

# Dalton State College

## Detailed Assessment Report

**2015-2016 POLS 1101**

*As of: 5/05/2016 10:49 AM EDT*

(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked *One-Time, Recurring, No Request*.)

### Course Description

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Surveys the structure and operation of the American federal government, the state government of Georgia, and American local government. (F,S,M)

Prerequisites: READ 0098, unless exempt

### Program Outcomes

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**PO 1: Read critically**

Graduates of associate's degree programs in the School of Liberal Arts will read critically.

**PO 2: Think critically**

Graduates of associate's degree programs in the School of Liberal Arts will think critically.

**PO 3: Demonstrate competence in written communication.**

Graduates of associate's degree programs in the School of Liberal Arts will demonstrate competence in written communication.

**PO 4: Competence in the Social Sciences**

Graduates of associate's programs will be competent in the social sciences.

### Outcomes, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

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**Outc. 1: Articulate constitutional principles and processes fundamental to democracy.**

Students will articulate the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation.

**Relevant Associations:**

**Standard Associations**

**SACSCOC 2012\* Principles of Accreditation**

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. (College-level competencies)

**General Education Goals Associations**

6.4 Students will articulate the constitutional principles and governmental processes fundamental to American democracy and political participation.

7.2 Students will articulate the constitutional principles and governmental processes fundamental to American democracy and political participation.

9.3 Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation.

**Institutional Mission Associations**

2 Dalton State offers targeted bachelor's degrees, a full range of associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities.

**Strategic Plan Associations**

**Dalton State College**

3.1 Goal I: Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students' 21st century educational needs.

**Related Measures**

**M 2: Multiple Choice Examination (Hips/Ellinger)**

Matthew Hips (Spring 2013)

Students will take a multiple choice examination covering the U.S. Constitution, Federalism and the fundamental principles of democracy (Chapters 1, 2 & 3). The entire examination (50 multiple-choice questions) covers these three topical areas (each topical area is specific to a chapter).

Ken Ellinger (Spring 2014)

Students will take a multiple choice examination covering the U.S. Constitution and the fundamental principles of democracy (Chapters 1 & 2). The entire examination (75 multiple-choice questions) covers these two topical areas (each topical area is specific to a chapter).

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Connected Documents**

[Examination #1](#)

[Examination #1 \(Fall 13\)](#)

**Target:**

A minimum of 75% of students will score an 80% or higher on their first multiple-choice examination covering the fundamental principles of democracy, the U.S. Constitution, and Federalism.

**Connected Document**

[Ken Ellinger Test 1 \(Fall 2014\)](#)

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Improve Scaffolding for the First Examination**

*Established in Cycle:* 2012-2013

The findings on this particular action item are slightly misleading. If you dropped the grade requirement from 80% to 75% the ...

**Improve Student Understanding of Different Examination Question Types**

*Established in Cycle:* 2013-2014

In looking back at the lack of success on student examinations this semester, I think one of the main causes of this lack of suc...

**Reduce multiple choice questions and add two critical thinking essays**

*Established in Cycle:* 2013-2014

Ken Ellinger (Spring 2014) Because students struggled with the critical thinking aspects of the exams, I shall reduce the nu...

**M 5: Graded Examinations (Veve)**

(Fall 2014/Veve) Students will take four graded tests throughout the semester composed of multiple-choice, true-false, or matching questions. Some of the questions will assess their understanding of the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation. Grading Criteria: For the graded tests, students will be scored based on whether they correctly answer the questions.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

(Fall 2014/Veve) A minimum of 70% of students will earn a 70% or better on the exam questions that pertain to the understanding of the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation.

**M 8: Examination on Constitutional Principles (Higgs,Fall 2015)**

Students will complete an examination dealing with the fundamental principles of American government and how those principles influence our system of democracy.

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

**Target:**

A minimum of 70% of students will achieve a 70% or better on their first examination.

**Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

In POLS 1101, a traditional class taught on the Dalton State main campus during the Fall Semester 2015, 87% of students who completed the course (81 of 93) earned a 70% or better on their first examination that focused on the governmental processes that are fundamental to their understanding of democracy, whereas 13% (12 of 93) did not. Students did exceptionally well on this examination with the grade distribution skewing significantly higher than it does for my other classes. This finding is surprising given the size of this class (N=93). In fact, when compared to my "normal" section of the success rate for students was significantly higher in the large section when compared to the smaller, more traditional section. [Note: In my "Traditional" section of POLS 1101, the success rate for students on Examination 1 was approximately 60% (of students who would have met the target, N=33), in the large section the success rate was 87%]. Even more telling is the breakdown of the grade distribution across the two sections:

	Large Section		Traditional Section	
	#	%	#	%
A'S	47	51	8	24
B'S	25	27	6	18
C'S	9	10	7	22
D'S	6	6	4	12
F'S	6	6	8	24

As you can see, the percentage of students who achieved high levels of success is significantly higher in the large section of POLS 1001. I believe that this grade distribution illustrates that there is no detriment to students in a large section of American Government in achieving success in their ability to exhibit understanding of the governmental processes that are fundamental to American democracy. I believe that students were successful for several reasons. The first reason for their success was we spent time in class reviewing the types of questions that would appear on an examination during the semester. Students were exposed to application, identification and explanation type questions prior to the exam being administered, so they were not as surprised when they arrived to take the examination. I believe that this reduced student anxiety as they "knew what to expect" when they arrived for the test. The second, and possibly most influential reason, was I was very intentional in making sure that I explicitly mentioned any information that would be on the test. In the past, I told them that anything that they read was fair game on the examination

(whether we covered it in class or not). This semester, I shifted the focus to only items that were covered during class. I believe this increased focus on the material that was on the test allowed students to focus on the right material (as opposed to studying the material that was not found on the test). I feel that this change is appropriate for an introductory course (1000-level) and will continue this approach in subsequent semesters.

## **Outc. 2: Articulate understanding of major forces, events and influences that have shaped society.**

Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society within the framework of a federal system of government.

### **Relevant Associations:**

#### **Standard Associations**

##### **SACSCOC 2012\* Principles of Accreditation**

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. (College-level competencies)

#### **General Education Goals Associations**

3.2 Students will express orally or in writing a broad understanding of an array of issues relating to culture, society, creative expression, or the human experience.

6.1 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.

6.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate and analyze perspectives and values of diverse cultural groups and their historical experiences in the United States.

7.3 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.

9.1 Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments.

9.3 Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation.

#### **Institutional Mission Associations**

2 Dalton State offers targeted bachelor's degrees, a full range of associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities.

#### **Strategic Plan Associations**

##### **Dalton State College**

3.1 Goal I: Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students' 21st century educational needs.

### **Related Measures**

#### **M 3: TED Talk Assignment (Hipps)**

Matthew Hipps (Spring 2013)

Students are required to watch a video on [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) that deals with a major political event or idea that has shaped our nation. Students are required to watch a video that pertains to a political topic and then are required to complete a worksheet in which they make connections with the material covered in class and the textbook. Students are evaluated on the accuracy of the information on their work sheets.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

#### **Connected Document**

[Ted Talk Worksheet](#)

#### **Target:**

A minimum of 80% of students will score an 80% or better on the TED Talk work sheet assignments.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

#### **Integrate TED into the Course Core Curriculum**

*Established in Cycle: 2012-2013*

In future semesters, I will integrate TED Talks more into the fabric of my academic classroom. In the future, I will attempt to ...

#### **Further Integrate TED into the Fabric of the Course**

*Established in Cycle: 2013-2014*

Last semester I attempted to integrate more TED talks into the fabric of the course. I also added full length documentaries as a...

#### **M 4: One page analytical paper over videos (Ellinger)**

Ken Ellinger (Spring 2014)

One page analytical paper over videos looking for comprehension of the video's content and the student's opinion and analysis of the arguments presented in the video. Students are required to complete four analytical video papers.

Source of Evidence: Video or audio tape (music, counseling, art)

#### **Target:**

Ken Ellinger (Spring 2014)

75% of students will score a grade of B or better on the analytical video paper.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Continue to provide students opportunity to rewrite papers for acceptable grade**

*Established in Cycle:* 2013-2014

Ken Ellinger (Spring 2014) Requiring students to rewrite papers have been a normal assessment tool for this class. This is ...

