

Institutional Effectiveness Report

Name of Program/Department:	BA/Liberal Arts Program
Year	2018-2019
Name of Preparer:	<i>Shawn R. Smolen-Morton</i>

Program Mission

The mission of the Liberal Arts Program is to introduce students to their literary and linguistic heritage and acquaint them with a variety of genres, periods, themes, critical approaches, and individual writers ranging from ancient to modern. Courses in creative and expository writing, composition theory, the history of the language, modern theories of grammar, film studies, and literary criticism are also offered. Students may also earn either a minor or a collateral in English.

Program Learning Outcomes

PLO 1.0 Demonstrate knowledge of a variety of critical approaches for studying and appreciating literature.

PLO 2.0 Understand how to research key aspects of literature and the producing cultures.

PLO 3.0 Demonstrate knowledge of American and British literary heritage.

PLO 4.0 Understand how literature is crafted in a variety of genres and across periods.

PLO 5.0 Demonstrate knowledge of individual writers ranging from ancient to modern.

PLO 6.0 Apply knowledge about literature and exercise an array of critical skills using effective communication.

Student Learning Outcomes

Skills Outcomes (to be assessed for the entire portfolio except the reflection paper)

- A. Ability to Analyze Texts Critically. The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to understand literary texts in original ways and be able to discuss literary works beyond a simple reporting of what professional critics have already said. Ideally, the student will demonstrate understanding of aesthetic and thematic implications of literary works and be able to make defensible critical judgments and construct coherent arguments.

- B. Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing. The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to use conventions of documentation and integrate borrowed ideas and quotations gracefully into the student's own writing.
- C. Ability to Connect Literary Texts to their Contexts. The portfolio will communicate awareness that literature serves a purpose beyond the purely aesthetic and helps reflect and define cultural and personal identities.
- D. Ability to Apply Theory. The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to apply rhetorical, literary, and/or film theory in a textual analysis.

Knowledge Outcomes (items A, B, and C will be assessed for appropriate papers within the portfolio)

- A. Demonstrate specific knowledge of American Literature. The student will demonstrate a specific knowledge of a key writer, genre, movement or period in American Literature.
- B. Demonstrate specific knowledge of British Literature. The student will demonstrate a specific knowledge of a key writer, genre, movement or period in British Literature.
- C. Demonstrates a Broad Knowledge of American Literature, British Literature, or International Literature. The student's portfolio covers a range of canonical and non-canonical writers and texts across a broad range of American or British literature. Note: to be assessed with the portfolio as a whole.

Method

Assessment Process

- Fourteen students assembled a portfolio of essays from each of the major “blocks” or areas of study in the English Liberal Arts Major. The students significantly revised one of these essays in the Capstone course, ENG 496. At least one essay should have had a significant theoretical component and at least one essay should have been supported by research. Finally, the student composed a reflection essay for the portfolio. See Appendix part 3 for more details.
- The capstone instructor gathered portfolios from the Fall and Spring semesters.
- An exit Questionnaire asked students to evaluate the English Department courses relative to the skills SLO’s (Appendix part 2).
- At the end of the Spring semester, eleven professors teaching English upper-level courses read and scored fourteen portfolios (87 essays) using the Department’s Score Point Indicators.
- Each portfolio was assessed by two readers. If the scores differed by more a one full point, then a third reader scores the portfolio for that Student Learning Outcome and all three scores are averaged.
- Before the assessment period, professors met to review procedures and to calibrate the scoring by discussing a sample portfolio.
- The English Department Chair and the Department’s curriculum chair met to discuss the results and to draft potential Action Items.
- After the report is distributed, the curriculum committee will revise the Action Items, review and revise procedures, and make a recommendation to the Department for the English Liberal Arts major. This meeting will take place just after the Fall semester begins.
- During the first third of the Fall semester, the English Department will approve Action Items and plans for executing them.

A. The Assessment Procedure for Skills is based on the portfolio as a whole for direct assessment. The Questionnaire gathers indirect data (Appendix part 2).

