

Course Level Assessment

English Composition II – ENL 102

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Submitted by Curtis Hakala

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present the methodology and findings for the course level assessment of English Composition II (ENL 102). English Composition II exposes students to additional forms of composition and expects students to demonstrate a higher level of proficiency in writing. Major emphases are the research paper and literary forms. To assure that English Composition II is meeting its intended purpose in the curriculum and that students are in fact achieving the defined course learning outcomes identified on the Master Course Record Form (See Attachment A), this course was selected for a course level assessment project to discern attainment of specified learning outcomes across multiple class sections. All instructors of English Composition II provided input as to which course outcomes and measurements to include in this assessment.

Methodology

English Composition II course outcomes will be assessed on a cyclical basis over four years beginning with the spring 2008 semester. Each year, a minimum of four course learning outcomes will be selected for evaluation. Dependent upon assessment findings, some outcomes will be assessed over multiple years to validate effectiveness of changes in curriculum or course materials. A grading rubric (See Attachment C) addressing the target learning outcomes served as an indicator of student achievement of course learning outcomes. The grading rubric was incorporated across this section of ENL 102 during the assessment cycle. The minimum performance standard is set at 80%. At least 80% of the students must meet the minimum acceptable level of “C” provided by the grading rubric. In the event that the minimum performance standard is not met, the unmet learning outcome will be targeted for further monitoring. The results may also trigger an evaluation of course materials supporting the learning outcome, revision of course materials or further curriculum revision.

In the spring 2008 semester, four course learning outcomes were selected for assessment in one section of English Composition II. The target learning outcomes include:

- Outcome 1: Develop a clear, concise thesis
- Outcome 2: Write developed paragraphs
- Outcome 3: Incorporate correct quotations
- Outcome 4: Analyze selected reading(s)

To assess these learning outcomes, final research papers were analyzed in one section of English Composition II. All students enrolled in this section completed a research paper and the target learning outcomes were assessed on a grading rubric. Fourteen students were included in this sample. The outcomes and corresponding indicators are listed in Figure 1. Results were compiled for each indicator denoting the percent of students meeting or exceeding the grading rubric for each indicator. Findings from the data for each outcome are presented in the results section of this report.

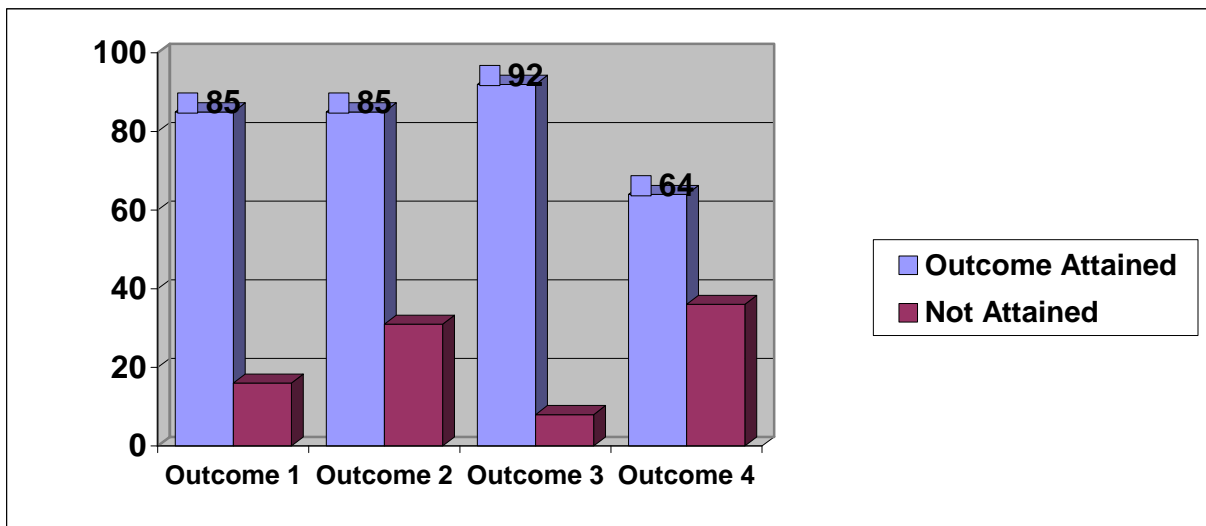
Learning Outcome	Indicator
Outcome 1: Develop a clear, concise thesis	Grading Rubric: Essay controlled by a clear, precise, well-defined thesis; sophisticated in both statement and insight
Outcome 2: Write developed paragraphs	Grading Rubric: Arrangement of paragraphs seems particularly apt; contains clear and smooth transitions
Outcome 3: Incorporate correct quotations	Grading Rubric: Uses well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently; uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident
Outcome 4: Analyze selected reading(s)	Grading Rubric: offers cogent analysis, shows command of interpretive and conceptual tasks required by assignment and course materials: ideas original, often insightful, going beyond ideas discussed in lecture and class

