



**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 Effectiveness.*

**Faculty Name(s): Mira Foote**  
**Division/Department: Communication Arts/English**  
**Course Assessed: ENGL-102 (Writing about Literature)**

**Step 1. Define**

***Explain the purpose or rationale for assessing the selected course.***

English 102 is the second of Carroll's gateway introductory writing courses. These two courses prepare students for academic challenges at the four-year level, instructing them how to understand, plan, and execute college writing and research projects. They are essential communications courses that ensure students can perform essential tasks in the workforce.

***Identify which course objective(s) were assessed. Briefly explain why you selected these course objectives for assessment.***

Two course objectives were assessed: Goal 4: Craft thesis statements that make a point or a claim about the human condition as depicted in a literary work.

Goal 3: Conduct research to ground interpretations in relevant social, historical, and/or biographical contexts. –2 criteria: number of sources and relevance of sources.

Together, these course goals speak to the essence of a part two rudimentary communications class. They ensure that students can identify and parse out an organizing claim about a work of literature that reflects an essential truth about the human condition. Moreover, they ensure that the student is able to select appropriate evidence for their claim both from the literary text as well as from secondary sources that are authoritative and relevant to the subject of the literary work. Finally, the goals measure to what degree students are able to synthesize these sources meaningfully so as to demonstrate the veracity of their claims and offer a deeper understanding of the literary work.

***Identify to which program goal(s) selected course objective(s) align.***

- **Course Objective 3:** Conduct research to ground interpretations in relevant social, historical, and/or biographical contexts (GE1, GE3, GE4, GE8)
- **Course Objective 4:** Craft thesis statements that make a point or a claim about the human condition as depicted in various literary works (GE1, GE3, GE8)

### General Education Goals that Align:

- 1-Communicate ideas in written, oral, and other modes as appropriate to a situation and audience.
- 3-Employ various thinking strategies to develop well-reasoned judgments.
- 4-Evaluate sources of information for accuracy, relevance, and reliability.
- 8-Identify their roles as global citizens in a multicultural country and world.

#### 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 English 102 Signature Assignment about Protest Literature was the evaluation tool for this study. This assignment requires students to study a work of literature that underscores the injustice perpetrated on a marginalized community by systemic racism in our society. Students conduct research to broaden their understanding of the protest work. Then they write a paper (using MLA style documentation) that identifies the lived experience of the marginalized group and makes a claim about the writer's observation(s) regarding the impact(s) of this injustice on the community, culture, or group represented in the work.

**Four English faculty members scored randomly selected artifacts from two separate semesters using a rubric created for this purpose. A norming session was conducted before each round of scoring. Scorers assessed to what degree student artifacts met rubric guidelines about these objectives.**

The rubric designed to score this assignment assesses three categories of student achievement: Does Not Meet Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Exceeds Expectations.

For Course Goal 4, "Craft thesis statements that make a point or a claim about the human condition as depicted in various literary works," requires no subcategories to delineate student achievement. A "meets expectations" or "does not meet expectations" designation will be awarded; an "exceeds expectations" designation will be measured by whether or not the student presents a thesis that is *especially insightful*, as judged by the scorers.

For Course Goal 3, "Conduct research to ground interpretations in relevant social, historical, and/or biographical contexts," the rubric will delineate the three subcategories by:

- **the *number* of valid academic sources** the student *uses* in their research *and references* in their paper: (0 or 1 valid sources referenced does not meet expectations, 2 valid sources referenced meets expectations, and more than 2 valid academic sources referenced exceeds expectations). **Sources must be referenced in the text of the paper *and also* listed on the works cited page in order to be counted, as detailed below.**

- *specific reference(s)* in the student paper to social, biographical, or historic context *relevant* to the work; the student's interpretation must be grounded by specifically referencing these types of researched material. The student paper is deemed to "meet expectations" only if it **specifically references the researched contexts, and only if that context is relevant to the intended message of the protest work.** In other words, the student's interpretation of the protest work must be logically defensible as a consequence of the paper's references to academic research that is relevant.

The rubric is attached to this report.

### Step 3. Implement

*Explain how the assessment was implemented.*

*Did any unexpected challenges arise in implementing the assessment?*

In fall of 2022 and spring of 2023, 102 faculty were advised in a semester kick-off meeting and through emails that the 102 CLAP was afoot. The 102 Signature Assignment had been revamped and made available to all faculty on the 102 *Canvas* development site where several documents, lessons, and other resources are also located for general use by faculty.

Communication among faculty members in the English department who teach English 102 is limited or does not fully exist since many adjunct faculty members teach this course. Only in semester kick-off meetings are some adjunct faculty members available and present. Consequently, not all 102 faculty are certain to get the information and instructions about the Course Level Assessment Project. Emails are sent to update faculty, but there is no current follow-up to these communications. This reporter cannot know to what degree instructors implement or understand the assignment as intended. This severely limits the chances that senior full-time faculty members can effect changes, especially improvements for enhanced student learning from semester to semester.

#### 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.*

After the conclusion of each semester, a random selection of student artifacts was collected from *Canvas* and sent along to scorers. Four English faculty members met to norm and then score the artifacts.

In the first round of scoring (January, 2023 for FA 2022) the data demonstrates that students overwhelmingly were writing appropriate thesis statements for literary analysis essays. They also succeed in identifying appropriate academic sources for use in essays that offer a literary analysis. However, students struggled to utilize their chosen sources in meaningful ways. Students revealed a need to learn how to bring their research to bear on the literary analysis that their essays advanced. Specifically, they sometimes failed to use their research to support the main argument of their essay. 36% of students received a score of 0 for this skill. These outcomes were reported to faculty in attendance at the 2023 spring kick-off meeting for English faculty members, and there was a brief presentation underscoring the need to address these areas of weakness.

The second round of scoring (May, 2023 for SP 2023) revealed unexpected loss in the category of **students' ability to craft appropriate claims (clear thesis statements)**. The literature explored in the spring semester was the same as that for fall. However, fall outcomes in this category were excellent; 93% of students presented valid thesis statements. By contrast, spring results were troubling: not quite 70% of students successfully met this benchmark. One observation this scorer makes is that thesis statements that did not make an appropriate claim tended to focus on the poet's use of literary techniques rather than about the topic of the writer's protest. Another observation is that several students had a cluster of inadequate thesis-like statements in their introductory paragraphs, none of which truly addressed the assignment adequately. They did not home in on the lived experience of the marginalized group on whose behalf the writer is protesting. Many spring semester students failed to convey the inequity and oppression that the community in question experiences.

Measurements of students' ability to **conduct research to ground their literary interpretations in relevant contexts** are nearly the same for both semesters, with spring results very slightly lower than those of fall. In both semesters, students located and cited in their papers the requisite number of secondary sources to an equal degree in almost every category. One significant gain demonstrated for spring, however, is that whereas in the fall less than one percent of students demonstrated the ability to use their research to broaden the context and power of their thesis in a manner that exceeded expectations for the benchmark, in the spring, 28% of our students did this to a level deemed exceptional, a lovely result. An equal percentage of students met this benchmark in both semesters: 68.7%. However, the same percent of students in both semesters also were not able to use/synthesize their research to ground their interpretation in relevant contexts; 36% in the fall and 37% in the spring scored "Does Not Meet" for this category.

Below are scoring results tables from both fall and spring.

## Fall 2022

| Objectives   | Does Not Meet | Meets | Exceeds |
|--|---------------|-------|---------|
| Craft thesis statements that make a point or a claim about the human condition as depicted in a literary work          | .06%          | 73%   | 20%     |
| Conduct research to ground interpretations in relevant social, historical, and/or biographical contexts.—Appropriate # | 16%           | 70%   | 13%     |
| Conduct research to ground interpretations in relevant social, historical, and/or biographical contexts—Relevant.      | 36%           | 56%   | .06%    |

## SPRING 2023

| Objectives   | Does Not Meet | Meets        | Exceeds    |
|--|---------------|--------------|------------|
| Craft thesis statements that make a point or a claim about the human condition as depicted in a literary work          | 9/32 28.1%    | 22/32 68.75% | 1/32 .03%  |
| Conduct research to ground interpretations in relevant social, historical, and/or biographical contexts.—Appropriate # | 5/32 15.6%    | 22/32 68.7%  | 5/32 15.6% |
| Conduct research to ground interpretations in relevant social, historical, and/or biographical contexts—Relevant.      | 12/32 37%     | 11/32 34%    | 9/32 28%   |

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.*

**Only in the kick-off meeting for Spring 2023 was there a limited presentation of results to faculty members present. An email apprised all 102 faculty that the CLAP was continuing.**

Final Results and Recommendations

There is a compelling need for 102 faculty to meet regularly and share essential information about course goals and assignments. The results of this CLAP demonstrate a lack of communication that limits the degree to which we work together to improve outcomes for our students. Discussion about ways to pay adjuncts teaching 102 to attend regular in-service meetings seems like a matter-of-fact way to begin addressing this problem.

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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