Skills Outcome A. Ability to Analyze Texts Critically.

Skills Outcome B. Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing.

Skills Outcome C. Ability to Connect Literary Texts to their Contexts.

Skills Outcome D. Ability to Apply Theory.

The reader rates the overall portfolio with one of four scores:

Score 4: Excels.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO.

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO.

- B. The Assessment Procedure for Knowledge is based on one appropriate paper for direct assessment. The Questionnaire did not ask about the new SLO's.

Knowledge Outcome A. Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of American Literature.

Knowledge Outcome B. Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of British Literature.

Knowledge Outcome C. Demonstrates a Broad Knowledge of American, British, or International Literature.

Based on at least one essay in the portfolio, the reader assigns one of these scores:

Score 4: Excels.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO.

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO.

[SLO's and the Score Point Indicators are described in Appendix part 1]

Student Learning Outcomes in the English Liberal Arts Major and Alignment with General Education Goals

Goal 1. The ability to write and speak English clearly, logically, creatively, and effectively.

- Partially and indirectly addressed by the essays written for the portfolios.

Goal 2. The ability to read and listen with understanding and comprehension.

- Partially and indirectly addressed by the essays written for the portfolios.

Goal 3. The ability to use technology to locate, organize, document, present, and analyze information and ideas.

- Addressed by the research essays for the portfolios.

*The portfolio essays were written for upper level division literature courses. Those courses are not designed to directly and immediately align with the General Education Goals.

Method: Baseline, Benchmark, and Target

Baseline: N/A. The Department has no baseline because this assessment model and its Student Learning Outcomes were implemented for the first time this year.

Benchmark: 2.5. The Department is using the benchmark from the previous assessment model because it works on the same numerical scale.

Target: N/A. The Department will set a Target based on the analysis and discussion of this first year's results.

Assessment Results: Discussion

Skills Outcome A: Ability to Analyze Texts Critically.

The points total for this SLO was 78 from 30 readings, yielding a 2.60 average. This average slightly exceeds the provisional target, 2.5. The target was achieved. Nine of the fourteen individual portfolios (64.3%) earned an average score of 2.5 and above. This analysis seems to reflect the total average method.

For Skills Outcome A, students responded to this statement: "My English courses have helped me learn how to read literary texts more closely and critically." 13 out of 14 (92.9%) strongly agreed and 1 out of 14 (7.1%) agreed. No student disagreed. The department has not set a baseline, benchmark, or target for this survey. At a glance, the survey numbers are always high, regardless of fluctuations in the direct measurements.

Skills Outcome B: Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing.

The points total for this SLO was 77 from 29 readings, yielding a 2.66 average. This average slightly exceeds the provisional target, 2.5. The target was achieved. Eleven out of the fourteen individual portfolios (78.6%) earned an average score of 2.5 and above. Considered individually, the portfolios were significantly stronger for Skills Outcome B than the previous target shows.

The Department has offered and then required additional training for students to improve these perennially low scores under the previous rubric.

For Skills Outcome B, students responded to this statement: "My English courses have helped me learn how to find and evaluate sources to support my arguments about literary texts." 11 out of 14 (78.6%) strongly agreed and 3 out of 14 (21.4%) agreed. No student disagreed. The department has not set a baseline, benchmark, or target for this survey. During the Exit Interviews, an informal discussion between the student and the capstone instructor, several students pointed to the need for more instruction for this skill.

Skills Outcome C: Ability to Connect Literary Texts to their Contexts.

The points total for this SLO was 78 from 29 readings, yielding a 2.69 average. This average slightly exceeds the provisional target, 2.5. The target was achieved. Ten

out of the fourteen individual portfolios (71.4%) earned an average score of 2.5 and above. Considered individually, the portfolios were significantly stronger for Skills Outcome C than the previous target shows.

