General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: FORL 100W
GE Area: Z

Results reported for AY: Spring 2016
# of sections: 1
# of instructors: 1

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Department Chair: Damian Bacich
College: Humanities & the Arts

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 to <curriculum@sjsu.edu>, 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

To be completed by the course coordinator:

1. What GELO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

   GELO 4: Students shall be able to locate, organize and develop essays and documents according to appropriate editorial and citation standards.

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

   Diagnostic assessment revealed that most students (despite a majority being seniors) had either no familiarity with or no sufficient skills to apply the style of the Modern Language Association (the standard in our discipline) when writing academic papers. Cautioned by this surprising revelation, I staggered the application of the MLA style throughout essays during the course of the semester. I started by requiring one text and one internet citation to gauge the students competence to properly cite sources (formative assessment). When it was obvious that the students’ ability was woefully insufficient, I assigned the study of the MLA Style Manual. To further assess the students’ progress (formative assessment) and to provide them with an opportunity to practice, I requested a draft bibliography for their term paper. Still, their mistakes were plentiful. Hence, I introduced extra sessions of citation practice into the curriculum. When proper citations were illustrated in class on the blackboard using familiar texts from our course reading list, the students began to better understand the reasons for and the methodology of the stringent and meticulous citation guidelines. Finally, the students were expected to produce a term paper with accurate citations and a professional bibliography. The results of this summative assessment were very satisfactory when compared to the initial lack of familiarity with the MLA style. However, it is desirable that the students are being trained in writing professional academic papers in their other upper-division classes of our department as well. By the time they are seniors, they can be expected to have had a rigorous exposure to the professional standard in our discipline. It would be more effective yet, if students would take the 100W course before they enrolled in upper-division classes. This is, after all, what the Writing Workshop is designed for.
What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)

The modification that were made ad hoc during the semester as described above will most likely be institutionalized – unless students will enter the 100W with better preparation in the future.

Furthermore, our department has taken the initiative to better inform the students about the importance of the 100W Writing Workshop as a preparatory class for upper-division course work, while it is often regarded as a quasi terminal graduation requirement that – in many cases -- is pushed off until the last semester before graduation. The faculty members of the Department of World Languages & Literatures are committed to advise the students to take WST test and subsequently the Writing Workshop as early as possible. Improvements in the balance of juniors versus seniors in our 100W courses are expected in future semesters. The department is nonetheless aware that transfer students in particular can only be channeled through the WST / 100W / upper-division work pattern with a certain time-lag.

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 (GELOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

No changes are planned.

(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 GELOs for writing.

Given the size of the course sections, we are confident that students are receiving thorough feedback.

- Damian Bacich, Chair, Department of World Languages and Literatures