General Education Assessment Report Template

Academic Year: 2015-2016

Course Name/Catalog Number: ENG 231/231E/231S/232

General Education Component: Second-Year Seminar

UULO(s) assessed this year:
- ☒ Intellectual Breadth/Life-long Learning
- ☒ Inquiry/Critical Thinking
- ☒ Communication
- ☐ Global/Multicultural Knowledge and Awareness
- ☐ Citizenship & Ethics

Other learning outcomes assessed this year: Click here to enter text.

Process: Please provide a brief narrative of the assessment process for this course. Include a description of the type of student work assessed (e.g., research papers, exams, etc.), the number and roles of people involved in the process, any tools used for the assessment (e.g., checklists, rubrics, etc.), and how student learning was evaluated.

In 2015-16 we returned to the method we had previously developed for assessing student writing in the World Literature courses after a three-year hiatus. We collected a sample of analytic essays from all sections of the course in Fall 2015 and met to read those papers on January 14th, 2016. Names of students and instructors were removed from the papers. Each paper was read by at least two people (Anne Stevens, Elisa Cogbill-Seiders, Zach Vance, Sarah Pawlak, Roberta Sabbath, Joyce Ahn, and Molly O’Donnell). We read 52 papers in total, 26 each from ENG 231 and 232. We used the same rubric we last used in 2013 so that we could compare results. The rubric evaluates papers in seven different categories: Mastery of literary works in context, mastery of critical terms and concepts, thesis, organization, use of evidence, grammar/syntax/punctuation/mechanics, and overall quality. For each category, readers assign a score of 1-4 (1 = no/limited proficiency, 2 = some proficiency, 3 = proficiency, and 4 = high proficiency). As we had done in the past, we hoped to gain a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses of student writing.

We began the session by scoring two papers in common as a norming exercise. For the most part, all seven readers scored the two papers in the same way, sometimes with all seven readers scoring exactly the same for a particular category. Where we differed it was usually just by a single number. Because of the norming exercise and the discussion of expectations beforehand, no papers received overall quality scores that differed by more than a single digit.
Results: Please provide a brief summary of the results of your assessment process. Include both what you learned about your students’ achievement of the specified learning outcomes and what you learned about the assessment process itself, if applicable.

The full data set is available by request. Average scores for the papers are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>context</th>
<th>terms</th>
<th>thesis</th>
<th>organization</th>
<th>evidence</th>
<th>grammar</th>
<th>overall</th>
<th>pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>4.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVG13</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>difference</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>232AVG</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>4.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>232AVG13</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.56</td>
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<td>4.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>difference</td>
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<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>overall</th>
<th>pages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>231AVG</td>
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<td>1.98</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>4.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>231AVG13</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>difference</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the 2016 sample to the papers we collected in 2016, we see moderate improvement in a number of areas and slight declines in others. The overall quality fell between 2 and 3, as is to be expected in a sophomore level general education course. The length of the papers increased slightly, particularly in the ENG 232 sample, where the average paper length increased by a little more than half a page. The weakest overall number is for mastery of critical terms and concepts and the strongest is for thesis statements. This suggests that perhaps instructors should spend a little more time providing students with critical terms for discussing world literature.

Speaking more anecdotally about the papers that we read, we did see a significant difference in this regard from our 2013 sample. In 2013 most of the papers we collected consisted of textual analysis, comparison, or other tasks that showcase critical thinking skills. A few papers, however, were long (10+ page) research papers or personal response essays. When we implemented the Second-Year Seminar “hallmarks” of 20 pages of writing a semester in Fall 2013, at that time we also required that instructors assign at least one analytic essay and that essay would serve for the purposes of assessment.
**Conclusions:** Please describe how the results of this assessment process might be used to revise instruction in this course and/or refine the assessment process in future years.

This report will be circulated to the department chair, English faculty, and World Literature instructors. Jennifer Keene, Chris Hudgins, Chris Heavey, and Laurel Pritchard will also receive a copy. We plan to hold a workshop for World Literature instructors later this semester to discuss the results and to workshop effective writing prompts. Additionally, we are holding a workshop in February where we will discuss issues of classroom transparency as a follow-up to a workshop series led by Mary-Ann Winkelmes in the fall. With a greater emphasis on creating transparent writing prompts where students know the purpose, task, and criteria for assignment we hope to see some additional improvements in the overall quality of writing in the World Literature courses in the future.

**Appendices:** Please attach any applicable assignment descriptions, rubrics, or graphic representations of results.

| Reader: __________________________ | Paper No.: __________________________ | Page count: ________ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>No/Limited Proficiency (1 point)</th>
<th>Some Proficiency (2 points)</th>
<th>Proficiency (3 points)</th>
<th>High Proficiency (4 points)</th>
<th>Score or N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mastery of literary works in context</td>
<td>Shows little understanding of larger contexts of literary work.</td>
<td>Shows some knowledge of works in context but lacking depth or precision.</td>
<td>Fairly strong understanding of works and their contexts but may be overly simplistic in places.</td>
<td>Sophisticated understanding of works and their contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Mastery of critical terms/concepts</td>
<td>Uses terms and concepts incorrectly or does not bring in relevant critical terms when needed.</td>
<td>Some use of terms and concepts but lacking depth or precision.</td>
<td>Uses appropriate terms and concepts but with some errors or lack of sophistication.</td>
<td>Sophisticated use of appropriate critical terms and concepts that helps develop student's argument.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Thesis</td>
<td>Reader cannot determine thesis &amp; purpose OR thesis has no relation to the writing task.</td>
<td>Thesis and purpose are somewhat vague OR only loosely related to the writing task.</td>
<td>Thesis and purpose are fairly clear and match the writing task.</td>
<td>Thesis and purpose are clear; closely match the writing task.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Organization</td>
<td>Unclear organization OR organizational plan is inappropriate to thesis. No transitions.</td>
<td>Some signs of logical organization in support of the thesis. Transitions are abrupt, illogical, and ineffective.</td>
<td>Organization supports thesis and purpose. Transitions are generally appropriate, but sequence of ideas could be improved</td>
<td>Fully &amp; imaginatively supports thesis &amp; purpose. Sequence of ideas is effective. Transitions are smooth and effective</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Use of evidence</td>
<td>Offers simplistic, undeveloped, or cryptic support for ideas; Inappropriate</td>
<td>Offers some support that may that may be dubious, too broad or obvious. Details are</td>
<td>Offers solid but less original reasoning. Assumptions are not always</td>
<td>Substantial, logical, &amp; concrete development of ideas. Assumptions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Grammar/syntax/ punctuation/mechanics</td>
<td>Mechanical &amp; usage errors so severe that writer’s ideas are difficult to understand</td>
<td>Repeated weaknesses in mechanics and usage. Pattern of flaws</td>
<td>Grammar and syntax are correct with very few errors in spelling or punctuation.</td>
<td>Essentially error free. Evidence of superior control of diction</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Overall quality</td>
<td>Poorly written, unclear, or not following instructions.</td>
<td>Sentences show little variety, simplistic. Diction is somewhat immature; relies on clichés. Tone may have some inconsistencies in tense and person</td>
<td>Sentences show some variety &amp; complexity. Uneven control. Diction is accurate, generally appropriate, less advanced. Tone is appropriate</td>
<td>Sentences are varied, complex, &amp; employed for effect. Diction is precise, appropriate, using advanced vocabulary. Tone is mature, consistent, suitable for topic and audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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