For Skills Outcome C, students responded to this statement: “My English courses have helped me learn how to understand a text in its historical and cultural context.” 9 out of 14 (64.3%) strongly agreed and 5 out of 14 (35.7%) agreed. No student disagreed. The Department has not set a baseline, benchmark, or target for this survey.

Skills Outcome D: Ability to Apply Theory.

The points total for this SLO was 54 from 28 readings, yielding a 1.93 average. This is significantly below the provisional target, 2.5, and clearly fails to achieve the target and the Department’s purposes for this SLO. Four out of the fourteen individual portfolios (28.6%) earned an average score of 2.5 and above. Considered individually, the portfolios confirm the very poor results derived from the previous method.

During the calibration session, the readers (all literature instructors) identified and discussed this surprising problem seen in the sample portfolio. Several potential causes and solutions have already been identified.

For Skills Outcome D, no indirect assessment was taken.

Knowledge Outcome A: Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of American Literature.

The points total for this SLO was 66 from 29 readings, yielding a 2.28 average. This is slightly below the provisional target, 2.5. The target was not achieved. Nine out of the fourteen individual portfolios (64.3%) earned an average score of 2.5 and above. Considered individually, the portfolios are close to the results derived from the previous method, but indicate better performance. During the calibration session, the readers (all literature instructors) identified and discussed this new Student Learning Outcome, but have not yet had time to discuss the results. The mediocre score may indicate a problem with gathering essays for this SLO, weakness in the students’ knowledge, and/or the types of assignments given by instructors. For example, an assignment might direct a student to read a text closely, but that close reading of one text is not likely to demonstrate knowledge of American Literature. Overall, students included fewer essays from this area.

For Knowledge Outcome A, no indirect assessment was taken.

Knowledge Outcome B: Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of British Literature.

The points total for this SLO was 84 from 28 readings, yielding a 3.00 average. This is significantly above the provisional target, 2.5. The target was achieved. Ten out of the fourteen individual portfolios (71.4%) earned an average score of 2.5 and above. Considered individually, the portfolios reflect the results derived from the previous method. More students included essays on British literature, and that fact may help explain the significant difference between Knowledge Outcomes A and B.

For Knowledge Outcome B, no indirect assessment was taken.

Knowledge Outcome C: Ability to Demonstrate a Broad Knowledge of American, British, or

International Literature.

The points total for this SLO was 63 from 26 readings, yielding a 2.42 average. This is just below the provisional target, 2.5. The target was not quite achieved. Seven out of the fourteen individual portfolios (50.0%) earned an average score of 2.5 and above. Considered individually, the portfolios suggest that the method based on averages is misleading for this SLO. The readers and the curriculum committee are not yet aware of these results.

During the calibration session, readers noted a problem in assessing this SLO; even a large portfolio of several essays collected over a student's career may not capture the information that we need to assess the SLO. Another method may be needed. The reflection essay may help.

For Knowledge Outcome C, no indirect assessment was taken.

Action Items

A. Actions planned for 2019-2020 to address the 2018-2019 IE Report

[The Department's curriculum committee will revise these Action Items and present them to the Department as a whole in early Fall 2019. The Department will then adopt Action Items and begin to implement them.]

1. Draft a Mission Statement for the English Liberal Arts major.
2. Set the Baseline from the new data.
3. Review the SLO's target (2.5), adopted from the previous assessment model.
4. Continue the required workshops on resource use and synthesis.
5. Revise or expand the Reflection Essay to address SLO's like theory.
6. Define "theory" more explicitly for students and faculty.
7. Consider this assessment in relationship to the PRAXIS subject test.
8. Revise the indirect assessment questions to reflect the revised SLO's and set targets, to include an indirect assessment of the new SLO's. The current indirect assessment is not producing useful information.

B. Actions Completed during the Academic Year 2018-19 to address the 2017-2018 IE Report

SLO 2.0 (a.) Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing.

