

# **GEAC 2012-13 Assessment Report**

## **Literature**

**July 2014**

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), co-chaired by Charles Wilson and Worth Pickering, developed a process for assessing all goals of the 2010 Revised General Education Curriculum plus critical thinking (a SCHEV requirement) on a four-year cycle. During 2012-13 assessment data were collected for oral communication, literature, and human creativity. GEAC convened the second annual Assessment Summit in May 2013 with the goal of training and calibrating raters to assess written artifacts, rating the written artifacts, and drafting reports of what is done well and what may need improvement in all three competencies.

### **Methodology**

Literature was assessed during the 2012-13 academic year. The focus of the assessment was on lower division Literature courses, or “L” courses. The student learning outcomes (SLO) for lower division “L” courses are:

1. Students will critically analyze literature and assess its contribution to our cultural heritage.
2. Through critical reading and analysis, students will develop an understanding of the effective use of the English language.
3. Through critical reading and analysis, students will develop the ability to make informed judgments about writers’ style and content.
4. Students will develop an understanding of the perspectives of a diverse group of writers that may include women writers, minority writers, and writers from non-American cultures.

### **Artifacts**

While the following three L courses meet the Literature requirement, the vast majority of students are enrolled in ENGL 112L. Therefore, fifty written artifacts were randomly selected from several ENGL 112L course sections for the assessment.

- ENGL 112L, Introduction to Literature
- ENGL 114L, American Writers, American Experiences
- FLET 100L, Understanding World Literature

### **Rubric**

The ENGL 112L, Introduction to Literature Rubric was developed by one member of the Assessment Team based on the VALUE Rubric for Reading and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence (Rhodes, 2009). The revised rubric is included in Appendix A.

## **Raters**

The GEAC assessment staff member assigned to Literature recruited three fulltime teaching faculty plus one adjunct faculty member to be raters for the Assessment Summit.

## **Calibration**

The four raters met with two members of the GEAC who facilitated the calibration process that included the following steps:

1. Review the 2010 Revised General Education Goal and SLO for Literature
2. Review the rubric, both the scale (“Exceeds Standard,” “Meets Standard,” “Approaches Standard,” and “Needs Attention”) and each individual SLO. Raters were instructed that GEAC set the target for the “average” student as “Meets Standard.” Each SLO was reviewed with some discussion about the differences between the four scores. Minor edits were made to the rubric.
3. Read and rate sample artifacts.
  - a. All raters and group leaders read and rated the same artifact. The leaders tallied the ratings and led discussions about why they chose different scores.
  - b. A second sample was read and rated using the same process at which point the leaders determined that the raters were calibrated.

## **Rating**

Raters were instructed that we would be using analytical scoring whereby they would read the artifact / portfolio completely one time and then score each SLO individually. Two raters read and rated each artifact / portfolio and the goal of calibration was to get to the point where the two raters did not differ by more than one point.

The raters read artifacts / portfolios on Blackboard and scored the artifacts using Qualtrics, the University’s web based survey tool. Qualtrics allowed the Assessment Team to monitor the results and identify those artifacts on which raters disagreed by more than a point. A third rater was assigned to rate those artifacts and make the final decision.

The raters worked independently for approximately 6-8 hours over two days. GEAC members monitored the rating sessions and answered questions as they arose.

## **Inter-rater Reliability**

The ratings by the two raters who read each artifact / portfolio were compared to see if they matched, were off by one point, or were off by two or more points. The results of this analysis appear in the following table and show that more than 76% of the ratings were exact matches or off by one point. There were five portfolios that required a third reader because they differed by more than one point on more than half of the SLO. The third rating was accepted as the final rating for those five portfolios.

