Discipline's Mission Statement:
The mission of the English Department is to provide world-class education in composition courses at the freshman and sophomore level for both full-time and part-time students in career and transfer programs (including the Core Curriculum Program), as well as for students seeking personal development. To meet the needs of the people in its service area, the Department provides traditional and alternative delivery modes and instructional strategies and technology appropriate to course objectives. It continually assesses student academic achievement for the purpose of ongoing improvement in student learning.

Discipline's Assessment History:  
Program’s Curriculum and Teaching Strategies

By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, how has it previously affected your program's curricula and/or teaching strategies?

Our Department’s assessment process is an important tool to help drive pedagogy in the classroom. Our assessment of students’ writing encourages classroom practices that complement effective ways of teaching writing and of becoming a college writer. Because faculty are directly involved in the assessment process, from designing the rubric to scoring the final essays, they are very familiar with the specific learning outcomes of the department, and therefore faculty design essay assignments with these learning outcomes in mind. Essay assignments ask students to form and articulate opinions about some important issue, with time to reflect, to talk to others, to read on the subject, to revise to insure that students are aspiring to succeed in meeting the state’s General Education guidelines.

Our assessment does not focus primarily on the readily accessed, surface features of language—on grammatical correctness or on error, on what is wrong rather than on the appropriate rhetorical choices that writers should make at the college-transfer level. Our assessment is designed to measure what students do well in Communication, Critical Thinking, and Qualitative Reasoning.

Our assessment process assures that students will have their writing evaluated by more than one reader, assures that assessment measures and supports what is taught in the classroom, assures opportunities for faculty to come together to discuss all aspects of assessment: the design of the instruments; the standards to be employed; the interpretation of the results; possible changes in curriculum suggested by the process and results.

Over the years, our Department has worked on diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses in writing high-level essays. The assessment process helps us in the following ways:
1. Plan instructional strategies to address student strengths and weaknesses;
2. Certify student readiness for entry into and exit from composition classes;
3. Evaluate and describe overall student achievement;
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of our instructional program

1. Historical Context (looking at academic year 2008-09)

Scoring Rubric: The English Department continues to use four categories on the essay scoring rubric, one for each learning outcome that we teach in English 121 in relation to writing a college essay: Thesis, Support, Organization, Grammar/Mechanics. Each learning outcome is related to critical thinking. Essays are scored twice by ENG faculty, after an intensive norming session, to ensure consistency in the scores for each category. The ENG Department has continued using the same rubric to score our final out-of-class essays for several years, refining the descriptive criteria in each category to assist us in our norming.

Training: English faculty who score the final set of ENG 121 essays spend time norming the scoring by practicing on sample essays and discussing the scoring criteria for each competency listed on the rubric before they being asked to score essays on their own. Establishing agreement on what constitutes a score of —Proficient (3) is fundamentally important to the process. During each norming session, we address the language of the rubric, the ease of use of the rubric, and the effectiveness of the rubric. Each essay had two readers, with a third reader for scoring discrepancies of two or more points difference (if one score is below a 3 and one score above). Sample essays demonstrate the level of proficiency for each of the scores on the rubric, and faculty discuss these scores at great length so that we reach consensus before we score the set of final essays.

Rubric Categories: We have continued to use four separate categories to assess the essays, because these are the key elements of academic writing that we teach in ENG 121. The rubric has been easier to use as an assessment tool with four categories vs. the original three. Essay assignments require students to demonstrate skill in taking a position on an issue (stated in the thesis) and supporting this position with reasons and examples. This scoring guide helps faculty scorers evaluate the essay responses and assign scores on the basis of the effectiveness of the position developed, the clarity and appropriateness of the support used, the organization of the essay, and the language skills displayed.

Low scores: In the 2008-09 academic year, the English Department was discouraged by the low number of students earning the Proficient or higher scores for all four categories: Thesis and Grammar at 68% each came close to the benchmark of 70% of students earning a 3 (proficient) or higher.