1. Require students to revise essays for capstone that already have a research component.
2. In capstone, emphasize the requirements of this student learning outcome.
3. After the success of the workshops for this SLO in Spring 2018, offer workshops for handling sources in the fall and spring semesters. Motivate every student to attend at least one workshop.

Results: This SLO has improved significantly. The Department made the workshops mandatory. In every portfolio for 2018-2019, the current cycle, more than one paper had a research component.

The new assessment model.

1. Set benchmarks and targets for the indirect assessment of the new SLO's. Revise these survey questions to reflect the wording and spirit of the new SLOs.
2. Determine how to incorporate the N/A scores into the calculations.

Results: The Department will not use N/A for the new assessment because the portfolios are designed to address each SLO. This year's averages will be the first benchmark for the new assessment.

Executive Summary

For the English Liberal Arts major, the English Department implemented a new curriculum in Fall 2014. For the subsequent four years, the Department assessed the program with the previous model, based on one student essay revised in the Capstone course. That model produced between 12 and 20 essays per year.

At the same time, the Department developed a new assessment model to better fit the new curriculum. The new model directs students to save essays from their entire career in the major and to assemble a portfolio of six essays, including a reflection essay and one essay revised during the capstone course (Appendix part 3). For those reasons, portfolios were not complete until Fall 2018.

After calibrating the assessment at the end of the Spring 2019 semester, eleven professors read 14 portfolios (87 total essays) over a four day period. For each portfolio, two readers assigned a whole number score of 1-4 for each SLO: 4: Excels; 3: Satisfies

the SLO; 2: Partially satisfies the SLO; 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO. All of the scores for each SLO were then averaged. If scores for a portfolio differed by more than a point (a 2 and a 4, for example), that portfolio was scored for that SLO by a third reader and all three scores were averaged. The Department used the target from the previous model, a 2.5 average out of a possible 4. A 2.5 average tells the Department that one of the two readers scored the portfolio for that SLO at a 3 or higher.

For the past three years, the Department has piloted an indirect assessment by asking students to evaluate how well the courses in the English Liberal Arts program helped them with the SLO's. This method has produced consistently high averages, regardless of the strength of the direct assessment. The Department doubts the efficacy of this method, and did not expand it to include the new SLO's.

As expected, the results of this year's assessment are mixed. Three skills SLO's are very similar to SLO's used in the previous model, and those results are fairly good and consistent with the old baselines. An average of 2.60 for Skills Outcome A (Ability to Analyze Texts Critically) met the target (2.5) and is similar to previous results (2.61 in 2018 and 2.83 in 2017). An average of 2.66 for Skills Outcome B (Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing) met the target (2.5) and is higher than previous results (2.47 in 2018 and 2.25 in 2017). The Department implemented several action items to address the perennially low scores for this skill set. An average of 2.69 for Skills Outcome C (Ability to Connect Literary Texts to their Contexts) met the target (2.5) and is lower than previous results (3.24 in 2018 and 2.94 in 2017). Skills Outcome D (Ability to Apply Theory) is a completely new SLO, and during the calibration session, the readers immediately saw that the scores would be low and that the portfolios were not really addressing the SLO, even though the instructions directed students to collect one essay with a theoretical component. An average of 1.93 for Skills Outcome C is far below the target (2.5). The readers, the chair of the curriculum committee, and the Department chair have drafted several action items to address this low score. The three Knowledge Outcomes are new and have no context for analysis.

An average of 2.28 for Knowledge Outcome A (Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of American Literature) did not meet the target (2.5). Readers noted that portfolios had fewer essays on American Literature. An average of 3.00 for Knowledge Outcome B (Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of British Literature) met the target (2.5). Readers noted that portfolios had many essays in this area. An average of 3.00 for Knowledge Outcome B (Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of British Literature) met the target (2.5). Readers noted that portfolios had many essays in this area. An average of 2.42 for Knowledge Outcome C (Ability to Demonstrate a Broad Knowledge of American, British, or International Literature) did not meet the target (2.5), but was very close. During the calibration session, readers noted a problem in assessing this SLO; even a large portfolio of several essays collected over a student's career may not capture the information that we need to assess the SLO.

