

Annual Assessment Report

Department: English

Academic Year: 2017-2018

Date of Submission: 1 Oct. 2018

Department Chair: Sarah Skripsky

I. Response to the previous year PRC's recommendations

Italicized quotations in this section come from the PRC's Feb. 2017 response to our 2016 Six-Year Program Review Report.

Item: *We encourage the department to think how its PLOs [Program Learning Outcomes] can be aligned with the department mission statement and revise them for the next six-year cycle (5).*

Response: In 2017-2018, we completed a substantial revision of our PLOs. The revisions were made with collaboration with all full-time colleagues, some of whom contributed feedback while off campus. The three “new” PLOs are largely a concise revision of the nine PLOs assessed in our 2010 six-year program review report. Those nine PLOs reflected our program values and mission statement well but were too expansive for sustainable program review. Our three, streamlined PLOs are as follows:

Graduates of the English major will . . .

1. Demonstrate critical discernment in their examination of literary texts in ways that expand their affections and sympathies—by assessing their own cultural and theological assumptions, engaging in research, and evaluating evidence. (Thinking Critically PLO)
2. Read literary texts carefully, analyzing both the contexts and the techniques (e.g., literary devices and genre characteristics) that shape their meaning. (Reading Carefully PLO)
3. Engage various audiences in writing with sensitivity to rhetorical situations and scholarly standards. (Writing with Rhetorical Sensitivity PLO)

The revised PLOs are **aligned with our mission statement** as follows:

*The study of language and literature offers practice in the discipline of paying attention to the beauty and brokenness of the created order as students learn to **read carefully, think critically, and write with rhetorical sensitivity.***

The revised PLOs' **alignment with ILOs** is noted in the table later in this section.

	These PLOs will guide our teaching and program review in the 2017-2023 cycle.
Item: <i>The PRC is also concerned that the current PLOs do not adequately represent the quality and scope of student learning in your program (2).</i>	Response: The revised PLOs focus on core dimensions of student learning in our program. These outcomes are already introduced and developed throughout our program. They articulate our instructional commitment to high-quality engagement with texts, both assigned readings and student-produced writing. As such, they improve upon the two PLOs from our previous six-year cycle.
Item: <i>The required Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators needs to be submitted by June 15, 2017 together with the Action Plan and Multi-year Assessment Plan (5).</i>	Response: See Appendix C-f for the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators. The Action Plan for 2017-2023 was already submitted by Cheri Larsen Hoeckley, the outgoing chair. The Multi-Year Assessment Plan for 2017-2023 is in progress; its revision is on the agenda for our next department meeting (Oct. 16). Apologies for the delay; we needed to finalize our new PLOs before finalizing this plan, and last year was exceptionally challenging.
Item: <i>Benchmarks for student performance need to be established for all PLOs (6).</i>	Response: Agreed. Establishing benchmarks will be a focal point in the first three years of the 2017-2023 assessment cycle.
Item: <i>In the future, we would like to see direct and indirect evidence of student learning in relation to the revised PLOs. We encourage faculty to collect meaningful data in relation to all PLOs by utilizing different assessment tools to analyze the results (i.e. rubrics, focus groups, tests). (6)</i>	Response: This report includes direct evidence of student learning in relation to PLO #3. The ENG 002 assessment was aimed at first-year and GE students; the ENG 192 Capstone assessment was aimed at seniors. We would do well to improve our use of consistent, imbedded assessments in required courses such as ENG 060 and ENG 192.
Item: <i>The department should administer a comprehensive alumni survey and analyze and act upon its results in the next cycle. (6)</i>	Response: We are willing to do so. We need to decide on the particular goals of the survey and design it more effectively than our past surveys. We might also reinstate Senior Exit Interviews, which could be required for ENG 192 Capstone and for Major Honors students.
Item: <i>We would like to see a stronger emphasis on the closing the loop activities relevant to your evidence of student learning. What changes in pedagogy, resources, student or faculty support are necessary for the improvement of student learning in your program? (6)</i>	Response: We are “closing the loop” primarily in terms of ENG 002 and Capstone requirements and assessments. We have also held multiple workshops in which assessment conversations led to “best practices in pedagogy” conversations and produced guiding documents for our instructors.

<p>Item: <i>We would like the department to analyze enrollment patterns and disciplinary trends and projections in English major. Where does your department want to be in six or ten years from now? What changes are necessary for sustaining a vibrant and effective English program at Westmont? (6)</i></p>	<p>Response: Our department is keenly aware that is it part of a national trend toward decreased study of the humanities. English departments nationwide are experiencing approximately 20% decline in majors. We recently designed and received approval for a new Writing Minor (in the 2018-2019 catalog), which should help us recruit minors and improve some course enrollments. We are working to innovate in course designs (e.g., innovating in the design of introductory courses, and piloting online Mayterm courses in 2018 and 2019). We have also been collaborating with Admissions and Marketing staff to revise our “public face” with appropriate publicity. We have also improved our relationship with Career Development and Calling through collaborations on Pathways career panels and in our ENG 190 Internships and ENG 192 Capstone courses.</p> <p>We would appreciate the PRC’s suggestions of other resources for following up on the concerns you raise here.</p>
<p>Items: Other</p>	<p>Response: The department would appreciate the PRC’s advice about which items should be given priority in the 2017-2023 cycle, especially in light of the hiring of three assistant professors in the past three years (Carmen McCain, Rebecca McNamara, and Kya Mangrum). We want to include these new hires in meaningful program development and review without giving them unwise service expectations before tenure.</p>

Notes:*Alignment of new PLOs with ILOs*

	Critical Thinking/Discernment	Reading Carefully	Writing with Rhetorical Sensitivity
English PLOs (emphasis added to show alignment)	#1: Graduates of the English major will demonstrate critical discernment in their examination of literary texts in ways that expand their affections and sympathies—by assessing their own cultural and theological assumptions, engaging in research , and evaluating evidence .	#2: Graduates of the English major will read literary texts carefully, analyzing both the contexts and the techniques (e.g., literary devices and genre characteristics) that shape their meaning.	#3: Graduates of the English major will engage various audiences in writing with sensitivity to rhetorical situations and scholarly standards .
Westmont ILOs (emphasis added to show alignment)	Critical Thinking: Graduates of Westmont College will accurately evaluate the strength of evidence in support of a claim.	Diversity: Graduates of Westmont will effectively analyze topics and human experiences using categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, and disability with respect to a biblical vision of human flourishing.	Written Communication: Graduates of Westmont will write effectively in various contexts . Information Literacy: Graduates of Westmont will identify, evaluate, and integrate sources effectively and ethically in various contexts .

II A-1. Institutional and Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment (Information Literacy)

This assessment occurred during Mayterm 2017, drawing on ENG 002 student writing samples from the 2016-2017 academic year. Its results were reported in the library's 2017 annual assessment report but have not previously been included in an English department assessment report.

Institutional Learning Outcome and Program Learning Outcomes	<p><u>Information Literacy ILO:</u> Graduates of Westmont will identify, evaluate, and integrate sources effectively and ethically in various contexts. This ILO is aligned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library PLO #4: Students will effectively integrate sources into their own writing (summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting) while acknowledging the ideas and intent of the original author/s. • English PLO #3: Graduates of the English major will engage various audiences in writing with sensitivity to rhetorical situations and scholarly standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Note: While this PLO was finalized in 2018, this outcome was imbedded in our department mission statement at the time of this assessment.</i>
Who is in Charge /Involved?	Jana Mayfield Mullen (Library) and Sarah Skripsky (English department chair), supported by six ENG 002 instructors (Theresa Russ Covich, Anna Jordan, Beth Lee, Teddy Macker, Carmen McCain, Rebecca McNamara) and three additional librarians (Lauren Kelley, Mary Logue, Diane Ziliotto).

