

**STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM  
SUMMARY FORM AY 2004-2005**

**Degree and Program Name:** Bachelor of Arts in General Studies

**Submitted By:** Dr. Kaye Woodward

Please complete a separate worksheet for each academic program (major, minor) at each level (undergraduate, graduate) in your department. Worksheets are due to CASA this year by **June 1**. Worksheets should be sent electronically to [cskjs@eiu.edu](mailto:cskjs@eiu.edu) and should also be submitted to your college dean. For information about assessment or help with your assessment plans, visit the Assessment webpage at <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/> or contact Karla Sanders in CASA at 581-6056.

**PART ONE**

What are the learning objectives?	How, where, and when are they assessed?	What are the expectations?	What are the results?	Committee/ person responsible? How are results shared?
1. To apply critical thinking skills	<p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition</b>, the orientation course, has several activities designed to facilitate and evaluate critical thinking skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Analysis of motivations for returning to school</li> <li>b) Reflection on barriers that have prohibited earlier return to school</li> <li>c) Assessment of events that have caused significant transformational learning-how, what, why.</li> </ul> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> course, has several activities designed to foster critical thinking skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) In the beginning of the class students are asked to describe the steps in performing one of several simple activities. After completion of that activity, they are asked a series of</li> </ul>	<p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Students will be able to identify the motivating factors that have helped them to decide to return to college at this point in their lives and determine why those factors have become dominate.</li> <li>b) Students will be able to identify the significant factors that have affected their ability to return to college earlier, with the underlying goal of helping them recognize that despite circumstances, the real reason for the delay is more of a personal decision rather than a circumstance</li> <li>c) Students will be able to reflect on their previous learning and life events to</li> </ul>	<p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Students are evaluated on their ability to reflect and express their motivation and barriers. They are asked questions to help them “dig a little deeper” inside themselves to get to the root cause/factors. Approximately 96% of the students start by voicing surface reasons and not accepting responsibility for their own actions while approximately 4% readily identify that they have been responsible for their previous actions. By the end of the first two weeks, approximately 90% of the students have</li> </ul>	<p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b> Person responsible is the instructor for each of the sections of the course. Instructors meet at least once a year to discuss the course, compare data and results, and discuss revisions. Between these meetings, the instructors are informed about changes via email.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development:</b> Instructor is responsible for the assessment of this objective. Data is shared with the program director through scheduled review meetings, director review of materials being submitted by students, and by feedback from</p>

	<p>questions to encourage them to reflect and identify steps they have taken for granted or assumed one would know. Students are encouraged to read the postings of other students and to ask questions. Once the list has been revised, they are again asked a series of increasingly in-depth questions and allowed to revise. At this point, students are asked to evaluate the activity with the unstated goal of having them express and understanding of the difference between knowing the steps and understanding the conceptual knowledge that is essential for that activity.</p> <p>b) Throughout this course, students are encouraged to reflect on the knowledge they have acquired outside the formal academic classroom and to identify not just the experience but the conceptual knowledge required to be able to do that activity, or the knowledge they learned from performing that activity as it related to an academic discipline and to courses taught at the university level.</p>	<p>determine which events caused a “transformational change” in the individual. They will then carefully examine the change and the circumstances to determine what and why those events were significant and how the individual changed as a result of the event(s).</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development:</b></p> <p>a) Students will be able to gain an understanding of the difference between experience and understanding the knowledge that is essential to that experience.</p> <p>b) Students will be able to express with increasing clarity and depth the conceptual knowledge relevant to a specific learning activity.</p>	<p>presented evidence of understanding that they are and have been responsible for their previous actions and that they are now serious about completing their degree.</p> <p>b) By the mid-point of the class most of the students are able to identify activities in their past that have resulted in significant learning and are able to identify the key elements as to why that event was significant.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development:</b></p> <p>a) Students write at least three drafts of one learning narrative. Each draft should reflect successively more depth and breath of information. Students cannot pass the course without submitting a draft that meets the requirement of depth information.</p>	<p>portfolio evaluators.</p>
<p>2. Students will engage in the writing process to develop a coherent, persuasive</p>	<p>Assessment of writing skills begins with reviewing the applicant’s responses to several</p>	<p>Applicant should be able to respond to each question with several well-developed,</p>	<p>Approximately 5% of the students who are admitted to the program are</p>	<p>The director places a notation in the applicant’s file indicating that the</p>

