

2012-2013 Annual Program Assessment Report

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College and the assessment office. You may submit a separate report for each program which conducted assessment activities.

College: Humanities

Department: English

Program: English Subject Matter & FYI/JYI

Assessment liaison: RosaMaria Chacon

1. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s) (optional). Provide a brief overview of this year's assessment plan and process.

Assessment is conducted through the English Department's Subject Matter Committee. The plan calls for assessment of two SLOs: (1) Departmental SLO #3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of creative, literary, linguistic, and/or rhetorical theories. The committee used a rubric with five different assessment categories to assess final essays from English 495ESM Senior Seminar for English Subject Matter and FYI/JYI students; (2) Subject Matter/FYI/JYI SLO #1: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the nature and structure of the English language and of its relationship to other human languages. The committee used a rubric with five different assessment categories to assess two semester examinations from students in English 301, Introduction to Linguistics.

2. Assessment Buy-In. Describe how your chair and faculty were involved in assessment related activities. Did department meetings include discussion of student learning assessment in a manner that included the department faculty as a whole.

During the previous year (2011-2012), our assessment activities and discussions were often conducted with all department faculty during monthly department meetings. Unfortunately, the English Department found this method to be rather unwieldy and unmanageable. This is particularly true since the English Department has five options with an additional graduate program

in Rhetoric and Composition. This has resulted in 6 different 5-year plans, which can be confusing and unwieldy for all (whole) department discussions.

Therefore, this year (2012-2013), the English Department tried something different. At the beginning of each semester, the department chair met with each option head and the assessment coordinator (liaison) to discuss assessment plans and tasks. After these meetings, each option head met with their committees and conducted assessment. These 6 committees included 28 different faculty members (out of a total of 32 full time faculty). Thus, almost all English Department faculty were directly involved in assessment. Doing our assessment in this manner enabled us to conduct assessment more effectively in a focused effort.

In addition, the English department did conduct (in October 2012) one all faculty discussion and consensus re the adoption of a new rubric for assessment of Common Undergraduate SLO #3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of creative, literary, linguistic, and/or rhetorical theories. This SLO and rubric are shared by several options.

- 3. Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project.** Answer items a-f for each SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, copy and paste items a-f below, BEFORE you answer them here, to provide additional reporting space.

3a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

Common Undergrad SLO #3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of creative, literary, linguistic, and/or rhetorical theories

3b. Does this learning outcome align with one or more of the university's Big 5 Competencies? (Delete any which do not apply)

- Critical Thinking
- Written Communication

3c. What direct and/or indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

A department-approved Common Rubric that described and quantified different levels of student achievement or articulated response to the SLO (Common Undergraduate SLO #3) was implemented:

1: Unsatisfactory; 2: Less than Satisfactory; 3: Satisfactory; 4: More than Satisfactory; 5: Excellent

3d. Describe the assessment design methodology: For example, was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (Comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used.

Students were assessed through the vehicle of an analytical writing assignment that directly required the application of theory in the Senior Seminar, 495ESM. A culminating essay assignment was assessed per 1-5 scale rubric. Nineteen essays were randomly selected.

3e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO: Provide a summary of how the results were analyzed and highlight findings from the collected evidence.

The Subject Matter/FYI/JYI Committee members independently assessed the 19 randomly selected essays using the 1-5 scale rubric. In addition to the rubric, members of the committee produced commentary on their assessments. The results were tabulated as follows: 16% - Excellent (Category 5); 16% - More than satisfactory (Category 4); 26% - Satisfactory (Category 3); 36% - Less than satisfactory (Category 2); 6% - Unsatisfactory (Category 1). Thus, the majority of papers (58%) placed in the categories of “Satisfactory” or better. Our assessment found that those students who placed in the bottom 42% (36% less than satisfactory and 6% unsatisfactory) were unable to consistently apply analysis in their use of theoretical frameworks in their discussions. Students comprising the lower 42% category did not thoroughly analyze, did not apply theoretical frameworks consistently, and did not fully develop their theoretical assertions.

3f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO: Describe how assessment results were used to improve student learning. Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year? (Possible changes include: changes to course content/topics covered, changes to course sequence, additions/deletions of courses in program, changes in pedagogy, changes to student advisement, changes to student support services, revisions to program SLOs, new or revised assessment instruments, other academic programmatic changes, and changes to the assessment plan.)

