

**ASSESSMENT Activities for 2015-2016**

**Africana Studies Program, College of Social Sciences**

**Due September 1, 2016**

1. *What learning outcomes did we assess this year?*

For the academic year 2015-2016 we assessed two SOAP outcomes with two sets of final portfolios and two sets of surveys for *AFRS 129: African American Literary Classics* and *AFRS 104W: Writing About American Inequality*:

* **Goal B.** To improve the ability of students to think critically, analyze issues, and acquire oral and written communication skills. **Outcome 4.** Demonstrate oral communication and interpretive skills (assessed in 104W)
* **Goal C:** To integrate service-learning, provide resources to the greater Fresno community **Outcome 6.** Students will promote awareness and understanding of local and/or international issues related to race, race relations and tolerance and serve as advocates in the community to provide resources related to Africana Studies in the greater Fresno area. (assessed in 129)

1. *What instruments did we use to assess them?*
2. **Direct measure/holistic rubric** – final portfolios and final reflections in 104W about the writing process and strategies to improve writing. Students had many choices sampling writing done throughout the semester, and they also made different choices in reflecting on strategies for improving writing so we used a holistic rubric. Sample of 12 portfolios, half of a class, 92 pages total.

**Rubric scale**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AFRS 104W Portfolio # | 1 = Not proficient | 2 = Developing competence/moderate proficiency | 3 = Proficient skills/developed competence | 4 = Excellent skills, exemplary competence |
| Scale | Shows minimal awareness and knowledge of writing strategies, the writing process and communication skills | Identifies partial understanding of writing strategies, the writing process and communication skills | Demonstrates knowledge of multiple strategies for writing process and communication skills | Articulates complex understanding of writing strategies, the writing process and communication skills |
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1. **Indirect measure –** student survey on 104W’s writing practices and use of the wiki on Blackboard for sharing writing, revising and peer review. 6 questions, 40 surveys total.
2. **Direct measure/Holistic rubric** – final portfolios and final reflections in AFRS 129 which included final reflections, letters exchanged with Hoover High students and their own poetry. Sample of 12 portfolios, 1/3 of the class, 250 pages total.

**Rubric Scale**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AFRS 129 Portfolio # | 1 = Not proficient | 2 = Developing competence/moderate proficiency | 3 = Proficient skills/developed competence | 4 = Excellent skills, exemplary competence |
| Scale | Shows minimal awareness and knowledge of race-related issues and AFRS resources | Identifies partial understanding of race-related issues and AFRS resources | Demonstrates knowledge of multiple race-related issues and AFRS resources | Articulates complex understanding of race-related issues and AFRS resources |
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1. **Indirect measure** – student feedback survey about 129’s service learning project with 11th graders at Hoover High on African American poetry, poetry writing and mentoring. 4 questions, 42 surveys total.
2. *What did we discover from the data? What changes will we make as a result of the findings?*

**Outcome B-4, AFRS 104W: Writing About American Inequality** *–* For the portfolios AFRS faculty scored samples separately using the rubric. Seven out of twelve portfolios were rated at the top of the scale as a 4, which is 58% of the sample and slightly below the benchmark of 2/3 in top 30% of the rating rubric. One third (4) portfolios were rated as a 3 with proficient skills and developed competence and one portfolio received a 2 with moderate proficiency. Below are some sample quotes from student work to demonstrate levels of proficiency:

* 1. *Scale of 2* = Developing competence/moderate proficiency *“*One of things I have learn in class was free writing. I took free writing for granted as a waste of time. As I practice free writing, it allows me to just write without any pressure. It allows me to go back and reread what I wrote which allows me to turn into an easy (sic), little stories and even poem.” (Sample 4)
  2. *Scale of 3 =* Proficient skills/developed competence
* “I learned new concepts of what it means to be a writer or even how to become a better writer in this class but what I am more thankful about this class is that I discovered qualities I didn’t know I possessed within my own writing.” (Sample 8)
* “As I mentioned if there was no procrastination I think a lot of my work would be flawless because I would allow myself the time to make the necessary revisions before turning it in. A strength I know that I do have is getting to the meat of the info.” (Sample 3)
* “As a future social worker, I will be able to tell someone else’s story as if it were my own. As I am leaning towards working in the penal system, I could give a voice to so many who have lost theirs.” (Sample 9)
  1. *Scale of 4 =* Excellent skills, exemplary competence
* “To be a great writer one must definitely be willing to read. How else will you be able to see proper examples and learn what and what not to do in your writing? I came across a quote that really caught my attention, in both an educational and humorous way. The quote says, ‘The greatest part of a writer’s time is spent in reading, in order to write; a man will turn over half a library to make one book.’ (Samuel Johnson) I understood this perfectly.” (Sample 4)
* “In just one short semester we covered a lot of strategies to writing and I was introduced to new writing styles in creative writing. These new skills have helped me grow as a writer and also helped me learn new ways to personalize my writing and to incorporate my ideas while still using outside sources in research papers.” (Sample 7)
* “After this, I mix it all together: my free-writes, ideas, supporting topics and details, and outline. …Before I can print, I must make sure my essay is concise and with no errors, so I have my sister review it. Next, I read it out loud, before I hit print on my printer. Lastly, if I see no errors, I click *print* and my end result is a well-written essay or poem.” (Sample 11)

These portfolios show the benefits of students having a variety of choices in developing their writing and improving their communication skills. We will continue to implement multiple types of writing tasks and peer review feedback tasks for students to support each other’s progress and improve their own writing process.

For the AFRS 104W survey on revising practices and posting to the wiki, 70% of respondents (28 out of 40) said they revised their writing “often – more than 50%” or “always” while 12% said they revised their writing “sometimes – less than 50%” and 18% said they revised their writing 50% of the time. We think these results could be improved by encouraging even more revision for writing tasks through the wiki and through in-class activities. In addition, due to qualitative feedback on the surveys about the quality of student feedback, we will implement more structured guidelines for giving constructive, specific feedback on particular assignments that require specific outcomes. This class does a great many creative writing exercises which will remain open and less structured allowing for a full dialogue and variety of responses in feedback.

**Outcome C- 6, AFRS 129: African American Literary Classics** – Again we used a holistic rubric for diverse final portfolios and final reflection essays on the service-learning project with Hoover High. AFRS 129 is an elective in the major and a high-enrolled GE I/C course. This service-learning project was a one-time project with a fellow teacher from the San Joaquin Valley Writing Project, and we also conducted a similar mentoring and writing project with Liberal Studies students in *SSCI 180: Diversity in the U.S.* in the spring semester partnered with Edison High students. One third of the sample (4 portfolios) for 129 scored in the top 25% of the rubric with a score of 4 for exemplary competence, 58% of the sample (7 portfolios) scored a 3 with developed competence, and 1 portfolio scored a 2 with moderate proficiency. These scores do not meet the benchmark set in the SOAP which may be a factor of the broad range of skills in GE classes in general. Students taking AFRS 129 are usually new to the field of Africana Studies and come from a wide range of majors. Although we do not plan to repeat this particular project, we still plan to seek out service-learning opportunities for our students. In particular, Dr. Oputa has expressed an interest in reviving our fieldwork course *AFRS 189: Fieldwork in Community Relations*, and we look forward to supporting that new initiative.

Sample student quotes below document the different ratings given for AFRS 129 for SOAP outcome C-6:

1. Scale of 2 = Developing competence/moderate proficiency

* “Maya’s story is similar to many young black women in American as they maintain fortitude when sexism and racism arise. Malcolm X and Maya Angelou are great leaders to look up to in the face of adversity as a black man or women in American.” (Sample 3)

1. Scale of 3 = Proficient skills/developed competence /Demonstrates knowledge of multiple race-related issues and AFRS resources

