Millikin University
College of Arts & Sciences
English Literature Major Assessment Report

27 May 2010

In addition to the learning goals of the core curriculum requirements of all English majors, the English Literature major has the following specific four learning outcome goals.

Goals and Mission of the English Literature Major

among them graduate studies in English literature, publishing and editing, and virtually any career that asks for clarity of thinking and expression. Through the core English department curriculum, students gain a solid foundation in the literary traditions, profiting from learning side-by-side with all English majors and the emphasis of disciplinary specialty each major brings to the study of literature. Beyond this solid foundation, 4(lt)-13(y)20(er)s3 :s0(e)-5(ao t)4aua3(b)-9(rin)-8(g)1(

As the artifacts correspond with Literature major learning goals, these artifact essays will come out of the following coursework where faculty prioritize those goals.

English Literature major students will:

L1. have advanced understanding of a variety of literary genres.

, and cultural contexts.
L3. be able to apply literary criticism and theory in the interpretation of texts.
L4. write a near-professional, original work of literary research and scholarship

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Literature Major Requirements	Literature Major Learning Goals (EN202, EN420 & Three Advanced Genre Courses)			
	L1-understand a variety of literary genres	L2-understand **literatures'** historical, intellectual & cultural contexts	L3-apply literary criticism & theory in interpretation of texts	L4-write a near-professional work of literary research
English major traditions core	●	●		
EN202 Writing About Literature			●	
Genre Course: EN340 Poetry	●			
Genre Course: EN350 Fiction	●			
Genre Course: EN360 Drama	●			
Genre Option: EN366 Literary History		●		
EN420 Seminar in Literature				

Literature Major Portfolio Evaluation Rubrid

	Green (4-5)	Yellow (2-3)	Red (0-1)
Artifact 1: genre essays Related goal: L1	Portfolio includes essays that clearly present knowledge of the inherent and established features of literary genres.	Portfolio includes some essays that present knowledge of genre features and methods of literary genres.	Portfolio includes essays that have difficulty discussing fundamental genre distinctions and their workings.
Artifact 2: essays related to contexts Related goals: L2	Portfolio includes essays that clearly present a range of contextual factors and contributors to text. Essays clearly articulate not only what those factors are, but how they effect authors and the works they produce.	Portfolio includes some essays that demonstrate a knowledge but not a full range of contextual factors and contributors to text. Essays attempt to articulate not only what those factors are, but how they effect authors and the works they produce.	Portfolio includes essays that discuss a limited range of contextual factors influencing authors and the works they produce.

Artifact 3: essays employ critical theoryT/F1 9 T

Analysis of Assessment Results

The 2010 portfolio revealed strength in L3, with an average score in the green area. All other areas were in the yellow area, with L4 nearly in the green. However, the two evaluators' scores were widely divergent, with Evaluator 1 scoring L1 and L2 red and Evaluator 2 scoring those goals green and yellow respectively. L3 and L4 showed a narrower divergence, with Evaluator 1 scoring each yellow and Evaluator 2 scoring each green.

Strengths

L3 and L4 remain the strongest of the literature program's goals, and the lack of an overall red score is a definite strength.

Areas for Improvement

All areas are in need of improvement. Even with the divergence of scoring, L1 and L2 were the weakest areas in the 2010 portfolio, which reflects, at least for L1, a trend. The program still needs to improve genre studies or to drop that particular goal. Contexts would also seem to be in need of improvement.

Improvement Strategies

1. Discussion and Revision of Learning Goals

The English Department, but as a whole and the Literature Program, needs to have a frank discussion about the established goals. Our course offerings and Core Requirements for the major work at cross purposes. Advanced literature courses are ostensibly genre-based. The core is historically-based, and the advanced literature courses fulfill areas of the core requirements.

