

ASSESSMENT REPORT 2014-2015

English Undergraduate
(Instructional Degree Program)

B.A.
(Degree Level)

Program 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.

Student Learning 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).

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1

- Effective Communication Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

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.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	10	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	3
Total Number of Students	13	Percent of Students Meeting	76.9%

Assessed:		Criterion:	
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Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

Our students actually did better on this outcome than they have in previous years, but the change to a different system of evaluating the results makes the outcome look worse. Faculty discussed the need to evaluate more types of writing in this outcome, and therefore to involve more faculty in evaluating the essays. We would like to create a more targeted outcomes assessment system that would allow us to look at creative writing in addition to the analytical essays we are currently evaluating.

Student Learning 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).

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

- Effective Use of Technology
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Each semester the Outcomes Assessment Coordinator will request from faculty peers a set of randomly sampled 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.

Summary of Data

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	9	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
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Total Number of Students Assessed:	13	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	69.2%
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Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Again, though our students are actually doing better at using sources, our new system makes the results look worse. Nevertheless, we are considering further changes. Faculty discussed the need to come up with a rubric for evaluating the use of sources. This rubric will need to account for the differences in the use of sources expected of lower division students, juniors, and seniors, and it will need to account for the different ways that sources can be used in different types of classes and writing. Using a rubric of this type would give us a better idea of how many of our students know how to find and use sources, and it would allow us to then adjust the ways in which we teach them to find and use sources.

Student Learning 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).

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

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.

Summary of Data

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	11	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	2
Total Number of Students Assessed:	13	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	84.6%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

While we are pleased with the results of this outcome assessment, faculty discussed the overlap between the assessment areas of learning outcome 2 and learning outcome 3. Students who are using sources should also be analyzing those sources. We need to adjust our outcomes assessment plan in order to make sure that we are accurately assessing both outcomes. We plan to hold a retreat later in the year to work on this and other matters.