English BA

Literature And Literary Theory (4000-Level)

Goal Description:

Students majoring in English will acquire an appreciation of various critical approaches and methodologies in studying literature and literary theory.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Reading Literature Critically And Writing About It Analytically

Learning Objective Description:

Students will be able to use various approaches and methodologies to analyze literary texts and demonstrate the ability to interpret texts by communicating their understanding of those texts in analytic essays.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessment Of Writing

Indicator Description:

Reading and writing are part and parcel of each other. Essays written to analyze and/or apply literary texts suggest the depth and quality of the students' reading, as well as their understanding of the assignment. Thus, during the spring 2015 semester, we will collect writing samples of English majors from 4000-level (senior-level) classes and examine them to ascertain the effectiveness of reading that they evince. Our goal is to read 25% of the essays, chosen at random, written by English majors in 4000-level literature courses. We anticipate an enrollment of some 105 students in any given long semester and so should expect to read 26 to 30 essays.

Criterion Description:

80% of English seniors in 4000-level writing-enhanced classes will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.

To assess the effectiveness of student writing abilities, English faculty will conduct an annual holistic review of representative essays produced across all sections of 4000-level (senior) classes.

Holistic Scoring Procedures

1. To assure that the assessment reviews a representative sampling of writing, teachers of 4000-level sections in Spring 2015 were asked to submit a final paper significant writing from 3-4 students in each section, with these students selected at random by the department's secretarial staff. Submitted papers represent some 25% of students enrolled. (See attached memo to 4000-level instructors.)

2. Two primary readers from among the tenured/tenure-track English faculty independently read and score each essay under review; in the case of an unreliable result, the essay is referred to a secondary (i.e., a third) reader, who reads the essay independently, without any knowledge of the previous results (see number 5, below).

3. Each primary reader scores each essay on a 4-point scale, with a score of 4 the highest possible. The two primary scores are added to yield a total, with the final scores ranging from 8 (highest possible) to 2 (lowest possible). A combined score of 5 or higher is passing. A score of 7 or 8 indicates an excellent essay; a score of 5 or 6 indicates an acceptable essay; a score of 4 or less indicates an unacceptable essay.

4. Reliability of the two scores is assumed when both scores from the primary readers are congruent, that is, when they are within 1 point of each other. For example, a score of 6 that would be seen as reliable would mean that both readers marked the essay as a 3. A reliable score of 5 would mean that one reader assessed the essay as a 3 while the other reader assessed it as a 2.

5. Should the primary scores for an essay not be reliable—for example, a 4 and a 1, a 3 and a 1, a 4 and a 2—the essay is referred to a secondary reader. If that reader agrees with the higher score, the essay is certified as acceptable or excellent; if the secondary reader agrees with the lower score, the essay is certified as unacceptable.

Findings Description:

78% of the papers scored were assessed as having met the departmental criteria for critical thinking and editing. Thus, we did not meet our goal for this assessment. Below is a listing of the overall scoring of essays (N = 9, 6% of enrollment):

8 (excellent essay) = 0
7 (excellent essay) = 3
6 (competent essay) = 1
5 (competent essay) = 3
4 (unacceptable essay) = 1
3 (unacceptable essay) = 1
2 (unacceptable essay) = 0

What is clear in the findings for this report is that the number of our samples was well short of our intended goal (we only had 9 essays to evaluate). The department is going to develop a more effective way of gathering artifacts from individual courses in order to reach the 25-30 essays to evaluate in our holistic rubric. We believe that will give a more accurate overall assessment.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Holistic Scoring Rubric
Action Description:

We will distribute the holistic scoring rubric of 4000 level courses for faculty to consider as they teaching writing in these courses, primarily through comments on student assignments.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Reporting/Data Enhancement
Action Description:

One of the major deficiencies in our reporting material is the lack of representative artifacts for assessment. The department is having trouble meeting our goal of assessable writing samples. The department will consider and implement a new system of collecting writing artifacts in order to reach our goal, which will give us a better, more comprehensive ability to assess our performance in this category.

World And Multicultural Literature (2000-Level)

Goal Description:

Students will be exposed to the works of representative writers of various cultures and to universal themes and common concerns of literature.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstrating Knowledge In World And Multicultural Literature
Learning Objective Description:

Students will read and articulate their understanding of basic concepts and approaches to world and multicultural literature.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Assessing 2000-level Writing
Indicator Description:

Reading and writing are part and parcel of each other. Essays written to analyze and/or apply literary texts suggest the depth and quality of the students' reading, as well as their understanding of the assignment. Thus, during the spring 2015 semester, we will collect writing samples of students enrolled in 2000-level (sophomore-level) classes and examine them to ascertain the effectiveness of reading that they evince. We anticipate collecting samples at random from approximately 15% of the students enrolled in ENGL 2332 and ENGL 2333.

Criterion Description:

50% of sophomore students in ENGL 2332 and ENGL 2333 will meet the departmental criteria for academic writing that reflects critical thinking and good editing.

To assess the effectiveness of student writing abilities, English faculty will conduct an annual holistic review of representative essays produced across all sections of ENGL 2332 (World Literature I: Before the Seventeenth Century) and ENGL 2333 (World Literature II: The Seventeenth-Century and After).

NOTE: These course numbers represent a renumbering to conform with Core requirements. Formerly, ENGL 2332 was ENGL 2331 and ENGL 2332 was ENGL 2342. We have combined our reading of student papers from these two courses because either will serve to meet Core requirements, and 2332 is not prerequisite for 2333.

Holistic Scoring Procedures

1. To assure that the assessment reviews a representative sampling of writing, teachers of ENGL 2332 and 2333 sections in Spring 2015 were asked to submit a final paper significant writing from 3-4 students in each section, with these students selected at random by the department's secretarial staff. Submitted papers represent some 15% of students enrolled. (See attached memo to ENGL 2332 and 2333

instructors.)

2. Two primary readers from among the English faculty at all levels (tenure/tenure-track, lecturer, and Graduate Assistants) independently read and score each essay under review; in the case of an unreliable result, the essay is referred to a secondary (i.e., a third) reader, who reads the essay independently, without any knowledge of the previous results (see number 5, below).

3. Each primary reader scores each essay on a 4-point scale, with a score of 4 the highest possible. The two primary scores are added to yield a total, with the final scores ranging from 8 (highest possible) to 2 (lowest possible). A combined score of 5 or higher is passing. A score of 7 or 8 indicates an excellent essay; a score of 5 or 6 indicates an acceptable essay; a score of 4 or less indicates an unacceptable essay.

4. Reliability of the two scores is assumed when both scores from the primary readers are congruent, that is, when they are within 1 point of each other. For example, a score of 6 that would be seen as reliable would mean that both readers marked the essay as a 3. A reliable score of 5 would mean that one reader assessed the essay as a 3 while the other reader assessed it as a 2.

5. Should the primary scores for an essay not be reliable—for example, a 4 and a 1, a 3 and a 1, a 4 and a 2—the essay is referred to a secondary reader. If that reader agrees with the higher score, the essay is certified as acceptable or excellent; if the secondary reader agrees with the lower score, the essay is certified as unacceptable.

Findings Description:

76% of the papers scored were assessed as having met the departmental criteria for critical thinking and good editing. Thus, we met our goal for this assessment. Below is a listing of the overall scoring of essays (N = 41, 10% of enrollment):

8 (excellent essay) = 1
7 (excellent essay) = 8
6 (competent essay) = 9
5 (competent essay) = 13
4 (unsatisfactory essay) = 8
3 (unsatisfactory essay) = 2
2 (unsatisfactory essay) = 0

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Expanding multicultural components
Action Description:

Although the department offers courses that deal with World Literature and multiculturalism, we feel we can expand offerings and emphasize multiculturalism more in our current offerings. The department will review our undergraduate curriculum and find ways to add a more multicultural component to new and current courses.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Reporting/Data Enhancement
Action Description:

One of the major deficiencies in our reporting material is the lack of representative artifacts for assessment. The department is having trouble meeting our goal of assessable writing samples. The department will consider and implement a new system of collecting writing artifacts in order to reach our goal, which will give us a better, more comprehensive ability to assess our performance in this category.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

1. We will maintain our efforts at encouraging students to enter on-campus writing contests, to take advantage of tutoring in the Academic Success Center, and to use Newton Gresham Library to support their reading and writing.

2. Faculty will be provided with copies of the department's criteria for 4000- and 2000-level writing and will be encouraged to share and discuss these with students in their 4000- and 2000-level classes, respectively.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

1) Students have been given any available information on opportunities to showcase their own work and information on the Success Center and other resources to facilitate their success in writing.

2) Faculty have been given all information regarding the 4000/2000 writing criteria. Faculty have discussed these criteria with students; however, a more systemic way of communicating that information to students would be helpful.

PCI

Closing Summary:

Although the department wishes to continue many of our current practices that our successful, it recognizes that there are areas that need to be re-thought, revised, and re-evaluated. In the upcoming year we are going to address a number of issues and take the following actions:

1) Have a full BA curriculum review and make updates to our current curriculum.

2) Due to declining numbers in the major, our recruitment and retention committee will actively implement recruiting initiatives to increase numbers.

3) With the increase demand for online coursework, the department will make decisions on what role online learning has in our department and to what degree we should alter current offerings to increase our online presence.

4) The department will find ways, both through curricula and through future hiring, to increase diversity in our department.

The department believes these are major areas where we can improve and better serve student needs and make the program more attractive to potential students.