The 42% of assessed papers falling in the “Less than satisfactory” and “Unsatisfactory” categories require further analysis as to why such a large percentage of students continue in their senior year to have writing issues. The ESM committee has contextualized this issue alongside other recent ESM student struggles, including the high percentage of students who have dropped out of the program because of low grades in classes like English 436 and 301, and the high percentage of students who needed to retake the exit interview because of failures (see Year End Report for more information and statistics). With this evidence, along with informal student surveys administered to our ESM students, we believe that the diminishment of advisement for these options has likely been an influential factor.

ESM students take a rigorous blend of courses to help prepare them to become teachers; FYI/JYI students, as part of a blended program, often take upwards of 18 or 19 units a semester in classes ranging from English to Psychology and graduate Special Education classes. For our students, it is crucial that they receive guidance about how to balance their intense course load so that they succeed. Yet based on the current advisement system, our students are encouraged to receive guidance only about GE requirements in the Advisement office. We cannot expect our competent and hard-working staff in Advising to have intimate knowledge of the intensity of different English classes. Option-directed advisement in the English Department can identify student academic problem issues and can help to provide support—not only in directing students to support services, but in helping students identify their academic learning issues.

We are considering two possible remedies:

- 1) Reinstatement of dual semester Department Advisement for both ESM and FYI/JYI, given that the problems we are seeing here and in other areas with student learning and graduation outcomes are completely new to the program’s assessment and appear to result from the recent removal of Departmental advisement.

- 2) Another possible remedy is through further assessment to determine what problem areas should be addressed in the classroom. Some problem areas might be addressed in English 355. English 355 might expand to focus on framing theoretical arguments and helping students develop these frameworks in their writing. Further, students with these particular weaknesses might be identified in English 355 and then tracked longitudinally in English 495ESM to ensure that instruction has been successful. The topics covered in English 355 are, however, quite extensive and it might not be possible to add to the agenda of the course. We might also want to consider working with the Literature committee, which is planning on developing a two-semester Theory requirement to help students better learn and master difficult theoretical coursework. Third, we hope to implement specialized workshops, provided for Subject Matter students with identified issues in applying theory as well as writing. We would like to work more intensively with students demonstrating difficulties with the understanding and application of theory in their writing. These workshops are more feasible but still require significant time investments that may not be possible under the constricted time parameters of the faculty, who are already doing so much with insufficient resources.

SECOND SLO ASSESSMENT:

3a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

Subject Matter/FYI/JYI SLO #1: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the nature and structure of the English language and of its relationship to other human languages. (see below for analysis)

3b. Does this learning outcome align with one or more of the university's Big 5 Competencies? (Delete any which do not apply)

- Critical Thinking
- Written Communication

3c. What direct and/or indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

A committee-approved rubric that described and quantified different levels of student achievement or articulated response to the SLO was implemented:

1: Unsatisfactory; 2. Less than Satisfactory; 3: Satisfactory; 4: More than Satisfactory; 5: Excellent

3d. Describe the assessment design methodology:

This SLO (Subject Matter/FYI/JYI SLO #1) was assessed on the basis of two semester exams (Exams #1 and #2) by the Subject Matter Committee. The exams were designed to address the topics students had practiced on homework assignments. Scores from 33 exams were assessed via the rubric developed by the committee, specifically for this SLO.

The homework assignments provided by the professor teaching the class treated phonetic transcription, phonological processes, morphological (and morphophonological—word structure and the intersection between word forms and their pronunciations) structures and processes, syntactic structures (phrasal and clausal structures) and processes (displacements, omissions, and the like), as well as semantics (lexical and syntactic). The cumulative exams, including both multiple choice and constructed **written** answers, addressed these areas, and were explicitly associated with them (Exam 1 addressing predominately phonetics, phonology and morphology, and Exam 2, semantics and syntax).

3e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:

Provide a summary of how the results were analyzed and highlight findings from the collected evidence.

Each exam had a total of 40 points. Numerical results are as follow:

	Test 1	Test 2
Mean	27.03	22.67
Median	28.55	23.2
SD*	6.50	7.74
(*Standard Deviation)		

In considering these results it should be noted that the focus of the second exam was on syntax, which is typically more difficult for students, and often requires additional exposure. This difficulty accounts for the lower scores.