Organization scores increased: In the previous year, the lowest score had been in Organization. We addressed this in our department discussions, and the percent of students earning a “3” or higher increased by 5%, from 55% to 60% last year.

More students achieving scores higher than “3” (proficient): During the 2008-09 academic year, more students achieved scores of 4 and 5 in two areas—Organization and Grammar than in the previous year. In the academic year 2008-09 students earned the highest percent of scores of 4 & 5 in Grammar (26%).
Proficient scores for Thesis and Grammar: In 2008-2009 the competencies with the most students achieving scores of "proficient" (3) or higher were Thesis and Grammar (68%). We hope to maintain this high level for the Thesis and Grammar and increase the number of 3's, 4's and 5's in all other areas for this academic year, 2009-10.

Writing Center support: Our ACC Writing Center is available to students for tutoring during the entire academic year. We are hoping that this writing support may contribute to higher scores on this year’s essays than on the essays from previous years. The Department will continue to track which writing competencies our students ask for help with when they work with their tutors. Faculty can then coordinate further with the Writing Center tutors by being aware of which competency measures lowest on student end-of-semester essays and can recommend more tutorial assistance with that writing skill.

By using the assessment process as an evaluative technique, what changes to student learning have been noted?

Faculty meet to review the assessment to see which scores can most be improved. During the academic year, faculty meet to discuss ways to improve curriculum as they did last year when they focused on improving the lowest scores (Organization). Because we saw a 5% increase in the success rate of students earning a “3” or higher, these roundtable discussions served the student learning. Involving our faculty directly in the development and assessment of student writing provides an opportunity for faculty development and curriculum reform since inevitably both occur when instructors discuss assessment which relates directly to their classrooms and to their students.

What unintended consequences, if any, have occurred because of the assessment process?

We plan to have transfer faculty work closely with developmental faculty to help students prepare for college-level writing in ENG 121.

Who receives information about your department’s assessment and why?

The summary report is shared with all English faculty at specifically scheduled assessment meetings; the report is posted on the ACC Website for open access for advisory committees or key stakeholders such as faculty, students, and alumni. Faculty often report changes in their teaching and in their own assessment approaches. In particular, they indicated changes in their expectations for students’ responsibility for their own learning and assessment, in their goals for instruction, and in their use of explicit performance criteria to evaluate student work.
# Assessment Overview

**Discipline/Program Name**: ENGLISH  
**Assessment Year**: 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Outcome Type</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Strength of Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thesis</td>
<td>GE and Discipline</td>
<td>Rubric Graded Essay</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>70% of students earning a “3” or better on a 5-point scale</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>Strong: Exceeds Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organization</td>
<td>GE and Discipline</td>
<td>Rubric Graded Essay</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>70% of students earning a “3” or better on a 5-point scale</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Neutral: Meets Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support</td>
<td>GE and Discipline</td>
<td>Rubric Graded Essay</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>70% of students earning a “3” or better on a 5-point scale</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>Strong: Exceeds Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Grammar</td>
<td>GE and Discipline</td>
<td>Rubric Graded Essay</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>70% of students earning a “3” or better on a 5-point scale</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>Strong: Exceeds Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pre and Post semester “Blue book” diagnostic writing</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Pre and Post writing</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Post writing score increase by 2 or more points for more than 70% of students</td>
<td>74% of students scored 2 or more points higher on post-writing</td>
<td>Strong: Exceeds Benchmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describe the Learning Outcome That You Have Measured**

- SLO/GE, Discipline or Other
- Pre-Post Test, Judged Competition, Embedded Questions, Rubric Graded Essay
- Number of Students Assessed
- # of Years This Outcome Has Been Assessed
- Measurement Standard
- Report the Results of Your Data Analysis
- Strong: Exceeds Benchmark
- Neutral: Meets Benchmark
- Weak: Misses Benchmark
**Outcome #: 1**

