Assessment of Learning Goal for GECC

Anthropology 366: Revolution and Development in the Third World; instructor Julia Smith, winter quarter

This GECR class fulfills the International Studies Requirement section of the General education requirements. We were asked to evaluate the students' ability to meet Goal 4: For students to recognize and understand a diversity of opinions and perspectives, in written and spoken discourse, concerning the course content.

- Objective 1: Students will form and support an opinion on a modern international problem or topic.
- Objective 2: Students will analyze multiple perspectives on a given issue related to the course content.

I elected to evaluate Objective 2. To do this, I gave my students in week 8 of the class an exercise. First, I asked them to watch a film on the Zapatistas, a subject of that part of the class. Then, I asked them to complete several questions:
- two that asked them to identify perspectives that were present and absent among those interviewed in the film (4 points)
- two that asked them to analyze the perspective of the movie makers (4 points)
- one that asked them to relate the perspective of the movie to other lecture and written material (2 points).

The exercises were scored by the instructor using the attached rubric (p. 2).

Students were allowed to take the exercise home due to time constraints (the film took the entire class period). Thirty-four students returned the exercise. Their average score on the exercise was 8.8 out of 10, a very respectable average; nearly 2/3rds of the students received 9s or 10s. The range was from 4.5 to 10. Three lowest scores (between 4.5 and 5.5) were from students for whom English was not a native language (who may have had some difficulty following the film).

A nearly 90% correct response demonstrates that students in this class have become reasonably adept at identifying perspectives of media and being critical of them. However, I clearly have a small group of students who are struggling to do so with films; I will work moving forward to ensure that they are given assistance to make sense of the perspectives in visual media. I also plan to include a similar exercise for my students more generally, to keep them focused on this important goal.
Exercise questions and scoring rubric (the latter was not shared with students):
1. We just watched a film on the Zapatistas in which multiple people with different perspectives were heard from. Identify three different people (by name or by positions) who were interviewed in the movie. (3 points, 1 for naming each of three people from the film)

2. Were there perspectives missing that it would have been interesting to have? Name one person or type of person (by name or position) whose perspective would have deepened our understanding. (1 point for naming one person who meets these criteria - typically pro-government)

3. What do you think was the purpose of the movie-makers? Were they trying to describe the situation? Make an argument? Affect public opinion in the United States? (2 points; 1 for a vague description, 2 for a strong statement that this was aimed at presenting a pro-Zapatista perspective to US audiences)

4. Did the movie take a strong stance toward the Zapatista rebellion? What perspective? (2 points; 1 for saying it had a stance, 1 for describing it)

5. Do ideas from the book or lecture complicate your understanding of the description of the Zapatistas or some incident in the film? What's one idea or fact that you wish they had included, addressed, or at least alluded to? (2 points; 1 for a vague idea, 2 for a specific piece of information or theory)

Total possible score: 10 points