General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: Art100W/Writing Workshop for the Arts  GE Area: Z

Results reported for AY 2-12-13  # of sections: 3  # of instructors: 2

Course Coordinator: Christy Junkerman  E-mail: christy.junkerman@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Anne Simonson  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, 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? (This should be in agreement with the Assessment Schedule on file with UGS (http://www.sjsu.edu/ugs/faculty/assessment/ge/Schedules). If not, please submit a revised Assessment Schedule for the course.)

By the way, this link doesn’t lead to anything (page not found).

We assessed SLO 2: Students will be able to express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse. This continues to seem to us to be central to our discipline and develops skills which are crucial to any university educated professional. It is a complex agenda and a life-long pursuit, easy to contain in a catch phrase with an acronym and a number, but very hard for us to sign off on, as if we can just say students have climbed that mountain.

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

It is, of course, very difficult to quantify outcomes in the humanities, but we can offer approximations:

In general, though with some variety from class to class, about 25% of the students make good progress, about 65% make some progress and perhaps 10% make no progress at all. This all depends, of course, on what they bring to the class in skill, attention span, attitude and determination. Students with an interest in improving and with somewhat better than average writing skill make the most progress, learning to pay attention to things that can make a difference. On the other side, there are always some students who simply disappear or who make no effort at all.

We are all concerned, in this class as in our other classes, at the level of reading comprehension our students exhibit. A lack of sophisticated vocabulary and a tendency to oversimplify and read for the quick take-away point, as well as a certain unwillingness (lack of patience?) to make the effort to think conceptually all contribute to this. As one of the teachers put it: “[one challenge] is persuading students that analyzing, developing, criticizing, etc., matters or concerns them, when many have the quick technological skills that seem to be exactly what the world wants.”
What have we learned? We have all taught this course many times and all continue to try to address the needs of students with effective exercises and assignments, dropping what doesn’t work and trying new things. We work on many things that can address reading comprehension: vocabulary work (with more time we could do much more of this); close analysis of arguments or of things like paragraph structure and transitions in a well-written article; close reading of passages, analysis of writing in different contexts (for example a New Yorker article and a more popular magazine or blog) to learn about ‘voice.” We work closely with our art reference library Rebecca Feind Kohn and try to help students analyze sources for research assignments. We build research assignments in careful stages and try to develop the topics as a research process both to help them understand the material they are working with more clearly and help them avoid the plagiarism temptation (or perhaps the temptation of “efficiency” as one rather defiant plagiarist explained her work to me!) We often have the students work in groups or pairs, but know that the assignments must be well focused and well monitored to keep them on task. Group work does afford us the opportunity to roam the classroom and lean over their shoulders to work with them more directly.

We have paying particular attention to the make-up of the classes to detect any general changes, now that Design and Animation are offering their own 100W sections, but find that the students as a group have not changed a great deal in terms of their writing skill level, and indeed some Design and Animation continue to enroll in Art 100W. However, there are fewer of them and one instructor finds that the resulting classes with a higher proportion of art and art history majors have a stronger common ground, but at the same time she misses the more interdisciplinary setting of the classes we taught before the split.

(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.)

The 100W instructors continue to meet and share ideas. We plan no major modification but certainly a course like this is continually modified as we find and share new articles to use in class, new issues in art seem pertinent and workable. Janet Silk is teaching one of the new Design 100W classes this semester and when we next meet will share with us her experiences of teaching a class of mostly designers to see how it compares with the more interdisciplinary experience of classes which mix the various disciplines of art.

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?
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