EWU Programmatic SLO Assessment
AY 2013-14 and "Closing the Loop" for AY 2012-13

Degree/Certificate: BA

Major/Option: English/Literature
Submitted by: Christina A. Valeo
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Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2013-14

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Part I – for the 2013-14 academic year: Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Summary Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

1. **Student Learning Outcome**: The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.

Students will be able to "compose sophisticated argument[s] that are well organized and supported."

2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

    _____*SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing*
    assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;
    __X___*SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;*
    _____*SLO met without change required*

3. **Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

Final student papers were gathered from our capstone course in the English Literature program (ENGL 490: Literature at the Crossroads). As the last major writing assignment in our undergraduate program, these papers should represent our students' best achievements in academic arguments. Papers were anonymously reviewed for qualities of "sophisticated argument," "well organized," and "well supported," and then scored on a 9-pt rubric (see below).

4. **Observations gathered from data**: Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.

    a. Findings: The six papers scored earned the following points on a 9pt scale:

        3, 4, 4, 5, 5.5, 6

    b. Analysis of findings:
    A '9' on this rubric would represent a paper ready for publication, so these scores reflect a reasonable level of achievement for upper-level undergraduates. However, while the students had sophisticated ideas and topics and ample support from primary and secondary sources, most had not structured their arguments to best showcase their thinking. Thesis statements were buried or evolving, terms were not defined early in the papers, some ideas were repeated or appeared too late in the paper to be useful.   We surmise that while we are carefully structuring some expectations of paper writing in our program (length of papers, numbers/types of sources, eg), we are not yet being explicit enough in our instruction of advanced academic argument.

5. **What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**

    a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

    The program director will consult with the Director of Composition in search of a possible shared text (book length or article) that describes best practices in the teaching of advanced academic argument.   Faculty in the literature program will be invited to read and consider this shared text, so that we can discuss this instructional issue without falling into the pitfalls of critiquing each other's classroom work. We'll gather at a meeting to discuss this text and then to articulate possible milestones in argument instruction at the 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses in our program

    b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

    Fall 2014: common text/resource selected
    Winter 2015: program meeting to discuss academic argument instruction
    Spring 2015: further review of final papers in Capstone and other student work samples

6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

Email report to your Dean and Helen Bergland (hbergland@ewu.edu) by November 3, 2014 | Questions? 509-359-4305

For this learning outcome, an essential step will be to consider student work samples from earlier in our course sequence in order to see what milestones are achievable at each course level.   Reviewing the final products, as we did this year, illustrates shortcomings in SLOs, but is less helpful in articulating an improvement solution.

EWU Undergraduate Literature Program
SLO 2013-2014: Students will compose sophisticated arguments that are well organized and supported.
Paper #_____   Rater: _____
Evaluation Rubric:

	Outstanding (3pts)	Strong (2pts)	Adequate (1pt)	Inadequate (0 pts)
Sophisticated argument	The argument is original and complex, and approaches the kind of subject worthy of publication in scholarly journals	The paper makes a strong, original, and thoughtful academic argument	An argument is present, though perhaps not particularly original or complex.	The "argument" of the paper does not represent a real, academic argument
Well organized	A powerful introduction, transitions, and structure all contribute to the overall strength of the argument	The organization of the paper includes a structure that builds the argument and clear transitions.	The paper is organized in a way that a reader can easily follow	The paper lacks a clear organizational structure
Well supported	Support for all claims is academic and convincing, with articulate reasoning and explications	Support for all claims is academic, convincing, and explained.	All claims are supported with academic evidence	Claims are made without support OR support is not academic

NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP

FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2012-13 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

In response to the university's accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, this section has been added. This should be viewed as a follow up to the previous year's findings. In other words, begin with findings from 2012-13, and then describe actions taken during 2013-14 to improve student learning along, provide a brief summary of findings, and describe possible next steps.

> *Working definition for closing the loop: Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning." Adapted 8.21.13 from http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html.*

1. **Student Learning Outcome(s)** assessed for 2012-13
2. **Strategies implemented** during 2013-14 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2012-13 assessment activities.
3. **Summary of results** (may include comparative data or narrative; description of changes made to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.): Describe the effect of the changes towards improving student learning and/or the learning environment.
4. What **further changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery,** etc. are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?

Note: Due to sabbaticals and faculty job changes, we did not complete an SLO assessment for 2012-2013. We made some progress in other areas of improvements (including discussion and explication of paper-writing expectations at each level of our program), but did not complete a formal assessment for which we could "close the loop." We look forward to this reflection opportunity at this time next year, and in the years to come.