Assessment Overview
Discipline/Program Name LITERATURE  Assessment Year 2008-2009

<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. Students will develop and demonstrate analytical reading skills.</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Pre/Post Test with Embedded Questions</td>
<td>165/143</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>70% score “2” or higher</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will develop and demonstrate their knowledge of literary genres, concepts, and terminology.</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Pre/Post Test with Embedded Questions</td>
<td>165/143</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>70% score “2” or higher</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will develop and demonstrate college-level writing skills.</td>
<td>GE and Discipline</td>
<td>Comparison of early and late-semester essays</td>
<td>165/143</td>
<td>1st time</td>
<td>70% score “5” or higher</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Student success and retention</td>
<td>GE</td>
<td>Institutional Research</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment of the Literature Discipline at Arapahoe Community College
Prepared by Lance Rubin, Humanities Chair
2009-2010

Mission Statement
Congruent with the purposes, goals, and character of Arapahoe Community College, the main objective of the Literature discipline is to promote, through the study of literature, the intellectual, academic, professional, moral, and spiritual development of students. Encouraging consideration of the idea that literature offers – in addition to entertainment and aesthetic enjoyment – important insights concerning human nature and the human experience, the program strives to generate a dialogue revolving around the definition, character, and potential practical consequences/applications of literature and literary study, as well as other disciplines within the humanities.

Discipline Learning Outcomes
1. Students will develop and demonstrate analytical reading skills.
2. Students will develop and demonstrate their knowledge of literary genres, concepts, and terminology.
3. Students will develop and demonstrate the presence of basic cultural and historical contexts of the literary works studied.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary relevance of literary works.
5. Students will develop and demonstrate college-level writing skills in analyzing works of literature.
PART I: Results of 2008-2009 Assessment

Method of Assessment
We continued to focus on the discipline’s introductory course, Introduction to Literature (LIT 115). This course has the most students and sections by far. However, we also looked at one section each of our next heaviest-enrolled courses, Literature 201 and Literature 202 (Masterpieces of Literature I and II) to begin assessing our 200-level classes.

The two assessment methods we used for the LIT 115 classes in the 2008-09 academic year were:

Discipline Learning Outcomes: Demonstrating Analytical reading Skills and Demonstrating Knowledge of Literary Genres, Concepts and Terminology

Method: Pre-Test/Post-Learning Comparison
- During the first week of class, students are given a short piece of literature with short-answer questions that address each of the learning outcomes for Literature (see above). Those questions are scored according to a mutually-agreed-upon rubric.
- At a later point in the semester, the poem and same questions appear on an exam.
- We then compare the scores of each question in an attempt to see what our students know coming into our classes and what they know after they have been taught some of the specific content of our classes.
- Questions corresponding to Learning Outcomes 1 and 2 will be on the exams. We focused on these two content goals rather than all of them because of the 5 goals, we thought these two were the most pressing for Introduction to Literature students. Rather than asking 1-2 questions for each learning outcome – as we did last year – we asked 4 questions for learning outcome #1 and 4 questions for learning outcome #2. This gives, we think, a more accurate snapshot of the students' mastery over these concepts.

Benchmark for assessed outcomes: We graded each answer with a score between 4 and 1 (with 4 showing a mastery of the concept addressed in the question, 3 showing an above-average understanding of the outcome, 2 showing an adequate understanding of the concept addressed in the question, and 1 showing a lack of understanding of the concept addressed in the question). Instructors followed the same essential guidelines from the essay grading rubric.

Faculty agreed that success here would indicate that 70% of the students earn a score of 2 or higher on each exam question. The rationale for this percentage is that it roughly mirrors the pass/success rate of many disciplines within the Liberal Arts/Humanities at ACC.

Assessment Results: Pre-Test/Post-Learning Comparison in LIT 115

Historical Context: This is the data from last year’s assessment
### Results for 2008-2009

#### Pre-Test/Post-Test Average Score Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Pre-Test Scores Average</th>
<th>Post-Learning Scores Average</th>
<th>Average Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1: Analytic Reading Skills</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.88 (22.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2: Literary Concepts/Terminology</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.93 (23.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3: Cultural/Historical Contexts</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.97 (24.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4: Contemporary Relevance/Application</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.18 (29.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-Test/Post-Test Scores

We expanded this a bit to make 2 categories where there was only one last year: the numbers of students who earned a score of 2 were separated from those who earned 3 and 4 (which would show greater understanding of the concept).
Analysis
Last year, we noted that incoming students scored quite high on the pre-test. With the inclusion of more (and more in-depth questions) per topic, the numbers went down a bit on the pre-test, which is what we expected from incoming students. In other words, we asked more challenging questions; those more in keeping with what they might expect in a college-level vs. a high school literature class.

We do note a slightly lower uptick in the pre/post scores on average, but they are still well within what we think is realistic. We were pleased to see that over 80% of students scored a 3 or 4 on the post-test questions. That being said, the students who Withdrawed from the class of were not present for an exam (and likely given an F for the class) are not accounted for on the Post-Test. In theory, some of those who scored 0 or 1 on the pre-test might not have been in the sample pool for the post-test.