**M 6: Graded Examinations (Veve)**

(Fall 2014/Veve) Students will take four graded tests throughout the semester composed of multiple-choice, true-false, or matching questions. Some of the questions will assess their ability to articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society within the framework of a federal system of government.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

A minimum of 70% of students will earn a 70% or better on the exam questions that pertain to their ability to articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society within the framework of a federal system of government

**M 9: Examination on Federalism and Federal Systems (Hipps, Fall 2015)**

Students will complete an examination dealing with federalism, our federal system and its impact on the viability and effectiveness of our democracy.

Source of Evidence: Standardized test of subject matter knowledge

**Target:**

A minimum of 70% of students will score a 70% or better on their examination dealing with federalism and federal systems.

**Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Not Met**

In POLS 1101, a traditional class taught on the Dalton State main campus during the Fall Semester 2015, approximately 65% of students who completed the course (60 of 93) earned a 70% or better on Examination 2 dealing with their understanding of events and forces that have shaped America within the framework of a federal system, whereas 35% (33 of 93) did not. This result is a bit misleading, as students were actually very successful overall on the examination. Eighty-one percent of students taking the examination earned a 70% or higher. However, when I delved into the question level data a bit more deeply, I found that students did well on questions related to the linkages between the public and government (approximately an 82% success rate), but that success rate dropped within questions that were directly related to federalism and the role of government institutions within that federal system. On questions directly related to federalism and our federal system, the success rate for students in this course was approximately 65%. There are two main reasons that I believe that this may have happened. First, the most common question type on these questions were Application based questions. These questions required the students to not only be familiar with the terms, but to understand how these terms applied to the functioning and structure of our political system. Students seemed to struggle with their understanding of how the concepts would be applied to the questions on the test. In fact, further examination show that they actually had a solid understanding of the terms related to federalism and the the federal system, but it was clear that the understanding of how these terms fit into the larger narrative regarding American government was lacking. The second issue is that I believe that students earned a false sense of confidence on the first examination. Scores were so high on the first examination that students believed that they did not need to put in the work necessary to be successful on the examinations. With that being said, I think that there are some things that can be done to help students be more successful on this examination, and specifically, application questions dealing with federalism and our federal system. I will address this in my action plan.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Improve Student Performance on Application Questions**

*Established in Cycle:* 2015-2016

There are several things that I would like to address to help students to be more successful on application questions on their...

**Outc. 3: Analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions.**

Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons regarding issues pertaining to the structure and operation of American government.

**Relevant Associations:**

**Standard Associations**

**SACSCOC 2012\* Principles of Accreditation**

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. (College-level competencies)

**General Education Goals Associations**

3.2 Students will express orally or in writing a broad understanding of an array of issues relating to culture, society, creative expression, or the human experience.

6.1 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.

7.1 Students will demonstrate the ability to articulate and analyze perspectives and values of diverse cultural groups and their historical experiences in the United States.

7.3 Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society.

9.3 Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation.

## Institutional Mission Associations

2 Dalton State offers targeted bachelor's degrees, a full range of associate's degrees and career certificate programs, and a wide variety of public service activities.

## Strategic Plan Associations

### Dalton State College

3.1 Goal I: Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet students' 21st century educational needs.

## Related Measures

### M 1: Government Issue Debate (Hipps, Spring 2013)

Matthew Hipps (Spring 2013)

Students will participate in a debate where they will present arguments and conclusions based on the analysis and evaluation of relevant political materials related to a concept relevant to Civil Rights and/or Civil Liberties in American Government. Students are required to submit a short essay regarding the topic that they are assigned. This essay will be evaluated using stated grading criteria or a rubric.

Source of Evidence: Presentation, either individual or group

### Connected Documents

[Hipps Debate Grading Rubric](#)

[Hipps Debate Paper Assignment](#)

#### Target:

A minimum of 75% of students will achieve a 75% or better on both the written and oral components of their American Government Debate.