SLO	Exact Match		Off by 1		Off by 2 or More		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	20	47	19	44	4	9	43	100
2	19	44	22	51	2	5	43	100
3	19	44	22	51	2	5	43	100
4	25	58	8	19	10	23	43	100

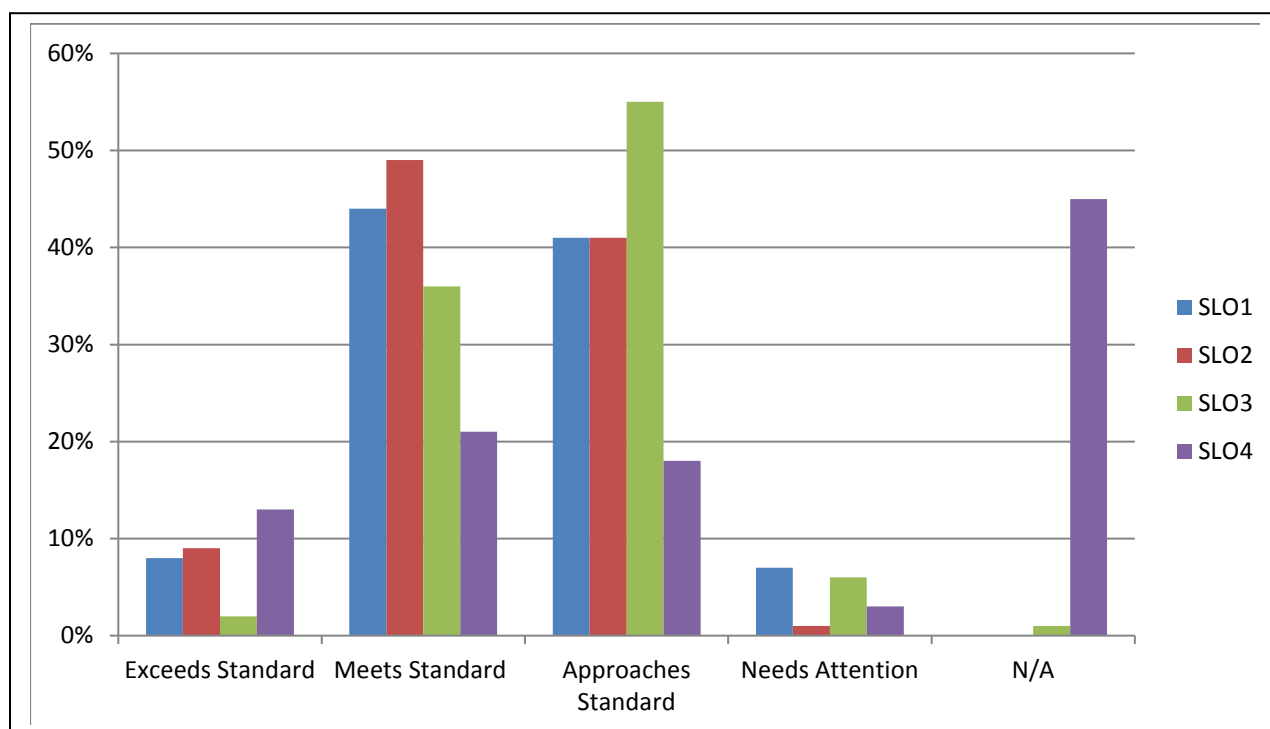
## Results for Literature

### Ratings

As shown in the table below, slightly more than half of the artifacts were rated Meets Standard or Exceeds Standard for SLO 1 (52%) and SLO 2 (58%). Both SLO had a significant number of artifacts rated as Approaches Standard (41%). The majority of artifacts (55%) for SLO 3 were rated as Approaches Standard. In short, half or more of the students were able to critically analyze literature and assess its contributions to our cultural heritage (SLO 1) and develop an understanding of the effective use of the English Language (SLO 2). However, the majority (61%) had difficulty making informed judgments about writers' style and content. The raters were only able to rate about 55% of the artifacts for SLO 4, developing an understanding of the perspectives of a diverse group of writers, suggesting that this SLO was not addressed effectively in many course sections.