Figure 1: Assessed Outcomes and Indicators

Results

Based on the existing data, three of the four learning outcomes were met at the minimum performance standard (See Table 1). Eighty-five percent of the students successfully completed the identified indicator for Learning Outcome 1 (Developing a clear, concise thesis). Eighty-five percent of the students successfully completed the identified indicator for Learning Outcome 2 (Write developed paragraphs). Ninety-two percent of the students successfully completed the identified indicator for Learning Outcome 3 (Incorporate correct quotations). Learning Outcome 4 (Analyze selected reading(s): 64%) failed to meet the minimum performance standard established for the assessment activity.

Table 1: Distribution of Performance Standards for Outcomes 1 Through 4



Outcome 1: Develop a clear, concise thesis

A grading rubric analyzing a final research paper covered this outcome (Figure 1). The percentage of correct responses was 85% which is above the desired 80% attainment level. While the correct responses for this outcome were met in this assessment, this outcome will require further study to determine if the desired results are sustained in future courses.

Outcome 2: Write developed paragraphs

A grading rubric analyzing a final research paper covered this outcome (Figure 1). The percentage of correct responses was 85% which is above the desired 80% attainment level. Again, while the correct responses for this outcome were met in this assessment, this outcome will require further study to determine if the desired results are sustained in future courses.

Outcome 3: Incorporate correct quotations

A grading rubric analyzing a final research paper covered this outcome (Figure 1). The percentage of correct responses was 92% which is above the desired 80% attainment level. While the correct responses for this outcome were met in this assessment, this outcome will require further study to determine if the desired results are sustained in future courses.

Outcome 4: Analyze selected reading(s)

A grading rubric analyzing a final research paper covered this outcome (Figure 1). The percentage of correct responses was 64% which is below the desired 80% attainment level. A possible reason for this outcome not being met is the fact that students failed to uniquely analyze and discuss the basic elements of literature. Future instruction should focus further on thematic and character analysis.

Conclusion and Action Plan

In conclusion, this course level assessment of English Composition II finds that three of the four outcomes are being met at the minimum performance standard of 80%. Outcome 1 (Develop a clear, concise thesis), Outcome 2 (Write developed paragraphs), and Outcome 3 (Incorporate correct quotations) did meet the minimum performance standard in this course. These outcomes will continue to be examined in upcoming course assessment to ensure the proper emphasis will be maintained.

Of main concern is Outcome 4 (Analyze selected reading(s)) in which 64% of the students performed at the minimum acceptable level. Since offering cogent analysis is crucial to analyzing literature, the low performance on this outcome will be addressed. Classroom instruction in this course will need to address critical thinking skills so that students will be able to insightfully analyze specific elements of literature. Also, the grading rubric used in this course level assessment will be implemented across the English curriculum so that students and instructors can internalize category standards and share the same goals in writing and grading essays.

The participating faculty members have been made aware of the course level assessment and attainment of the outcomes for the classes they taught. Their continued input as to which outcomes to monitor will be utilized in future course level assessments. This final report is distributed to all developmental English faculty members. Any suggestions or comments from the faculty members will also be considered for any possible changes to the course to increase the attainment level of the outcomes.

**Attachment A:
Master Course Record Form for ENL 102 English Composition II**

Course Prefix and Number: ENL 102
Course Title: English Composition II
Recommended Transcript Title (if over 40 characters) English Comp II
Date Approved/Revised: June 30, 2005
Credit Hours: 3 Contact hours per week (Based on 15 week term): Lecture: 3 Lab:
Prerequisite: ENL 101, challenge examination, OR CLEP Corequisite: Pre/Corequisite:
Grading Mode: Letter
Catalog Description: A continuation of ENL 101. The student is exposed to additional forms of the composition and is expected to demonstrate a higher level of proficiency in writing. Major emphases are the research paper and literary forms.
Course Outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. demonstrate organizational skills 2. analyze selected readings 3. identify literature narrators 4. identify literary genres 5. identify literary conflict 6. exhibit readings understanding 7. edit essays 8. participate in classroom discussion 9. develop note taking skills 10. read assigned literary works 11. demonstrate library and research skills 12. contrast themes 13. contrast literary works 14. contrast literary characters 15. compare themes 16. compare literary works 17. compare literary characters 18. avoid plagiarism 19. document carefully all sources 20. use correct paraphrases 21. write developed paragraphs 22. write correct topic sentences 23. write clear, coherent essays 24. utilize clear transitions 25. use MLA documentation 26. use literary terminology