* “The courage [Malcolm X and Maya Angelou] had to stand up to defeat the racism is a direct link to protesters today. The unity that we see for these protest come from the stories we have heard from our older generations.” Pg. 15 “…we gain from elder[s] because knowing what they were able to accomplish ignites a fire within us to achieve…” (Sample 6)
* Pg. 2 “The most meaningful lesson for me came from Langston Hughes’ Ku Klux poem. Brittany & I both agreed that the excessive abuse the black man seemed to have endured was beyond unnecessary.” “I expected to solely provide meaningful service, but within this semester I have actually gained unexpected knowledge about myself as well as this community.” (Sample 5)
* “I hit the wall, but I felt my own strength when I was able to pick myself back up. My maturity had not grown instantly, but I finally caught ahold of it. I began reading and writing more; trying to reform my mind and gain intelligence. I know that this is one of the main things that attracted me to Malcolm X in his autobiography.” (Sample 11)

1. Scale of 4 =Excellent skills, exemplary competence

* “We also see Black student athletes banding together against racial injustices at certain colleges the same way as when Malcolm X would unite African Americans at his rallies to preach to the people about how they can overcome racial injustices. I feel like Malcom X paved a way for many African Americans in todays’ generation by inspiring people to take leadership roles against fighting oppression.” (Sample 4)
* Pg. 22 “My high school partner and I shared a lot of things that were very significant to both of us as we respected our beliefs. We both chose poems that were related to oppression, racism, and other life issues that we are still facing in this generation. Our own personal poems inspired both of us to try something new and different as we continue to reflect on poetry.” (Sample 8)

As demonstrated by these student samples, students with higher scores in the rubric developed their ideas related to race, race relations and tolerance with greater complexity and more depth. All of the students described benefits of exchanging ideas in their letters and also meeting with their student partners at Hoover High, and it should be noted that all students who participated did “serve as advocates in the community to provide resources related to Africana Studies in the greater Fresno area” as the SOAP outcome states.

For the survey given about the service learning project we asked students the following questions:

1. On a scale of 1-4, did the service-learning project inspire you to revise and put more effort into your writing (letters and poetry) to mentor a young person in high school?

1 = not at all 2 = a little 3 = somewhat 4 = very much

1. Did the readings linked to the service-learning project raise your awareness of race relations and racial inequality in the U.S.?

1 = not at all 2 = a little 3 = somewhat 4 = very much

1. What was your least favorite and most favorite part of participating in the Hoover High project? Do you have any advice for future participants?

A majority of students responded with the highest ratings for both questions 1 & 2, 63% for question 1 and 56% for question 2. The same number of responses (37%) expressed that they revised their writing and that readings linked to the service learning project raised their awareness of racial inequality “somewhat,” and less than 10% of responses said that their awareness of race relations and racial inequality was raised “a little.” In relation to improving the project, many students expressed an interest in meeting with their student pen pals more often to get to know them better. We only met twice face-to-face, once in October for a poetry-writing workshop in Madden Library with local poets Lee Herrick and Mike Medrano, and once in December for a poetry slam at Hoover High. Many students said that the poetry reading at Hoover High was their favorite part of the project because we listened to all of the Hoover High students share poems that they wrote during the semester. At the same time multiple students also expressed some dissatisfaction that meetings outside of class were mandatory for the service-learning project. However, we did fill out service-learning contracts at the start of the semester which made these expectations clear from the beginning.

1. *What assessment activities will we be conducting in the 2016-2017 academic year?*

Our timeline of activities has finished in our current SOAP so we will be creating a new timeline of activities for 2017-2021 as well as completing a summary of assessment activities for the last three years, 2014-2017. We are scheduled to conduct an Alumni Survey and an exit survey for *AFRS 15: Slavery and the American Experience*.

1. *What progress have we made on items from our last program review action plan?*

The Africana Studies Program continues to host and support many public events in conjunction with Welcome Black, African Peoples’ History Month, the Black Popular Culture Lecture Series, the Hip Hop Research and Interview Project, the African American Intellectual Thought Symposium, African American EDGE, Onyx, ABC (Afrikan-Black Coalition), Latino Commencement and African American Commencement. The program is still in the process of developing joint certificates with other departments, such as History. We have experienced three failed joint searches in the past three years (CLAS, Sociology and Criminology), and we our currently embarking on a renewed joint search with the Criminology Department. We are also beginning a new search related to West African culture to replace a senior faculty member who left the university in 2010. AFRS faculty participated in Harambee, the new Black student welcome retreat, and we will continue recruitment activities through participation with on-campus events.