

UW Colleges Assessment Planning and Reporting Form  
2004-2005

Email your reports to **SAC@uwc.edu**

<b>Department</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Assessment Coordinator(s)</b>	<b>Holly Hassel and Nancy Chick</b>

NOTE: Please attach relevant supporting information used to complete the Report Summary Sheet.

### PART 1: Assessment of General Education Outcomes

#### Section 1: Identify the Proficiencies and Performance Indicators Assessed

- at the *Planning* stage, mark the performance indicators to be assessed in the left hand column below
- at the *Reporting* stage, report the numbers of students who did not meet, met, or exceeded expectations

Proficiency	Performance Indicators	# Do Not Meet	# Meet	# Exceed
<b>C. Communication Skills</b>	2. Communicate clearly, precisely, and in a well-organized manner	254	985	636

#### Section 3: Use of Results

1. How did individual instructors report that they plan to use these results to improve the instructional process?

Instructors did not provide individual feedback on the institutional results. Because so much of our attention is devoted to the departmental/discipline-specific assessment, and because there is a great deal of overlap between the institutional communication skills rubrics and our discipline assessment, we have placed our energies there.

2. What recommendations would you and/or the department assessment committee make to your department for continued improvement of the assessment process, proficiencies, performance indicators, assessment activity, rubric, and/or student performance in the discipline?

Last year, we wrote that these were our concerns: "The one area that we would like to improve is the participation level of our department members, especially instructional academic staff. We would also like to have a more readily referenced guide for who is required to assess and what courses they should assess." We are still working on improving our participation at this level. We still have seven IAS who did not participate in institutional assessment during spring semester, which, in a department our size, is probably to be expected, but we would still try to work through the goal of achieving a 100% participation rate. All faculty participated.

3. After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will the department take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency?

As noted above, our department composition assessment overlaps considerably with the communication skills rubric, so we will be applying the same strategies for institutional assessment as we do below (see Section 5 of discipline-specific use of results).

## PART 2: Assessment of Department-Specific Outcomes

### Section 1: Identify department-specific outcomes/performance indicators.

Outcomes/Performance Indicators
<p><b>1. After taking any literature course in the English department, a student will be able to choose or respond to a selected passage of textual evidence relevant to a specific topic, do a close reading of that passage, and interpret the passage's significance and relationship to the piece as a whole, as relevant to the topic.</b></p> <p>a. summary of basic meaning  b. analysis of specific words  c. fluency with discipline-specific language  d. explains multi-layered meanings</p>
<p><b>2. After taking a composition course in the English Department, any student should be able to address effectively the purpose and audience expectations for any written assignment and write clearly, fluently, and in a well-organized manner.</b></p> <p>a. rhetorical strategies  b. background for audience  c. examples or evidence  d. incorporate sources  e. standard essay structure  f. thesis  g. cohesiveness  h. paragraphing  i. topic sentences  j. uses sentences correctly  k. integrates quotations  l. transitions  m. uses appropriate diction  n. concise language  o. standard written English  p. documentation</p>
<p><b>3. After taking a class in literature, students will identify key passages that contribute to textual complexity and acknowledge the value of ambiguities and tensions in a text.</b></p> <p>a. identify multiple meanings  b. identify specific passages  c. acknowledge ambiguities</p>

### Section 2: Attach the rubric/standards used to assess each outcome/performance indicator.

### Section 3: Assessment Results

Departmental Outcome/Performance Indicator	# Exceeds	# Meet	#Fails
<p>1. After taking any literature course in the English department, a student will be able to choose or respond to a selected passage of textual evidence relevant to a specific topic, do a close reading of that passage, and interpret the passage's significance and relationship to the piece as a whole, as relevant to the topic. (see attached rubric for PIs)</p>	a. summary of basic meaning: 327	346	69
	b. analysis of specific words: 287	340	100
	c. fluency with discipline-specific language: 267	351	107
	d. explains multi-layered meanings: 307	332	77

2. After taking a composition course in the English Department, any student should be able to address effectively the purpose and audience expectations for any written assignment and write clearly, fluently, and in a well-organized manner.	<b>Fall 2004</b>	333	95
	a. rhetorical strategies: 311		
	b. background for audience: 343	309	76
	c. examples or evidence: 315	312	93
	d. incorporate sources: 239	336	138
	e. standard essay structure: 322	345	61
	f. thesis: 353	294	77
	g. cohesiveness: 287	329	77
	h. paragraphing: 307	339	92
	i. topic sentences: 311	340	94
	<b>Spring 2005</b>	166	30
	j. uses sentences correctly: 153		
	k. integrates quotations: 130	166	63
	l. transitions: 149	154	47
	m. uses appropriate diction: 171	155	42
n. concise language: 190	142	42	
o. standard written English: 142:	161	46	
p. documentation: 169	132	49	
3. After taking a class in literature, students will identify key passages that contribute to textual complexity and acknowledge the value of ambiguities and tensions in a text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify multiple meanings: 295</li> <li></li> </ul>	325	72
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify specific passages: 281</li> <li></li> </ul>	310	99
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acknowledge ambiguities: 273</li> </ul>	315	97

## Section 5: Use of results

### 1. How did individual instructors report that they plan to use these results to improve the instructional process?

Please see attached document "Closing the Loop on 2004-2005 Assessment" for specific examples of changes identified by individual instructors.

### 2. What recommendations would you and/or the department assessment committee make to your department for continued improvement of the assessment process, proficiencies, performance indicators, assessment activity, rubric, and/or student performance in the discipline?

Our activities have been focused primarily on our Spring department meetings, where we have expended the majority of our assessment-earmarked budget. This year, we met at UW-Baraboo and spent one day on discussing and responding to the results of our Fall, 2004 assessment and 2003-2004 assessments, with two sessions focused on composition and two sessions on literature results. All of our meeting budget (\$1800) was used to support this meeting.

