

Humanities General Education Annual Assessment Report 2012-2013

I. Introduction

The Humanities General Education Program serves all Oregon Tech degree students, who are each required to take nine credits in this general education area. The program offers courses in art, literature, humanities, music, philosophy, languages, and intercultural communication. The program also offers a number of online courses to serve degree completion students as well as on-campus students.

II. Program Purpose, Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

The Humanities faculty reviewed the program purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes during the fall faculty meeting in September 2012. The faculty reaffirmed the statements below:

Humanities General Education Program Purpose

The Humanities General Education Program provides for the study of fine arts, literature, humanities, drama, film, music, philosophy and foreign language which allows students the opportunity to learn specific methods for critically evaluating human values and conduct within historical and cultural contexts.

Program Educational Objectives

1. Foster intellectual curiosity, global knowledge, critical thinking, personal responsibility, and ethical and cultural awareness.
2. Prepare students to use language effectively.
3. Establish a framework for students to develop an aesthetic appreciation for fine arts.
4. Prepare students to be responsible citizens, lifelong learners, and world-ready leaders in their chosen fields.

Expected Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates from this program will be able to:

1. Articulate significant social, literary, and political perspectives found in humanities.
2. Critically analyze ideas and cultural values that have profoundly influenced Western culture, using appropriate support.
3. Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.
4. Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.
5. Explain how historical and social contexts influence various types of artistic expression.
6. Identify and analyze universal themes reflected in the humanities, using appropriate support.

7. Identify and describe specific personal connections to literary themes in writing, using appropriate support, vocabulary, and first person point of view.

III. Three-Year Cycle for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The faculty also confirmed the assessment cycle planned last year, as listed in Table 1 below.

Learning Outcomes	'11-12	'12-13	'13-14	'14-15	'15-16	'16-17
1. Articulate significant social, ethical, literary, and political perspectives found in humanities.			X			X
2. Critically analyze ideas and cultural values that have profoundly influenced Western culture, using appropriate support.			X			X
3. Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.		X			X	
4. Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.		X			X	
5. Explain how historical and social contexts influence various types of artistic expression.				X		
6. Identify and analyze universal themes reflected in the humanities, using appropriate support.	X			X		
7. Identify and describe specific personal connections to literary themes in writing, using appropriate support, vocabulary, and first person point of view.	X					

Table 1 Humanities General Education Assessment Cycle

IV. Assessment Activities

The Humanities faculty conducted formal assessment of two student learning outcomes during 2012-2013, SLO's #3 & 4.

Student Learning Outcome # 3: Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.

Direct Assessment #1

Faculty assessed this outcome in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writers, winter 2013, using short story readings followed by presentation assignments. Over the course of the

term, the goal directed students to become proficient at identifying and analyzing universal themes and elements as creative writers. For instance, students were asked to identify the method used by various writers to create a specific effect. Generally students easily identify the emotional effects of a story on the reader, but at the beginning of the term they had difficulty revealing how a writer creates the effects. Through critical reading and presentation of short story assignments from the anthology, students developed the ability to reveal, critically analyze, and create specific effects found in fiction. Students further developed their skill at creating effect by formal critique of their colleagues' short stories. Thirteen students completed this course. The minimum acceptable performance is set at 80%, because the expectation is high for lower division, 200 level courses with low enrollment.

The results are summarized using the performance criteria shown in Table 2 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Identify stories' effects on the reader.	Student critique and presentation rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	95%
Identify the authors' methods for revealing stories' effects.	Student critique and presentation rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	89%
Accurately support opinions with quotes from the stories and find meaning with literary vocabulary.	Student critique and presentation rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	84.5%

Table 2 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in ENG 246, winter term 2013

Indirect Assessment #1

To accompany the assessment above, the faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writers, winter 2013, by asking students to rate their proficiency for critique and presentation of short fiction, using the same rubric used by faculty to assess their performance. These results are summarized in Table 3 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Identify stories' effect on the reader.	Student critique and presentation rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	93%
Identify the author's methods for revealing stories' effects	Student short story rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	87%
Accurately support opinions with quotes from the stories and find meaning with literary vocabulary.	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	90%

Table 3 Student self-assessment results for SLO #4 in ENG 246, winter 2013

Students accurately saw themselves as competent to identify the effects of a story on the reader. They appropriately revealed themselves with room for improvement for identifying the author's methods for revealing stories' effects. Students clearly had an inflated view of their ability to accurately support their opinions with quotes from the stories and of their ability to find meaning with literary vocabulary.

