

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY FORM

First-Year Writing Program
 Department of English
 General Competencies 2006-2007

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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--Grades

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, **93.09% earned a grade of “C-” or better:**

ENG 101 students, Winter 2007	77.50%
ENG 102 students, Winter 2007	95.89%
ENG 101 students, Fall 2006	97.14%
ENG 102 students, Fall 2006	90.03%
ENG 114 students, Fall 2006	98.02%
ENG 198 students, Fall 2006	100%

Measurement 1B—Student Portfolios

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 **89.3%** of all portfolios reviewed **demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate college-level non-fiction prose.**

Reviewers agreed or strongly agreed that **91% of 114 portfolios** demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate college-level non-fiction prose. Reviewers agreed or strongly agreed that **86.9% of 102 portfolios** demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate college-level non-fiction prose.

COMMENTS

We are meeting our goals in this area.

Comparison to last year: Grades went up from last year (from 88.67% to 93.09% receiving a C- or higher). The percentage of portfolios meeting the goal also slightly increased from last year (from 85% to 89.3%).

OUTCOME TWO, PART 1

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

Measurement 2A—Student Portfolios

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.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **73.9%** of the students **demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate fiction.**

Measurement 2B—Faculty Survey

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, **93.33%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to analyze literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes.

COMMENTS

There is a 20% difference in rating of student achievement via portfolios and faculty perception of student achievement. Faculty perception is far outpacing student achievement. Partly this may be due to a technical difficulty with the assessment. On our assessment form this year we changed the criteria wording from “literary texts” to “fiction.” This proved problematic because some of our Humanities Base texts are literary (i.e., memoir, poetry) but not fiction. Thus, faculty might have been assessing their students on one criteria while portfolio reviewers may have been assessing them on another. We also intended to change the faculty survey from “able to analyze literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes” to “ability to read, analyze, and evaluate literature,” but this change was not made. Changes in the wording of faculty surveys and assessment rubric will need to be made next year in order to ascertain whether student achievement and faculty perception of student achievement are, in fact, so widely disparate.

There are other potential reasons for the poor student portfolio result. Some instructors are not assigning literary analyses in their courses. While the Competencies include ability to write literary analysis as an outcome of the course, a number of faculty question its inclusion here, since most students will not be English majors and, for those that are, one literary analysis paper in their first year will not have been sufficient preparation for a literature course. Thus, as we consider revisions to the Writing Program, we may need to reconsider this competency.

Comparison to last year: The faculty survey results this year remained consistent with last year’s results. Student portfolio, ratings, however, decreased (from 81.6% to 73.9%), possibly for the reasons stated above.

OUTCOME TWO, PART 2

Upon completing their general competencies English courses, students will be able to effectively write about the Humanities Base themes.

Measurement 2A—Student Portfolios

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 write about the Humanities Base themes.

Results

We were **not able to obtain valid results for the assessment of 114 portfolios**. Raters were in disagreement about how to interpret this criteria. The raters disagreed by almost two points on average. Disagreement revolved around what constituted *writing about the HB themes* (must they be named exactly in the writing?), as well as what constituted *writing* (must it be a formal paper?). We resolved these issues before reviewing the W'07 102 portfolios.

Faculty reviewing the English 102 portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **69.5%** of the students demonstrated the ability to read, analyze, and evaluate fiction in light of the Humanities Base themes.

Measurement 2B—Faculty Survey

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, **93.3%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to analyze literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes.

COMMENTS

According to the review of student portfolios, we are not meeting our goal in this area. Faculty perception, however, is that we are. In our review of student portfolios we determined that seven instructors whose students turned in portfolios did not appear to be teaching the texts or the themes at all—or, if they are teaching them, they are not requiring students to write about them. Of these seven, three are tenured or tenure-track faculty, two are part-time instructors, one is a lecturer, and one is a teaching assistant. Three tenured or tenure-track faculty members did not turn in student portfolios for the assessment; of those, one has openly declared that he/she will not use the Humanities Base texts. Thus, it is possible that the actual results for this outcome may be even lower than indicated here. Given that our Humanities Base texts are new and that the department voted almost unanimously to implement them, these results are puzzling and discouraging.

