing their curriculum was that I should continue to strengthen my focus on making history classes relevant for all my students. Because the state requirement that all graduates with an Associate or Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Arts in Teaching and all Bachelor degree successfully complete six hours in US history as part of their core curriculum (as in the case at all public institutions of higher education around the state) most students there are not history majors. At my institution, World History is a choice they can pick to fulfill six hours of Language Culture and Philosophy requirements. I tend to see more students majoring in, interested in majoring in, or simply interested in history in these classes. Overall, it is very

likely that most of my students consider the course they take with me their last history course - as it may well be. (Increasingly, students enter college with their history requirements completed through dual enrollment programs.) In short, I very well may have one "last shot," as a colleague of mine describes it, to help my students connect the content and skills they explore in my classes to the rest of their education and career goals. And perhaps they might see that connection and seek out other chances to enroll in history classes, or in some cases, if they decide to explore majoring in history I can be there to help in making that decision. And if they do, explain to them what to expect when they transfer to a senior institution and take upper division courses in this discipline and to evaluate how the major makes them marketable in future career pursuits, particularly if they are unsure they want to pursue a career with a teaching emphasis.

At my institution, our course outcomes reflect, in part, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual Learning Outcomes Project Recommendations. In all lower division courses, we expect students to be able, upon successfully completing the course, "create an argument through the use of historical evidence, analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources, and analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on this period of United States/World, Texas, etc. history. Mapping to Core Curriculum Components for American History and Language Culture and Philosophy, we also expect them to "appraise the choices, actions, and consequences of ethical decision making in a historical context and "analyze the influence of civic engagement on U.S. History" or "distinguish specific regions of the world from each other in the past and describe patterns of interaction over time" in world history.

These outcomes, with their emphasis on creating arguments (written communication), analyzing and using evidence, reading primary and secondary sources (evaluating, analyzing, and contextualizing other's arguments), analyzing effects of historical processes, and examine cultural regions both familiar and unfamiliar in the past and present, encourage students to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and information analysts – skills that will serve them well as they continue their college learning and beyond and whether they go on to pursue more historical study in college or not. They also encourage students to think about how the past shapes the present and to think empathetically about people in the past and present. They help students develop answers to open ended questions. They promote the many aspects of the LEAP essential outcomes of Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, and Problem Solving Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, Civic Engagement, and Foundations for Lifelong Learning and various aspects of. They thus are useful for all students.

In conclusion, while I may not be able to offer the equivalent of a methods course for history majors at my college, I can work to help all my students see the value of historical thinking skills and methodology that we explore to their future as well as mentor history majors both inside and outside the classroom. For any of those interested in history and the way historians explore the past and use the past to enlighten the present, especially history majors, I can be involved in extracurricular and co-curricular activities such as field trips to local museums and historical landmarks where we can work to contextualize the artifacts we explore, where we can gain empathy for people in the past, and where me might identify patterns of change, continuity, and interaction over time in examining primary source artifacts. I can also work with these students on projects outside the classroom to promote historical awareness. For example, last fall I asked for student volunteers – in my classes, among our history majors, and in the

Honors program, I work with - to create an exhibit for the community that promoted LGBT History awareness. We worked as a team to create a "museum exhibit" on the history of the LGBT Civil Rights movement in the U.S. since 1945. In doing so we read secondary sources, located and identified rich primary sources (both written and visual), put together a poster session, and orally communicated the story we wanted to tell those who attended. We also developed questions for and administered oral histories of several LGBT senior citizens in which we had to use empathy in understanding that their experiences were very different from our own. We also used Critical Thinking, Inquiry and Analysis, Information Literacy, and Oral and Written (some) Communication while practicing Civic Engagement that improved our Intercultural Knowledge and Competence and ability to work in teams and encouraged lifelong learning. Not only did we prepare ourselves for the future, we had fun.

Appendix

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
RESULTS REPORT
Semester: *Academic Year 2015-2016*

Degree Program:	History (BA)	**Dept. Coordinator:**	Patrick J. Kelly
Departmet:	History	**E-mail:**	Patrick.kelly@utsa.edu
College:	College of Liberal and Fine Arts	**Phone:**	458-4333

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 12 out of 13 (92%). Exceeds our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: 33 out of 41 (80%)** **Results: 31 out of 33 (93%). Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 11 out of 13 (84%). Exceeds our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: Sample Size: 33 out of 41 (80%)** **Results: 28 out of 33 (84%). Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 9 out of 13 (70%). Meets our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: 33 out of 41 (80%)** **Results: 26 out of 33 (78%). Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 11 out of 13 (84%). Exceeds our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: 33 out of 41(%)** **Results: 31 out of 33 (93%). Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 11 out of 13 (84%). Exceeds our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: 33 out of 41 (80%)** **Results: 27 out of 33 (81%). Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 11 out of 13 (84%). Exceeds our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: 33 out of 41 (80%)** **Results: 26 out of 33 (78%). Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 10 out of 13 (87%). Exceeds our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: 33 out of 41 (80%)** **Results: 27 out of 33 (81%). Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

Student Learning Outcome Name	Student Learning Outcome		Assessment Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sem	Results
					Fall	**Sample Size: 13 out of 35 (37%)** **Results: 13 out of 13 (100%). Exceeds our desired 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement
					Spring	**Sample Size: 33 out of 41 (80%)** **Results: 28 out of 33 (84%) Meets the 70% criteria.** **Finding:** ☒ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement