

University of Dayton
ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY FORM
English Department
General Competencies 2004-2005

Steve Wilhoit, Director of Composition
Anne Pici, Program Coordinator

OUTCOME ONE

Upon completing their general competencies English courses, students will be able to **read, analyze, and evaluate college-level non-fiction prose.**

Measurement 1A

At least **85%** of the students will complete their general competencies English courses with a “C” or better.

Results

Of all the students completing their general competencies English courses, 94.2% earned a grade of “C” or better:

ENG 101 students, Winter 2005	82.0%
ENG 102 students, Winter 2005	96.2%
ENG 101 students, Fall 2004	94.8%
ENG 102 students, Fall 2004	94.3%
ENG 114 students, Fall 2004	97.9%
ENG 198 students, Fall 2004	100.0%

Measurement 1B

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies courses will have their portfolios reviewed. This review will show that at least **80%** of the students demonstrate the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate college-level, non-fiction prose.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **85%** of the students demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate college-level non-fiction prose.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 1A realized a **0.5%** increase. Only students taking English 101 during the Winter term, 2005, failed to meet the standard of 85% of students obtaining a grade of “C” or better. Measurement 1B realized a **13%** decrease. The decrease in measurement 1B is likely due to a more stringent examination of student work by those reviewing the portfolios and a reconsideration of what constitutes college-level analysis and evaluation of non-fiction prose.

OUTCOME TWO

Upon completing their general competencies English courses, students will be able to **read, analyze, and evaluate literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes.**

Measurement 2A

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies English courses will have their portfolios reviewed by English department faculty. These portfolios will contain all of the essays written in their general competencies English classes. A review of the literary analysis essays contained in these portfolios will show that at least **70%** of the students are able to analyze literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **77%** of the students demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate fiction in light of the Humanities Base themes.

Measurement 2B

A semi-annual survey of faculty and staff teaching general competencies English courses will show that at least **70%** agree or strongly agree that their students are able to analyze literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes.

Results

Of the faculty and staff surveyed, **95%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to analyze literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 2A realized a **19%** decrease while Measurement 2B realized a **10%** increase. Two problematic issues emerged during this year's review. First, several faculty members did not teach the Humanities Base text as required by the department. Second, several faculty members did not have students address the Humanities Base themes when they wrote about literary texts.

OUTCOME THREE

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **write college-level expository essays.**

Measurement 3A

At least **85%** of the students will complete their general competencies English courses with a “C” or better.

Results

ENG 101 students, Winter 2005	82.0%
ENG 102 students, Winter 2005	96.2%
ENG 101 students, Fall 2004	94.8%
ENG 102 students, Fall 2004	94.3%
ENG 114 students, Fall 2004	97.9%
ENG 198 students, Fall 2004	100.0%

Measurement 3B

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies English courses will have their portfolios reviewed by English department faculty. This review will show that at least **80%** of the students demonstrate the ability to write college-level expository essays.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **83%** of the students demonstrated the ability to write college-level expository essays.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 3A realized a **0.5%** increase while Measurement 3B realized a **13%** decrease. This decrease may be attributed to more stringent examination of those reviewing student portfolios and stricter standards for what constitutes “college-level” expository essays.

OUTCOME FOUR

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **write college-level argumentative essays.**

Measurement 4A

At least **85%** of the students will complete their general competencies English courses with a “C” or better.

Results

ENG 102 students, Winter 2005	96.2%
ENG 102 students, Fall 2004	94.3%
ENG 114 students, Fall 2004	97.9%
ENG 198 students, Fall 2004	100.0%

Measurement 4B

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies English courses will have their portfolios reviewed by English department faculty. This review will show that at least **80%** of the students demonstrate the ability to write college-level argumentative essays.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **87%** of the students demonstrated the ability to write college-level argumentative essays.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 4A realized a **0.5%** increase while Measurement 4B realized a **9%** decrease. This decrease may be attributed to more stringent examination of those reviewing student portfolios and stricter standards for what constitutes “college-level” argumentative essays.

OUTCOME FIVE

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **use emerging technologies in completing their research and writing assignments.**

Measurement 5A

A survey of all students completing their general competencies English course work will show that at least **70%** agree or strongly agree that they have learned how to use emerging technologies in completing their research and writing activities.

Results

Of all students completing the survey, **84%** agreed or strongly agreed that they have learned how to use emerging technologies when completing their research and writing activities.

Measurement 5B

Students will be required to take a test after completing a tour of the library. This test will measure their knowledge of emerging research technologies in the library. At least **90%** of the students taking the test will pass.

Results

Results for individual students are not available. Instead, the library reports that students taking the tests scored an average of **83%**.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 5A realized a **9%** decrease. Information for Measurement 5B was not gathered last year. The English Department continues to work with the instructional librarians at Roesch Library to bring students to expected levels of attainment regarding their knowledge of information literacy technologies.

