**GE IC ARTS & HUMANITIES:**

**SLO Evaluation Report July 2023**

**Background/Description of GE Program ePortfolio:**

Prior to the 2017-2018 AY, departments/programs were responsible for assessing GE student learning outcomes and submitting a report every year for the GE Committee to review. This system had several weaknesses. Departments and programs were responsible for deciding which of the two to four outcomes designated for a specific GE Area to assess; thus some outcomes were evaluated multiple times within a year and others were not evaluated at all in certain years. It was also not possible for departments to access and evaluate a representative sample of student work, nor was it possible to compare the results from GE courses in the same GE Area taught by different departments/programs, because each department/program used its own criteria/rubrics. Finally, the GE Committee was not able to review and analyze the GE assessment reports in a comprehensive fashion, since the committee was also tasked with reviewing all GE curriculum proposals, as well as with discussing and updating GE policies and procedures.

Therefore, Fresno State developed a proposal for a new system of evaluating GE student learning outcomes during the 2014-2015 AY. The proposal was approved by Fresno State’s Academic Senate in May 2017 and by the President in August of 2017. Essentially, all freshmen and transfer students admitted to Fresno State beginning in Fall 2018 will submit one designated assignment aligned to one GE student outcome from lower-division (for freshmen) and upper-division (for freshmen and transfer students) GE courses to a GE Program ePortfolio. Students will also write 300-word reflections (freshmen write three and transfer students write one) about their learning and submit these to the GE Program ePortfolio. The GE Program ePortfolio was set up by the Director of Assessment and students were automatically enrolled. Handouts, videos, and other resources that were posted previously to Blackboard were uploaded to Canvas when the campus transitioned from Blackboard to Canvas.

During the first year of implementation (2017-2018 AY), efforts focused on electing members to the new GE Assessment Subcommittee and on approving common rubrics to be used to evaluate GE student learning outcomes. Fresno State’s GE student learning outcomes were approved by the Academic Senate in 2010. These forty outcomes were originally to be evaluated on a five-year rotating schedule. With the addition of Area F to the GE curriculum, the outcomes are now evaluated on a six-year schedule.

The ePortfolio submission process will change in Fall 2023. The university contracted with Canvas to develop an assignment LTI that eliminates the need for students to submit the designated assignments to their ePortfolio. When GE faculty set up their course in Canvas, they designate which assignment is the ePortfolio assignment. When students submit the designated assignment to their professor, the LTI duplicates the assignment and seamlessly routes that copy to their ePortfolio.

In the 2022-2023 AY, the Director of Assessment selected a random sample of student submissions for the two learning outcomes in Area IC, Arts and Humanities.. The Chair of the GE Assessment Subcommittee selected two faculty members from the subcommittee to assess each learning outcome. The Director of Assessment collaborated with each team of subcommittee members to determine which assignments aligned well with the relevant learning outcome. The Director of Assessment then provided a random sample of assignments to the team and they applied the appropriate rubric to assess the assignments and determine student proficiency in each learning outcome.

**GE Assessment Subcommittee: Evaluation and Norming Process:**

The GE Assessment Subcommittee had previously reviewed and approved common rubrics for evaluating each of the two GE learning outcomes designated for GE Area IC. Prior to conducting the assessment, the Director of Assessment met with each faculty team for the purpose of norming. Each team member had independently reviewed a sample of student work and used the rubric to evaluate the work. Where there were discrepancies in the team members’ ratings of proficiency or questions about the rubric criteria, the Director of Assessment and team members discussed the reasons for the differences and reached a consensus on how to apply the rubric going forward. The faculty teams then independently scored all of the selected assignments. After scoring the work, faculty teams met to identify common strengths and weaknesses. A third reviewer scored all assignments on which the two reviewers did not agree about proficiency.

**Student Learning Outcomes and measures (assignments) used to evaluate**

***Student Learning Outcomes***

Upon completion of a course in Area IC (Integration - Arts and Humanities), a student will be able to:

1. Recognize and explain, subjectively or objectively, the content and interpretation of creative works of culture (artistic, literary, and intellectual).
2. Explain relationships among the humanities, arts, and the self.

***Assignments:***

Multiple courses satisfy area IC requirements and were a source of assignments for this assessment. For learning outcome 1, these included Armenian Studies, Art, English, French, Humanities, Music, Spanish, Theatre, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. For learning outcome 2, these included courses in Armenian Studies, Art, English, Interdisciplinary Art Studies, Linguistics, Music, Theatre, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

For learning outcome 1, the assignments required students to analyze a variety of creative works, including music, film, literature, drama, and paintings. For learning outcome 2, the assignments required students to respond a variety of works of art, music, and literature. These included works by Khachatur Abolian, Rudolfo Anaya, Sarah Delappe, Billie Holiday, Lucy Lippard, Paul McCartney, Ronald Takaki, and Lauren Yee. Students were also called on to apply concepts from diverse fields in the humanities. One assignment required students to draft a letter to their local school board explaining how their arts education had an impact on their lives.