The mean and median values suggest that the outcomes are on the lower side of “Satisfactory.” The median score, which captures the most typical level of performance (half the class) hovers at 70% for the first test, and just under 60% for the second (not cumulative, but, rather, specific to the second subject area). In other words,

“Some responses demonstrate a familiarity with major concepts and issues relevant to the study of language”

“Some responses demonstrate an ability to analyze language and grammar at an introductory level”

“Some responses demonstrate an understanding of the discipline of linguistics.”

“Some responses demonstrate a basic understanding of the potential pedagogical applications of linguistic systems, including English and other natural languages.”

While this is a marginally acceptable outcome, we would like to strive for a consistently higher level of achievement. In pursuit of higher performance levels, we would like to discover the extent to which this is a first course in linguistics for students, or whether they’re taking it as the second of their linguistics requirements (see discussion below), and what concepts are the most challenging for them.

3f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO: Describe how assessment results were used to improve student learning.

Results from exam 1 were used immediately by the teacher during the semester in the design of an supplementary homework assignment that provides students with additional practice with the range of concepts in phonology and morphology, and which they could choose to complete for extra credit. Students in the ESM program are also required to select and take, one of the following courses: ENGL 302 (Introduction to Modern Grammar), ENGL 400 (The History of the English Language), or ENGL 405 (Language Differences and Language Change). All of these three courses include explicit treatment of the topics introduced in ENGL 301 that relate to the structures of human language. Thus, students have more than one experience with this field and the territory it addresses. There are no “prerequisite” relationships between ENGL 301 and the choice of these three courses; students may enter ENGL 301 having taken one of the three courses, or, they may follow ENGL 301 with one of the courses. Any one of these as paired with ENGL 301 constitute excellent preparation for teachers, although it is the case that the experiences students will have are different across the three courses that complement ENGL 301. It might be worthwhile to consider whether or not the two courses (ENGL 301 and whichever of the

three a student elects) do build on one another, or are at least mutually reinforcing. So, in future assessment efforts—and course monitoring—information about individual students and what linguistic coursework they’ve completed may contribute to our interpretation of the exam scores that we evaluate in ENGL 301.

4. Assessment of Previous Changes: Present documentation that demonstrates how the previous changes in the program resulted in improved student learning.

N/A

5. Changes to SLOs? Please attach an updated course alignment matrix if any changes were made. (Refer to the Curriculum Alignment Matrix Template, http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html.)

N/A

6. Assessment Plan. Evaluate the effectiveness of your 5 year assessment plan. How well did it inform and guide your assessment work this academic year? What process is used to develop/update the 5 year assessment plan? Please attach an updated 5 year assessment plan for 2013-2018. (Refer to Five Year Planning Template, plan B or C, http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html)

Assessment work in the English Department is always completely guided and aligned with the 5 year Assessment Plans (all six of them). We begin with the plans and stay with them. The only changes we ever have are in small supplemental tasks, which are not part of the actual assessment work. The changes are generally necessitated by an inability to fully complete a supplemental task due to organizational parameters, and are accounted for in our Annual Assessment Reports.

The English Department has updated or made adjustments in some of the Assessment Plans based on 1) discovery of previous errors in writing the initial 5 year Plans and 2) the overwhelming workload necessitated by six different, comprehensive 5 year Assessment Plans. In completing a self-study, writing six 5 year Assessment Plans, and conducting assessment all in one year (during 2010-2011) in addition to regular teaching, service, research and administrative duties, the English Department was quite swamped by work. Returning to the 5 year plans, on a year by year basis, we discover inadvertent errors and overwhelming assessment workloads. Therefore, we make small adjustments that will either correct our previous errors and/or alleviate some

of the workload. During 2012-2013 adjustments were made to the Honors and Graduate option Assessment Plans. The corrected plans were sent to Gregory Mena, Marilyn Filbeck, and Bonnie Paller February 16, 2013.

7. Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript which uses or describes assessment activities in your program? Please provide citation or discuss.

N/A

8. Other information, assessment or reflective activities or processes not captured above.

None