2012-2013 Assessment Report

"Year 1 of 5: Critical Reading"

Curriculum and Assessment Committee
Department of English, College of Arts and Letters
June 21, 2013

The 2012-2013 Curriculum and Assessment Committee was chaired by Associate Professor Hellen Lee, Vice Chair of the Department of English

In addition to Committee Chair Lee, the Committee was comprised of the following voting faculty members representing the subfield in which they specialize:
• Associate Professor Susan Fanetti, English Education,
• Associate Professor Julian Heather, TESOL, with Professor Marie Helt filling in during the fall semester,
• Professor Amy Heckathorn, Composition/Rhetoric,
• Professor Josh McKinney, Creative Writing, filling in for Professor Doug Rice in spring 2013, and
• Professor David Toise, Literature and Literary Theory.
• The Committee has two student representatives: Molly Chiah and Veronica Aguayo.

Brief Overview and Background on English Department Assessment Strategies:

The Department created, voted on, and approved a Five-Year Assessment Plan in 2011-2012. This is the first year of the implementation of that Plan. This year's focus was on critical readings skills.

In the past, assessment for the Department has been conducted discretely from year to year. The Department has incorporated an exit survey in 2008, conducted a portfolio review of the students enrolled in Senior Seminar in 2009, surveyed alumni in 2012, and other activities. While we were able to gather information about specific aspects of the Major, it lacked clear direction to collect data intentionally across the whole program, encompassing all aspects of the program.

In Fall 2011, the Department began updating and revising the Assessment Plan and Learning Outcomes to be a more cohesive program, based on the recommendation of the 2007-2008 Department of English Assessment Committee Report. The 2008-2009 Department of English Assessment Committee chose not to pursue creating a 5-year plan, but strongly recommended that it be acted upon. The 2011-2012 Department of English Assessment Committee, chaired by Julie Yen, brought forward a proposal that was approved by the Department in the fall. Additionally, based on the campus-wide Graduation Initiative, the assessment plan coordinates and responds to the University's Baccalaureate Learning Goals.

New Plan

The new Assessment Plan and Learning Outcomes plan is now a 5-year review cycle, with each of the first four years examining a different Learning Outcome and the fifth year taking a more holistic review of the preceding 4-year cycle. In brief, the four major Learning Outcomes are related to:

• critical reading,
• critical writing,
• scholarly research, and
• content area knowledge.

2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report.

1) As a result of last year's assessment effort, have you implemented any changes for your assessment including learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment tools (methods, rubrics, curriculum map, or key assignment etc.), and/or the university baccalaureate learning goals?

1.1) In the "Feedback for the 2011-12 Annual Assessment Report," the OAPA suggested that "the department . . . be more specific about the courses that are going to be evaluated each year, the level of these courses within the curriculum, sample sizes for each course and overall, the types of assignments that will be evaluated, and to show evidence of how they will demonstrate the inter-rater reliability in applying the rubrics."

As a result, the Committee carefully modified our assessment plans and methods to respond to OAPA feedback calling for more specificity in collecting data.

While this process is described in detail in section 4 of this report, the Committee was careful in response to feedback (1) to specify the assessment of courses from all areas of the Department: upper division, lower division, literature, composition, creative writing, pedagogy, and writing intensive (required in the major), (2) to ask individual faculty to describe how their chosen assignments could be used to evaluate "critical reading," and (3) to have individual faculty present 2-3 examples of student assignments at each level for norming purposes; the results of this norming by the Committee was reported back to the faculty to address inter-rater reliability.

1.2) Last year's OAPA "Feedback" also stated that all "MA programs use a thesis or capstone experience to assess student learning outcomes . . . However, the degree to which learning outcome is assessed is difficult to determine."

While this feedback has not been the focus of changes to our assessment and curriculum, we nonetheless tried to follow up on this advice in substantive ways.

Our graduate programs have made several changes this year to make assessment of our capstone courses more complete:

a) In the literature concentration, the exam committee has started to report overall results using our rubric. For an analysis of the overall results of Literature Comprehensive Exam in terms of learning outcomes see "appendix 1." This data will be discussed by the Literature Committee.

b) In the creative writing concentration, instituted an exam as a culminating experience for the first time; the exam was designed to allow for better assessment.

c) The composition program shifted from a thesis to project (portfolio of writing). The following from the program change justification articulates the connection between the new culminating experience and assessment.

The Writing Programs Committee proposes that the culminating Plan A/Thesis be replaced with Plan B/Project—a research portfolio (contents detailed on attached sheet). This would allow students to demonstrate and the committee to evaluate a variety of skills rather than the limited ones which go into the making of a thesis. Additionally, we would be able to more accurately assess our program since the portfolio more adeptly allows students to demonstrate breadth of accomplishment. Below are some of the reasons for this change:
- important practice in self-reflection, research, and oral presentation
- greater variety of activities for students to participate in and learn from
- inclusion of self-reflection as part of the culminating experience
- clearer latitude for professionalization in a variety of areas as is suitable to our students—teaching, graduate school, or advancement within a student's current profession
- more manageable workload for students and faculty

The Research Portfolio will be a minimum of 30 pages and evaluated by at least two Composition Faculty based on the degree to which it demonstrates that the writer has achieved the following outcomes:
- A working knowledge of praxis—the ways Rhetoric and Composition theory and practice inform one another
- An ability to theorize and practice a variety of writing classroom pedagogies
- An ability to engage in writing as a process, which includes critical self-reflection
- An ethically-driven understanding of the ways in which all language is meaning making, especially within the contexts of academic discourse communities
- An understanding of appropriate teaching strategies for students who speak and write a variety of English languages and dialects
- An ability to conduct research in Rhetoric and Composition using appropriate methods and methodological frameworks

2) As a result of last year's assessment efforts, have you implemented any other changes at the department, the college or the university, including advising, co-curriculum, budgeting and planning?

When we wrote our IPP report last year, the Department to stock of its advising system. As a result, this year we developed plans for a peer-advising program and these plans were included in one of the University's proposals as part of the CSU system wide-call for student success initiatives. The Department hopes the resources will become available through this process to improve our advising procedures.

3) What PROGRAM (not course) learning outcome(s) have you assessed in this academic year?

In accordance with the "Feedback for the 2011-2012 Annual Assessment Report Department of English," this year begins the new multi-year review cycle and the Committee focused on critical reading. The Learning Goals for this area are:

"Students will demonstrate an ability to apply critical reading strategies to a variety of texts, which may include written, oral, or visual works, and to analyze language and texts using appropriate critical, theoretical, rhetorical, and disciplinary methodologies."

4) What method(s)/measure(s) have you used to collect the data?

Examples of student work from several courses were collected and evaluated from a representative array of subfields and types of courses (e.g. seminars/workshops, discussion, and large lectures) to determine the level of critical reading skills demonstrated by students taking courses in the English major, minor certification, and other degree programs of the Department.

In order to assess reading skills, the Committee determined that courses representing the array of subfields in the discipline and types of courses in the curriculum should be assessed. In addition to the importance of assessing a variety of content areas, the Committee also considered the types of courses to be relevant in assessing critical reading. For this purpose, the Committee asked for volunteers from all teaching faculty in the Department and made specific requests to faculty teaching the lower-division literature surveys.

In response to the request for volunteers, the Committee received replies from seven (7) faculty members who offered to provide assessment data. The courses varied significantly in size and instructional format. Included in the sample were workshops/seminars, discussion-based courses, and large lecture courses, with enrollments ranging from 27 to 85 students per class.

The list of courses offered for assessment and their corresponding type and size are in Table 1. List of Courses and Enrollments below.

Table 1. List of Courses and Enrollments.

Course Title	Type*/Cap/Size
ENGL 30A (Section 1) Introduction to Creative Writing	W / 30 / 27
ENGL 30A (Section 2) Introduction to Creative Writing	W / 30 / 29
ENGL 30B (Early) Introduction to Writing Fiction	W / 30 / 31
ENGL 30B (Late)Introduction to Writing Fiction	W / 30 / 31
ENGL 65 Introduction to World Literature	L / 88 / 85
ENGL 100B Literary Theory	D / 40 / 46
ENGL 110P Second Language Learning and Teaching	W / 2 sections of 30/57 total
ENGL 120C Topics in Composition	W / 30 / 28

*Course type: W=writing; L=lecture; D=discussion.

The courses listed in Table 1 included writing-focused courses where critical reading is a crucial skill, such as creative writing and composition courses. They also included courses where critical reading is tied to pedagogy, such as TESOL and English Education courses. The courses evaluated also included on literary theory and literature courses, where critical reading is essential to comprehension and analysis.

Instructors were asked to provide information based on a single assignment of their choice from their course that evaluated reading skills, specifically:

• The course assignment as presented to students,
• A short description/rationale of the assignment for the Committee, and
• The numbers of student work that fell into the various categories for each Learning Outcomes listed on the rubric.

Individual faculty members provided all the requested materials. The materials came from different points in the semester. In one case, Heckathorn offered data from three separate assignments to show a longitudinal progress.

5) What are the criteria and/or standards for the program learning outcome?

Rubric for Evaluation

On February 8, 2013, the Committee provided the instructors who volunteered their courses for assessment with a rubric against which to categorize student work: see Appendix 2. The rubric focuses on two main Learning Outcomes:

1) Application of critical reading strategies, and
2) Analysis of language and texts.

Each of the two Learning Outcomes are separated into four levels of proficiency:

For "Application of critical reading strategies," the categories are:

1) fails to apply,
2) inconsistent,
3) adequate, and
4) sophisticated.

For "Analysis of language and texts," the categories are:

1) shows little or no analysis,
2) inconsistent,
3) ability, and
4) sophisticated.

Norming

In order to assess consistently across the various types of courses (seminar, workshop, discussion, lecture) and subfields (Composition/Rhetoric, Creative Writing, English Education, Literature/Literary Theory, and TESOL), the Committee reviewed the samples of student work as ranked by the instructor according to the rubric.

As expected, the variety of the types of courses in terms of content area and format led to many different kinds of assignments. After the data was normed for each assignment with the rubric (see Appendix 2), faculty member provided how many students scored in each of the areas.

6. What data have you collected? What are the results and findings, including the percentages of students who meet each standard?

Table 2. Rankings by Course

COURSE	SOPHISTICATED	ADEQUATE	INCONSISTENT	FAILS TO APPLY
30A (Section 1)	10	9	7	1
30A (Section 2)	6	11	8	3
30B (Early)	11	7	8	5
30B (Late Assignment)	11	7	8	5
65*	2	15	7	0
100B*	18	10	7	0
110P*	22	8	7	0
120C ** (All combined)	22	19	4	0
120C (Assignment 1)	6	6	3	0
120C (Assignment 2)	8	6	1	0
120C (Assignment 3)	8	7	0	0
Raw numbers	**102**	**86**	**56**	**14**
Percentages	**40%**	**33%**	**22%**	**5%**

*In these classes, students were given a choice of assignments to complete, so the number of assignments collected does not match total enrollment.

**In this writing intensives class, the instructor supplied responses only from English majors in the course.

6a.) In what areas are students doing well and achieving the expectations?

Our data, for one, shows stronger results in upper division courses when compared with lower division.

- In the lower division courses (30A, 30B, 65), sophisticated work is being done by 28% of the students,
- in the upper division courses (100B, 110P, 120A, 120C, 125A), sophisticated word is being done by 52% of the students.

The next step is to share this date with the entire Department to evaluate whether this progression from lower division to upper division work meets expectations.

6b.) In what areas do students need improvement?

Our data also shows some areas that might need improvement. These areas require further discussion and evaluation by the whole department and include the following:

- In lower division courses 10%, of our students are not applying critical reading strategies.
- In our lower division mega course, only 8.3% of students are doing sophisticated work in critical reading;
- This result in our mega-class is significantly lower even when compared to other lower division courses: 32% of students 30A and 30B are doing sophisticated work.

7.) As a result of this year's assessment effort, do you anticipate or propose any changes for your program?

We anticipate a discussion of the results reported in section 6 within the Curriculum and Assessment Committee and then with the entire department.

Discussions will focus on:

- Based on this data, what are realistic levels of achievement for our students?
- What can we learn from the comparison of upper and lower division courses?
- What can we learn from the comparison between mega-classes and smaller classes?
- How do these comparison helps to understand our "curriculum map" in order to examine which skills are emphasized (and should be emphasized) in which areas of the curriculum?
- How can we fine-tune or revise our rubrics and specify, if necessary, skills associated with each level of achievement? (In this discussion, we may make use of the Association of American Colleges and University rubrics.)

8.) Which program learning outcome(s) do you plan to assess next year? How?

Next year, we plan to examine learning outcome #2 on writing.

Learning Outcome 2: In a process that includes revision based on feedback from peers and instructors, students will produce a variety of written texts that demonstrate an ability to analyze language, ideas, and forms and creatively engage with the writing traditions of our various disciplines.

We plan to use a process similar to the one we engaged in this year. This will include:

a) Curriculum and Assessment Committee will distribute the rubric and outcome and solicit faculty participation from diverse set of courses within the Department representing upper and lower division, different enrollment caps, electives and requirements, and different disciplines within our Department. It is important to consider using our capstone course, Engl 198t, as part of the assessment process.

b) The Committee will request examples of sophisticated, adequate, limited, and inadequate assignments and conduct a norming sessions for each class.

c) The results of the norming will be reported to the faculty member, and, based on the results of the norming process, the Committee will request that the faculty member report back on how many of the student assignments fit into each category.

d) The Committee will compile the results and report back to the Department with questions and concerns for further discussion, including examining the constitution of the rubric.