The Department and the curriculum committee chairs have drafted eight action items to be reviewed by committee and the Department.

Action items implemented during the 2018/2019 year were effective: skills for using sources improved significantly, every student assembled a complete portfolio, the assessment model worked as a practical exercise, and strengths and weaknesses in both the SLO's and the assessment procedures became apparent.

VII. Appendices:

1. Score Point Indicator Descriptions
2. Questionnaire
3. Portfolio Contents

1. Score Point Indicator Descriptions

Skills Outcome A. Ability to Analyze Texts Critically.

The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to understand literary texts in original ways and be able to discuss literary works beyond a simple reporting of what professional critics have already said. Ideally, the student will demonstrate understanding of aesthetic and thematic implications of literary works and be able to make defensible critical judgments and construct coherent arguments.

Score 4: Excels. Sophisticated, original, and persuasive argument with a clear, debatable thesis; student's argument converses with source material; source material does not replace the student's argument.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO. The student's argument and thesis engage the text critically but contain weaknesses in originality or persuasiveness; the argument frequently depends on or is replaced by plot summary and/or secondary sources.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO. The student's argument proceeds mechanically/predictably, without a clear thesis, purpose, or direction; argument may follow the primary text's explicit meanings or the source's explicit arguments.

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO. The student's argument does not contain a clear thesis and demonstrates a lack of knowledge about the text; plot and/or sources summary replaces all or almost all of the student's argument; there may be an argument, but the discussion is not supported by primary or secondary sources.

Skills Outcome B. Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing.

The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to use conventions of documentation and integrate borrowed ideas and quotations gracefully into the student's own writing.

Score 4: Excels. Proper mixture of quote/paraphrase, smooth attribution and lead-ins; connections between differing sources; clear differentiation between external source ideas and writer's ideas. Sources support the argument well. The essay adheres to MLA documentation format.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO. Attempts to cite and/or introduce sources in the essay and the Works Cited; significant but not complete support for thesis from sources; attribution for sources not always clear. The essay adheres to MLA documentation format.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO. Insertion of cited material not always smooth or appropriate; writer's ideas and source's ideas often not effectively synthesized. MLA documentation format incomplete, often missing, or confusing.

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO. Insufficient quantity or quality of support material; abrupt or awkward insertion of cited material; no distinction between student's argument and source material; paper's argument may be a plot or source summary, an unsupported argument, or a combination of the two. Much of the MLA documentation *is* missing or incorrect. Works Cited is so poorly done that the citations are not comprehensible.

Skills Outcome C. Ability to Connect Literary Texts to their Contexts. The portfolio will communicate awareness that literature serves a purpose beyond the purely aesthetic

and helps define cultural and personal identities. The student shows how literary texts both shape and are shaped by the cultures around them.

Score 4: Excels. The student's writing indicates an understanding of the social, political, or cultural context of the primary text(s).

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO. References to the social, political, or cultural context are clear but are not well developed or integrated into the paper.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO. The student's writing has superficial or passing reference to the social, political, or cultural context of the primary text(s).

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO. The student's writing has no contextual references or has inappropriate and/or inaccurate references.

Skills Outcome D. Ability to Apply Theory. The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to apply rhetorical, literary, and/or film theory in a textual analysis.

Score 4: Excels. The portfolio demonstrates a mature ability to apply at least one important perspective from literary, rhetorical, or film theory in a textual analysis. The student understands the theoretical approach and uses it appropriately to produce sophisticated insight about the text.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO. The portfolio demonstrates an adequate ability to apply at least one important perspective from literary, rhetorical, or film theory in a textual analysis. The student mostly understands the theoretical approach and uses it appropriately to produce some insight about the text.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO. The portfolio demonstrates a partial ability to apply at least one important perspective from literary, rhetorical, or film theory in a textual analysis. The student somewhat understands the theoretical approach and uses it unevenly or inadequately to produce limited insight about the text.