<p>presentation that adheres to the standards of college level writing..</p>	<p>questions on the application form. These questions request at least a several paragraph response, which gives the director some insight into the abilities the student brings with them to the learning environment.</p> <p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition</b> is designated as a writing intensive class and therefore, more than 35 % of the grade is based on written activities. Students are required to do at least 3 free writing/reflective activities, do a timed writing, write a reflection paper, and submit a formal essay. Previously the essay was only required to be 250 words but that has been increased to 350 based on the recommendations of the instructional staff. This provides greater opportunities for students to demonstrate their critical thinking skills as well as their ability to express their ideas in greater depth using appropriate Standard Written English.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> Students must develop at least three drafts of the primary narrative for their portfolio in order to achieve a passing grade. Each assignment prior to the writing of the narrative, is structured to help the student develop and understanding of the depth and breath of information</p>	<p>cohesive paragraphs consisting of more than 2 sentences each.</p> <p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b> Students are expected to be able to present their thoughts or ideas in a cohesive manner, demonstrating college-level writing skills. The essays are evaluated using the rubric established for the EWP. Free writing/reflective writing activities are graded more leniently but students are given feedback about their writing skills on these activities. The instructor is responsible for the evaluation and feedback.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> course is all online and is very writing intensive. All work in this course is graded by the instructor and students are given at least three opportunities to develop draft documents for each essay. Students are expected to be able to identify the learning that occurred through their outside experiences and to be able to express the knowledge gained in a formal paper using appropriate college level writing skills. Evaluation is based on the student's ability to organize the complete document, writing skills, focus, clarity, paragraph development, use of vocabulary, transitions and</p>	<p>recommended for assistance from the writing center.</p> <p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b> Students who need to meet the sophomore level writing for the EWP can submit from this class. Preliminary writing activities tend to be more informal in nature so students are encouraged to rewrite using a more formal writing style. The rubric for the EWP is used in the final evaluation of all formal papers. In the past year, of approximately 150 students only one student required more than two attempts at revisions to meet the minimum standard. Fifteen students met the standard with their first submission. The remainder of the students was able to meet the standard with one or two revisions.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development:</b> Students are required to develop at least three drafts of their learning narratives. With each revision, the student is given comprehensive feedback designed to assist the individual in understanding the depth and breath of information essential for success in the PLA documents. Ninety percent</p>	<p>student should be enrolled in ENG composition classes and referred to the writing center immediately upon admission to the program. The notation is called to the attention of the assigned academic advisor. The advisor schedules periodic meetings with the student to assess the student's progress and discusses this with the director.</p> <p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b> The instructor is responsible for assessing the progress and writing skills of each student. Students that demonstrate difficulty are encouraged to seek out assistance immediately and the recommendation is communicated to the assigned academic advisor.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development:</b> The instructor and the program director review materials written by students for this class and discuss the student's progress and writing skills. Students are given detailed feedback with each draft submitted. In extreme situations,</p>
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	<p>essential for the portfolio. Each formal writing activity is evaluated using a rubric that is shared with the students. Informal writing activities are critiqued as to the writing skills that are demonstrated and the student is given feedback on areas that need greater attention</p>	<p>summary of information. The instructor for this course has a master's degree in English and teaches Composition at Lake Land College.</p>	<p>of the students in this course have a completed document ready for faculty review by the conclusion of the class. These students have demonstrated the ability to write at an advanced college level and to develop a sophisticated and persuasive formal essay. Ten percent of the students require additional work after the conclusion of the course. Approximately 80% of the portfolios sent out for evaluation are successful in earning credit in the faculty review process.</p>	<p>students are referred to the Writing Center for assistance.</p>
<p>3. To develop a greater identity with EIU through the use of technology and to develop skill in navigating EIU's web pages and WebCT.</p>	<p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b> Four sections of this class are offered each semester. Three of them are offered via WebCT and one section is offered in a face-to-face delivery mode. Students who indicate an interest in taking online courses are encouraged to take this course through that delivery method as it is designed to help the new student gain skill in navigating in WebCT. In addition, this course has an extensive unit on exploring EIU through the use of technology. Students are given a series of clues about information that can be found on EIU's web pages and are asked to locate the complete information. Students often report that this assignment is the most challenging of all the assignments for the class and that they learn a lot about the</p>	<p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b> Students are expected to be able to use a computer to navigate the EIU web pages to locate important information about various components of the university, such as information about the Academic Assistance Center, the EWP, the Writing Center, the university calendar, registration procedures and rules, the student newspaper, changing passwords, CATS, PAWS and other important details. Students should be able to find important information related to their progress at EIU through the use of the EIU online resources.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> Successful students will submit</p>	<p><b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition:</b> Most students report that the activity requiring them to seek specific information from the EIU website is challenging and difficult. However, students do persist until they find the requested information. Occasionally a student will need help to locate some specific price of information at which time the instructor might provide some additional clues. Comments from students indicate they find this assignment to be very helpful and empowers them to seek out information before having to call their advisor. They often report back on other information they "discovered" in the process of completing the</p>	<p>The effectiveness of this goal is somewhat measured by the decline in phone calls Baa or emails from students asking for information on something that can be easily found on the website. Also, this assignment is reviewed frequently in light of the changing nature of the EIU web pages.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> The instructor and director discuss the progress of individual students frequently during the semester. Options for remediation, referral to assistance, and quality of student's work are continually assessed.</p>