**RESULTS**

**Results for Area IC, Learning Outcome 1**

The evaluation of IC learning outcome 1 resulted in the following ratings:

* Proficient 35 (100%)
* Developing 0 (0%)

Students were rated proficient if they scored 3 (advanced) or 2 (proficient) on the rubric. Students were rated developing if they scored a 1.

Inter-rater reliability was 97.1%, above Fresno State’s benchmark of 90%.

The students did very well on this assessment. Faculty reviewers are not asked to reconcile ratings when they agree as to proficiency but disagree about rating a paper a 3 (advanced) or 2 (proficient). It is noteworthy that seventeen students earned scores of 3 from both reviewers. Some distinctions can be made based on the comments reviewers made for papers that each reviewer rated 3 (advanced) or 2 (proficient).

For assignments rated advanced, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Clearly explained points of interpretation
* Included several interpretive art examples
* Interpretation of two characters well developed
* Interpretation from perspective of different cultures provided
* Ample explanation of content
* Provided multiple examples, detailed examples
* Good job comparing and contrasting
* Analyzed topic from different angles

For arguments rated proficient, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Paper compared and contrasted two songs, but the interpretation was basic
* Did not provide multiple examples
* Paper was mostly a plot summary
* Some information missing
* Description was superficial

In summary, papers rated advanced were more developed than papers rated proficient. The advanced papers used more examples, provided stronger interpretations, and detailed explanations. The papers rated proficient included interpretation and at least one example, but had less development of their analysis.

**Results for Area IC, Learning Outcome 2**

The evaluation of IC, Learning Outcome 2 resulted in the following ratings:

* Proficient 33 (91.7%)
* Developing 3 (8.3%)

Students were rated proficient if they scored a 3 (advanced) or 2 (proficient) on the rubric. Students were rated developing if they scored a 1 on the rubric.

Inter-rater reliability was 91.4%, meeting Fresno State’s benchmark of 90%.

For assignments rated proficient, reviewers made comments about the quality of the analysis such as these:

* Makes important, substantial comparisons between the arts and the self
* Clear explanation of the relationship between arts, humanities, and the self
* Multiple, specific and relevant examples
* Examples were related to both self-experience and research

For assignments rated proficient, reviewers also made a number of comments that were specific to the artifact(s) being analyzed:

* Gender differences explained with examples
* Works of art were related to socio-political issues, history, and the self
* Sociolinguistics were related to the self, experience, and culture
* Immigrant family language issues were related to the student’s own family language experience
* A memoir explaining how the living environment of prison affected the author, examples emphasized the effect of setting on story writing

For assignments rated developing, reviewers made comments such as these:

* Not enough emphasis on the relationship with the self
* No clear explanation of the relationship between the songs and the self
* Only a single example that could be understood as a connection between arts, humanities, and the self
* Historical report, references insufficient to meet the rubric

In summary, papers rated proficient provided clear definitions, strong connections to the self, and detailed, relevant examples. For many of the papers, the reviewers were impressed with the significance of the subject matter under consideration and the ways that the students made connections between that subject and themselves. Papers rated developing were missing a clear connection to the self and/or provided limited examples.

**Disaggregated Assessment Data for Upper Division GE**

Disaggregated assessment data is an important element of the university’s diversity, justice, equity, and inclusion efforts.[[1]](#footnote-1) The assessment results for upper division GE assignments were analyzed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to determine whether there were equity gaps in the results. For first generation students, 92.6% of assignments were rated proficient, compared to 90.7% of continuing generation students. For historically underrepresented students, 93.8% of the assignments were rated proficient, compared to 94% of students who were not part of that group. For females, 95.7% of the assignments were rated proficient, compared to 86.7% of men.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The disaggregated data are shown in the following table:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Upper Division GE Assessment Proficiency** **AY 2022-23** | |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Column1** | **Column2** | **Column3** | **Column4** |
|  |  | **Percentage Proficient** | **Significant Difference (.05)** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **All Students (n = 216)** |  | 92.7% | N/A |
|  |  |  |  |
| **First Generation** |  |  |  |
|  | Yes | 92.6% | No |
|  | No | 90.7% |  |
| **Sex** |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 95.7% | Yes |
|  | Male | 86.7% |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Historically Underrepresented Students** | |  |  |
|  | Yes | 93.8% | No |
|  | No | 94% |  |

The disaggregated data are noteworthy because there was not an equity gap in the results for first generation students or historically underrepresented groups. Furthermore, all these student groups exceeded Fresno State’s 90% benchmark for proficiency. There was a statistically significant difference in results for male and female students. Women exceeded Fresno State’s benchmark, with 95.7% demonstrating proficiency. For men, 86.7% of the assignments were proficient, slightly below Fresno State’s benchmark.