#### Connected Document

[Examination #1](#)

#### Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

#### Improve the Overall Quality of My Rubric

*Established in Cycle:* 2012-2013

Although the students in my class achieved the measures that I set for them, I still think the broad nature of my rubric made ...

#### Improve Assessment of Participation

*Established in Cycle:* 2013-2014

Although the students in my class achieved the measures that I set for them, I still think the questions surrounding the authent...

### M 7: Graded Examinations (Veve)

(Fall 2014/Veve) Students will take four graded tests throughout the semester composed of multiple-choice, true-false, or matching questions. Some of the questions will assess the student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons regarding issues pertaining to the structure and operation of American government.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

#### Target:

A minimum of 70% of students will earn a 70% or better on the exam questions that pertain to the student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons regarding issues pertaining to the structure and operation of American government.

### M 10: Ideology Paper

Students will write a reflection paper on their political ideology and the influence that this ideology has had on their life, both political and non-political.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

### Connected Document

[Political Ideology Assignment](#)

#### Target:

A minimum of 70% of students will score a 70% or higher on their ideology paper.

#### Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met

In POLS 1101, a traditional class taught on the Dalton State main campus during the Fall Semester 2015, 90% of students who completed the course (84 of 93) earned a 70% or better on their political ideology paper. The political ideology paper required students to take a political ideology quiz, and then write a reflection paper based on their results. In addition, they were directed to other resources which would help provide clarity on ideologies and political positions (as we had not covered this material in class prior to their completion of this assignment). Students did exceptionally well on this assignment with both the grades and the distribution skewing a bit higher than it normally does for my traditional POLS 1000 courses. [Note: In my large section approximately 40% of students earned an "A" on this assignment, in my traditional section approximately 21% of students earned A's. In addition, 90% of students in my large section met the target, while only about 68% met the target in my traditional section]. I believe that there are several reasons that this happened. First, I believe that in my large section students engaged in significantly higher levels of academic networking than in my traditional classes. Students engaged and collaborated with other students to figure out exactly what their political leanings meant and to understand their position on the political spectrum. This collaboration provided a point of reference that was different from my own and I believe ultimately increased student success on this assignment. Second, I think that there is heightened awareness and focus on political positions because we are in the midst of a contentious and competitive primary election season. Students, who have long been uninterested in politics, have been inundated with political



sound bites and new stories and, as such, have been almost forced into paying attention to the political world around them (to varying degrees of course). I believe the primary season allowed students to align political positions with particular candidates which served as a benchmarking tool to help them understand their own political leanings. Finally, we spent a good deal of time in class (early in the semester) talking about political ideologies and what with an emphasis on how they are fluid over time. I believe their understanding of this idea was reflected in their reflections as many students referenced the fact that their political opinions were likely to change and thus their political ideology was likely to change over time.

## Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)

### Improve Scaffolding for the First Examination

The findings on this particular action item are slightly misleading. If you dropped the grade requirement from 80% to 75% the percentage achieving the goal would rise to 83%. Despite this fact, I believe that one of the reasons that students struggled on the first examination is that they were not prepared for what the examinations would look like. Most of my students were first semester freshmen who were used to examinations that simply tested their ability to regurgitate information that was in the textbook. They were completely unprepared to critically think about a concept and then apply it to a real world situations. To remedy this, I will have several activities in class which require them to engage in higher level thinking problems which are similar to those that will appear on the test. In addition, students will be required to take chapter reading quizzes (to ensure that they are reading the text, and to expose them to the types of questions that will appear on an examination). Finally, students will be given a chapter guide, which will help focus their readings and point them towards the most important information in the text.

**Established in Cycle:** 2012-2013

**Implementation Status:** Finished

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** Multiple Choice Examination (Hipps/Ellinger) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate constitutional principles and processes fundamental to democracy.

