ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

English Undergraduate Degree Programs (Dept. of English + Philosophy)

REPORT for AY 2008-9   September 2009

Assessments are included for the instructional programs listed below:

Program Name	Level
English	B.A. Major
English	B.A. Minor
Professional Writing	B.A. Minor

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__English__   __B.A., Major/Minor__

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Mission and Goals

Institutional Mission

The University "recognizes its special obligation to undergraduate education and to the preparation of **undergraduates** for advanced degrees or challenging professional careers. It "aspires to develop **broadly literate citizens and leaders . . . educated in analytical and critical thought** and in the **appreciation of the arts** and sciences . . . [and] is committed to **the cultivation and enrichment of the human mind and spirit.**"
The College of Arts and Sciences Mission: The College has the goal of providing **"undergraduate . . . programs in the humanities** and fine arts . . . [and] imparting to its students the **knowledge, verbal and cognitive skills, and values . . . that comprise the basis of a liberal education."** (Source: NMHU Catalog)

Program's Goals in Support of Institutional Mission

The NMHU English program "endeavors to develop in students a **fluency in the use of English through critical, creative, and technical writing" and "provides foundational knowledge of literary periods, genres, theory, and language."** The University Mission, the College of Arts and Sciences Mission, and the English Outcomes Assessment Instrument are strongly linked in the following ways: (1) The mission to provide undergraduate education, (2) the mission to provide for forms of cultural literacy, and (3) the need to promote verbal and analytical skills.

Intended Student Outcomes:

Student essays will be evaluated for the following attributes, all of which are clearly linked to the mission statement(s):

1. Written Presentation
2. Use of Sources
3. Analysis

NMHU Core Traits:

Since there has been greater emphasis on the four core traits of the NMHU student, each of the above can be tied to one of these four traits. The four traits are:

1. **Mastery of content knowledge and skills**
2. **Effective communication skills**

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3. **Critical and reflective thinking skills**
4. **Effective use of technology**

These are linked to our following 3 categories of analysis in the following ways:

1. Written Presentation: is a clearly tied to "effective communication skills" (Trait #2).
2. Use of Sources: in the field of English literary studies, sources are acquired via complex online search engines such as the MLA database and other library resources. Thus, by demonstrating a successful use of sources, student demonstrate mastery of "Effective use of Technoogy," (Trait #4).
3. Analysis: Complex literary analysis contains both "mastery of content knowledge and skills" (Trait #1) and "critical and reflective thinking skills" (Trait #3). In being asked to make a complex argument about a literary texts, students must both master the tools of literary analysis while using critical skills to construct their own argument.

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Intended Educational Outcome 1: Written Presentation
The category evaluates the student's ability to examine a literary, linguistic, or rhetorical work or phenomenon in essay form, demonstrating mastery of the conventions of writing. This includes evaluation of essay form (coherence, focus, organization, logic) and writing ability (effectiveness of language, prose style, clarity, precision, and grammar and usage).

A. MEANS OF ASSESSMENT AND CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS
Each semester the Outcomes Assessment Coordinator will request from faculty peers a set of randomly samples essays ("products") written by English majors or minors for 300 and 400 level courses in English (Literature, Linguistics, and Rhetoric). To achieve a statistically significant sampling, the Coordinator should obtain 15-25 essays. The Coordinator, either unassisted or with the assistance of other faculty appointed by the Department Chair, will evaluate the products according to all three assessment criteria using a 1-5 scale (failing, poor, adequate, good, excellent) with 5 being the highest. Each essay will be read by two or three faculty members, and the scores of those readers will be averaged. The "Criteria for Success" is a score of 3.5 or higher.

B. DATA RESULTS:
From a sample set of 14, the average score was 3.60, which is in the "success" range. The sample size was smaller this year due to an unusually small number of Senior English majors/minors.

C. USE OF RESULTS:
Results have been reported to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the department chair of Humanities, the English program coordinator, and English program faculty and will be considered appropriate in any discussion of proposed programmatic change.

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Intended Educational Outcome 2: Use of Sources

This category evaluates, relative to the parameters of the essay topic, the student's ability to use effectively either primary sources (in an explication paper) or primary and secondary sources (in a research paper). Elements to be evaluated include selection of text specimens from the primary text, bibliographic selection, documentation form, and effective presentation of research (summary, paraphrase, and quotation).

A. MEANS OF ASSESSMENT AND CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

See page for Outcome 1.

B. DATA RESULTS:

From a sample set of 14, the average score was 3.29, which was slightly below the success range.

Use of sources continues to be the weakest link in our program, and we have discussed this extensively at department meetings. Due to staffing constraints last year, we were unable to successfully separate our Undergraduate Lit Theory course (English 301) from our Graduate Lit Theory course (English 501). However, we have been able to implement this change this year, and English 301 has been completely redesigned to better emphasis use of sources.

The outcome problem here is that no single course emphasized use of MLA sources and documentation style before students entered into the 400 level courses. By redesigning English 301, we have remedied that problem, and expect higher scores in this area of assessment moving forward.

C. USE OF RESULTS: See page for Outcome 1.

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Intended Educational Outcome 3: Analysis

This category evaluates the student's ability to provide commentary and analysis informed by knowledge of the discipline, which may be literary, rhetorical, or linguistic, given the expectations of the particular assignment. This includes both textual analysis (i.e., examination of the text *qua* text, making appropriate use of the principles of literary, linguistic, or rhetorical analysis) and contextual analysis (i.e., the ability to put the text in a broader intellectual frame using ideas from humanities and social science disciplines (e.g., cultural studies, history, literary history, sociology, and psychology).

A. MEANS OF ASSESSMENT AND CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

See page for Outcome 1.

B. DATA RESULTS:

From a sample set of 14, the average score was 3.64, which is in the success range. Nonetheless, the implementation of the new 301 will likely increase scores in this category.

C. USE OF RESULTS: See page for Outcome 1.

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Additional Relevant Information and Data:

Program Enrollments, Undergraduate Majors Fall 2009:

- Freshmen: 6
- Sophomores: 2
- Junior: 8
- Senior: 3

Total: 19 majors (increase of 2 students since Fall 2008)

Comments: We have had numerous discussions in the department on how to best retention in freshmen year. While many of the students who list themselves as "Majors" during their freshmen year turn out, in fact, not to be English majors, we still need a better recruitment at transferring those students into sophomores. In general, our sophomore classes tend to have the smallest number of students, as most of our majors only fully commit to the program as juniors.

To better boost this kind of retention and recruitment, we have implemented a literature focused learning community, entitled Heroes, Villains, and Vampires. Consisting of two linked classes—English 11 and English 152 (Intro to Fiction)—this class strives to better introduce students to literary study in their freshmen year, thus hopefully boosting our sophomore class numbers. Results of this initiative will be included in next year's assessment report.

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Data of Student Essays Used for Assessment:

File #	Written Presentation			Use of Sources			Analysis		
	1st Reader	2nd Reader	**Average**	1st Reader	2nd Reader	**Average**	1st Reader	2nd Reader	**Average**
1	3	3	**3**	4	3	**3.5**	2	3	**2.5**
2	5	4	**4.5**	4	4	**4**	4	4	**4**
3	2	3	**2.5**	2	2	**2**	3	3	**3**
4	3	4	**3.5**	3	2	**2.5**	2	3	**2.5**
5	4	4	**4**	5	3	**4**	4	5	**4.5**
6	4	5	**4.5**	5	4	**4.5**	4	4	**4**
7	1	2	**1.5**	2	2	**2**	3	3	**3**
8	4	3	**3.5**	3	3	**3**	4	4	**4.5**
9	4	4	**4**	3	3	**3**	3	4	**3.5**
10	5	4	**4**	5	3	**4**	5	4	**4.5**
11	3	3	**3**	2	2	**2**	2	3	**2.5**
12	3	4	**3.5**	3	2	**2.5**	3	3	**3**
13	5	5	**5**	5	4	**4.5**	5	5	**5**
14	4	4	**4**	4	5	**4.5**	4	5	**4.5**
Total			**50.5**			**46**			**51**
Average			**3.60**			**3.29**			**3.64**