

ASSESSMENT REPORT 2017-18

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:	16	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	4
---------------------------------------	----	---	---

Total Number of Students Assessed:	20	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	80%
Average Score for Outcome	3.78		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

The English department, in both last year's and this year's discussion of Outcomes Assessment data, concluded that the current SLOs had run their course in terms of collecting actionable information. If you look at this year's data, the information across the three SLOs was so bunched (3.78, 3.81, 3.81) and year-to-year differences were so minimal (.2 points, which works out to 1 or 2 professors scoring an essay higher or lower than a previous year) that no meaningful changes can be made to the program based on such information.

As a result, the English department decided to redraft the SLOs in an effort to generate more usable data. Over the 2017-2018 academic year, the department redrafted the entire plan; see a fuller discussion in the conclusions below.

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:	15	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	5
Total Number of Students Assessed:	20	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	75%
Average Score on outcome	3.81		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

The English department, in both last year's and this year's discussion of Outcomes Assessment data, concluded that the current SLOs had run their course in terms of collecting actionable information. If you look at this year's data, the information across the three SLOs was so bunched (3.78, 3.81, 3.81) and year-to-year differences were so minimal (.2 points, which works out to 1 or 2 professors scoring an essay higher or lower than a previous year) that no meaningful changes can be made to the program based on such information.

As a result, the English department decided to redraft the SLOs in an effort to generate more usable data. Over the 2017-2018 academic year, the department redrafted the entire plan; see a fuller discussion in the conclusions below.

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:	15	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	5
Total Number of Students Assessed:	20	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	75%
Average Score on Outcome	3.81		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

The English department, in both last year’s and this year’s discussion of Outcomes Assessment data, concluded that the current SLOs had run their course in terms of collecting actionable information. If you look at this year’s data, the information across the three SLOs was so bunched (3.78, 3.81, 3.81) and year-to-year differences were so minimal (.2 points, which works out to 1 or 2 professors scoring an essay higher or lower than a previous year) that no meaningful changes can be made to the program based on such information.

As a result, the English department decided to redraft the SLOs in an effort to generate more usable data. Over the 2017-2018 academic year, the department redrafted the entire plan; see a fuller discussion in the conclusions below.

Utilization of Results:

The English department has redrafted our SLOs to generate more useful data. To create the new student learning outcomes, the English department utilized best practices in the field by drawing on the April 2014 [“Report of the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment.”](#) published by the Association of Departments of English (ADE). This report includes guidelines for effective assessment of English programs and a list of sample SLOs. The English department selected four of the most relevant SLOs and modified them to fit our student body and the four Highlands traits. By aligning our program with national standards and best practices, the English department will ensure that our students are receiving an education consistent with the latest standards of the

field.

In Fall 2018, the English department will finalize its revision of our Outcomes Assessment plan by creating a scoring rubric based on ADE guidelines to ensure consistency in our data collection.

To further generate better data, and in an effort to evaluate student learning outcomes in different areas of our major, the faculty of the English Department have decided to revise our undergraduate outcomes assessment plan. We will evaluate SLOs for Literature classes next year, and the following year we will evaluate SLOs for Creative Writing, Composition, Literacy, and Linguistics courses. In the Fall of 2018 we will meet to decide on how to collect and assess data for the Creative Writing, Composition, Literacy, and Linguistics courses.

Changes to Program Based on Results:

The primary change has been the identification of our four new student learning outcomes, now aligned to ADE recommendations:

Close reading and use of primary and secondary texts: Students will read attentively, closely, and critically, effectively using primary and/or secondary texts, drawing conclusions and generalities beyond a given text, and offering a clear critical approach in interpreting texts, including traditional written, oral, and visual as well as Web-based texts.

Mastery of writing: Students will be able to write clear, grammatically consistent, and rhetorically effective texts, driven by a thesis and sustained by an ordered, coherent argument or sequence of ideas.

Mastery of content, writing, and theory: Students will respond to and produce literary, creative, rhetorical, and linguistic texts in a way that reflects an awareness of form, theory, or critical approach appropriate to the content area.

Mastery of content and context: Students will understand the role of contexts in production, reception, and transmission of literature, language, and cultural texts across periods, histories, genres, geographic or national spaces, and cultural differences.

Implementing these new SLOs will require some substantial revisions and rethinking of the English department will teach their courses. Over the next academic year, the department will collect a list of changes made to their courses that specifically address the new SLOs. For the 2018-2019 assessment cycle, we will be focusing on literature courses.

Retention Strategies:

Aligning our program with ADE recommendations will allow us to better utilize ADE documents, handbooks, and reports to increase the enrollment and retention of our major. Over the past several years, the chair of the English department has been attending ADE workshops, and we hope to continue the practice into the future.

The new SLOs should clearly identify areas that we need to work on, and we look forward to receiving and analyzing the data next year.

Our current retention strategy in English has been to create Learning Communities that help to bring students into the major, such as Donna Woodford-Gormley's Harry Potter LC this Fall 2018. Based on data provided by the Office of Strategic Enrollment Management, we have a low retention rate of Full-Time First-Time freshmen; several of these were placed into Dr. Woodford-Gormley's LC this year, and we will be able to compare their retention to the overall retention rates to see if this is an effective strategy.