	<p>university in completing this assignment. The online tour of EIU is often cited as very interesting as it helps students who are not familiar with this campus gain a visual image of EIU. The instructor of each section of the class is responsible for the assessment of the activity. Students who have difficulty locating the requested information are contacted either directly in the class or via WebCT email with more instructions.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> One section of this course is taught online each semester. Students must be able to successfully navigate through WebCT to be able to complete this class. Extensive use of the features found in WebCT are integrated into this course. Every activity in this course requires familiarity with technology.</p>	<p>via technology a minimum of one completed portfolio that adheres to the standards of college-level formal communication, and contains all the component parts.</p>	<p>assignment.</p> <p><b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> Eighty percent of the students are able to complete all requirements prior to the end of the course. Other students are allowed to continue working on the project and receive an "I" for the course.</p>	
<p>4. Be able to identify conceptual knowledge gained from experiential learning.</p>	<p>Students in both <b>EDF 3986 BOT/BGS Portfolio Development</b> and <b>EDF 2985 Adults in Transition</b> are guided through activities designed to help them understand how their experiential learning has helped them acquire some fundamental learning skills and foundations. Reflective writing, critical analysis, directed questioning and structured discussion help students move from viewing education as a series of courses</p>	<p>Students begin to select courses based on the educational goals they have established for themselves. They begin to look for a cohesive sequence of courses that will help create depth and breadth of knowledge in an area that has some value to the individual.</p>	<p>Many students ultimately identify a minor and willingly take additional courses in order to meet the requirements for a minor.</p>	<p>Instructors are responsible for the structure of the assignments in the two courses. The advisors then work with the student to help refine their goals and identify education options, such as minors that will help the student leave this institution with a well-rounded education that has a focus.</p>

	<p>to understanding education as a process of building on post learning in order to gain new knowledge an a more comprehensive view of the society in which we function. This process is introduced in the E DF 2985 course but is much more evident in the EDF 3985 course. The instructor is responsible.</p>			

(Continue objectives as needed. Cells will expand to accommodate your text.)

## PART TWO

Describe what your program’s assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the CASA Director’s comments on last year’s report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.

Based on the comments from the CASA director all instructors for the EDF 2985 Adults in Transition course met for a full-day retreat. Each assignment in the course was examined to consider the value of that activity to the program objectives. Efforts were made to enhance some activities to make them more in alignment with the CASA assessment. Reflective writing activities were added to both courses. In an effort to have a better way to assess student learning in EDF 3985, modules one and two were revised to allow for multiple writings, each time encouraging the student to look deeper, and to use critical analysis and problem solving skills. These efforts have resulted in students being able to get beyond describing only the experiential activities in their past to being able to discuss the conceptual knowledge they have acquired from those activities, much more quickly. Results in the EDF 2985 Adults in. Transition course are evident by the increase in students selecting to complete a minor as apart of their degree.

## PART THREE

Summarize changes and improvements in **curriculum, instruction, and learning** that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?

The ED F 2985 Adults in Transition course is much stronger and is more useful in providing new students with essential information about their learning goals, EIU and the BGS Program. By designing stronger critical thinking and analysis activities, students seem to be approaching their

course selection with greater care. The changes in the instructional activities for the EDF 3985 Developing a Prior Learning Portfolio have significantly improved the quality of the writing and the outcomes of the written narratives. There has been an increase in the number of portfolios being developed and the number of students who are completing their portfolios in a more timely manner.

Plans for the future include the development of a capstone course that will be required for BGS students. The focus of this course will be on the process of Appreciative Inquiry and Critical Thinking as the student is guided to assess the learning acquired at EIU and how that learning will help shape their future decisions. This course will provide opportunities for program and student learning outcomes assessment at the end of the student's experience at EIU. Other considerations are the development of an annual short-term study abroad program for BGS students that would allow this population to have an international cultural experience that is consistent with the university mission of promoting international educational experiences.