



Course-Level Assessment Project Final Report

To complete the Final Report, type your responses to the prompts below. Share a copy of the document with your supervisor and the Associate Provost of Assessment and Institutional Research.

Faculty Name: David Fell
Division/Department: Communication Arts/English
Course Assessed: English 101

Step 1. Define

*Explain the purpose or rationale for assessing the selected course.
Identify which course objective(s) were assessed. Briefly explain why you selected these course objectives for assessment.
Identify to which program goal(s) selected course objective(s) align.*

The rationale for assessing English 101 was that it is one of the highest enrolled courses at the college—and certainly the highest enrolled writing course. The purpose was to track student learning in the area of written communication (part of Program Goal 3).

The following course objectives were assessed:

2. Craft thesis statements that make a point or claim (PG 3).
3. Construct valid arguments based on a variety of evidence (facts, expert opinions, representative samples, statistics, and personal testimony) (PG 3).

These objectives were selected because they most clearly speak to whether a student can writing a thesis-driven essay, which is one of the core elements of a composition course.

Step 2. Design

*Describe the instrument (project/assignment) used to assess identified course objective(s).
What benchmarks and/or controls were established?
Explain how the assessment instrument was externally reviewed and validated.*

The assignment used for assessment was the English 101 signature assignment, which is an essay assignment that asks students to respond to a designated reading: specifically, to take a position on the argument made within that reading.

The essays were scored with a common rubric, which measured student success according to benchmarks provided therein, with a focus on the baseline for the acceptable level of student achievement for course objectives 2 and 3.

To ensure validity and consistency, all sections of English 101 used the same assignment, and the essays were scored using the same rubric.

The assignment was reviewed by English 101 instructors during a workshop at the beginning of the fall 2019 semester. The rubric was also reviewed by English 101 instructors and the English Discipline Coordinator prior to initially scoring the essays.

Step 3. Implement

Explain how the assessment was implemented.

Did any unexpected challenges arise in implementing the assessment?

To ensure consistency and validity, all sections of English 101 were asked to complete this assignment between weeks 12-14 of the semester. After the end of the fall 2019 semester, a sample of essays from a representative number of sections (2 artifacts from 20 different sections) was scored by a committee of English instructors.

Step 4. Analyze

Explain the data that was collected and how the data was analyzed.

To what degree did students meet the established benchmarks?

Consider intention of learning activity and assessment as compared to results.

The essays were scored with a common rubric. The scorers were three fulltime English faculty members: David Fell, Mira Foote, and Mary Wallace. The scoring took place on January 16, 2020.

The data showed the following:

- 75% of students met or exceeded the rubric criteria for thesis statement
- 72.5% met or exceeded the rubric criteria for validity of argument
- 87.5% met or exceeded the rubric criteria for variety of evidence

After this first round of scoring, a benchmark of 80% was established for each criterion. As shown by the above data, students met that benchmark for variety of evidence but not for validity of evidence—and not for thesis statement.

Step 5. Modify/Maintain

Based on analysis of data, describe changes made to the course and/or course materials.

Summarize the results of implementing changes, re-administering the assessment, and collecting and analyzing new data.

Following this first round of scoring, two changes were implemented:

- First, several video tutorials were created and distributed to English faculty members during the move to online instruction in the spring of 2020. Several of these tutorials show students how to construct a valid argument for an argument-rebuttal essay. These tutorials were intended to improve student performance on the validity of argument criterion.

- Second, a video tutorial was created in order to show students how to construct an effective thesis statement for an argument-rebuttal essay, and this tutorial was distributed to English faculty members in the fall of 2020. This tutorial was intended to improve student performance on the thesis criterion.

Final Results and Recommendations

After the end of the fall 2020 semester, a representative sample of essays was again scored, using the same rubric. The scorers were four fulltime English faculty members: David Fell, Mira Foote, Mary Wallace, and Siobhan Wright. The scoring took place on January 11, 2021.

The data showed the following:

- 89.19% of students met or exceeded the rubric criteria for thesis statement
- 83.78% met or exceeded the rubric criteria for validity of argument
- 86.49% met or exceeded the rubric criteria for variety of evidence

As shown by the above data, students met the 80% benchmark for each of the three criteria assessed. The following chart shows the improvement between the fall 2019 and fall 2020 semesters:

| Objectives | Fall 2019 | Fall 2020 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Objective 1: Thesis | 75% met or exceeded objective | 89.19% met or exceeded objective |
| Objective 2: Validity of Argument | 72.5% met or exceeded objective | 83.78% met or exceeded objective |
| Objective 3: Variety of Evidence | 87.5% met or exceeded objective | 86.49% met or exceeded objective |

Given these results, the English department recommends that we conclude our course-level assessment of these objectives at this time.

Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____

Please forward a copy of the signed report to the Associate Provost of Assessment and Institutional Research.