Signature Assignment:
What are they and what are they for?
Fall 2018

Adapted from:

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SeaWolf Studies

Institutional learning goals:
1. Academic excellence
2. Student success & well-being
3. Global, social, & civic responsibility

Learning experiences in the major

EO 1100 distribution requirements

Overlays: Ethnic St, Amer Inst, Sust & Env Resil, Global Aw, GWAR

WSCUC Core Competencies

SSU General Education Learning Outcomes

The thread that holds it all together:
Institutional learning goal 4. Integrated and Applied Learning
Determine Assessment Tools and Cycle

Create New Curriculum

Develop Implementation Plan

GE Program

GERS
IGEA
GE SubComm

GERS

GERS
IGEA
GE SubComm
Maintaining a Robust and Evolving GE Program

GE Courses: faculty

Assessment: faculty working groups, IGEA/ASPIRE, GE Sub, Faculty Gov

Course Approvals/Placement: GE SubComm
What is an SSU Signature Assignment?

• addresses two or more learning outcomes
• is “cool” in that it sparks student intellectual curiosity, relevant to their lives, results in a product they can showcase, is enjoyable
• involves student performance on something other than a test
  - essays, art galleries, projects, presentations, lab reports, service learning journals, websites, posters, creative writing, creative combinations, etc.
• counts toward a student’s grade
• graded in ways that tie in with programmatic assessment that can be done later
• includes the GELOs and associated rubrics, how it will be graded, and in general the learning experiences to be engaged
• accompanied by a student reflection

*Combines a learning experience AND evidence for authentic assessment.*
SSU GE learning outcomes associated with EO 1100 distribution courses, with overlays, and with WASC core competencies

A1 Oral Communication
1. Communication
2. Literacy

A2 Written Communication
1. Communication
2. Literacy

A3 Critical Thinking
1. Communication
2. Literacy
3. Argument

B1 Physical Science
4. Quantitative Reasoning
5a. Disciplinary Knowledge

B2 Life Science
5a. Disciplinary Knowledge

B3 Lab
4. Quantitative Reasoning

B4 Quantitative Reasoning
4. Quantitative Reasoning

B Nat. Science & Quant. Reasoning Upper Division
3. Argument
4. Quantitative Reasoning
5b. Interdisciplinary Knowledge
9. Creative Problem-Solving
QR Core Competency
CT Core Competency

C Arts & Humanities Upper Division
3. Argument
5b. Interdisciplinary Knowledge
10. Creative Expression
CT Core Competency

C Arts
5a. Disciplinary Knowledge

C2 Humanities
5a. Disciplinary Knowledge

D Social Sciences
5a. Disciplinary Knowledge

D Social Sciences Upper Division
3. Argument
5b. Interdisciplinary Knowledge
9. Creative Problem-Solving
CT Core Competency

E Lifelong Learning & Self Development
5b. Interdisciplinary Knowledge

Overlay requirements

Ethnic Studies
6. Diverse Cultural Competencies

American Institutions
7. Civic Engagement

Global Awareness
6. Diverse Cultural Competencies
11. Global Awareness

Sustainable Development
8. Sustainable Development
9. Creative Problem-Solving

GWAR/WIC
1. Communication
WC Core Competency
Professional Development Workshop

• How to create a Signature Activity based on GELOs
• Different types of Student Reflections and related prompts

Why Professional Development?
1. Get into curriculum-design mindset.
2. Meet new people outside of your program.
3. Opportunity to hear (and share) the ideas of others.
4. Will prolly learn something even despite best efforts not to.
5. Model life-long-learning for our students.
Creating a Signature Activity

Pilot Workshop:

Fall 2018 A1 Instructors
• Ed Beebout (Communications)
• Sara Kassis (Engineering)
• Erica Tom (Hutchins)
• Doyle Ott/Alexis McNab (Theater Arts)

GE SubCommittee
• Kim Hester-Williams (AMCS)
• Kaitlin Springmeir (Library)
• Heather Smith (Psychology)
• Aja LaDuke (Education)

IGEA/ASPIRE
• Carmen Works (Chemistry)
• Andy Wallace (Philosophy)
• V. Liptak (Academic Programs)
• Karen Moranski (Academic Programs)
• Jane Sutanonpaiboon (Business)