**Outcome Title:** Students will write multi-paragraph, college-level compositions (essays) that demonstrate competence in the following four critical-thinking areas: Thesis, Support, Organization, Grammar/Mechanics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Type (choose one): SLO/GE If Student Learning Outcome/General Education Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Outcome Description:** ENG 121: Program Assessment Arapahoe Community College, Littleton, CO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark for success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our goal is a benchmark of at least 70% of students scoring at or above a &quot;3&quot; level in each competency—which is college-level —Proficient as defined on the scoring rubric developed by English faculty. We determined the benchmark of 70% after discussing at length what a reasonable expectation for student success would look like. Although we strive for a 100% success rate, various obstacles hinder that outcome. A more realistic rate of success became our goal, and this goal has been reached in most outcomes each year we have measured our outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students from all sections of English 121 submit a copy of their final, out-of-class essay for the department to assess Students indicate whether they have taken ENG 090 (developmental English) at ACC, and the essays written by these students are put into a separate pile so that we can compare scores as a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
way of examining success in our Developmental English curriculum by comparing the percent of proficient or higher scores in this group as compared to those in the non-ENG 090 group. A sampling of the rest of the essays (students who did not take Developmental English) is then randomly selected from the remaining group of essays. Fall semester for this past academic year resulted in 117 essays being assessed. Of these randomly selected essays, 50 students indicated that they had taken ENG 090 at ACC.

**Materials for Scoring**

- A scoring guide (rubric) that explains the criteria for each score point.
- Sample student essays intended to provide solid illustrations of each score point
- Explanations of how the sample student essays fit the scoring guide criteria
- Rangefinders, which are sample student essays intended to demonstrate that some variation is possible in each score point

We use the ENG Department’s holistic rubric, which is a 5-point scale, to evaluate the four key stated learning outcomes of ENG 121. On our scoring rubric, developed internally by the English faculty, and refined over a five-year period, the 5-point scale counts a "3" as being "proficient" in each of the four learning outcomes: *Thesis, Support, Organization, and Grammar/Mechanics*.

Faculty refer to these preestablished criteria to determine the score for each competency in each essay. The reader awards the score that best represents the overall quality of a response. Here quality is defined by the criteria given for each point in the Department’s scoring guide and illustrated by sample essays that exemplify performance at each score point. In determining a score, the reader does not enumerate or selectively weigh particular features of the writing but, rather, makes a summary assessment of the whole.
The percent of students earning a “3” (Proficient) or better on Thesis was 78% which exceeds our benchmark of 70%. In addition, the percent this year is 10% more than last year’s student scores.
Last year’s percent for Support was one of the lowest scores, at only 60% of students achieving a “3” or better. This year, that percent increased by a significant 18%, exceeding the benchmark.
Scores for Organization have increased for the past three years. Last year, only 60% earned a “3” or better. This year, we reached our benchmark—70% of students earned a “3” or higher for Organization.
Grammar scores increased from last year by 6% to surpass the benchmark of 70%.
What did the department learn?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Grammar/Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Took ENG 090 (2008-09)</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ENG 090 (2008-09)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took ENG 090 (2009-10)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ENG 090 (2009-10)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparing the scores of the final out-of-class essay in ENG 121, we compared the scores of those students who had taken ENG 090 with scores of students who tested into ENG 121. The table of their scores on the competencies of Thesis, Support, Organization, and Grammar show a significant increase for both groups. In every category, both groups of students met or exceeded the benchmark of 70% earning a “3” or higher this year, except for students who had taken ENG 090 in the competency “Organization.” These scores show a significant improvement over last year’s scores. In addition, students who took ENG 090 scored higher in the category “Grammar/Mechanics” than those students who tested into ENG 121.

Student performance summary

This information will be presented to the English Department, including all faculty/instructors from ENG 030 through ENG 122, to discuss strategies for continuing our success in achieving benchmarks in each area. In addition, we will have best practices roundtables during the semester to offer suggestions for classroom practices and assignments. We will continue using the same method of assessment next year to see if scores have improved to achieve or surpass the benchmark.