	4	3	2	1
Writing Process, including revision based on feedback	The text shows a comprehensive command and use of the process of revision based on feedback	The text shows adequate command and use of the process of revision based on feedback	The text shows a limited command and use of the process of revision based on feedback	The text shows inadequate command and use of the process of revision based on feedback
Analysis of language, ideas, and forms	Demonstrates sophisticated and nuanced ability to thoroughly analyze language, ideas, and forms	Demonstrates ability to analyze language, ideas, and forms in an adequate way	Demonstrates an inconsistent or limited ability to analyze language, ideas, and forms	Shows little or no analysis
Engagement with writing traditions of various disciplines	Demonstrates sophisticated and nuanced ability to thoroughly engage with writing traditions of various disciplines	Demonstrates ability to engage with writing traditions of various disciplines in an adequate way	Demonstrates an inconsistent or limited ability to engage with writing traditions of various disciplines in an adequate way	Shows little or no engagement with writing traditions of various disciplines

Appendix 1: Rubrics for Assessment of Critical Reading Strategies

<u>Learning Outcome 1</u>

Students will demonstrate an ability to apply critical reading strategies to a variety of texts, which may include written, oral, or visual works, and to analyze language and texts using appropriate critical, theoretical, rhetorical, and disciplinary methodologies.

	4	3	2	1
Application of critical reading strategies	Ability to read texts in a sophisticated and nuanced way	Ability to read texts in an adequate way	Demonstrates an inconsistent or limited ability to read texts in an adequate way	Fails to apply critical reading strategies
Analysis of language and texts	Demonstrates sophisticated and nuanced ability to thoroughly analyze texts	Demonstrates ability to analyze texts in an adequate way	Demonstrates an inconsistent or limited ability to analyze texts	Shows little or no analysis

Appendix 2:

PRELIMINARY Data for English MA Literature Concentration Outcomes based on Culminating Experience/Exam: THIS DATA REPRESENTS ONLY ONE SEMESTER'S EXAM (6 STUDENTS); THE COMMITTEE IS WAITING FOR ANOTHER SEMESTER'S DATA BEFORE DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS.

Knowledge of a Range of British and American texts

Sophisticated: 28%

Adequate: 39%

Inadequate: 17%

Little: 17%

Knowledge of a Variety of Literary Traditions:

Sophisticated: 22%

Adequate: 44%

Inadequate: 28%

Little: 6%

Knowledge of a Variety of Genres:

Sophisticated: 22%

Adequate: 39%

Inadequate: 33%

Little: 6%

Knowledge of Literary Periods:

Sophisticated: 22%

Adequate: 44%

Inadequate: 11%

Little: 22%

Understanding of Diverse Critical Perspectives:

Sophisticated: 28%

Adequate: 44%

Inadequate: 22%

Little: 11%

Interpretive Engagement with Complexity of Literary Texts:

Sophisticated: 28%

Adequate: 44%

Inadequate: 17%

Little: 11%

Interpretive Engagement with Complexity of Secondary Materials:

Sophisticated: 22%

Adequate: 50%

Inadequate: 11%

Little: 17%

English MA: LITERATURE CONCENTRATION Learning goals rubric

For each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of each row. There is no need to record individual student id numbers or for the committee to reach agreement; the graduate coordinator will tally and save the information for future assessment purposes.

- A sophisticated knowledge of a wide range of American, British and World literary works.

	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates sophisticated knowledge of a wide range of British and American texts	Demonstrates adequate knowledge of a wide range of British and American texts	Demonstrates inadequate knowledge of a wide range of British and American texts	Demonstrates little knowledge of a wide range of British and American texts
(for each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of this row)				

- A familiarity with a variety of literary traditions, periods, and genres

	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of a variety of literary traditions	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of a variety of literary traditions	Demonstrates an inadequate understanding of a variety of literary traditions	Demonstrates little understanding of a variety of literary traditions
(for each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of this row)				
	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of a variety of genres	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of a variety of genres	Demonstrates an inadequate understanding of a variety of genres	Demonstrates little understanding of a variety of genres

(for each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of this row)				
	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of a variety of literary periods	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of a variety of literary periods	Demonstrates an inadequate understanding of a variety of literary periods	Demonstrates little understanding of a variety of literary periods
(for each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of this row)				

- <u>An understanding of diverse critical perspectives available in the field of literary studies.</u>

	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of diverse critical perspectives	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of diverse critical perspectives	Demonstrates an in adequate understanding of diverse critical perspectives	Demonstrates little derstanding of diverse critical perspectives
(for each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of this row)				

- <u>An interpretive engagement with the complexities of literary texts as well as a variety of secondary materials.</u>

	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates a sophisticated interpretive engagement with the complexities of literary texts	Demonstrates an adequate interpretive engagement with the complexities of literary texts	Demonstrates an inadequate interpretive engagement with the complexities of literary texts	Demonstrates little interpretive engagement with the complexities of literary texts
(for each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of this row)				

	4	3	2	1
	Demonstrates a sophisticated interpretive engagement with the complexities of secondary materials	Demonstrates an adequate interpretive engagement with the complexities of secondary materials	Demonstrates an inadequate interpretive engagement with the complexities of secondary materials	Demonstrates little interpretive engagement with the complexities of secondary materials
(for each exam, place a check mark in the appropriate box of this row)				