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO. The portfolio demonstrates little or no ability to apply at least one important perspective from literary, rhetorical, or film theory in a textual analysis. The student fails to understand the theoretical approach and uses it inappropriately to produce facile insight about the text.

The Assessment Procedure for Knowledge is based on one appropriate paper.

Knowledge Outcome A. Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of American Literature. The student will demonstrate a specific knowledge of a key writer, genre, movement or period in American Literature.

Score 4: Excels. The student's writing demonstrates a substantial, specific, and accurate knowledge of at least one key writer, genre, movement or period in American Literature. This knowledge is coherent, relevant, and well developed. Facts are not piled up or tossed together without synthesis. The student has clearly worked to understand one key writer, genre, movement or period in American Literature. The exploration is thorough and complete.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO. The student's writing demonstrates some significant, largely specific, and fairly accurate knowledge of at least one key writer, genre, movement or period in American Literature. Some facts and/or accounts may be obvious, slightly inaccurate, or poorly synthesized. The exploration is usually thorough and largely complete.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO. The knowledge is piled up or tossed together without synthesis. The knowledge is often general and easily accessible from basic reference materials (i.e. an encyclopedia). Some facts are inaccurate or inadequate. Conclusions are vague and unpersuasive.

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO. The student's writing fails to demonstrate specific knowledge of at least one key writer, genre, movement or period in American Literature. There is little to no effort to understand the subject. Many

facts are inaccurate or inadequate. Conclusions are meaningless and unpersuasive.

[These score point indicators will be used for knowledge Outcome B.]

Knowledge Outcome C. Demonstrates a Broad Knowledge of American, British, or International Literature. The student will demonstrate a significant knowledge of writers and texts across a broad range of American, British, or International Literature.

Score 4: Excels. The student's writing demonstrates a significant knowledge of American, British, or International Literature. This knowledge is substantial, coherent, accurate and well developed. The portfolio covers cover a variety of literary periods, movements, significant authors and genres.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO. The student's writing demonstrates a fairly significant knowledge of American, British, or International Literature. This knowledge is adequate, usually coherent, mostly accurate and well developed. The portfolio covers a variety of literary periods, movements, significant authors and genres, but there are gaps in two or three areas.

Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO. Knowledge of American, British, or International Literature is limited to a few areas, but a broad knowledge is not evident. The knowledge is often general and easily accessible from basic reference materials (i.e. an encyclopedia).

Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO. The student's writing fails to demonstrate knowledge of even a few areas of American, British, or International Literature. There is little to no comprehension of periods, movements, significant authors and genres in one literature. The facts and descriptions are too general, too well known, or incorrect.

2. Questionnaire: Indirect Measurement

(completed at the end of capstone as part of a larger set of questions and an interview with the instructor.)

17. My English courses have helped me learn how to read literary texts more closely and critically.

Strongly Disagree	Agree
Disagree	Strongly Agree

18. My English courses have helped me learn how to find and evaluate sources to support my arguments about literary texts.

Strongly Disagree	Agree
Disagree	Strongly Agree

19. My English courses have helped me learn how to understand a text in its historical and cultural context.

Strongly Disagree	Agree
Disagree	Strongly Agree

20. My English courses have helped me learn how to see how literature serves a purpose beyond the purely aesthetic and helps define cultural and personal identities.

Strongly Disagree	Agree
Disagree	Strongly Agree

3. Portfolio Contents

Five different papers from the following list:

- *Block 1 (Fundamentals/300-level courses)
- *Blocks 2, 3, or 5 (British courses)
- *Block 4 (American courses)
- *One paper of students' choice from any block
- *Another paper of students' choice from any block
- *One reflection paper (to be completed in capstone with a directed prompt to reflect on the revised paper in addition to their work through the major)

[From these five papers, one of these papers will be revised in capstone, and one paper included in the portfolio should have a strong theoretical component.]