Use of Results
As mentioned, we are pleased with what we see here, obviously, though we would like to keep more students from withdrawing/failing the class. Some of the faculty have been seeing success by designing more focused courses around themes (war; protest literature) and historical periods (early 20th century literature) that take the course in a slightly different direction than it would if one was to follow the traditional “introductory” textbooks.

We will also consider other, more “macro” factors, such as pre-requisites for LIT classes, as some of the other local colleges have in place.

We do not think the pre-post test is very helpful, given that the number of students who score a 2 or higher does not correspond to the number of students who earn a C or higher in the course. One potential factor we are looking at in these scores is the possibility of grade inflation. That is, some of the scores seem higher than others depending on the instructor teaching the class. This is evident in the final grade distribution as well. It is something that I will monitor as Chair when we get next year’s results.

Gen-Ed Learning Outcome: College-level Writing Skills
Method: Comparison between early and late-semester essays

The shift from content to Gen-Ed assessment allowed the Literature faculty to assess our students’ writing. The faculty assigned a common writing assignment (in terms of writing expectations rather than content-based information) and developed a grid to assess those essays (in much the same way as English assesses their students’ writing).

We gave one writing assignment early in the semester (within the first 5 weeks) and another toward the end of the semester. We worked on a grid of 9 points to 1 point in order to take into account 4 basic writing competencies: focus/thesis, development/organization, support, and mechanics. There is no historical context, as this is the first time we have used this assessment tool. Here are the results:
Sample Size = 165/143 Students from Literature 115

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Essay Average Score</th>
<th>Last Essay Average Score</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Skills</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>.29 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Size = 165/143 Students from Literature 115

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Essay</th>
<th>Last Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scored 4-0</td>
<td>Scored 5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Essay</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Essay</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis
As you can see, there was virtually no change from assignment to assignment, with the average score very much average (as 5 = C). While over 80% of our students are scoring above a 3, we would have liked to see more students scoring in the 9-7 range. The raw numbers and average shows that we have room to improve here.

Use of Results
We will discuss what is being assigned in the last essay. Anecdotally, some of the last essays were on poetry, traditionally the weakest area for LIT 115 students (as compared with fiction and drama). We will work to see if the question we are asking in the essays prompts are clear and direct and have an honest discussion of how much we are talking about writing in our classes.

One potential factor we are looking at in these scores is the possibility of grade inflation. That is, some of the scores seem higher than others depending on the instructor teaching the class. This is evident in the final grade distribution as well. It is something that I will monitor as Chair when we get next year’s results.

Gen-Ed Learning Outcome: Student Success and Retention
Method: Correspondence between reading scores and student success

With the tragic death of our institutional research analyst, we were simply not able to get the data to make this portion of the assessment relevant. We are continuing to ask about student readiness in terms of both Reading and Sentence Skills scores on the Accuplacer.

The data from the previous year was inconclusive and we are going to request a tighter set of parameters comparing student success with Accuplacer scores for this year.

PART II: 2009-2010 Assessment Plan
Method of Assessment
Based on the renewed emphasis the college is placing on Gen-Ed outcomes, coupled with the increasingly individualized curricula which does not always fit the pre-test/post-test model we have been using, the Literature faculty have decided to assess discipline content goals within essays.

Assessment Strategy #1: Multiple Essays that Assess Content Goals and Writing Skills
We plan on covering two of our content goals – (1) Students will develop and demonstrate their knowledge of literary genres, concepts, and terminology; (2) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary relevance of literary works— with one of the goals that we share with Gen-Ed, that students will develop and demonstrate college-level writing skills in analyzing works of literature.

We will assign two substantial essays that are open ended enough to cover the 2 content goals, while at the same time allow us to assess writing skills. There will be three different rubrics through which we will assess each of the three goals. Since the essay portion was the weakest link in last year’s assessment, we hope that this will put more focus on the writing goal for both students and instructors.

**Benchmarks**
The Literature faculty expect to see improved scores between the Pre- and Post-Class test in all of our students. We would consider success with 75% of the students score a “2” or higher (on a rubric from 4-to-0) for each of the content goals, and a “5” or better (on a rubric from 9-to-0) on the writing assessment.

**Assessment Strategy #2: Retention, Reading Scores and Advising (Gen-Ed)**
The current levels deemed acceptable for college-level reading are as follows:

- ACT: 18 (reading)
- SAT: 430 (verbal)
- Accuplacer: 80+ on Reading; 95+ on Sentence Skills

We will request a report from Institutional Research comparing student test scores to final grades in LIT 115 to assess the need for a pre-requisite, and if so, at what level. If we cannot get this report, the Literature faculty are tracking the Accuplacer test scores with student final grades individually.

**Budget Requirements**
There are 6 instructors involved in the assessment, which we estimate will take a total of 4 hours over both semesters. Working from the per-hour rate of $20, Literature is requesting a budget of $480 ($80 per instructor)

**Results of the Assessment**
Results will be shared with all Literature instructors, the LAPP Dean, Vice-President of Instruction, and the Assessment Committee.