General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

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

Results reported for AY: 2013-14        # of sections: 29        # of instructors: 8

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Department Chair: Deanna Fassett        College: CoSS

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 September 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

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

Per our assessment schedule, we composed the following objective to assess for this year:

Students utilize in their final projects the full cadre of stylistic tools taught within 100W, including strategic selection and arrangement of fact, establishing credibility, use of vivid description, recognition of value and opinion statements, recognition of evidentiary research, and identification with audience.

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

COMM 100W instructors reported positive findings on students’ final projects. We have built the curriculum for COMM 100W around the idea that all communication carries a persuasive dimension, even where it does not appear to advance an argument. This year we wanted to know to what extent students used writing and argumentation strategies learned in the early part of the course in their final projects. Did their essays indicate that they could distinguish between fact and value? Were they making strategic choices in their selection and organization of facts? Did they incorporate vivid language? Build credibility through citations? And stylize their writing for a particular audience?

Instructors have created final projects that encourage students to remember and use these strategies. For example, one final project has students annotate their own final essay and identify in the margins the specific strategies they are using in a given sentence, paragraph, or section. This assignment prompts students to read their own writing on multiple registers: as an expression of ideas, and as an execution of generic writing form and technique. The instructor provided the following illustration:
[A student crafts] an opinion sentence, which forms the basis upon which the thesis paragraph is built. That opinion sentence might be, ‘Terry Merchant’s use of the word ‘failure’ to describe the Affordable Health Care Act is a gross mischaracterization inasmuch as the author’s definition of the word failure itself, is flawed.’ In the margin, a student would annotate that sentence with a comment such as: ‘This is an opinion sentence, which is the first sentence of a thesis paragraph. It is intended to be a strongly worded, declarative statement of opinion, absent use of the first person, which is designed further to be provocative with respect to the audience.’

Instructors also incorporate peer review and practice and feedback into final assignments and use those activities to remind students of the writing and argumentation strategies available to them.

Our assessment data this year indicates that students use in their final projects a combination of strategies learned earlier in the semester. They may not use those strategies consistently throughout their essays or at the most opportune points (the sign of mastery), but they do recall the techniques and employ them.

We are encouraged by these findings. We would like students to develop the habit of reading their own writing as an expression of their own ideas and as an execution of generic writing forms and techniques, and to be able to revise accordingly. Our assessment for 2014 suggests that, on average, students who complete COMM 100W have begun to acquire this habit.

(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.)

No modifications planned

Part 2

(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, the course coordinator and instructors are doing an excellent job keeping the goals, SLOs, content, support, and assessment consistent across sections. Regular communication between the coordinator and instructors and between the instructors maintains continuity within and across sections.

(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.
| We cap enrollment in Comm 100W to 27 students. Since we do not offer larger sections, students are able to receive thorough feedback and engage in practice and revisions of their writing within the current configuration of the course and workload of the instructors. |