There may be other reasons for the discrepancy between student portfolio assessment and faculty assessment. We intended to change the faculty survey from “able to analyze literary texts in light of the Humanities Base themes” to “ability to effectively write about the Humanities Base themes,” but this change was not made. The change will need to be made before next year in order to ensure accurate assessment.

In general, as a department we continue to struggle with the Humanities Base themes. We wonder exactly how to interpret them, how rigidly to interpret them, and what sorts of writing students must do about them to effectively meet the goals of the Humanities Base program. The Composition Committee discussed the matter this year and determined that flexibility produces better thinking and writing. Yet some of our instructors interpret the themes so rigidly that the writing produced in response is rather facile. The

Composition Committee is unsure how to handle this problem and could use feedback from the Humanities Base Committee.

Comparison to last year: Writing about Humanities Base themes decreased from last year (from 77% to 69.5%). Faculty survey results, however, remained about the same.

OUTCOME THREE

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **write clear, correct, organized, college-level prose.**

Measurement 3A—Student Grades

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, **93.09%** earned a grade of “C-” or better:

ENG 101 students, Winter 2007	77.50%
ENG 102 students, Winter 2007	95.89%
ENG 101 students, Fall 2006	97.14%
ENG 102 students, Fall 2006	90.03%
ENG 114 students, Fall 2006	98.02%
ENG 198 students, Fall 2006	100%

Measurement 3B—Student Portfolios

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 clear, correct, organized, college-level prose.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **91%** of the students demonstrated the **ability to write clear, correct, organized, college-level prose.**

Reviewers agreed or strongly agreed that **91% of 114 portfolios** demonstrated the ability to write clear, correct, organized, college-level prose. Reviewers agreed or strongly agreed that **90% of 114 portfolios** demonstrated the ability to write clear, correct, organized, college-level prose.

COMMENTS

We are meeting our goal in this area.

Comparison to last year: Student portfolio ratings improved from last year (from 82.3% to 91%).

OUTCOME FOUR

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **write well-supported college-level arguments.**

Measurement 4A—Student Grades

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

Results

Of all the students completing 102/114/198 English courses, **95.98% earned a grade of “C-” or better:**

ENG 102 students, Winter 2007	95.89%
ENG 102 students, Fall 2006	90.03%
ENG 114 students, Fall 2006	98.02%
ENG 198 students, Fall 2006	100%

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 **89.1%** of the students demonstrated the **ability to write college-level arguments.**

COMMENTS

We are meeting our goal in this area.

Comparison to last year: Grades increased over last year (90.37% received a C- or better last year; 95.98% did so this year). Student portfolio ratings improved from last year (from 74.5% to 89.1%).

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—Student Survey

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 library databases to find source.

Results

Of all students completing the survey, **94%** agree or strongly agree that they have **learned how to use library databases to find sources.**

Measurement 5B—Library Tutorials

Students will be required to take four online library tutorial and quizzes. These quizzes will measure their knowledge of emerging research technologies in the library. Students should achieve an average grade of 85% or better on the quizzes. 100% of classes should complete the quiz.

Results

The combined average score for all classes on all four quizzes was **91%**. **86%** of all students completed the quizzes.

Library Video Quiz 1 (**94.1%** average score; **86%** of all classes completed the quiz)

- English 101 --- overall mean of 89.5%; 82% of 101 students completed the quiz
- English 114 --- overall mean of 92.9%; 76% of 114 students completed the quiz
- English 198 --- overall mean of 100%; 100% of 198 students completed the quiz

Identifying Research Sources Quiz 2 (**90.26%** average score; **87.3%** of all classes completed the quiz)

- English 101 --- overall mean of 84.1%; 82% of 101 classes completed the quiz
- English 114 --- overall mean of 90.8%; 80% of 114 classes completed the quiz
- English 198 --- overall mean of 95.9%; 100% of 198 classes completed the quiz

Selecting Research Tools Quiz 3 (**84.3%** average score; **86.6%** of all classes completed the quiz)

- English 101 --- overall mean of 76.3%; 81% of 101 classes completed the quiz
- English 114 --- overall mean of 84.2%; 79% of 114 classes completed the quiz
- English 198 --- overall mean of 92.6% ; 100% of 198 classes completed the quiz

Citing Sources Quiz 4 (**96%** average score; **84.6%** of all classes completed the quiz)

- English 101 --- overall mean of 93.1%; 80% of 101 classes completed the quiz
- English 114 --- overall mean of 96.3%; 74% of 114 classes completed the quiz
- English 198 --- overall mean of 98.7% ; 100% of 198 classes completed the quiz

Measurement 5C—Faculty Survey

Faculty will complete a survey at the end of each semester, describing how well their course helped their students choose credible scholarly sources from library databases or catalogs. At least **90%** of the faculty agree or strongly agree that their students demonstrated the ability to choose credible scholarly sources from library databases or catalogs.