<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	As a group, we scored ENG 002 research essays using an Information Literacy in Student Writing Rubric developed for the last Information Literacy ILO assessment (Appendix B-a). We normed the rubric before beginning official scoring. The relevant scores from ENG 002 essays from 2014 and 2017 were compared at the end of the session.					
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	n/a					
<u>Major Findings</u>	<p>In comparison to 2014 data, we saw a marked improvement in the quality of students' source integration following targeted library instruction in ENG 002 in 2016-2017. These findings were encouraging to librarians as well as English faculty. The summary data is below; the best student performance is in the far-left column, and the weakest in the far-right column. Percentage results on ENG 002 student performance from 2014 vs. 2017 are imbedded in the columns below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="411 662 1866 1060"> <tr> <td data-bbox="411 662 548 1060"> Source Integration <i>PLO 4</i> </td> <td data-bbox="548 662 873 1060"> Synthesizes and critically reflects on content of sources with sophistication. Integrates sources by summarizing and paraphrasing with sophistication, and incorporates quotations thoughtfully; thoroughly incorporates information from sources. 2017: 21% 2014: 1.4% </td> <td data-bbox="873 662 1199 1060"> Strong evidence of synthesis and critical reflection on sources, with some areas for improvement. Integrates sources by summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting, with some evidence of critical reflection on sources; incorporated sufficient information from sources. 2017: 49% 2014: 14.1% </td> <td data-bbox="1199 662 1524 1060"> Some evidence of synthesis and critical reflection on sources but with obvious areas for improvement. Relies on quoting or "patch writing" from sources with limited accompanying evidence of critical reflection on sources; could have incorporated more information from sources. 2017: 22% 2014: 53.5% </td> <td data-bbox="1524 662 1866 1060"> Very little evidence of critical engagement with or synthesis of sources. Relies on quoting or "patch writing" from sources without demonstrating true engagement with sources; fails to incorporate sufficient information from sources. 2017: 8% 2014: 31% </td> </tr> <p>See also the full rubric and further discussion within the library's 2017 annual assessment report (Appendix C-a, pp. 2-4).</p> </table>	Source Integration <i>PLO 4</i>	Synthesizes and critically reflects on content of sources with sophistication. Integrates sources by summarizing and paraphrasing with sophistication, and incorporates quotations thoughtfully; thoroughly incorporates information from sources. 2017: 21% 2014: 1.4%	Strong evidence of synthesis and critical reflection on sources, with some areas for improvement. Integrates sources by summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting, with some evidence of critical reflection on sources; incorporated sufficient information from sources. 2017: 49% 2014: 14.1%	Some evidence of synthesis and critical reflection on sources but with obvious areas for improvement. Relies on quoting or "patch writing" from sources with limited accompanying evidence of critical reflection on sources; could have incorporated more information from sources. 2017: 22% 2014: 53.5%	Very little evidence of critical engagement with or synthesis of sources. Relies on quoting or "patch writing" from sources without demonstrating true engagement with sources; fails to incorporate sufficient information from sources. 2017: 8% 2014: 31%
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<u>Closing the Loop Activities</u>	At the end of our 2017 assessment workshop, we revised our Best Practices for ENG 002 document (Appendix C-d) with particular attention to teaching effective research and source integration practices. The document serves as a guide for all ENG 002 instructors and is especially valuable when training new faculty.					
Collaboration and Communication The library and English department are committed to ongoing collaboration in instruction. Targeted instruction in ENG 002 remains a priority, and our commitment to such collaboration has increased based on the encouraging results of this assessment.						

II A-2. Institutional and Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment (Oral and Written Communication: Audience-Centeredness)

ILOs and Program Learning Outcome	<p>The following outcomes are aligned in terms of audience-centeredness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Communication ILO: Graduates of Westmont will effectively communicate orally in various contexts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ [Related:] Written Communication ILO: Graduates of Westmont will write effectively in various contexts. • PLO #3: Graduates of the English major will engage various audiences in writing with sensitivity to rhetorical situations and scholarly standards. (Writing with Rhetorical Sensitivity PLO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Note: While this PLO was written in April 2018, this outcome was imbedded in our department mission statement prior to the 2017-2018 Oral Comm. ILO assessment.</i>
Who is in Charge /Involved?	Sarah Skripsky, department chair and ENG 192 instructor, and other full-time English faculty.
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	<p>In spring 2018, English faculty scored ENG 192 Capstone presentations and a Major Honors project presentations using an Oral Communication ILO rubric. See Appendices 1-b and 1-c for the presentation/project assignment prompts and Appendix C-c for a report that includes the rubric.</p> <p>Student presentations included oral and written components (e.g., outlines, prepared talking points, and presentation slides and handouts). Students were scored by faculty using a rubric that included three criteria for <i>audience-centeredness</i> or rhetorical sensitivity/adaptation. Of those three criteria, the criterion measuring “sensitivity to audience and occasion” is most similar to PLO #3. With that similarity in mind, faculty scoring of that criterion is a helpful way to understand how well Capstone students were able to engage audiences with “sensitivity to rhetorical situations.”</p>
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	n/a
<u>Major Findings</u>	<p>The data suggest that ENG 192 Capstone students’ performance on audience-centered criteria is better than that of the overall student population included in the Oral Comm. ILO assessment.</p> <p>Lesa Stern provided the English department with a data summary for our program’s performance within the Oral Comm. ILO assessment (Appendix C-b). Following is an edited excerpt from page 5 of the 2018 Oral Comm. ILO assessment report (Appendix C-c); this edited table includes highlighted percentage results for <u>overall</u> vs. <u>English</u> student performance in the audience-centered categories of the rubric.</p>

Summary Table Results of Evaluations of Oral Presentations

Percent of Speakers who scored excellent, good/fair, or unsatisfactory for each oral communication criteria

EXCERPT BELOW is for Audience-centered criteria ONLY.
Comparison Data for ALL STUDENTS vs. English students only has been separated by slashes.

