**LEP100 Instructors Meetings: Issue and Suggestions**

**LEP100 issues**

1. High variability in course requirements is a major complaint among students
2. Critical thinking data
   1. Highly variable data among sections
   2. Variability in how data is reported
3. Need to produce reliable data for HLC

**What could we do that preserves the intent of the course while allowing instructors flexibility to discuss the topic?**

***At this time, we cannot change the fact that critical thinking is part of LEP100 without altering the entire Liberal Education Program!***

**Small things that could start to make a difference**

1. If we are requiring students to attend campus events
2. How many events?
3. What types of events count for this?
4. What must they do/write in regards to this requirement?
5. Should we have a signature assignment(s)
   1. What would that be?
   2. How research or writing intensive should it be?
   3. Could it be used in addition to/in place of Moorburg letter for assessment?
   4. Method of grading/assessment?
6. If we continue the Moorburg letter
   1. When and how should it be given?
   2. Should the student’s performance on it count towards grade (use sliding scale)
   3. Can students use their notes/text to help?
   4. Do we keep the same scoring method?
   5. How should scores be report
7. Attendance requirement: what is it and how is it enforced?
8. Critical thinking
   1. What are the most important/fundamental pieces that students will be able to transfer across all of the discipline?
   2. What is the expected level of acheivement?
   3. Could there be any common assignments in this area?

**Recommendations from the instructors group!**

**1)Campus Events requirement in LEP100**

**Number of events**:  4

**Common signature event:**

In the fall semester: One of those events should be Mustang Success Night. This would help promote a common first year experience for the FYS classes

In the spring students would be required to attend finish strong week—they could write a reflection not only on event but their overall growth as a student that semester.

**For the other 3 events: Student should choose one event from 3 different categories**; fine art events, academic talks, athletic events, student services sponsored activity or club.  The idea behind this was so that students could pick something they are interested in as a way to help them adjust to campus life, but also to force them outside of their comfort zone and experience something new.

**What the students have to do**: The follow-up assignment should be a written reflection that includes a summary of the event possibly including responses such as: did the student enjoy it? find it useful? Did it match expectations? Why/why not. Additionally, the student needs to explain how the event connects to one or more of the LEP student learning outcomes. For example: the MLK day events could be linked to the diversity SLO and/or the citizenship SLO. An example follow up assignment is shown below. Feel free to modify!

**PARTICPATION IN CAMPUS/COMMUNITY EVENTS ASSIGNMENT**

(adapted from Deaver and Dilley)

Participation in campus event is a valuable way to enrich your university experience while simultaneously earning points for class. Eligible events include lectures, plays, musical performances, speakers, athletic events, and other officially recognized university events. You must attend the **common signature event and** **three different types of events**, e.g. fine art events, academic talks, athletic events, student services sponsored activity. You may count no more than one event in any given week.

To receive credit you must attend the event and then submit a **1-2 page typed (double-spaced) paper within one week of the event**. In the paper you must include the name of the event, the time, date and place, and a brief description of the event. You should also discuss how the event relates to one of the Student Learning Outcomes of the SMSU Liberal Education Program (an abbreviated list is on the back of this handout. A more detailed explanation of these SLOs is provided as a handout and in D2L). Points will be awarded based on writing quality and how well you address these requirements.

**Format for your paper is shown below:**

Name

Name of Event:

Date and Time of Event:

Place event was held:

Brief Description of Event:

Describe how the event related to the LEP Learning Outcomes

**Recommendations from the instructors group!**

**2)Common Signature Assignment**

An annotated bibliography will be used as a common signature assignment. The Moorburg letter is one assessment tool which will be retained because it is common to all sections, but some feel that it is not reflective of the critical thinking in their section. The compromise at this time is an **annotated bibliography assignment.** Here are some good reasons brought up by many as to why this could work.

#1) it still allows individual faculty members to connect with their theme.

#2) This follows our intent on having a developmental nature in the LEP. We need to think about the process involved in getting that final product. Keep in mind that these are first semester freshman, some of which are in ENG151 and some have not taken Eng151 and so we cannot expect research intensive papers or highly competent writing skills at this time.

#3) if faculty still want students to create essays, debates, discussions, or presentations, they are still welcome to do so, this assignment would simply be a stepping stone to those projects, but it would be something we would all have in common.

#4) This helps to reinforce the connections to the information literacy piece of the course. If students do not do anything after the library sessions, then students wonder why they had to do them.

#5) This can help your favorite librarian to better design your library sessions and helps to keep the information literacy piece incremental with the writing courses

#6) An annotated bibliography could be assessed using the critical thinking rubric and information literacy rubric.

An example of an annotated bibliography assignment is included.

**Recommendations from the instructors group!**

**3)Continued use of the Moorburg letter but without instructors scoring them**

We will continue to use the modified Ennis-Weir test AKA the Moorburg letter as a pre/post-test for critical thinking. The letter and instruction are available on the instructors D2L page located in the development section of D2L. Instructors will give the test at the beginning of the semester; the first day after add/drop was recommended, and then again during the last week of classes. Students will not use notes or texts on the pre or post-test. Performance on the test will not count towards the student’s grade.

The biggest change is that individual instructors will not be required to score the test! Instructors will give the pre/post-tests to the chair of the LEC and it will be the responsibility of the committee to score random samples from the various sections. This will help with the high amount of variability observed in test scores and help standardize how scores are reported.

**Recommendations from the instructors group!**

**4)Attendance requirement**

Instructors agree that attendance should still be a requirement. It is also worth noting that instructors agree that the class should not be online! Typically, instructors give points if students attend class and actively participate in the class; i.e. not sleeping or on cell phones. Instructors seem to have a policy of allowing no more than 3 absences; however, most instructors allow students to miss class for a school sponsored event such as athletics, forensics, or a performance.

**Recommendations from the instructors group!**

**5)Critical thinking**

Unfortunately, there is still no consensus on critical thinking or common pieces that should be included. However, there was a suggestion to use the text “Think: critical thinking and logic skills for everyday life” by McGraw/Hill as a common text or at least to use as a reference for the basis of critical thinking as a compromise. It does retain many of the elements from the Weston “rulebook for arguments” but is presented in a way that is easier to digest by first year students. It provides perspectives from a variety of disciplines using relevant events in recent history as well as significant historical events. There seems to be something for everyone and their themes in this text. The downside is the cost. Several instructors had already selected texts before we made this decision and so will not be able to use this as a text but merely as a reference for the fall. Instructors that had not chosen a text were considering a move to this text.

***\*We will try these suggestions and see what happens. Nothing is written in stone. We can examine this again after we have tried it and make changes were needed!***