Results

Results indicate that **99%** of responding faculty agree or strongly agree that their students **demonstrated the ability to choose credible scholarly sources from library databases or catalogs.**

COMMENTS

We are meeting all of our goals in this area with the exception of having all students complete the tutorials and quizzes. As was the case last year, English 114 courses have the lowest completion rate; those courses are generally taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Comparison to last year: Quiz results and quiz completion rates both increased from last year (Average score increased from 84.34% on quizzes to 91%; Average completion rate increased from 72.54% to 86%)

OUTCOME SIX

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

Measurement 6A—Student Portfolios

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 college-level instructors.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **91.4%** of the students demonstrated the **ability to write essays for college-level instructors.**

Faculty agreed or strongly agreed that **100% of 114 students** demonstrated the ability to write essays for college-level instructors. Faculty agreed or strongly agreed that **82.6% of 102 students** demonstrated the ability to write essays for college-level instructors.

Measurement 6B—Faculty Survey

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 college-level instructors.

Results

Of the faculty and staff surveyed, **89.9%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to write essays for college-level instructors.

COMMENTARY

We are meeting our goal in this area.

Comparison to last year: Student portfolio ratings showed improvement from last year (80.15% last year to 91.4% this year), as did faculty response (72.21% last year to 89.9% this year).

OUTCOME SEVEN

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **write essays for two or more purposes.**

Measurement 7A—Student Portfolios

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 two or more purposes.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **89.3%** of the students demonstrated the ability to write essays for two or more purposes.

Reviewers agreed or strongly agreed that **92% of 114 students** could write for two or more purposes.

Reviewers agreed or strongly agreed that **86.3% of 102 students** could write for two or more purposes.

Measurement 7B—Faculty Survey

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, **96.6%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to write essays for two or more purposes.

COMMENTS

We are meeting our goals in this area. However, faculty perception of student work is outpacing portfolio assessment of student work.

Comparison to last year: There was very little change in student portfolio ratings, but faculty survey results showed quite an increase from last year to this year (77% last year to 96.6% this year).

OUTCOME EIGHT

Upon completing their general competencies English course, students will be able to **think critically about the topic under discussion.**

Measurement 8A—Student Portfolios

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 think critically about the topic under discussion.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **88.6%** of the students demonstrated the ability to **think critically about the topic under discussion.**

Measurement 8B—Faculty Survey

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 think critically about the topic under discussion.

Results

Of the faculty and staff surveyed, **86.6%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students are able to think critically about the topic under discussion.

COMMENTS

We are meeting our goal in this area.

Comparison to last year: Student portfolio ratings increased from last year to this year (from 80% to 88.6%) while faculty survey results decreased (from 94% to 86.6%).

OUTCOME NINE

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

CITATION**Measurement 9A—Student Portfolios**

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 adequate mastery of MLA in-text citations.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **86.6%** of the students demonstrated adequate **mastery of MLA in-text citations.**

Measurement 9B—Faculty Survey

An annual survey of faculty teaching general competencies English courses will show that at least 70% agree or strongly agree that their students demonstrated an adequate mastery of MLA in-text citation.

Results

Of the instructors surveyed, **86.6%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students demonstrated an adequate **mastery of MLA in-text citation.**

Measurement 9C—Student Portfolios

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 adequate mastery of MLA works cited format.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **82.6%** of the students demonstrated adequate **mastery of MLA works cited format.**

Measurement 9D—Student Survey

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 use correct MLA citation style.

Results

Of the students surveyed, **90%** agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to use **correct MLA citation style.**

DATABASE SEARCH/SCHOLARLY SOURCES**Measurement 9E—Student Portfolios**

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 ability to choose credible scholarly sources from library databases or catalogs.