Student Learning Outcome #4: Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.

Direct Assessment #1

Faculty assessed this outcome in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writers, winter term 2013, using students' short stories submitted in formal fiction writing workshops. Student progress was measured with formal critique, analysis, and feedback from students and faculty. Thirteen students participated in the assessment. Revisions will be accepted during the following term for critique and submission for publication in *The Edge*.

The results are summarized in Table 4 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Use appropriate dialogue and narration in a completed short story.	Student short story rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	89.9%
Create a significant effect in a completed short story.	Student short story rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	87%
Formally critique colleagues' completed short stories.	Student short story rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	94%

Table 4 Assessment Results for SLO #4 in ENG 246, winter term 2013

Indirect Assessment #1:

To accompany the assessment above, the faculty indirectly assessed this outcome in ENG 246, Reading for Fiction Writers, winter 2013, by asking students to rate their proficiency for creative writing, using the same rubric used by faculty to assess their performance. These results are summarized in Table 5 below.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Use appropriate dialogue and narration in a completed short story.	Student short story rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	93%
Create a significant effect in a completed short story.	Student short story rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	87%
Formally critique colleagues' completed short stories.	Student essay, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	90%

Table 5 Student self-assessment results for SLO #4 in ENG 246, winter 2013

The primary writing assignment for the term is a completed short story. Students submit revisions of their stories each week for critique. Instructor provided a specific critique assignment for weekly short story submissions. Instructor also provided detailed presentation instructions for the assigned readings from the anthology. For the first seven weeks of the term students gave presentations on assigned short stories from our anthology. They also read and critiqued their colleagues' weekly short story revisions. Students used critical reading skills for both assignments. During last weeks of the course students participated in formal workshops and responded to their colleagues' short stories with detailed, formal critiques.

The students begin writing their stories with ten pages of overheard conversation which they revise to five pages of dialogue. Thus they discover the contrast between conversation and dialogue. Next they edit the dialogue to allow for the addition of narration and description. As their stories progress students develop a dynamic main character and establish the effect. The small class size fosters appropriate individual instruction.

V. Summary of Student Learning

Student Learning Outcome #3: Read and discuss humanistic works critically with significant reference to irony, symbolism, imagery, and interpretation.

Strengths: Students demonstrated acceptable performance on all criteria for this SLO. Students were also able to appropriately support their opinions with quotes from the texts.

Weaknesses: During their presentations some students had difficulty using the literary vocabulary to affectively find meaning in the assigned stories. Typically, many students

found personal connection in the stories' events rather than closely examining the primary themes which is the correct place to find personal connection. Looking at the events in a story to find personal connection instead of finding meaning in the literature's themes demonstrates a lack of experience responding to stories.

Actions: No further action is required.

Student Learning Outcome #4: Identify or create key elements of individual expression within film and/or fiction writing.

Strengths: The students wrote some well constructed and imaginative short stories and many will appear in *The Edge* next term. Most of the students (89%) found the appropriate balance between narration and dialogue.

Most of the students (94%) were very conscientious and thorough with their formal workshop critiques of their colleagues' short stories. Formal critiques in workshop allow students to discuss their stories and review techniques in an open, nonthreatening forum. Potentially, each student benefits from most, if not all the workshop critiques.

VI. Changes Resulting from Assessment

In this section, two issues involving assessment in the Humanities and Social Sciences department will be discussed and plans for revitalizing humanities assessment will be presented.

First, over the past few years of assessment, we have come to the conclusion that, taken as a whole, our activities are too narrow in focus to encompass the broad range of learning undertaken in the humanities area.

Second, this year we have seen the departure of two long-term humanities professors. We have successfully searched for their replacements and will have two new assistant professors next year, one with a Ph.D. in English, the other in Philosophy. While this complete turnover in humanities faculty has hampered the current years' assessment activities, it creates an opportunity for change and improvement.

Thus, next year (2013-14), the Humanities and Social Sciences department will begin its work towards revitalizing humanities at Oregon Tech. Our goal is to renew the role humanities plays in the overall educational paradigm of Oregon Tech. To do this, our new faculty will consider Oregon Tech's mission and best practices of academic peers. They will develop and offer new courses, while eliminating others, bring forth a proposal for a new minor based in humanities, and take on the related assessment activities. Indeed, as we undertake this transformation, assessment will play a prominent role in the process, in that we will be evaluating our current student learning outcomes and changing them to reflect the new orientation of humanities at Oregon Tech as it develops.