

# Learning Outcomes Assessment

Assessment ID: 168

Assessment Type: General Learning Outcome

Year/Term: 2009 / 2

Name: Shadle, Mark

Email: mshadle@eou.edu

Program: English/Writing

Prefix / Course Number: WR / 121

## High Impact Practice (HIP):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Year Experience                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Community                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Training                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Curriculum                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University Writing Requirement              | <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Assignments and Projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Research                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity / Global Learning            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service Learning / Community-Based Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Internship / Practicum / Field Work    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capstone Project                            |   |

Learning Outcome: Communication

Assessment Method/Tool: Rubric

Measurement Scale: 1 - 3

Sample Size: 41

	Developing (# of students)		Adequate (# of students)		Proficient (# of students)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. Clearly focuses and logically organizes communication	15	36.6%	12	29.3%	14	34.1%
2. Presents convincing evidence	21	51.2%	10	24.4%	10	24.4%
3. Edits carefully and accurately	15	36.6%	12	29.3%	14	34.1%
4. Employs graphics, media, and source materials appropriately and ethically	21	51.2%	10	24.4%	10	24.4%
<b>Averages: (based on <u>41</u> student sample size)</b>	18	43.9%	11	26.8%	12	29.3%

**Benchmark:** 85% Institutional benchmark goal for percent of students to meet "Adequate" or "Proficient" levels  
 (This institutional benchmark does not take into account the level of the course and the preparedness of the students in the sample. Results will help the institution understand the learning needs of participating students.)

**Percent Achieving Benchmark** 56.1% Actual percent of students meeting "Adequate" or "Proficient" levels

# Learning Outcomes Assessment

Assessment: ID: 168

---

**Question / Prompt / Assignment:** (used for the assessment) Dream Home Essay (2 pages): After reading our three books on hand-built shelters, architectural history and a utopian community, as well as considering the films we watched on experimental homes in America and beyond, write an essay in which you create a dream home. Be sure to include location, materials, philosophy and whimsy.

**Commentary / Explanation:** (provide context within the course/activity for the question/prompt/assignment) The main complaint in first-year writing courses from my previous students writer's block lines up with national surveys that show invention is the least-taught part of composition. Current students seem very uninterested in heavily researching a topic unless it has strong personal meaning. Therefore, they were asked to write about basic things that will matter greatly in their lives: the kind of world, shelter and treatment of the environment they hope to see. In the spirit of Ghandi's "be the change you want to see," students were asked to create a suite of essays, and connect them in a reflective essay. Here's the passage from the Syllabus, and the lay-out of assessment:

## ASSESSMENT:

A Suite of Four Essays that: 1) lay out a personal utopia; 2) describe and create a fave personal shelter or home; 3) describe a problem with water or air, and propose a solution; 4) a reflective essay that introduces and links the other essays. All can be revised, throughout the quarter, for a better grade.

Paper One (one-page, double-spaced): A Mini-Essay on Your Utopian America will be graded as an initial indication of patterns of error that need to be addressed in the Writing Lab each week with a tutor and with other collaborators. Any mid-term requests for graduation, athletic teams, or other programs will be met with the grade from this paper.

Paper Two (two pages, double-spaced): Earth/Shelter: Description and explanation of a dream house that incorporates alternative energies and marries an ethic and aesthetic.

Paper Three (two pages, double-spaced): Water/Air is turning either ideals or pet peeves into political action. For example, a pet peeve about the dangers of radioactive water in the Columbia River for wind-surfers might lead toward thinking about whether current plants that turn salt water into drinking water are safe.

Paper Four (One and one-half pages): Reflective Essay that links the other Papers, and serves as introduction to them in the Deadline Portfolio.

The Collaborative Project or Mini-Transformance on community service or citizenship done with classmates or others includes each student's share of the work, clearly spelled out IN ONE PARAGRAPH.

Grading of the Deadline Portfolio will take into account a number of factors, including:

The number and quality of assignments, including revisions  
Care, completeness and relevance of evidence and research  
Persuasiveness and appropriateness of various kinds of logic or appeal  
Number of errors in mechanics and grammar at sentence level  
Overall organization, neatness and aesthetic and ethical integrity  
Creativity in addressing the addressed or invoked audience(s)

Focus upon the grade for the course should seek to replace worry with lots of activity toward the Deadline Portfolio, and students should spend as much time as necessary in the Writing Lab. No guarantee of the final grade can be given. It is up to the student to seek out the teacher during office hours or through appointment with questions about learning or assessment or further reading lists.

