Yeah, WRITE!

New Disciplinary Writing Curriculum as Outcome of Assessment Cycle

Center for Pacific Islands Studies, SPAS
Julie Walsh and Jan Rensel

Introduction

In May 2014 faculty collected student course assignments and evaluated them collaboratively using a rough rubric. The results showed that 50% of students were not meeting our writing and critical thinking expectations.

BA Program Outcomes

1. Students can describe the diversity and similarity of issues in Oceania.
2. Students can identify major events in the history of the region and analyze processes of change in island societies.
3. Students can research and communicate indigenous issues and concerns.
4. Students can demonstrate critical thinking and write analytically.
5. Students can interact with and advocate for Pacific Island communities at home or abroad.
6. Students can analyze and interpret creative practices in Oceania.

Sample Topics in Yeah, WRITE! Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Notes</th>
<th>Prewriting</th>
<th>Writing as Performance</th>
<th>Writing for Different Audiences and Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Book Reviews</td>
<td>Writing Film Reviews</td>
<td>Writing Grant Proposals</td>
<td>Writing Reflection Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Research Papers</td>
<td>Engaging with Literature</td>
<td>Citations and References</td>
<td>Visual Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategies to address Writing and Critical Thinking Skills

1. Revised program SLOs to be explicit about analytic writing and critical thinking in interdisciplinary field.
2. Developed lessons on reading, writing, research skills to be taught in our courses, for majors and non-majors: Yeah, WRITE!
3. Added a Writing Intensive focus to 6 of 8 core courses.
4. Faculty collaboratively created a new rubric to assess writing and critical thinking.
5. Faculty will assess SLO4 every two years to see impact of Yeah, WRITE!

Use of Results and Action Plan

Faculty are utilizing Managing Editor Dr. Jan Rensel and Graduate Assistant Candice Steiner to conduct in-class workshops and share resources for students to use in writing assignments across the curriculum.

Faculty will align the Yeah, WRITE! Curriculum with the new rubric so that skills are introduced, reinforced, and mastered as students progress through the BA program.

Coordination with Pacific Collection librarians assists students with research and reinforces information literacy skills and outcomes.

Faculty have also extended writing support for MA students. Dr. Rensel, Ms. Steiner, and CPIS teaching faculty have organized writing groups for MA students working on theses and portfolios.

Conclusions

Faculty involvement in assessment scoring led to recognition of students’ need for more instruction and support of writing and critical thinking skills.

Collaborations with library staff, athletic department tutoring programs, English department, and our colleagues resulted in a new curriculum and an assessment process to monitor its impact on student learning outcomes.