	Exceeds Standard	Meets Standard	Approaches Standard	Needs Attention	N/A
<i>Students will critically analyze literature and assess its contributions to our cultural heritage.</i>	8%	44%	41%	7%	0%
<i>Through critical reading and analysis, students will develop an understanding of the effective use of the English language.</i>	9%	49%	41%	1%	0%
<i>Through critical reading and analysis, student will develop the ability to make informed judgments about writers' style and content.</i>	2%	36%	55%	6%	1%

	Exceeds Standard	Meets Standard	Approaches Standard	Needs Attention	N/A
<i>Students will develop an understanding of the perspectives of a diverse group of writers that may include women writers, minority writers, and writers from non-American cultures.</i>	13%	21%	18%	3%	45%



### Debriefing

After all of the ratings were completed, the raters were debriefed and asked about (a) the calibration and rating process, in particular how rigorous and accurate they found it to be; (b) student learning, especially the areas of strength and areas that need improvement; and (c) recommendations for other faculty who teach the L courses.

**Calibration and Rating Process.** The raters thought the calibration was rigorous and accurate and were able to complete the rating process effectively (only five artifacts required a third rater). As noted in the data analysis above, the rubric worked well for SLO 1-3 but not as well for SLO 4 – develop an understanding of the perspectives of a diverse group of writers. The raters discussed the possibility of adjusting the rubric to eliminate some of the Not Applicable ratings. However, reviewing the wording of the SLO and the curriculum designed to teach SLO 4 are other possible solutions that should be explored. In addition the raters also asked that they be provided with the assignments to which students were responding when they wrote their

papers. Finally they discussed the possibility of adding a SLO that would address students' research skills; e.g., appropriate use of sources and search engines.

**Student Learning.** All of the SLO were addressed in the artifacts with the exception of SLO 4 – develop an understanding of the perspectives of a diverse group of writers. Nearly half of the artifacts (45%) were rated as not applicable on SLO 4. As noted above the faculty should consider revising the SLO, ensuring that it is covered in the curriculum, and/or revising the rubric. Beyond their concerns with SLO 4, the raters thought that ENGL 112L was taught by a more experienced group of faculty who were using a diversity of textbooks, and holding students to standards.

The areas of strength for ENGL 112L included:

- Emphasis on engaging thinking beyond just reading
- Captured interdisciplinary literature
- Emphasis on diversity which can be expanded to international literature as well
- The papers did a great job of focusing on SLO 3; SLO 4 was good as well when it was addressed

The areas that need improvement included:

- Papers lack a thesis statement
- Papers would benefit from research
- More emphasis on critical thinking – Bloom's Taxonomy helps to encourage critical thinking as you move through the course – transition from reporting to analyzing

**Recommendations.** Two of the most significant concerns with ENGL 112L are improving the curriculum and/or pedagogy so as to improve student learning for (a) SLO 1-3 so there are more Meets or Exceeds Standard than Approaches Standard ratings; and (b) SLO 4 so as to improve students writing from Needs Attention to Meets or Exceeds Standard. The faculty in the Department of English should consider revising SLO 4, ensuring that it is covered in the curriculum, and/or revising the rubric. Faculty are also encouraged to incorporate more research into the writing required in ENGL 112L. And the raters suggest sharing the rubric with all faculty and students via Blackboard – “make rubric a part of the culture vs. a mandated part of the culture.”