OUTCOME SIX

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **write essays for a variety of audiences.**

Measurement 6A

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies English courses will have their portfolios reviewed by English department faculty. This review will show that at least **80%** of the students demonstrate the ability to write essays for a variety of audiences.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **22%** of the students demonstrated the ability to write essays for a variety of audiences.

Measurement 6B

A semi-annual survey of faculty and staff teaching general competencies English courses will show that at least **70%** agree or strongly agree that their students are able to write essays for a variety of audiences.

Results

Of the faculty and staff surveyed, **71%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to write essays for a variety of audiences.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 6A realized an **18%** decrease while measurement 6B realized a **36%** increase. Writing for a “variety of audiences” continues to be a problematic competency. Since our first-year composition classes ask students to write for academic audiences, few essays address a “variety” of audiences as that term is typically defined. The English Department will need to reassess whether it wishes to continue to include “writing for a variety of audiences” as a general reading-writing competency.

OUTCOME SEVEN

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **write essays for a variety of purposes**.

Measurement 7A

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies English courses will have their portfolios reviewed by English department faculty. This review will show that at least **80%** of the students demonstrate the ability to write essays for a variety of purposes.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **58%** of the students demonstrated the ability to write essays for a variety of purposes.

Measurement 7B

A semi-annual survey of faculty and staff teaching general competencies English courses will show that at least **70%** agree or strongly agree that their students are able to write essays for a variety of purposes.

Results

Of the faculty and staff surveyed, **95%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to write essays for a variety of purposes.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 7A realized a **39%** decrease, while Measurement 7B realized an **18%** increase. Writing for a “variety of purposes” continues to be a problematic competency. Since our first-year composition classes ask students to write for academic purposes, few essays address a “variety” of purposes as that term is typically defined. The English Department will need to reassess whether it wishes to continue to include “writing for a variety of purposes” as a general reading-writing competency.

OUTCOME EIGHT

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **employ fundamental critical thinking skills.**

Measurement 8A

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies English courses will have their portfolios reviewed by English department faculty. This review will show that at least **80%** of the students demonstrate the ability to employ fundamental critical thinking skills.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **93%** of the students demonstrated the ability to employ fundamental critical thinking skills.

Measurement 8B

A semi-annual survey of faculty and staff teaching general competencies English courses will show that at least **70%** agree or strongly agree that their students are able to employ fundamental critical thinking skills.

Results

Of the faculty and staff surveyed, **90%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to employ fundamental critical thinking skills.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 8A realized a **3%** decrease, while Measurement 8B realized a **3%** increase.

OUTCOME NINE

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **engage in basic research activities**.

Measurement 9A

Every year **5%** of the students enrolled in general competencies English courses will have their portfolios reviewed by English department faculty. This review will show that at least **80%** of the students demonstrate the ability to engage in basic research activities.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **85%** of the students demonstrated the ability to engage in basic research activities.

Measurement 9B

An annual survey of students taking general competencies English courses will show that at least **70%** agree or strongly agree that they are able to engage in basic research activities.

Results

Of the students surveyed, **90%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to engage in basic research activities.

Commentary

As compared to the previous assessment, Measurement 9A realized an **11%** decrease while Measurement 9B realized a **10%** decrease. The decrease in Measurement 9A is largely due to student work which did not document material properly or employ correct MLA citation style.

Discussion and Action Plan

Though the measurements for most outcomes evidenced a decline from last year's assessment, in most cases the program is still achieving its goals. The following exceptions are noted:

Measurement 1A:

82.0% of English 101 students achieve a grade of "C" or better (goal is 85% or better)

Measurement 3A:

82.0% of English 101 students achieve a grade of "C" or better (goal is 85% or better)

Measurement 5B:

83% of students taking the library test will pass (goal is 90% or better)

Measurement 6A

22% of students write for a variety of audiences (goal is 80% or better)

Measurement 7A

58% of students write for a variety of purposes (goal is 80% or better)

Those reviewing the students' portfolios were also disappointed in the quality of the research skills the students' writing reflected, especially the ability of students to base their work on scholarly resources and to employ proper documentation practices.

The Writing Program is taking several steps in light of these assessment results:

- A. The Writing Program is revising Outcome 6 ("Upon completion of their general competencies English course, student will be able to write essays for a variety of audiences") and Outcome 7 ("Upon completion of their general competencies English course, students will be able to write essays for a variety of purposes."). It will submit these revisions to the General Education and Competencies Committee for consideration and approval.
- B. The Writing Program will extend faculty development and teacher training efforts for the 2005-2006 academic year. It will offer more extensive pre-service and in-service workshops designed to help faculty and staff address the program goals more effectively.
- C. Special emphasis will be placed on helping students develop more effective research skills.
- D. The Director and Assistant Director of Writing Program will revise its assessment procedures and institute necessary changes to improve the process. They will focus attention on establishing clearer evaluation criteria for the measurements employed.
- E. The Writing Program will begin to consider ways to move away from using course grades as a measurement tool .