Oral Com Competency		Excellent (ALL STUDENTS/ English only)	Good to Fair (ALL STUDENTS/ English only)	Unsatisfactory (ALL STUDENTS/ English only)
Audience-centeredness: Oral communication should demonstrate sensitivity to the audience and occasion. Audience-centeredness includes responding well to challenging questions, respecting intercultural differences, and handling unforeseen situations.	Sensitivity to audience & occasion	53 / 100	41 / 0	5 / 0
	Q & A time	57 / 100	41 / 0	3 / 0
	Adapt to audience	61 / 83.3	37 / 16.7	2 / 0
AUDIENCE-CENTEREDNESS OVERALL RATING:		60 / 85.7	39 / 14.3	1 / 0

Notes: any criteria that was not applicable was left blank. Percentages reflect the actual number of presentations that scored in the category. Some evaluators marked on line between two categories; the score was attributed to the lower category. Some evaluators only completed the "overall rating" and did not mark the sub-criteria, thus explaining why the percentages in the overall evaluations do not necessarily match the sub-criteria percentages.

Note: 159 senior student presentations were evaluated by 11 different departments

	<p>Unfortunately, as noted in the italicized comments below the table, some faculty gave overall scores on the rubric without circling scores for particular criteria, so not all rubrics could be applied to the assessment of audience-centered criteria relevant to PLO #3.</p> <p>However, when comparing the valid scores available, we notice that English Capstone students' performance was higher in the three audience-centered criteria on the rubric (i.e., higher in comparison to overall student data). Overall, student performance in audience-centered criteria was 60% excellent (vs. 85.7% excellent for English).</p>
Closing the Loop Activities	We need a larger sample size and more focused attention to rhetorical performance within written texts. Our Written Comm. ILO assessment in 2018-2019 will teach us more about English majors' performance in comparison to student performance in other majors, and more in particular about students' rhetorical performance within written texts (vital to PLO #3 as well as the Written Comm. ILO). We look forward to reviewing more substantial program data and comparative, institutional data.
<p>Collaboration and Communication</p> <p>Lesia Stern was the lead assessment specialist for the 2017-2018 Oral Communication ILO assessment. Her team's work prompted the English department's use of the Oral Comm. rubric.</p>	

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	PLO #3: Engage various audiences in writing with sensitivity to rhetorical situations and scholarly standards. (Writing with Rhetorical Sensitivity PLO)
Who was involved in implementation?	All English faculty were invited to a pedagogy workshop on oral communication, including audience-centered (rhetorical) elements relevant to PLO #3, as noted in section IIA-2. All seven full-time faculty participated; we were joined by two adjunct instructors.
What was decided or addressed?	After scoring some of the ENG 192 Capstone presentations, we had a departmental conversation about initial assessments and which teaching practices we valued as "best practices" in this course and other, developmental courses in the major. This conversation was framed in terms of oral communication pedagogy; however, our conversation about teaching <i>rhetorical sensitivity</i> translates well to teaching students to communicate better in writing as well as speech.
How were the recommendations implemented?	As a result of this workshop, we generated a guiding document titled Best Practices for Teaching Oral Communication in English Courses. See Appendix C-e for this document; I have highlighted audience-centered (rhetorical) elements relevant to PLO #3.
<p>Collaboration and Communication</p> <p>Lesia Stern, the lead assessment specialist for the 2017-2018 Oral Communication ILO assessment, offered a discussion guide for use during our departmental conversation about the oral comm. assessment and best practices in teaching oral communication.</p>	

In addition to the activities noted in this section, several English faculty attended Greg Spencer’s workshop on teaching oral communication, which included discussion of teaching rhetorical elements. It was beneficial to learn from Greg in conversation with colleagues from various departments. This workshop also informed our discussion of best practices in teaching oral communication.

VI. Appendices

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data
 - a. Sample assignment prompt for ENG 002 research essay—*imbedded in Appendix C-a, pp. 11-12*
 - b. ENG 192 syllabus with project menu and proposal prompt
 - c. ENG 192 presentations: brief guidelines and schedule for 3 venues
 - d. Major Honors project and presentation guidelines
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
 - a. Information Literacy in Student Writing Rubric—*imbedded in Appendix C-a, page 14*
 - b. Oral Communication ILO rubric with audience-centered criteria—*imbedded in Appendix C-c*
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents (optional)
 - a. Library’s 2016-2017 annual assessment report (see pp. 2-4 for ENG 002 essay assessment)
 - b. Oral Communication ILO assessment message, Summer 2018: ENG 192 data for *audience-centered* criteria (data provided by Lesa Stern)
 - c. Oral Communication ILO assessment report for 2017-2018
 - d. Best Practices for ENG 002, Version 2.1 (revised in summer 2017 after Information Literacy ILO assessment)
 - e. Best Practices for Teaching Oral Communication in English courses (highlighted points on rhetorical sensitivity)
 - f. 2017-2018 Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) for English