The Department needs to determine the validity of genre studies, particularly in light of the state of the profession. Additionally, each of the learning goals needs to have its rubric revised to reflect what the profession expects. L4, for instance, needs to include much beyond a literature review. The emphasis on scholarly sources for L4 is merited; the 2008 committee questioned how a literature review (the basic form of the green rating) could relate to the official wording of
-professional, original work of literary research and sch
many professional literary articles do not include a formal literature review (rather, they do this as a statement of lack of scholarship, to situate themselves within a community of specific ideas, present scholarship as further-reading footnotes, or use scholarly comments throughout their own
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scholarship   methodology, preciseness of language, argumentation, use of evidence, etc. While a thorough knowledge of scholarship is essential for a scholarly essay, the rubric should include other criteria as well.

2. Portfolio Assembly/Collection

The 2010 portfolio again illustrated that students seem to be confused by the learning goals, establishing a trend. The artifact submitted for L3/L4 would have easily been suited for L2, as it provided a wealth of research on the context for the literature. There was a similar issue with the portfolios submitted in 2009. While this may reveal a lack of student understanding of the

concepts related to the goals (or simply lack of understanding of the goals themselves), it also reveals that student selection of artifacts can be misleading. The committee came up with some options for artifact assembly and collection:

A. Begin the process in the 1-credit required EN 105 (Introduction to Millikin English

instruct them to post every paper that they write to that repository.

B. Transform the selection process in one of the following ways:
1. Transform EN 420 into a 1-hour capstone directed study. The course, as it stands, is simply another literature course, since it must be cross listed with one of our 300-level studies course. The 1-hour capstone would be a true capstone, which would fill in knowledge gaps, provide a forum for students to revise quality work already done, and allow them to judge their best work and assemble a portfolio. The 1-hour capstone would be part of the faculty member's regular teaching load and not an overload.

2. Have students choose their portfolio artifacts in consultation with their advisors. This would provide much-needed faculty input into which artifacts fulfill the particular goals, while still permitting students to select artifacts.

3. Simply require students to submit the 3-4 artifacts that they believe best represent the quality of their work, without pairing the artifacts to goals. Then the assessment committee would rate the portfolio as a whole according to the goals.

Obviously, there are advantages and disadvantages to all of these recommendations. The committee firmly believes that recommendation A be adopted. It will provide students with an introduction to the portfolio concept and a place for them to keep their work, though faculty in other literature courses should continually remind students to post their work to their Moodle portfolio. While the committee believes that B1 would be a benefit to the student, it would require that literature majors take another 3-credit 300-level studies course. B2 would require some extra work for faculty advisors, though this, in the end, is work that should be done to help students prepare a writing sample for job and graduate school applications. B3 is perhaps the most problematic, since it does not guarantee that artifacts will meet any of the goals; however, the student-selection process should be part of the assessment, since it will reveal the students' understanding of the learning goals as the goals relate to student writing.

3. Replace Portfolio with Capstone Project
The portfolio method of assessment works for some programs, such as CWRR. However, for other programs the portfolio method is overkill. A near-professional quality project will, by its nature, demonstrate mastery of the other goals. It will need to include critical theory (L3), present contexts (L2), include scholarship (L4), and--at times--present an awareness of genre (L1). The project produced in EN 420--the Literature Major capstone course--should provide the assessment committee with the data needed to assess adequately the progress of the program. The committee recommends that the assessment artifact become the EN 420 project. Such a change will eliminate the need for voluntary student submission, which has not always worked in

the past, since the EN 420 instructor can submit the artifact to the assessment committee at the end of the course.

4. L2 Contexts
While students have demonstrated a familiarity with contexts, they have not demonstrated that
advanced

state of the University would make any programmatic changes dependent upon the financial health of the institution. At present, the turnover of faculty in the Department has placed several faculty lines in jeopardy. Because the Department must justify replacing faculty who have departed, we have no guarantee that any changes made to the program will be able to be implemented. The Literature Program desires to make meaningful changes to the curriculum, but if those changes cannot be implemented--as we are finding with the University-wide public speaking requirement--