Issues in terms of curriculum, teaching strategies for department discussion:
1. Discuss scores being unequal for the category “Organization” in terms of students who took ENG 090 vs. students who tested into ENG 121 to address preparing ENG 090 students for ENG 121.
2. Work on shortcomings noted by faculty who scored the student essays: Use of correct MLA format (reference the Hacker handbook) beginning with the first essay of the semester Concerns about Narrative/Descriptive essays or reports vs. Analytical/Argument essays.
3. Essay topic selection: See samples of students’ final essays and which topics have led to low scores. (Also, help students understand how instruction in writing the title can help writers focus their essays).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome #: 2</th>
<th>Outcome Title: “Blue Book” Pre and Post Writing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome Type</strong>&lt;br&gt;SLO/GE&lt;br&gt;Student Learning&lt;br&gt;Outcome/General Education&lt;br&gt;Communication</td>
<td><strong>Outcome Description:</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>English 121 Program Assessment</strong>&lt;br&gt;Arapahoe Community College&lt;br&gt;Students will demonstrate the ability to write a multiparagraph essay using standard conventions (thesis, support, organization, and grammar) that responds to a reading prompt in a timed setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmark for success</strong>&lt;br&gt;1) Please specify what percentage of the sample size is expected to meet or exceed your benchmark.&lt;br&gt;2) What is the rationale for choosing this measure?</td>
<td>We will compare pre and post blue book scores of our ENG 121 students to see if those scores have gone up. Our benchmark for the end of semester blue book score is to have the average composite score increase by 2 or more points. The score from the 9-point scale (which is the scores of two readers, added together for a maximum of 18) from the beginning of semester diagnostic (blue book) essays will be compared to the end of semester blue book scores of students who have completed ENG 090 and those who tested into ENG 121 with the appropriate SS and REA scores on our CPT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of assessment process:</strong></td>
<td>At the beginning of each semester, students in ENG 121 write an in-class diagnostic essay (referred to as the —blue book1 essay) which is holistically scored on a 9-point scale modeled on the Educational Testing Service’s AP essay scoring guide and is modified specifically to assess our students’ competencies in the four learning outcomes we have identified. Students then write an end of semester blue book essay which is scored using the same 9-point scale. After extensive norming using sample essays and the 9-point scale, two ENG faculty read each blue-book essay and assign a score. Therefore, students can earn a score ranging from 2-18. The Department measured students’ pre and post “blue book” scores and will use these scores as a second method of assessment. We will compare the scores of ENG 090 students’ final blue book essay to the entry scores of students who tested into ENG 121 and did not take ENG 090 to see how closely aligned these scores are.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Method: 9-point rubric**

**Blue Book--Pre and Post Writing Scoring Guide**

Your score should reflect your judgment of the essay’s quality as a whole. Students have only an hour to read and write, so remember to evaluate it as a first draft. Read supportively and reward them for what they do well.

9 – 8 The upper-range responses satisfy the following criteria:

a. **Summary**—Complete, accurate, concise.

b. **Focus of agreement and/or disagreement**—The writer must establish a clear position on the issue. Agreement/disagreement with the author’s point of view may be complete or partial, but the writer must establish and maintain the focus of his or her argument.

c. **Support for agreement/disagreement**—Support should provide relevant, concrete, and **distinctive** examples or reasons from the writer’s experience or general knowledge. The writer may also provide an analysis of the summarized article.
**d. Style and coherence**—Upper range papers demonstrate clear style, overall organization, consecutive thought, often a strong voice. They contain few errors in usage, grammar, or mechanics.

7 This score should be used for papers that fulfill the basic requirements for 9-8, but have less development, support and analysis.

5 – 6 Middle range papers omit or are deficient in one of the four criteria:

a. **Summary**—Summary absent, inaccurate, incomplete, or inadequate.

b. **Focus of Agreement/disagreement**—What the writer is agreeing/disagreeing with is not clear or is not related to the main issues of the summarized essay.

c. **Support**—Writer only asserts or counter-asserts; writer’s examples are highly generalized or not distinguishable from examples given in the article; analysis of the debate maybe fallacious, irrelevant or thin.

d. **Style and Coherence**—These papers are loosely organized or contain noticeable errors in usage, grammar, or mechanics.