**Implementation Description:** I created a website that gave students access to almost all of the information that they would need to be successful on the examinations. Students reported that this website helped them tremendously in their ability to be successful on the test. [http://libguides.daltonstate.edu/hipps\\_pols1101\\_fall13](http://libguides.daltonstate.edu/hipps_pols1101_fall13)

**Projected Completion Date:** 08/2013

### Improve the Overall Quality of My Rubric

Although the students in my class achieved the measures that I set for them, I still think the broad nature of my rubric made the debate difficult to grade students. Furthermore, I believe that the students had a difficult time knowing exactly what was expected of them in both the written and oral components of the project. As such, I will create a separate rubric for both the written and oral components with specific criteria that better pertain to a written assignment and to an oral assignment. On the written component, I would have students submit a plan that outlines exactly what student will be responsible for each component of the paper. I believe this would provide more accountability for each student and would force every member of the group to contribute something tangible to the project. For the oral component of the debate, I would require every student to speak at some point during the debate, regardless of whether or not they enjoyed public speaking.

**Established in Cycle:** 2012-2013

**Implementation Status:** Finished

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** Government Issue Debate (Hipps, Spring 2013) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions.

### Integrate TED into the Course Core Curriculum

In future semesters, I will integrate TED Talks more into the fabric of my academic classroom. In the future, I will attempt to align a TED Talk unit with the core competencies and learning objectives in my course encouraging students to focus on argument as opposed to persuasion. It's a slight difference, to be sure, but it's key. Argument demands a more rigorous attention to citing concrete evidence over making emotional pleas. Sure, a student can use passion and persuasive techniques, but let's face it: emotion does not a great argument make.

I will start by selecting specific speeches for my students to watch, chosen because of their quality and relevance to our course material. This will supplement class lectures as TED speeches are presented by experts in their fields. They range in topics across all content areas, and they push students to listen and comprehend topics that can represent the minute details of very esoteric subjects. The format of a TED speech is, in fact, a multi-genre essay that incorporates many of the elements of different disciplines and thought structures into a single speech.

The unit will culminate with an assignment where students are required to create a "product" that will showcase their learning through whatever modality they feel best speaks to the knowledge they have gained.

**Established in Cycle:** 2012-2013

**Implementation Status:** Finished

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** TED Talk Assignment (Hipps) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate understanding of major forces, events and influences that have shaped society.

**Implementation Description:** TED Talks and documentaries became an integrated component of my class sessions replacing lectures in several of my classes.

### Continue to provide students opportunity to rewrite papers for acceptable grade

Ken Ellinger (Spring 2014)

Requiring students to rewrite papers have been a normal assessment tool for this class. This is to ensure students have the opportunity to comprehend and analyze arguments presented in the videos - which requires students to come up with opinions supported by evidence from the videos. In this case, students generally meet target for

success.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** One page analytical paper over videos (Ellinger) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate understanding of major forces, events and influences that have shaped society.

#### **Further Integrate TED into the Fabric of the Course**

Last semester I attempted to integrate more TED talks into the fabric of the course. I also added full length documentaries as a supplement to the course material. One complaint from students was that they felt that the documentaries were considerably one-sided and they would have liked to have seen more of a balanced argument presented in class. As a result I will use Jing (a screen capture software tool) and TedEd (a program that allows you to link critical thinking questions any video that is available on YouTube) and I will make short clips for students to watch while providing critical thinking and reflection questions for them to answer while watching. I believe that this will allow students to more clearly see the relevant parts of a talk (i.e. if a talk is 7 minutes long but the major point I want them to capture is only 1:00 long, I can condense the clip and allow students to see only the part of the talk that I need them to see, and save time in class for more discussion and analysis of course material

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** TED Talk Assignment (Hipps) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate understanding of major forces, events and influences that have shaped society.

#### **Improve Assessment of Participation**

Although the students in my class achieved the measures that I set for them, I still think the questions surrounding the authenticity of participation by individual students needs to be addressed prior to continuing the assignment in future semesters. In order to do this, I am going to require students to record themselves addressing a specific question related to their topic. Each student will be required to address and answer a question via some form of social media (Facebook, GoogleHangout etc.). I believe that this will allow me to more accurately evaluate each individual students contribution and to accurately assess each students knowledge related to their topic (and their specific question). I would set this up with the library offering students opportunities to record the answers to their question during specific class times (to help students who may not have a live internet connection at home). I think this will increase accountability for each student and would force every member of the group to contribute something tangible to the project (not to mention something that would be more easily measured). This would allow students to forgo the oral component in class (if they did not feel comfortable speaking in front of the group) and they still would have contributed an oral portion of the assignment to me privately.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** Government Issue Debate (Hipps, Spring 2013) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions.