Results

Faculty reviewing the portfolios agreed or strongly agreed that **73.9%** of the students demonstrated ability to **choose credible scholarly sources from library databases or catalogs.**

Measurement 9F—Student Survey

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 find and use scholarly sources for research papers.

Results

Of the students surveyed, **90%** agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to **find and use scholarly sources for research papers.**

Measurement 9G—Faculty Survey

An annual survey of faculty teaching general competencies English courses will show that at least 70% agree or strongly agree that their students demonstrated the ability to choose credible scholarly sources from library databases or catalogs.

Results

Of the instructors surveyed, **99.9%** agreed or strongly agreed that their students demonstrated the ability to **choose credible scholarly sources from library databases or catalogs.**

COMMENTS

We are meeting our goals for citation style. We continue to have difficulty with scholarly sources, however. Portfolio assessment suggested that some teachers are only giving scholarly sources cursory attention; a number of students cited only one scholarly source in one paper. Many papers required no outside research at all. The results here suggest that not all instructors understand that the course should include in-depth work with scholarly sources.

We need to add a question on the faculty survey about student ability to use correct works cited format. In addition, we need to rephrase the questions about scholarly sources on faculty and student surveys to emphasize the ability to find multiple scholarly sources for more than one writing assignment.

Comparison to last year: In-text citation in student portfolios improved from last year to this year (from 74.7% to 86.6%), as did works cited pages in student portfolios (from 76.5% to 82.6%). While use of scholarly sources is still not satisfactory, it did improve over last year (from 62.5% to 73.9%).

DISCUSSION AND ACTION PLAN

In most cases the program is achieving its goals. In fact, the program shows significant improvement in several areas when compared to last year's results. In particular, we have seen **improvement in student portfolio work in the following areas:**

- Ability to read, analyze, and evaluate college-level non-fiction prose.
- Ability to write clear, organized, college-level prose.
- Ability to write well-supported college level arguments.
- Ability to write essays for college-level instructors.
- Ability to think critically about the topic under discussion.
- Ability to correctly use in-text citation and to correctly format works cited.
- Ability to find and use scholarly sources.

We also saw an increased number of students taking the library tutorials and quizzes and increased scores on those quizzes.

We are pleased to see that our goals for increasing student research skills are being met and we will continue to emphasize those.

Problem areas include:

- Apparent decrease in student ability to read, analyze, and evaluate fiction (for reasons discussed on page 2).
- Apparent decrease in student ability to write about the Humanities Base themes (for reasons discussed on pages 2-3).
- Faculty perception of student work outpacing student work as assessed by the Composition Committee in the areas of:
 - ability to analyze fiction,
 - ability to write about the Humanities Base themes,
 - ability to write essays for two or more purposes, and
 - ability to find and use scholarly sources.

Results also suggest:

- While most instructors are striving to be rigorous, a few are giving simplistic assignments and giving high grades for average or poor work. This was evident in the portfolio analysis and also in the distribution of grades. 40% of all 101/102 students in the Spring 2007 semester received the grade of A. 43% received the grade of B. Thus, 83% of all 101/102 students in the spring received a B or better. When the Composition Committee examined student portfolios, we often disagreed with the grades awarded to papers and felt that many instructors were not holding students to high standards.

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

- We will continue our efforts to provide workshops and training for all writing teachers. This year we offered a number of successful workshops.
- We hope to improve turnout at next year's workshops by publicizing the funding from Paul Benson and Deb Bickford to provide a stipend for TAs and part-time instructors who attend.
- We would also like to increase the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty who attend those workshops. Currently, that group has the lowest turnout to workshops. Given the Provost's mandate that all full-time faculty teach first-year writing, professional development for that group seems essential.
- In our workshops we will focus on three areas for improvement:
 - use of scholarly sources;
 - use of the Humanities Base texts;

- rigor in assignments and grading.
- As a department we need to discuss what it means to write about the Humanities Base themes and how (or whether) to incorporate literature into our writing courses in the future.

Our department also recently approved a proposal to entirely overhaul our first-year writing courses. We will take that proposal to the Academic Senate in Fall 2007. Much of our attention in the upcoming year will be devoted to that proposal.