General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title: CS100W Technical Communication  GE Area: Area Z

Results reported for AY ___14/15_______  # of sections ___5/4____  # of instructors ___2_______

Course Coordinator: ___Debra Caires_______  E-mail: ______debra.caires@sjsu.edu___________

Department Chair: __________Dr. Sami Khuri___________  College: ___College of Science__________

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 1, SLO2 (fall 2014)

   SLO 3, SLO 4 (spring 2015)

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

Every opportunity a student has to discover their level of knowledge, understanding, qualities, skills, and other attributes can be seen as feedback. Useful feedback does not always have to come from the instructor; feedback can also result from their interaction with the Product Owner (the client in our applied projects) and their peer-to-peer activities. It is our goal to ensure that students: work with broader definitions of feedback, know how they will receive this feedback, and integrate processes for acting on feedback in regards to their study patterns and assignment delivery.

The current standard practice is for the instructor, using an attached rubric (students have pre-assignment access), to write feedback on the students’ assigned documents. Students often simply look at their grade and, if the grade is acceptable, they may or may not take the time to read the instructor’s feedback comments or suggestions for improving their next document submission. Instead, a mechanism needs to be in place that requires students to study their instructor’s feedback and consider how to learn from the instructor’s comments and then take action in order to improve the standard of their work.

This four-step feedback loop offers multiple opportunities for learning and encouraging students to engage with the required coursework weeks before the approaching deadline. Our current hybrid environment (online and in class lectures), along with the flipped classroom, is used for feedback on early drafts by incorporating the rubric as a guiding tool. Students currently work in small feedback groups with their peers and benefit from collaborative learning.
Although we are incorporating the feedback loop (Figure 1), one approach we have not addressed at length is incorporating a feedback pattern that mimics what takes place in industry. One strategy is to start with the rubric (specifications, standards, goals) and NOT the assignment (end product, user interface). The rubric will be presented at the beginning of the project or assignment. Each instructor will spend adequate in class time discussing with their students how the rubric serves as a goal-setting tool, helping students to strategically plan for their assignment, and critically designing objectives that answer what students need to strive for and why.

The purpose of this new strategic plan (fall 2015) is two-fold:

Critically evaluating the rubric (a set of standards based on SLOs) serves to remind students of the importance of reviewing and editing their finished document before submitting it for instructor evaluation and grading. This plan puts the student in the role of evaluator, forcing them to critically analyze and determine what has been done well and how the process can be improved.

We will review the five-step process with our students:

1. Question: learn enough about your topic to identify a specific question to answer or a hypothesis to test;
2. Gather: locate, retrieve, read, evaluate, and record information related to your research question or hypothesis;
3. Conclude: reflect on what you have learned, draw a conclusion, and then organize your information to support that conclusion;
4. Communicate: you final work with supporting points;
5. Evaluate: the completed product (document) and explain the process you used to create the product (document).

Strategic Plan
While the short-term goal may be mastery of content and completion of a product for our course, the ultimate long-term goal is for our students to develop effective research skills that can be used in both their academic studies and professional careers. We will integrate and emphasize the assessment of the process by starting with number five in the five-step process: evaluate.
We will start the task of writing by initiating a self-evaluation process and communicate that students will take responsibility for the quality of their work. Using guided team activities students will discover which research processes they do well, and which ones they need to improve. Going through this pre-writing self-evaluation process, before initiating steps one through four above, students will understand their vital role as evaluators, specifically self-evaluators.

(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.)

Student Goals

1. Spend time generating effective classroom discussions
2. Solicit effective feedback from students
3. Cultivate peer-to-peer collaboration and evaluation
4. Incorporate a culture of discovery and practice within the classroom

Instructor Goals

1. Evaluate how well the process of self-evaluation was taught
2. Evaluate if students really understand instructor comments after self-evaluating
3. Evaluate if students can transfer what they’ve learned, through the self-evaluation pre-writing process, to their applied projects by the quality of their resources and written documents

Overall changes to curriculum (still in line with GE requirements)

1. The traditional literature review paper has migrated to online published technical blogs (five blogs at 400 words each) based on peer review research.
2. The poster expo presentation has incorporated a 500 word self-script for a more polished presentation when employers are present.
3. The proposal midterm/final report has been broken into 5 separate parts ending with each two week sprint (five sprints equaling 10 weeks).
4. Take-home weekly written and scantron quizzes are now used to keep students current on reading requirements and writing assignments.
5. Face-to-face in lecture classroom time is completely flipped (all hands-on).
6. The team end of sprint report is a template driven written exam (students are not responsible for formatting this particular document), instead content is the main focus.

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.

N/A