Executive Committee
• Melinda Milligan (Sociology)
• Laura Krier (Library)

GERS
• Suzanne Rivoire (Computer Science)
**Critical Thinking VALUE RUBRIC**

**Definition**
Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

*SSU rubrics to be developed by faculty working groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

| Explanation of issues | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions. | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown. |

| Evidence | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning. | Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/evaluation. Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question. |

| Influence of context and assumptions | Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position. | Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position. | Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position. |

| Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious. |

| Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) | Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order. | Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (implications and consequences) are identified clearly. | Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (implications and consequences) are oversimplified. |

For more information, please contact value@aacu.org
What is Self-Reflection?

“What highly productive and creative individuals think about their own thinking while they are thinking. This process, called metacognition, allows people to engage in a valuable conversation with themselves, exploring their background, questioning and correcting their thinking in the process, and pursuing the dynamic power of their minds.”

— Ken Bain,
What the Best College Students Do. (2012)
Types of Reflection

• Reflection in Action: thinking about the action while in the process of doing it. This is how we deal with uncertainty, instability, and value conflict.
  • How are we doing on the action? What do we need to do?
• Reflection on Action: thinking about the action after an experience is over.
  • How did action turn out? How was our process?

Reflection allows students to make connections between concepts within the action, across the class, across their major, across their degree as a whole, with their community, and within themselves as they grow and change.
Reflecting with Others

• Affirms the value of one’s experience
• Offers alternative meanings and ideas which can broaden the field of understanding
• Supports one’s self-discipline and provides a sense of personal responsibility.

- Carol Rodgers, Benefits of Reflection in Community (2002)
Formative and Summative Reflection in Signature Assignments

• What reflection IN action prompts would you use and when/where in the assignment would you include them?

• What reflection ON action prompts would help students make connections?

• How might you use Reflection in Community?
Connection to Self Over Time

Self at Beginning of College

Signature Activity and Reflection

Signature Activity and Reflection

Signature Activity and Reflection

Signature Activity and Reflection

Signature Activity and Reflection

Signature Activity and Reflection

Signature Activity and Reflection

Self at End of College
### Sample Reflection Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UNDEVELOPED</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>SKILLED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIBING EXPERIENCE</strong></td>
<td>Student provides a description of the experience, observation, activity, reading, etc. upon which he or she is reflecting</td>
<td>Clear but general</td>
<td>Clear and focused on the specific aspects that challenge the student</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclear and vague</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIBING RESPONSE</strong></td>
<td>Student provides a description of their intellectual and emotional response to the experience</td>
<td>Some response but limited to one domain (e.g., only emotional, intellectual) or to reflection only, without indication of conscious contemporaneous reflection.</td>
<td>Clear and focused description of the feelings, thoughts, and questions raised by the student at the time of the experience and upon reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclear and vague</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENERAL REFLECTION</strong></td>
<td>Evidence that the student has questioned or evaluated their prior perceptions, actions, or beliefs</td>
<td>Minimal reflection – No personal reflection or limited to description of general opinions and behaviors without reflection on underlying assumptions, habits, or values driving those opinions or behaviors.</td>
<td>Critical reflection – Critical evaluation (questioning, examining more closely) student’s personal assumptions, habits, or values and their connection to the opinions or behaviors upon which the student is reflecting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection – Making connection between student’s personal assumptions, habits, or values and the opinions or behaviors upon which the student is reflecting.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECTED TOPIC REFLECTION</strong></td>
<td>Minimal reflection – No personal reflection or limited</td>
<td>Reflection – Making connection between student’s personal assumptions, habits, or values and the opinions or behaviors upon which the student is reflecting.</td>
<td>Critical reflection – Critical evaluation (questioning,</td>
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* SSU rubrics to be developed by faculty working groups

[https://www.smu.edu/-/media/Site/Law/faculty/teaching-resources/Student-Reflection-Rubric.pdf](https://www.smu.edu/-/media/Site/Law/faculty/teaching-resources/Student-Reflection-Rubric.pdf)
DRAFT Assessment Idea

- Faculty give signature assignments
- Faculty working groups apply rubric(s) for a GE learning outcome and analyze data
- GE program review
- Faculty development, re-certify GE classes
- Update GE program