

CLEP & DSST Faculty Conference – November 4, 2016

NOTES: HISTORY Breakout Session

Attending this session: Wayne Artis, GEC council rep; Pikes Peak CC; Aaron Haberman, UNC; Karen Kaemmerling, CMC; Chris Holcom, CCD; Bill Ashcraft, CCD; Doug O’Roark, CMU; Todd Laugen, MSU Denver who took notes.

I. Context info: Wayne noted state legislature wants to see this happen. Some background discussed.

A. Could we require an essay within History CLEP or DSST? Could colleges require an additional writing assignment before assigning full credit. Higher institutions in CO could require an additional essay exam.

B. Discussed: Who’s the target audience for CLEP?

II. Cut-scores?

A. DSST course problem. GT-Pathways does have a Civil War course at community college; At UNC, these are UD courses. Better to just grant lower-division credit? CCHE expectation here: passing this course would mean fulfilling GS requirement in History;

B. UD course credit for Civil War or Vietnam History? UNC and MSU Denver need to change this policy. Check with Bernice here. Then change Table data with Ian here. Move to end credit for UD credit for Civil War and Vietnam; these aren’t GS courses anyway. Check with Transfer Office too.

C. CLEP? We won’t really have any influence over cut score if ACE has established “50” as the cut score.

III. GT-Pathways competencies and content criteria neglected

A. concern about lack of skills assessed with CLEP. Just basic demonstration of content knowledge; could recommend an essay component with CLEP?

B. Don’t all GT Pathways History courses require writing? Shouldn’t we be consistent here.?

C. We don’t have GT pathways competencies available to compare to CLEP

1. SLOs for GT-HI1: formulate arguments; incorporate evidence

2. SLOs information literacy: evaluate info critically; use info to accomplish a specific goal; require in-class writing

3. AP exam approaches these competencies much more clearly with writing AND with multiple choice questions grouped around primary sources.

D. If we accept these tests without writing requirement for GT pathways credit, don't we undermine the principles of General Education and GT-Pathways competencies?

E. Recommend: student brings in a CLEP or DSST test and then must pass a written exam targeting GT-pathways competencies for History.

IV. Problem with rigor in CLEP?

V. Should we only give elective credit within the major/minor?

VI. Transfer credit problem? If we required CLEP + written assignment, then students could transfer both. Credit won't appear on transcript until student has completed the writing assignment. But this could pose problems for the student who transfers to another institution.

Additional comments from MSUD:

Hi Bernice and Jim,

I wanted to report on today's Faculty Conference regarding CLEP and DSST credits. I represented the History Department and reviewed 2 CLEP tests for History and 2 DSST tests for History.

The unanimous consensus of the History faculty team at the conference was that NONE of these tests align with the recently adopted GT Pathways content or competencies for GT-HI1. I was part of the team last November that drafted those competencies, and they reflect an emphasis on the skills needed to do History and write critically. They stressed interpretation of primary and secondary sources and creating an argument based on evidence. They will help prepare our students for college and future career success. These GT Pathways competencies thus align with our General Studies Historical SLOs in important ways.

Yet the CLEP and DSST exams are only multiple choice assessments of basic content. They don't meaningfully address these interpretive skills. This means at that as currently designed:

1. CLEP Exams on US History I and US History II do NOT sufficiently address GT Pathways competencies or MSU Denver General Studies SLOs for HIS 1210 or HIS 1220 at MSU Denver.

2. DSST Exam on the Vietnam War and the Exam on the Civil War similarly do NOT address GT Pathways competencies. What's more these tests do NOT meet the SLO requirements for HIS

3520 Civil War and Reconstruction or HIS 3790 The Vietnam War at MSU Denver. Those 3000-level courses typically include expectations for students to practice doing some historical research, which obviously was not included on the DSST exam. What's more here, neither of these courses counts as a General Studies course at MSU Denver anyway.

3. Thus our History team felt that there was NO GT Pathways equivalent course for these different exams. We give course credit for AP exam scores of 3 or higher. This is much more rigorous standard for awarding students college credit. If only the CLEP or DSST exams approached the AP exam level of rigor!

One possibility we recommended to Ian was that universities and community colleges could additionally require successful CLEP students to complete a written interpretive assignment that addresses that content area. So a student with a CLEP US History I score of 50 could then complete a written interpretive assignment designed by the MSU Denver History Department BEFORE receiving credit for HIS 1210. This would ensure that CLEP exam takers meet the minimum expectations for GT-HI1 course and our own General Studies Historical expectations.

Please let me know if I should clarify any of this information. Thanks.

Todd

R. Todd Laugen, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of History
Metropolitan State University of Denver