Gen Ed News

Attention! All Tier Two Instructors

If you teach a Tier Two general education course, and care about student learning, please consider this request. We are doing an assessment of how well our students meet two of the gen ed learning outcomes: Communication Effectively and Think Critically. In order to do this, we need to have student work (artifacts) that reflect these two areas. On the next page is a letter from Vice-Provost Gail Burd regarding the importance of this measure and how you can be a part. It will take minimal effort and time on your part. We do all the “heavy lifting”. BUT without your participation, we cannot get the student work to evaluate. This is NOT a measure of your teaching or class. We simply want to see if our students are able to write and think. We did a similar study like this four years ago and we want to see how our students are doing.

Please read the letter on the next page. The links are at the bottom of that page.

Be proud of your students by helping with our study.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding this request, please contact Elaine at evm@email.arizona.edu or 621-1328.

OIA Offerings: Facilitating Student Learning

Facilitating student learning encompasses all of the strategies instructors can use to support student learning in any delivery format, on-ground, hybrid, or online.

The links below are designed to help you with this facilitation. They are listed in order of increasing time commitment, from browsing our online resources to semester-long, for-credit courses.

OIA Mini-Primers

These are short, narrative introductions to a variety of teaching topics with links to web resources.

Active Learning Strategies
Collaborative Learning
Learning Sciences Strategies

Using Clickers for Learning OIA Mini-Primers List

OIA Tutorials

These are self-enrolled and self-paced online tutorials, designed for any UA instructor, and offered through D2L. A sample of the tutorials related to facilitating student learning are listed below. To access the full list of tutorials, click on the OIA Tutorial List below.

Active Student Learning
Teaching Diverse Students
Mini-Courses

You can expect to spend about an hour a day on the content for these online mini-courses. Where indicated below, some include synchronous meetings, but most of the work for these will be at your own pace.

Mini-courses List

D2L Did you know?

Brightspace/D2L has been working on adding annotation capabilities to Assignments. Once implemented instructors will be able to markup submissions directly, in Brightspace/D2L instead of having to click through to Turnitin.com’s Grademark. Once annotations are implemented in Assignments, Grademark will still be available. Instructors will have the option to use whichever tool they prefer to markup documents. This functionality will be released this spring. Stay tuned.

Phone: 626-6804
8am -5pm M-F
Help Pages:
http://help.d2l.arizona.edu
Meet the Instructor:
Dr. Joela Jacobs

An Assistant Professor of German Studies, Joela is affiliated with the Institute of the Environment, the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies, and the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies, which reflect some of her interdisciplinary research interests. She came to the US from Germany for graduate school at the University of Chicago, where she improved her grad student stipend by working as a Certified Teaching Consultant.

Her GenEd courses include “From Animation to Zombies,” a course in which 250 freshmen explore the question “What is life?” from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives; “Wicked Tales and Strange Encounters,” a 19th-century German literature course that shows that we are still invested in the same monsters and fairy tales as ever; and “Recycling Culture: Environmentalism Made in Germany,” in which students examine cultural factors that shape environmentalist practices.

Why do you teach Gen Ed? I teach GenEd because I love the opportunity to engage with students from all over campus and make interdisciplinary connections.

What is the most rewarding aspect of teaching Gen Ed? Meeting so many different students is a real joy, and my number one secret learning outcome is for students to make friends in my classes. There are many rewarding moments, but sometimes students will tell me how they used or talked about something they learned outside of class, and that shows me that it became truly meaningful to them.

What is the most challenging aspect of teaching Gen Ed? GenEd courses juggle a lot of demands: Socializing students into the University, writing training, content in which the students have no background, and the large class sizes. Sometimes I wish I could clone myself.

How do you get to know your students? I build in a lot of tasks that ask students about themselves, for instance taking a selfie and completing the sentence “This is so me because...” which we then use to discuss the roles of portraits and problems of representation in art and literature. I also learn as many names as possible and enlist students to help me learn their name in a positive way.

What do you do to engage students in your course? I teach in Collaborative Learning Spaces with an in-class response software that engages students. After group work phases, during which students discuss a set of scaffolded questions and relate them to their life worlds, I set the bingo machine in motion to call on a random table number to begin class discussion. The materials are often thought-provoking enough that my TAs and I are kept busy throwing the catchbox microphones around the room.

What is the strangest question anyone has ever asked you? Often, I am the one asking the strange questions, such as “What is something that we cannot imagine?” A new color might be a good answer to this, but students surprise me by thinking out of the box and coming up with different ideas. I guess at this point no question seems all that strange to me anymore.