## **Summary and Recommendations**

The assessment process for Literature was rigorous with a thorough calibration during which the raters validated the rubric developed by one of the Assessment Team members. Following calibration, four raters scored about 50 artifacts from ENGL 112L and only five artifacts required a third rater. In general the assessment revealed that half or more of the students were able to critically analyze literature and assess its contributions to our cultural heritage (SLO 1) and develop an understanding of the effective use of the English Language (SLO 2). However, the majority (61%) had difficulty making informed judgments about writers' style and content (SLO 3). The raters were only able to rate about 55% of the artifacts on SLO 4, developing an understanding of the perspectives of a diverse group of writers, suggesting that this SLO was not

addressed effectively in many course sections. It is recommended that faculty review their curriculum and pedagogy for the first three SLO so as to have more artifacts rated as Meets Standard or Exceeds Standard. Particular attention should be focused on SLO 4 to determine whether it needs to be revised or the curriculum needs to be enhanced to address it. Finally, the raters suggested sharing the rubric with both faculty and students via Blackboard so there is common understanding of what is expected.

### **Questions or More Information**

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## ENGL 112L (Introduction to Literature) Rubric

**Note: Raters are encouraged to assign a zero to any paper or collection of papers that does not meet the minimum criterion of “Needs Attention” OR does not address the student learning outcome**

Student Learning Outcomes	Exceeds Standard 4	Meets Standard 3	Approaches Standard 2	Needs Attention 1
<i>Students will critically analyze literature and assess its contributions to our cultural heritage.</i>	<b>Evaluates strategies</b> for relating ideas, text structure, or other textual features in order to <b>develop knowledge or insight</b> about our cultural heritage.	<b>Identifies relations among</b> ideas, text structure, or other textual features, to demonstrate how they support an <b>advanced understanding</b> of our cultural heritage.	<b>Discusses relations among</b> parts or aspects of a text, such as effective or ineffective arguments or literary features, in considering how these contribute to a <b>basic understanding</b> of our cultural heritage.	<b>Identifies aspects of a text</b> (e.g., content, structure, or relations among ideas) as needed to <b>respond to questions</b> posed about our cultural heritage.
<i>Through critical reading and analysis, students will develop an understanding of the effective use of the English language.</i>	<b>Evaluates information gleaned from the text</b> , general background knowledge, and/or specific knowledge of the author’s context to <b>develop knowledge or insight</b> about the author’s message and attitude.	<b>Interprets the information from the text</b> , general background knowledge, and/or specific knowledge of the author’s context to draw more <b>complex inferences</b> about the author’s message and attitude.	<b>Examines textual features</b> (e.g., sentence and paragraph structure or tone) to draw <b>basic inferences</b> about the author’s message and attitude.	<b>Uses vocabulary</b> appropriately to <b>paraphrase or summarize</b> the information the text communicates.
<i>Through critical reading and analysis, student will develop the ability to make informed judgments about writers’ style and content.</i>	<b>Uses a range of interpretative strategies</b> to make meaning of the text and make informed judgments about writers’ style and content.	<b>Articulates an understanding</b> of the multiple ways of reading and the range of interpretive strategies to make informed judgments about writers’ style and content.	<b>Demonstrates a basic understanding of the text</b> , choosing among interpretive strategies to make judgments about writers’ style and content.	<b>Can identify purpose(s) for reading</b> , relying on an external authority such as an instructor for clarification of the task.

Student Learning Outcomes	Exceeds Standard 4	Meets Standard 3	Approaches Standard 2	Needs Attention 1
<i>Students will develop an understanding of the perspectives of a diverse group of writers that may include women writers, minority writers, and writers from non-American cultures.</i>	Demonstrates <b>sophisticated understanding</b> of the complexity of cultural rules and biases important to women writers, minority writers, and writers from non-American cultures.	Demonstrates <b>adequate understanding</b> of the complexity of cultural rules and biases important to women writers, minority writers, and writers from non-American cultures.	Demonstrates <b>partial understanding</b> of the complexity of cultural rules and biases important to women writers, minority writers, and writers from non-American cultures.	Demonstrates <b>basic understanding</b> of the complexity of cultural rules and biases important to women writers, minority writers, and writers from non-American cultures.

Based on three VALUE Rubrics (Reading and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence) from: Rhodes, T. L. (ED.). (2009). *Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.