## GRADING OF PORTFOLIO:

□□□□

Exploration and Short Papers: □□□□□□□□

Wrs.-to-Learn/Prewritings: 10%□□

Papers One Through Four: 55%

Collaborative Project: 10%□

Writing Lab Tutoring Sessions: 10%□□

Class Evaluation (attached handout): 5%□□

Attendance and Class Participation: 10%□□

# Learning Outcomes Assessment

Assessment: ID: 168

---

Total: 100%

**Data Analysis: What do these results mean? (what do the results indicate regarding student proficiency in the outcome assessed)**

The re-incorporation of rhetoric into the process writing curriculum of the composition classroom in the last quarter of the 20th century meant that students stopped writing one, assigned mode at a time, and learned grammar and mechanics during the process of actual writing, rather than as workbook drills. It also meant they had to find a message and purpose, identify an audience, attend to the writer's presence in the piece and discover a sense of occasion that went beyond assignment.

In the past decade print media have faced severe competition from other multimedia, and the so-called millennial generation has an increasingly short attention span. They have read very little, and have viewed a lot of visuals and visual rhetoric uncritically. Many current students are bored by what they can't identify quickly with as personally important.

Therefore, this suite of essays that includes the Dream Home Essay being examined, asks students to focus upon what kind of world they want, and how they want to live in it. The books included an architectural historian stumbling into the building of his dream home, a collection of texts/photos of hand-built shelters around the world and a look at an unintentionally utopian community in Colombia (the Gaviotas) that finds alternative energy through low-tech solutions in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Because we had to focus quite a bit on invention through reading, pre-writing, films and discussion, it meant we had less time on workshops related to organization, style, mechanics and grammar. However, those students (more than half) who regularly used the Writing Lab (only five visits were required, as we had many large classes, and not all students could use the Lab each week) made significant improvement in constantly revising their papers. Students who missed the days when we did writing workshops were at a disadvantage, which is why I took strict attendance, and graded down upon the fourth absence. A particularly nasty flu season meant more absences than usual, and faculty were asked to be empathetic about this.

**Closing the Loop:**

**How will you use the results to improve student learning?**

**How do these results relate to University, Program, and General Education Learning Outcomes?**

How will you use the results to improve student learning?

While students did make a good start at using evidence, it was not often convincing. I'll need to spend more time introducing what they will receive in Writing 222.

Argumentation (soon to become Writing 123, in line with other schools in the state), especially letting them recognize logical fallacies more quickly. I'll have to ban not only Wikipedia, but all online sources, as students do not know how to effectively negotiate the library and hard-copy resources.

After carefully reading my longer, required Self/Class Evaluations (which go beyond scantron ones), I'll cut back the reading a little to incorporate more in-class free-writing and small-group editing sessions.

I spent a great deal of time with some learning disabled students, and I need to reconsider training a practicum student or Writing Lab tutor to help me with this. I also need to make sure I have a classroom where the computer internet access and DVD player work, as I had constant distractions from this. As I've said so many times during fifteen years of fighting for it: WE NEED A COMPUTER CLASSROOM DEVOTED ONLY TO WRITING CLASSES. All other schools in the state have this, and it puts us at a disadvantage, as the composing and editing processes can be taught much more effectively with such a set-up.

How do these results relate to University, Program, and General Education Learning Outcomes?

So while organization and focus and editing/revision was a success story for a majority of the students, using convincing evidence ethically was often falling short. This is a result of a millennial generation that is addicted to the net, and doesn't yet know how to assess the credibility of net or visual sources. While I spent a fair amount of time defining plagiarism, more time needs to be spent on discussions of intellectual property.

I finally got students engaged in heated debates about this, and there was some consensus: they might not rip a book off the net, but have few compunctions about ripping music. Netiquette needs to be part of probably every Gen Ed class. I also think that students need more work during orientation week about some basic classroom manners—the kind of thing that still doesn't work in a theater when students continue to distract others with the lighted dials of their phones while texting, even though they get an on-screen reminder not to do this. All freshman

# Learning Outcomes Assessment

Assessment: ID: 168

---

need to hear in very clear terms that it's not all right to wear earpods and use phones and texting and instant messaging during classes. All but three of my students in these two large classes had not experienced at least one meal a day with their family. They simply don't know how to converse politely and effectively. I STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT ALL INCOMING STUDENTS BE ASKED TO BUY AND DISCUSS IN SMALL GROUPS THEODORE ZELDIN'S LITTLE GEM OF A BOOK: Conversation: How Talk Can Change the World. This work would accelerate success in all Gen Ed courses if this was part of orientation week, like our former booktalk groups.

I also believe that students need to learn more during orientation about how community service works on this campus. My students worked in small groups on community service, but not just how to plug into existing service networks. Instead, they thought about how they wanted to help, and then tried to bring about that change. They and I learned that we don't yet make this one-stop shopping on this campus. We need a place for students to go that will help them understand the need for homework as different as our Human Subjects Committee, fundraising processes and links with the community and international groups and institutions.

<b>Student Samples (optional):</b> <b>(web links to posted, online files)</b>	Have, but need scanned	Developing Example (web address)
<b>NOTE: Student names cannot be used</b> <b>on the samples.</b>	Have, but need scanned	Adequate Example (web address)
	Have, but need scanned	Proficient Example (web address)