What is your favorite cookie? My favorite German cookies are Vanillekipferl (“little vanilla mountains”), similar to Mexican wedding cookies, but are baked for the holiday season in the German-speaking world. I admit though that I am a chips person at heart; any kind of flaming hot chips and I’ll be happy!

To: Instructors of Tier II General Education Courses
From: Gail D. Burd, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Teaching, and Learning

Date: March 18, 2019
RE: Institution-Wide Learning Outcomes and Assessment

In 2017, Faculty Senate approved Institutional Learning Outcomes for all undergraduate students. They are: Communicate Effectively, Think Critically, Use Information Effectively and Ethically, and Understand and Value Differences. As an institution, these outcomes need to be assessed periodically to ensure our students are obtaining these skills. If necessary, that evidence may be used by faculty to make changes as needed.

Instructors of Tier Two General Education course(s) know that writing and critical thinking are important skills that our students need to learn. Four years ago, we measured the written communication and critical thinking skills of our freshmen and senior students. As a result of those findings, the writing emphasis requirement was added to all general education classes. It is time to re-assess these outcomes and see if our policy change has helped students improve their skills in these areas.

This year, we are part of the Value Institute sponsored by AAC&U (American Association of Colleges and Universities). We will be collecting student artifacts (written work) and submitting them to the institute for evaluation with a nationally-developed rubric.

This is where you can help. We are asking that you submit at least one writing assignment that you think fits the criteria for either written communication or critical thinking. The links to the brief Qualtrics surveys below will help you make this determination.

We are not asking you to create a new assignment, but to see if one of your current assignments meets most of the rubric criteria. If you have an assignment that fits, we will follow up with you on how to submit those artifacts. This is not meant to be more work for you, other than filling out the initial “assignment alignment” form. We will handle everything else on our end.

We have a very short turn-around time, and request that your assignment alignment form(s) be filled out by April 1, 2019. For your convenience, we have created a Qualtrics survey for completing the form(s) and submitting assignments. Also attached is a cover sheet from the VALUE institute providing a bit more information about the process.

To fill out the survey form for Critical Thinking:
https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0VA2LHm5w0yPuKx

To fill out the survey form for Written Communication:
https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6DqK3x6OopblM0j

Got any ideas for Gen Ed News stories? Want to brag about something great and innovative you are doing in Gen Ed? Send ideas or content to evm@email.arizona.edu
Title IX

The University of Arizona is committed to fostering a learning, working, and living environment free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. The University's Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and the Student Code of Conduct prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

This prohibition includes all forms of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual assault and relationship violence which are also prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance"

It is important that all members of our community know where to turn if they have a concern, need assistance or support, or would like to file a complaint. I hope this website is a helpful compilation of information which assists students, employees and other members of the UA community.

For more Information regarding Title IX at The University of Arizona click [here](#).

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**WRITING TIP OF THE MONTH: “WHY ARE WE DOING APA?” TEACHING REFERENCE CONVENTIONS AS WRITING STRATEGIES**

Source-based, academic writing requires accurate referencing and attribution. However, it is important to remember that students in general education courses - especially Tier I - may not have much experience outside of using MLA-style conventions in their high school English classes. Students may not know why they have used it, only that it was required by their teacher. In fact, Serviss (2016) found that even graduate student TAs had trouble describing their own citation practices.

If you require specific reference conventions for the writing assignments in your course, consider sharing with students not only what they are supposed to do, but also why they should do it in that way. Citation styles reflect the values of the respective disciplines, and sharing these values may help students navigate the different systems.

Below find some common features of MLA and APA format that may be appropriate to share with students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference system</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>APA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often used in</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Social sciences and related fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on</td>
<td>Authorship. MLA references include the full name of the writer, and in-text citational practices include the author’s name, but not the date.</td>
<td>Currency. APA in-text documentation requires the date of publication to demonstrate that the research is up to date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s unique...</td>
<td>Page numbers of quoted, paraphrased, or summarized information are included in in-text citations. Readers may want to assess your interpretation of the source or the accuracy of your paraphrasing.</td>
<td>You are less likely to find direct quotations because researchers are interested in the results or conclusions and are less likely to be interested in the specific language or words used to report those findings. Consider paraphrasing or summarizing rather than quoting your sources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

Purdue Online Writing Lab (2014, October). *The Purdue OWL: Citation chart*. Retrieved from [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/949/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/949/01/)