Bergen Community College

Assessment Report for 2008-2010

Department/Program: Composition and Literature

Department Leader: Andrew Tomko

Liaison: Lou Ethel Roliston

Assessment Project Coordinator (if not the Department Leader):

Date Submitted: Spring 2010

Program(s), if applicable (AAS, Interdepartmental, etc.):

Literature

Mission/Goal statement of the department or program:

Currently in revision

SEMESTER 1: Create the Assessment Plan

Goal or learning objective being assessed:

Student Learning Objective: Examine various literary techniques that writers use in constructing their texts, and demonstrate an understanding of these techniques.

Relevant Core Competencies: (check as many as apply)

☒ Communication   ☐ Quantitative Reasoning   ☒ Critical Thinking

☐ Civic Responsibility   ☐ Technological and Information Fluency   ☐ Personal Skills

☐ Interpersonal Skills   ☐ Creativity and Aesthetic Appreciation   ☒ Applied Knowledge

Means of Assessment:

A common question on a quiz or as part of a larger exam in selected sections of World Literature and American Literature will be administered. The responses to this question will be collected in fall 2009. Literature faculty will develop a rubric which will be used to cross grade the question and assess how well students demonstrate an understanding of thematic interpretations of literary texts.

SEMESTER 2: Develop an Assessment Strategy

Criterion for success:

Seventy-five percent (75%) of students in the sample will demonstrate an understanding of theme as an element of literature by achieving a score oc C or higher on a grading rubric.

Dean's Comments: This is the first time a LIT assessment project is being undertaken. Although important, it is recommended future assessment efforts focus on Composition.

For this study under Means of Assessment: what type of questions will be asked? Will it be part of a quiz or an exam? What kind of response will be required? It is hard to imagine a rubric for the grading of a quiz. The criteria for assessment in the rubric and how the rubric is constructed would determine the effectiveness of the result. What kind of rubric will be used? How mant classes will be involved? How many faculty involved in grading? (Please correct typo "assess" not "access").

Why are two LIT courses chose? Will the data be analyzed separately and compared? Will the results of this study be applied to other LIT courses or just these two? (Have the generic learning goals for all the LIT courses been approved on master syllabi by the College Gen Ed Committee?) Perhaps use one course and create a common questions related to the content of that course---thematic elements in one Am Lit course.

VP's Comments: Sample questions and preliminary rubrics need to be completed ASAP for pre-evaluation. Too much work is being left to year two.

SEMESTER 3: Implement Assessment Plan & Strategy

Summary and analysis of data collected:

A sub-committee of the Literature Work Group (those faculty in the Composition and Literature department who regularly teach Literature electives) developed the assessment tool. The Student Learning Objective to be measured was number 2: "Students will examine various literary techniques that writers use in constructing their texts, and demonstrate an understanding of these techniques." Originally, the committee decided to ask a question about a particular literary technique, i.e., symbolism, setting, irony, et al. When the project was brought before the entire Literature Work Group, however, the majority felt it would be more appropriate and efficacious to ask students to identify a theme in a work of literature. It was agreed that in identifying a theme students would also have to give specific support from the text.

The sub-committee agreed that instructors would be able to choose the text to be used as the basis of the question. Faculty were asked to participate in the project in the fall semester of 2009. Five faculty members agreed. The sub-committee (Adam Goodell, Peter Helff, Thomas LaPointe, and Andrew Tomko) developed a rubric to be used for grading. The original goal of the project was that 75% of students surveyed would receive a C or higher. The project was administered over a two-week period in November of 2009. 90 student responses were returned. The sub-committee next met in the spring of 2010 to grade the results. We first had a norming session to make sure our standards were consistent. Then the student responses were divided up so that each committee member read two sets; thus, all of the responses were read by two readers, blind to the score of the other reader. 29 responses required a third reading; these were done by readers who had not read the papers in the first round.

Literature Assessment Project Results

Grade received	A	split A/C	C	F
numbers	5	11	34	40
percentages	5.6%	12.2%	37.8%	44.4%

total number of responses: 90

total passing with C or above: 50 or 55.56%

total failing: 40 or 44.4%

our goal was 75% passing with C or better.

notes:

4 readers; each response read by two separate readers, blind to first response.

29 responses required a third reading. 23 were split between C and F; 6 were split between A and F.

Third readings done by readers who had not seen response in the first round, also blind.

We did not try to reconcile readings split between A and C, since both were passing grades.

LIT Assessment Instrument

Objective to be measured:

#2. Examine various literary techniques that writers use in constructing their texts, and demonstrate an understanding of these techniques.

Sample Question:

In a paragraph, identify a theme in _____* and provide evidence from the text to support your interpretation.

* instructor provides work or list of works

LIT Assessment Rubric

Responses will include the following elements:

1)   A theme from the work is clearly identified

2)   The theme is interpreted

3)   Specific support, i.e., a specific incident in the work is cited, is present

4)   The support is linked to the identified theme

Numbers 1 and 3 are absolute requirements; absent one of these, the response cannot receive a passing score.

Responses should be marked, F (failing), C (passing), or A (exceptional).

(The Summary should appear here. Use attachments only to provide information to support the summary.)

SEMESTER 4: Reporting and Revising

Use of results:

The 55.56% passing rate was of course disappointing. In the meetings of the sub-committee, however, it was clear that we needed to make sure students were really grasping the material. Indeed, several responses in the norming session made us question whether or not the student had actually read the text; it may have been the case that the student was regurgitating information delivered by the instructor.   This, we felt, was an important issue to bring back to faculty. Additionally, asking a question on theme, which can be a somewhat abstract concept to grasp, may have encouraged more vague responses from students. The next step will be to bring the results back to the Work Group for discussion.

Dean's Comments:

VP's Comments: