FMU's General Education and the Composition Program:
Academic Year 2018-2019

Submitted by
Rachel N. Spear, PhD
Coordinator of Composition and
Assistant Professor of English

Department of English, Modern Languages, and Philosophy

Introduction

FMU's Composition Program holds four primary goals:

1. To prepare students to use language conventions and styles for writing in a variety of rhetorical situations
2. To deepen students' understanding of the power and influence of written, digital, and visual texts, both those they read and those they writing themselves
3. To develop students' information literacy
4. To guide students through processes of reflection so they can evaluate and improve their current and future reading and writing practices.

While we recognize FMU's Composition Program's vital role in FMU's General Education requirements and view its four programmatic goals as being tied to these goals, there are two General Education goals to which the composition program is closely linked:

Goal 1:   The ability to write and speak English clearly, logically, creatively, and effectively. [Note: The composition program does not assess speaking skills.]

Goal 9:   The ability to reason logically and think critically in order to develop problem-solving skills and to make informed and responsible choices. [Note: The composition program does not assess the ability to make "responsible choices."]

Program Assessment and
Extension to General Education Goals

Our Composition Program goals unfold in conjunction with individual course student learning outcomes. In the academic year 2018-2019, the program pulled from indirect and direct assessments. Specifically, 588 composition students, or about 75% of fall composition students taking any composition course, participated in a writing attitude survey. In addition, we performed a direct assessment of our ENG 102. Our end-of-the-semester direct assessment of ENG 102 consisted of 72 randomly selected portfolios from 35 sections of ENG 102. For a complete explanation of the assessment methods, refer to the English Composition Program's Institutional Effectiveness Report: Academic Year 2018-2019. That report also contains the program's mission as well as the results of direct and indirect assessment.

In order to assess the above General Education goals, our First-Year Advisory Committee created and assessed those same 72 randomly selected portfolios based on the below measures:

- GE-SLO 1a: The paper(s) demonstrate(s) that the student can write English clearly, logically, and effectively.
- GE-SLO 1b: The paper(s) demonstrate(s) that the student can write English creatively (or stylistically).
- GE-SLO 9: The paper(s) convey(s) that the student can reason logically and critically in relation to their research and composition skills.

Again, papers were scored on a 4-point scale where 4 excelled at meeting the SLO, 3 satisfied the SLO, 2 partially met the SLO, and 1 failed to meet the SLO. Last year, we piloted this method of assessing the General Education goals; thus, we are still in the process of establishing baselines but will use last year's data for general comparisons. However, please note that any comparison is flawed due to the fact that last year was still a part of our two-year programmatic assessment pilot and that last year's direct assessment focused on English 101, whereas English 102 completes the general education requirements. Thus, last year's data gave insight mid-way through the general education composition requirement while this year's data reveals insight at its conclusion. In addition, we recognize that this assessment does not account for the different layers in which portfolios may be assessed in relation to the current General Education goals and that the data may be skewed as a result. Keeping these factors in mind, we are making our benchmark lower than our programmatic benchmark, setting it at 70%. The assessment method and process mirrored our programmatic assessment. In addition, when two or more scores deviated by more than one point, the portfolio had a third read; two portfolios had third reads.

GE-SLO 1a: The paper(s) demonstrate(s) that the student can write English clearly, logically, and effectively.
- A) RESULTS: 92% of the portfolios successfully met this measure. Specifically, 66 out of the 72 had an average score of 2.5 or greater on the 4-point scale.
- B) BENCHMARK ACHIEVEMENT AND DISCUSSION: The benchmark was met. No discussion needed. This was a 15% increase from last year's data.

GE-SLO 1b: The paper(s) demonstrate(s) that the student can write English creatively (or stylistically).
- A) RESULTS: 79% of the portfolios successfully met this measure. Specifically, 57 out of the 72 had an average score of 2.5 or greater on the 4-point scale.
- B) BENCHMARK ACHIEVEMENT AND DISCUSSION: The benchmark was met. No discussion needed. This was a 36% increase from last year's data.

GE-SLO 9: The paper(s) convey(s) that the student can reason logically and critically in relation to their research and composition skills.
- A) RESULTS: 90% of the portfolios successfully met this measure. Specifically, 65 out of the 72 had an average score of 2.5 or greater on the 4-point scale.
- B) BENCHMARK ACHIEVEMENT AND DISCUSSION: The benchmark was met. No discussion needed. This was a 17% increase from last year's data.