

**ASSESSMENT REPORT
2016-17**

English Undergraduate

B.A.

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 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 criterion 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:	4
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Total Number of Students Assessed:	15	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	73%
Average Score for Outcome	3.98		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

The average score for this outcome is 3.98, which is above the threshold for success. A majority of our students are scoring above the threshold for success, many of them well above. However, the percentage of students meeting the criterion is lower than we would like. Three of our 15 students scored below the threshold for success in this outcome. These are students in upper level classes, so to address this we plan to offer more Writing Center support for upper level writers, assigning a tutor in the writing center to work with students in 300 and 400 level English classes. Faculty will also offer more focused writing instruction in classes at all levels, and they will use scaffolding of assignments to help students become stronger writers. In the future we would also like to revise our outcomes assessment plan to make it more inclusive. Currently we are evaluating analytical essays, but we would like to also evaluate the other types of writing our students do.

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 criterion 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:	5
Total Number of Students Assessed:	15	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	67%
Average Score on outcome	3.8		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

The average score for these outcomes is above the threshold for success, but the percentage of students meeting the criterion in this outcome is much lower than we would like. Although many of our students score well above the criteria for success in the outcome, five of the students evaluated scored below 3.5 in their use of sources. This may be due in part to the significant changes to the Modern Language Association's (MLA) documentation system, which confused many of our students. To improve our instruction in this area, faculty will conduct curriculum mapping sessions to ensure that we are teaching our students, repeatedly and consistently, how to use sources. We will also use scaffolding of assignments to guide our students through the use of sources, and we will introduce students to the changes in MLA 8 through Writing Center workshops and classroom lessons. We will also purchase multiple copies of the latest MLA handbook so that they are readily available to faculty and students. Finally, to ensure that we are assessing the essays accurately, we will request that faculty members submit a copy of the assignment along with the essays. This will allow the reviewers to better understand the types of sources that the students were expected to use.

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
- Effective Communication Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

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 criterion 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:	4
Total Number of Students Assessed:	15	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	73%
Average Score on Outcome	4.03		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

The average score for this outcome is 4.03, which is well above the threshold for success. However, while most students scored well above 3.5, 3 out of the 15 students evaluated did not meet the criterion for success. To address the fact that a few of our upper division students are struggling with analysis of texts, we will offer more Writing Center support for upper level writers. Writing Center tutors can work on all aspects of writing, including analysis, and designating at least one tutor to work with students in upper level courses will allow tutoring sessions to focus on this skill. English faculty will also conduct curriculum mapping sessions to discuss when and how often we are teaching analysis. We will use scaffolding of assignments to aid students in the process of analyzing texts, and we will provide more focused writing instruction at all levels.

Utilization of Results:

- **Curriculum mapping sessions**
- **Scaffolding of assignments**
- **More Writing Center support for students in upper division English classes**
- **Increased instruction in MLA documentation**

Changes to Program Based on Results:

- **More focused writing instruction in classes at all levels**
- **Curriculum mapping sessions**
- **One writing center tutor designated as tutor for students in upper division ENGL classes**
- **Revisiting of OA plan to evaluate different types of writing**

Retention Strategies

- **Using curriculum mapping to ensure that our students progress through the program and learn the appropriate skills**
- **Writing Center tutoring for upper division students**