Since the areas students appeared to have the highest "Fails to meet" scores in Composition were in "Using appropriate rhetorical strategies to the assignment" and research strategies, we had two faculty members lead sessions. Our rhetorical strategies session helped department members define the term and discuss effective pedagogy in helping students determine appropriate rhetorical strategies for their assignments. This session was led by Christel Taylor, Waukesha.

Second, we had a follow-up session to our Spring, 2004 meeting in which we "closed the loop" by offering a session facilitated by Greg Ahrenhoerster (Waukesha) and John Allen (Waukesha) on citing sources. Of the areas needing improvement, this one was by far the most significant. In our Spring 2005 meeting, Chuck Rybak (Washington County) led a session continuing the department conversations on how to effectively teach MLA documentation and the citing of sources.

This year, 2004-2005, we also began to assess literature courses, with department members not teaching literature asked to reassess composition. Since we weren't closing the loop from the previous year, we instead developed sessions focused on our Fall 2004 results, which indicated that the highest "Fails to meet" rates were in the two PI's "Analysis of specific words" (18%) and "Fluency with discipline-specific language (15%), so we had a session on each identifying what those PI's mean and best practices for helping students master those skills. In one session, we identified exactly what we mean by "discipline specific terms" and generated lists of the kinds of language we expect students to be fluent with after a course in literature, while in the other we discussed what problems students face in identifying specific words in the process of literary analysis and brainstormed teaching strategies for overcoming these problems.

The results of our Spring, 2005 assessment revealed that students struggled the most in literature assessment with the PI "Identify passages that contribute to a text's complexity or ambiguity" and "Acknowledge ambiguities" and in composition with "integrates quotations gracefully." We have recommended that next year's Co-DAC's address these issues for next year.

Finally, when we asked the department for feedback on the forms, they submitted and agreed to the following comments, with a few voices representing the department's feedback. A few commented that "They look good. They're easy to read and follow, but repetitive and lengthy, but perhaps that's unavoidable in terms of maintaining the clarity. I would think that the institutional accreditation agency (whatever their current name and/or acronym is) would be impressed." A few others agreed that they're "difficult to read because the columns end up being so gosh-darn long and thin. I don't think you and Holly were overly verbose either...it's just the format of the form--very user-unfriendly in my opinion." A combined perspective claims "I found it easy to follow because of the organizational

set-up, but reading down those long columns was something else again." Overall, the department agreed that these forms are "serviceable."

**3. After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will the department take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency?**

We have collected materials from all the workshops we have done at our Spring meetings on our department website, with all assessment rubrics and proficiencies located at this address: [http://www.uwc.edu/uwc/depts/english/Faculty\\_Materials/assessment.html](http://www.uwc.edu/uwc/depts/english/Faculty_Materials/assessment.html) and all notes and handouts distributed at our meetings at this website: [http://www.uwc.edu/uwc/depts/english/Faculty\\_Materials/materials.htm](http://www.uwc.edu/uwc/depts/english/Faculty_Materials/materials.htm).

In addition, we plan to share the strategies reported by individual instructors (#1) with the dept, so that those who didn't report changes might get ideas for how to improve.

### PART 3: Additional Assessment and Contributions

Please ask for and include in the report information from Department members about any other assessment activities they have conducted, particularly in conjunction with grant-funded innovations. Also ask for and describe briefly any additional contributions to assessment such as publications, presentations, qualitative classroom innovations (such as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning activities), and other items relating to assessment that the department wishes to note.

- Jean Greenwood (UW Marathon) and a few others faculty and Instructional Academic Staff at Marathon are doing a FACETS follow-up, a reflection piece suitable for publication, about innovative strategies we have implemented in our summer teaching. The FACETS program originates from UW- Stevens Point and stands for Faculty Alliance for Creating and Enhancing Teaching Strategies.
- At the spring English department meeting, the department agreed to use a departmental SoTL project as our departmental assessment activity for 2005-2006, so the year's assessment activities will be part of a larger project. Greg Ahrenhoerster and Cassandra Phillips were named co-Department Assessment Coordinators and agreed to oversee the project, and Nancy Chick, Judy Barisonzi, Lynn Kordus, Ellyn Lem, and John Pruitt volunteered as committee members. After a meeting in June, the committee decided to investigate and assess how students use the peer review process in their own writing and how they perceive the process of peer review as affecting their own writing. The following are related questions, with the first two being the most relevant for assessment:
  - What aspects of writing are improved by listening to the comments of outside readers?
  - What aspects of one's own writing are improved by engaging in the process of thoughtfully reading someone else's essay?
  - How do students perceive the process of peer review?

While the whole department will gather data on the learning involved in peer review, the seven department members will gather more in-depth data from their classes for the SoTL project.

- Holly Hassel (Marathon) and Nancy Chick (Barron) are participating in a Lesson Study research project with colleagues from UW Green Bay and UW Lacrosse in helping students read in complex ways. They are developing a lesson based on Theodore Roethke's poem "My Papa's Waltz" and will meet this fall to implement and evaluate the lesson's effectiveness. See our online Holly Hassel (Marathon) is examining data collected from her year serving as the 2004-2005 UW Colleges teaching fellow. She hopes to determine whether courses in literature can help students develop skills in recognizing and tolerating ambiguity, developing empathy, and engaging with moral questions.
- Greg Ahrenhoerster's article "Will They Still Respect Us in the Morning: A Study of How Students Write after They Leave the Composition Classroom" is currently being considered for publication by Teaching English in the Two-Year Colleges and reports on work he and Cassie Phillips did collecting data on whether students "transfer" skills they learned in first year composition courses to writing assignments in subsequent courses in other disciplines.