General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: LING 129: Culture, Language, and Ethnicity in the US   GE Area: S

Results reported for AY: 2016-17   # of sections: 6   # of instructors: 4

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Department Chair: Swathi Vanniarajan   College: H & A

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by October 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

(1) What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY? SLO 4: Students will be able to "recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups within the U.S." (Note: In Henze’s sections, she added the phrase "identify the ways they can contribute to..." along with "recognize and appreciate")

(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

Number of students and sections: In Fall 2016, a total of 3 sections were offered. Henze taught two sections (N= 28 and 27) and Kataoka taught one section (N=28). The total number of students in Fall was 83. In Spring 2017, 3 sections were also offered. Moore taught one section (N=26); Kataoka taught one (N=25) and Donlay taught another (N= 12). The total number of students in Spring was 63. For the 2 semesters combined, the class served 146 students.

Assignments that addressed SLO 4: The assignments used to assess this objective varied somewhat across the instructors. They included (a) Reflective papers on videos (Speaking in Tongues; Do You Speak American; Crosstalk; and Just a Piece of Cloth) (b) midterm and second term exams; (c) quizzes; (d) student group presentation and self-evaluations on Language Myths; and (e) Interview paper.

Results of the assessment: The majority of students met or exceeded a standard of “B” (good) performance on GELO 4. For example, in Henze’s two sections in Fall 2016, students were asked to reflect on how they would use information from one of the videos to foster positive interactions among different ethnic and religious groups. The average score across the two sections was 92% (or A-). 33% of the students had incomplete or missing responses. Donlay used the same measure in his Spring 2017 class and obtained very similar results (averages of 92.5%, 92.9%, and 81.5% on three video reflections). He notes that the last average is skewed low because one student (out of 12) didn’t turn in the assignment. Kataoka also used this assignment to measure GELO 4, and her students averaged 84% (this includes 3 students who missed the assignment altogether).

Donlay, Kataoka and Henze used another measure, the self-evaluation of a group presentation on a language myth, to assess GELO 4. Donlay notes that “All students turned in the assignment and all had good ideas about how to communicate what they had learned to others.” In Henze’s sections, those who turned in the assignment on time had strong responses, but 35% received a lower score because they either turned the assignment in late or not at all. Kataoka found that “while students did well on their presentations, this GELO could be further strengthened by making a more explicit statement in the instructions.” (see “Modifications” for more details).

In Moore’s Spring 2017 section, rather than using multiple measures to assess GELO 4, a specific question on the final exam was designed to target GELO 4. In his report, he provides details on the question. His results show that 92% of the students scored in the A range (95% or higher), while 8% (2 students) scored 65% or lower.
Lessons learned from the assessment: Student performance on GELO 4 is high across all sections when students complete the assignments fully. The main reasons cited by instructors for poor student performance are incomplete answers or not turning in the assignment. We saw different approaches taken to assessment, wherein three instructors used multiple measures and another instructor used one very targeted assessment to measure GELO 4. The results are very similar across sections regardless of which measures were used, which suggests that as a group, the instructors have standards which are aligned, and the students in each section are similar in their average performance. No one had a class of exceptionally low students. The results further suggest that the changes we implemented in 2016-17 worked well. These included (1) foregoing a book on language myths and instead including in the reader a set of 7-8 short articles about language myths; and (2) using reading quizzes (in some cases, online quizzes) to encourage students to keep up with the readings.

(3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year?

1. We think that GELO 4 needs to be changed to reflect a more active stance. Instead of only “recognizing and appreciating constructive interactions…” (which is rather passive and hard to measure), we think the objective should state something like the following: “Students will be able to identify ways they can contribute to constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups in the US.” We will follow up to find out how such a change can be made.

2. Perhaps substitute 1-2 quizzes with online discussion prompts related to topics of current interest that are relevant to the course.

3. Consider developing specific questions (on the final exam or on a different assignment) targeting GELO 4. The reason for doing so is explained by Kataoka, who points to the embeddedness of GELO 4 in at least three assignments, including the Interview paper. However, she adds that it is difficult and not pedagogically sound to evaluate papers section by section. Moore, in Spring 2017, experimented with one specific exam question targeting GELO 4, and his results are very similar to the results on multiple measures. Therefore, it seems reasonable to try this more targeted approach in the future, perhaps not only for GELO 4 but for the other GELOs as well.

4. Include in class discussions specific attention to and examples of how we can increase positive interactions across different groups in the US. This might help students make the connection when it comes to the assessments of GELO 4.

Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes, all sections are well aligned with area goals. Student Learning Objectives (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment.

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE SLOs for writing.

The enrollment cap for Ling 129 classes is 25. We do not allow more than 30 students in the class.