4 This grade should be used for papers that fulfill the basic requirements of 6-5 grade but are slightly weaker or seem off topic. (Different from addressing a minor point in the original.)

3 - 2 Lower range papers are deficient in two or more of the criteria—typically they have no summary and no support. Often these papers are preachy, clichéd, or platitudinous OR they have serious development, organization, or coherence problems.

Papers with serious, repeated errors in usage, grammar, or mechanics OR papers with significant focus or coherence problems that seriously disrupt communication must be given a 2.

1 This grade should be given to a paper with overwhelming problems.

**Note:** An essay written in fluent, stylistic prose may be scored one point higher than the guide would normally permit.
Results
What were the results of the assessment process? (List results for each method, if more than one were used.)

What did the department learn?

Students’ average score on the Pre test was 10.4 and on the Post test was 12.9, so we exceeded our benchmark which was to have the average score increase by at least 2 points. The average score increased by 2.5 points. Last year the average score increased by 3.18 points, but the average Pre test score was only 8.71, and the average Post test score was 11.89. So although the increase was more, the pre and post scores were both lower than this year’s pre and post scores.

Student performance
Since the average scores for the post test show an increase of more than 2, we are encouraged by the results.
| summary | For next year, if we can obtain the data, we will compare scores of students who took ENG 090 to those who did not take ENG 090 to see if the scores are equivalent or to determine if one group demonstrates a more significant increase in average scores at the end of the semester. |
Outcome #: 3  
Outcome Title: Retention Information

Outcome Type: Discipline

Since Retention is a College goal, the English Department is tracking data for our students enrolled in ENG 121.

Outcome Description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Took ENG090 in Fall</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Fall ENG090 Students Taking ENG121 in Spring</th>
<th>% Return</th>
<th>Returners Who Pass</th>
<th>% Returners Who Pass</th>
<th>% Orig. Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>Spring 2007</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>Spring 2008</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>Spring 2009</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benchmark for success: Our benchmark for success was to have 70% or more students who enrolled in ENG 121 after taking ENG 090 pass with a C or better. The benchmark is consistent with our other measures of learning outcomes.

Description of assessment process: We examined the enrollment data for all students enrolled in ENG 121, and we looked at retention data for all students, in particular for students who had taken ENG 090 during fall semester, and who then enrolled in ENG 121 during spring semester.

Results: For three years our fall enrollments in ENG 090 have increased, and the spring percent of students enrolling into ENG 121 after taking ENG 090 has also remained relatively consistent in the past two years. Our benchmark of ENG090 students who then pass ENG 121 is more than 70%, so we exceeded our expectations for two years in a row.

What did the department learn? This is the fourth year we have tracked this data, and our benchmark is to have 70% of all students pass ENG 121, whether they took Developmental English or not. The current numbers indicate that the success rate in ENG 121 for students who completed ENG 090 and passed ENG 121 in the spring is higher than the benchmark we set. We have exceeded the benchmark for the past three years.

Student performance summary: The department will continue to work with all composition faculty to ensure that the progression from ENG 060 and ENG 090 builds the skills necessary to succeed in ENG 121. Since we have exceeded the benchmark for this group for the past three years, it would appear that the collaboration and meetings with colleagues in the English Department has been successful in terms of student success.
**Part 2: Current Academic Year Assessment Plan**

We will continue to measure the same four learning outcomes: *Thesis, Support, Organization, Grammar/Mechanics*. For next year’s assessment we will add a new learning outcome: **Information Management**: Retrieve and synthesize information from various sources in order to develop an informed opinion.

**Assessment Method(s) (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)**

We will continue to measure the final out-of-class essay from ENG 121 and the pre- and post-blue book essays from ENG 121 students.

**Benchmarks (only include if they differ from those noted in Part 1)**

Our benchmarks will remain the same.

**Have you submitted a separate budget worksheet?** (Choose by bolding; for information about this worksheet, please refer to the specific budgeting e-mail sent by the committee chairperson.)  **Yes**