**Conclusions**

The results of the assessment of Area IC (Arts and Humanities) were excellent. For Learning Outcome 1 (recognize and explain the content and interpretation of creative works), 100% of submissions were rated proficient. For Learning Outcome 2 (explain the relationship among humanities, the arts, and the self), 91.7% of the submissions were rated proficient. The results for both learning outcomes exceeded Fresno State’s 90% benchmark.

For Upper Division GE assignments, the disaggregated data showed that students with first generation status and historically underrepresented status had nearly identical proficiency ratings to students who were not in these groups. And all these group’s proficiency ratings exceeded Fresno State’s 90% benchmark. Women had a higher percentage of papers rated proficient when compared to men and these results were statistically significant. These results are consistent with the disaggregated data for the 2021-22 assessment of GE Area D.

Faculty reviewer comments contained several common themes. For Learning Outcome 1, the papers clearly explained points of interpretation, provided multiple detailed examples, offered interpretations from different cultural perspectives, and analyzed the topic from multiple angles. For Learning Outcome 2, proficient papers made important and substantial links between arts and the self, provided multiple specific and relevant examples, and used examples that related to both self-experience and research. For the two papers that were not rated proficient, more explanation of the relationship of creative works to the self and more examples of that relationship were needed.

Another issue that has often arisen during GE Assessment is the question of whether the prompt aligns well with one or more GE Learning Outcomes for that area. Overall, there were more papers that aligned with GE Learning Outcomes in the upper division GE assignments than in the lower division GE Areas assessed in 2020-21 and 2021-22. The improved alignment was especially evident for Learning Outcome 1. It was more challenging to find papers that related to Learning Outcome 2 (relationship between creative works and the self). During assessment of Area C1 in 2020-21, it was also difficult to find assignments that related well to Learning Outcome 2 (relationship of the self to the arts in a given cultural context). Perhaps GE faculty in the arts do not emphasize the relationship of the arts and the self in their curriculum and assignments and this type of learning outcome should be reconsidered. There is a suggestion box for Learning Outcomes on the new GE Faculty Canvas site (see below) and faculty in the arts will be encouraged to consider this option.

To assist GE faculty with alignment and other GE Assessment policies, a new site has been created in Canvas for all GE Faculty. This site has modules explaining how to implement the new assignment designation tool, the GE Learning Outcomes and Rubrics, guidelines on alignment with learning outcomes, results of previous GE assessments, and a suggestion box. signment designation tool, the GE Learning Outcomes and Rubrics, guidelines on alignment with learning outcomes, results of previous GE assessments, and a suggestion box for Learning Outcomes. All GE faculty are included on this site and the participants can be updated by the Office of IDEAS as new GE faculty are added. This will hopefully make it easier to inform new GE faculty about GE assessment. Many lower division GE courses are taught by lecturers who may be less connected to campus communications than tenured/tenure track faculty. Some part time lecturers are hired near the start of a semester because openings in the schedule have suddenly occurred.

. A challenge noted during previous lower division GE assessments is the workability of assessing proficiency for each GE Learning Outcome in a single assignment. Upper division GE courses require at least 2,000 words of writing, with one assignment of at least 1,000 words. The upper division papers assessed in 2022-23 were significantly longer than the typical papers assigned in lower division GE courses, which may have made it easier for students to demonstrate proficiency on learning outcomes. The minimum writing requirement for lower division GE courses is 1,000 words total. The GE Learning Outcomes for some areas (such as A3 Critical Thinking) are discrete and can be assessed in a single assignment in a course where students are writing about 1,000 words in a term. Other Learning Outcomes include substantial content, and it is difficult for an assignment of 1,000 words or less to cover the totality of a learning outcome.

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1. . Ruth Williams, “Culturally Responsive Assessment, What to Tackle First,” NIOLA, December 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . The difference between first generation students and students who were not part of that group were not statistically significant (.05 level), nor was the difference between historically underrepresented students and students who were not part of that group. The difference between men and women was statistically significant. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)