**Projected Completion Date:** 08/2014

#### **Improve Student Understanding of Different Examination Question Types**

In looking back at the lack of success on student examinations this semester, I think one of the main causes of this lack of success was the inability of students to adjust to different question types throughout the course of the examination. Students performed quite well on questions that revolved around basic rote memorization. However, students struggled on analysis and synthesis questions. To remedy this, I will create a series of classroom group activities that will revolve around allowing groups of students to work through the analysis (and hopefully synthesis) of relevant course concepts. I believe that this would allow students to work through their struggles in a low-stakes environment and, hopefully, increase overall student success on the examinations.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** Multiple Choice Examination (Hipps/Ellinger) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate constitutional principles and processes fundamental to democracy.

**Projected Completion Date:** 08/2014

#### **Reduce multiple choice questions and add two critical thinking essays**

Ken Ellinger (Spring 2014)

Because students struggled with the critical thinking aspects of the exams, I shall reduce the number of multiple choice questions and add two critical thinking short essays to build students' critical thinking skills when it comes to answering exam questions that require analysis and synthesis.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** Multiple Choice Examination (Hipps/Ellinger) | **Student Learning Outcome:** Articulate constitutional principles and processes fundamental to democracy.

#### **Class discussion and in-class quiz over dual and cooperative federalism.**

In order to improve my students' comprehension of dual federalism and cooperative federalism, beginning in the spring semester of 2015 I will devote at least 15-20 minutes of class time to a specific discussion of these two related concepts, complete with appropriate analogies (i.e. "layer-cake federalism" and "marble-cake federalism") and

illustrations of how these two concepts are operationalized in our federal government today. I will also administer an in-class quiz immediately upon completion of the discussion so I can see if the students are understanding these two concepts. We will immediately grade the quiz in class and discuss any of the questions that were problematic for the students.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Projected Completion Date:** 02/2015

#### **Improve Student Performance on Application Questions**

There are several things that I would like to address to help students to be more successful on application questions on their examinations. The first step that I will take is to add application questions to an end of chapter review that will be disseminated to students at the end of each chapter. I feel that increasing the visibility of these questions will help students to be more familiar, and thus more comfortable with these types of questions. In addition, I will have students analyze their performance on the test and submit corrections for partial credit. This will allow students to have a deeper understanding of why they got questions wrong, and allow them to avoid those mistakes in the future.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Student Learning Outcome):**

**Measure:** Examination on Federalism and Federal Systems (Hipps, Fall 2015) | **Student Learning**

**Outcome:** Articulate understanding of major forces, events and influences that have shaped society.

**Implementation Description:** Instructor will implement changes in the upcoming semester.

**Projected Completion Date:** 05/2016

**Responsible Person/Group:** Instructor

### **Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers**

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#### **What strengths and weaknesses did your assessment results show? In addition, please describe 2 to 3 significant improvements or continuous improvement measures you'll put in place as a result of your assessment findings.**

In POLS 1101, a traditional class taught on the Dalton campus, the Fall Semester 2015 was evaluated. I believe that my assessment indicated that students are still struggling with the application portion of the examination. Although students had a moderate amount of success on the examination, there is still a large portion of the class that cannot seem to figure out how to tackle the application questions where they need to transcend simple rote memorization. I believe that there are a few main reasons for this and I will attempt to address these reasons in future iterations of this course. First, I believe that the culture of students enrolled in POLS 1101 is one where they feel that they should not have to think on a deeper level than that which is required by the simple memorizing of definitions. I will attempt to instill a culture of critical thinking from the first day of class in my course. Engaging students in critical thinking questions (where they receive immediate feedback) should increase the success of students on questions where they are required to apply information to new political science situations. In addition, I feel that students are not making "Real world" connections. As such, I will work hard to create a set of "real world" assignments that make real and obvious connections between class work and things that are happening in "real life". I believe that making these two changes will help improve my assessment findings in future iterations of this course. (Hipps, Fall 2015)