

Assessing Writing in Gordon Rule Humanities Classes

Operational Unit: Fine Arts WEC

Unit Purpose Statement: The Division of Fine Arts is committed to providing instruction to prepare students for both the work force and transfer to ongoing higher education.

Initiative Contact: Daniel Dutkofski

Strategic Initiative: Learning Assured

Goal Outcome: Integrate individual student effort with the learning process.

Objective: College-level Writing

Objective Description: Increase the percentage of students writing at the college level.

Initiative's Relation to the Strategic Plan:

This initiative will introduce and develop an assessment process for "Communicate" in all Gordon Rule courses that are used to strengthen the writing outcome for humanities general education courses and to create a college wide rubric for writing assignments and assessments. As such, it will measure the progress in writing students are achieving in the humanities courses.

Expected Results and the Means of Assessment

Expected Results 1: Humanities faculty will reach a consensus on what college level writing is.

Means of Assessment: A select group of humanities faculty will work with their colleagues in Communications to develop a set of rangefinder papers that exemplify papers at each level defined by the LET rubric (beginning, developing, competent, and accomplished). A larger group of faculty will compare their grades on this set of papers to the rangefinder grades.

Individual Responsible: Dan Dutkofski

Expected Completion: 8/1/2009

Stakeholders: Academic Affairs - WPK (10671) - Michele McArdle Communications & Humanities OSC (10682) - Kevin Mulholland Humanities & Foreign Languages EAC (10674) - David Sutton Fine Arts WEC (10691) - Daniel Dutkofski

Results: On April 10, 2009, full time humanities faculty and deans met to read selected essays and discuss the scoring using the LET rubric. They also graded them using the traditional A-F grades to establish a range. There were two papers which generated a great deal of discussion, but it became apparent that the wide range of grades assigned was more attributed to the problems with the assignment instructions and rubric than to a disagreement about the quality of the work. Most faculty were in accord when asked to describe Accomplished, Competent, Developing, or Beginning papers. They were also quite compatible in terms of the letter grades assigned.

Expected Results 2: We will ascertain whether papers that earn at least a "C" in Gordon Rule humanities classes are at college level, as defined in the LET rubric as competent or accomplished.

Means of Assessment: Applying the LET Rubric for assessment of written communication to a sample of papers that earned at least a "C" in Gordon Rule humanities classes.

Individual Responsible: Dan Dutkofski

Expected Completion: 8/1/2009

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Results: There was consensus that "C" level papers are generally not "competent" or "accomplished." In almost every case, they were labeled as developing or even high beginning. As the Communication faculty discovered at their February 20th meeting, many students will not reach the competent or accomplished level at the end of a single Gordon Rule course. There was a lively discussion as to whether they will have reached that competency at the end of all of their Gordon Rule courses.

Implementation Plan

Budget Requirements: In district travel and copying expenses.

Results to Improve: There needs to be a greater understanding on the part of humanites instructors of the level of writing required for Comp I students (the pre-req course for the Gordon Rule courses in Humanities).

Research papers should only be assigned with adequate instruction on methodology.

Changes for Next Year: We will follow up with an ongoing review of assignments and grading rubrics to assure continuity.

Year:

Faculty are anxious to explore the possibility of making ENC 1102 a pre- or co-requisite of any Gordon Rule humanities class to insure greater writing training before beginning these courses. They also see the need for ongoing discussion of assignment given, with an emphasis on those assignments with a research requirement.