

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

English B.A

College of Liberal Arts

AY 2013-2014

Submitted by: Rich Carr, Chair, English Dept.

Contact Information: 474-6361

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1. Assessment information collected

Evidence included critical papers from four of the past year's 400-level English classes, as well as final exams from the past year's sections of English 310, 317, 318, and 462. We also had access to two previous reports produced under this plan, from the assessments performed in 2011 and 2013. We did not have any student-selected essays.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

Our findings include the following:

- Successful students in the courses assessed do indeed demonstrate the knowledge and abilities mentioned in the OA plan. Our students are addressing a wide variety of questions in their course work.
- The most successful students see their work as part of a larger conversation and are able to enter that conversation critically and/or creatively. Few of our students use citation practice in a genuinely critical or "dialogic" manner.
- Less successful students struggle with seeing the relationships between big ideas and examples.
- Less successful students are reluctant to re-examine initial impressions.
- The "advanced knowledge" learning outcome is dependent on cognitive flexibility with language as a socially-shared system of meaning-making options.
- Topics courses on language provide evidence of our students integrating these outcomes with current issues in the field.

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

The English Assessment plan needs to be updated to reflect current practices in the department, including course goals and syllabi. We recommend the following:

- The current assessment plan should undergo Department review at the Fall 2014 retreat. In particular, the assessment plan needs to include a Department-designed rubric that is aligned with our outcomes. We recommend collecting

data that more clearly measures student learning—i.e., sample work from individual students over the entire course of their progress in the BA.

- We need to find a better way to measure the longer-term effectiveness of 310 Literary Criticism, and, based on those findings, perhaps encourage taking the class earlier in English major coursework.
- We need to emphasize across the curriculum ways of using research that situate the essay writer in an interesting dialogue about a particular text or topic.
- Specifically, the "advanced knowledge . . . of the English language" outcome should be revised to something more specific and rigorous, as in the following examples:
 - developing a cognitive capacity for seeing the language analytically, and making tacit knowledge explicit;
 - recognizing language as inherently variable and varying;
 - gaining a greater appreciation of the systematicity of language, including nonstandard varieties;
 - recognizing the socially-constructed nature of language and the socioeconomic basis of standards;
 - distinguishing linguistic prejudice from linguistic fact.

4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting.

The 2014 BA Assessment committee consisted of Dr. Eric Heyne, Dr. Burns Cooper, and Dr. Sarah Stanley.