27. incorporate correct quotations
28. use electronic sources
29. write major research paper(s)
30. use appropriate verb tenses
31. state clear thesis
32. revise essays
33. recognize similes
34. recognize metaphors
35. recognize literary tone
36. recognize literary theme
37. recognize literary symbolism
38. read critically
39. use library sources

Implementation Cycle: Fall/Spring Semesters

Role in College Curriculum: (Check all that apply)

- General Education Core:** Written and Oral Communication
- Technical Core (Specify Program)**
- Restricted Elective (Specify Program)**
- General Elective**

Course Fee: None

Instructor's Qualifications: Master's Degree plus 18 graduate level English credits.

Expanded Course Description (provides details regarding major course concepts, target audience, delivery format, etc)

The course focuses upon writing effective essays and completing a developed research paper. Students should leave the course prepared to write competently in other academic courses and in the workplace. Some emphasis will be given to working in class within time limitations. Students will look at a variety of genres for textual analysis and personal response.

Research will be for analysis papers and a research paper. Specific requirements for each paper will be given out as listed on the course schedule.

Prepared by: Debra H. Backus

**Attachment B:
Summary of Outcomes, Indicators, Performance Standards and Results**

Course Level Assessment: Fall 2007 English Composition II – ENL 102				
Learning Outcome	Indicator	Percent of Correct Responses	Percent of Incorrect Responses	Performance Standard Met (80%)
Outcome 1: Develop a clear, concise thesis	Grading Rubric: Essay controlled by a clear, precise, well-defined thesis; sophisticated in both statement and insight	85% (12)	15% (2)	Yes
Outcome 2: Write developed paragraphs	Grading Rubric: Arrangement of paragraphs seems particularly apt; contains clear and smooth transitions	85% (12)	15% (2)	Yes
Outcome 3: Incorporate correct quotations	Grading Rubric: Uses well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently; uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	92% (13)	8% (1)	Yes
Outcome 4: Analyze selected reading(s)	Grading Rubric: offers cogent analysis, shows command of interpretive and conceptual tasks required by assignment and course materials: ideas original, often insightful, going beyond ideas discussed in lecture and class	64% (9)	36% (5)	No

**Attachment C:
Grading Rubric**

Grading Rubric

I offer the following grading rubric (only slightly altered) because it serves as a good explanation of how most teachers, myself included, go about establishing a grade for a paper or for a full-length exam response. I *don't* plan to apply this standard mechanically, but if you internalize the category standards set forth for "A" papers, you will be writing with much the same goals in mind as teachers generally have when they put grade to paper.

Letter Grades	Conceptual	Thesis	Development and Support	Structuring	Language
A	offers cogent analysis, shows command of interpretive and conceptual tasks required by assignment and course materials; ideas original, often insightful, going beyond ideas discussed in lecture and class	essay controlled by clear, precise, well-defined thesis: is sophisticated in both statement and insight	well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	appropriate, clear and smooth transitions; arrangement of paragraphs seems particularly apt	uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors
B	shows a good understanding of the texts, ideas and methods of the assignment; goes beyond the obvious; may contain one minor factual or conceptual inconsistency	clear, specific, argumentative thesis central to the essay; may have left minor terms undefined	pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	distinct units of thought in paragraphs controlled by specific and detailed topic sentences; clear transitions between developed, cohering, and logically arranged paragraphs that are internally cohesive	some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively
C	shows an understanding of the basic ideas and information involved in the assignment; may contain some factual, interpretive, or conceptual errors	general thesis or controlling idea; may not define several central terms	only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to integrate quotations appropriately	some awkward transitions; some brief, weakly unified or undeveloped paragraphs; arrangement may not appear entirely natural; contains extraneous information	more frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences; imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors (subject-verb agreement, comma splice, etc.); effort to present quotations accurately

Letter Grades	Conceptual	Thesis	Development and Support	Structuring	Language
D	shows inadequate command of course materials or contains significant factual and conceptual errors; does not respond directly to the demands of the assignment; confuses some significant ideas	thesis vague or not central to argument; central terms not defined	frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	simplistic, tends to narrate or merely summarize; wanders from one topic to another; illogical arrangement of ideas	some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés, colloquialisms, repeated inexact word choices; inappropriate quotations or citations format
F	writer has not understood lectures, readings, discussion, or assignment	no discernible thesis	little or no development; may list facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	no transitions; incoherent paragraphs; suggests poor planning or no serious revision	numerous grammatical errors and stylistic problems seriously distract from the argument