General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: ENGL 71: Introduction to Creative Writing  
GE Area: C2

Results reported for AY: 2014-15  
# of sections: 16  
# of instructors: 9

Course Coordinator: Alan Soldofsky  
E-mail: alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Shannon Miller  
College: Humanities and 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 SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?
   
   SLO 3: Letters courses will enable students to write clearly and effectively. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness

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

An appropriate outcome to measure in an entry-level Creative Writing course is how clearly and effectively students can write/revise a poem or piece of short nonfiction. SLO 3 was assessed based upon the quality of students’ work in response to being assigned to write a poem or a short nonfiction “Self-Portrait” to emulate Adam Zagajewski’s “poem (in translation) “Self-Portrait” and/or Linda Pasten’s poem “Self-Portrait.”

The SLO 3 outcomes, measured from the samples used, varied in outcome from section to section, not counting for reasonable statistical variation. It would appear this is a fair assessment of student outcomes, which correlates the percentage of students passing the course, where students must achieve a “C” or higher to receive credit for the course. Our conclusion is that the course is successful in facilitating student success in meeting SLO 3. Assessment statistics: out of 130 student samples assignments, we found:

- 7% failed to meet the standard
- 10% barely met the standard
- 83% met or exceeded the standard.

(Data for 3 of the thirteen ENGL 71 sections was not reported by the instructors.)

The faculty teaching ENGL 71 will continue to use this common assignment to assess SLO 3 in future semesters, but as coordinator I will offer more training in how to administer the assignment and meet with the faculty as a group as well as encourage discussion of best practices. Each participating instructor assessed a sample of 10 of their students’ works of creative writing written in response to this common prompt. The actual results for AY 2014-15 are as follows:
Failed (to meet standards for the assignment): 7%
Barley meets (standards for the assignment): 10%
Meets (standard for the assignment): 60%
Exceeds (standards for the assignment): 23%
SAMPLE SIZE: 130 Students

More than simple sentence-level correctness and clarity, as would be assessed in a composition course, the writing standards in ENGL 71 include higher order Creative Writing skills: the ability to create effective literary devices (image, metaphor, simile, allegory, etc.) and the ability to write imaginatively and concisely in a nuanced manner. We are satisfied that 83% of the students met or exceeded the department standard.

(3) 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.)

We do not plan any modification to the course next year. The ENGL 71 faculty have been engaged in an email conversation since the beginning of the Fall 2015 term to determine what modifications if any should be made to the compulsory Self-Portrait writing exercise that is used as a common assignment in the course for assessment. Additional poems have been suggested to included as models for the assignment. Some instructors are experimenting with these additional models. The outcome will be assessed at the end of the semester.

APPENDIX 1: SLO 3 Assessment Data

APPENDIX 2: Common ENGL 71 Assessment Assignment Prompt

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.

(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.
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