2012-2013 Assessment Report
Program: Creative Writing, BA

College of Liberal Arts

English

Creative Writing, BA

Expected Outcome: Demonstrate Effective Written Communication

Students in ENGL 4240, the creative writing capstone, will demonstrate effective written communication skills in the form of a substantial portfolio of quality creative work of fiction and poetry, in which they

1. use formal techniques of point of view, description, and dialogue in fiction and creative nonfiction;
2. use formal techniques of sound, line-breaks and metaphor in poetry;
3. demonstrate the effective use of English;
4. demonstrate an engaging and original voice.

Assessment Method 1: Capstone Portfolio

Assessment Method Description

During the capstone course, students developed portfolios of stories, poems, creative non-fiction pieces, and reflective essays. Using a rubric developed by the track faculty, two members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee assessed each portfolio. Disagreements were resolved by a third committee member.

Each student portfolio was assessed whether the student was able to

1. Use formal techniques of point of view, description, and dialogue in fiction and creative nonfiction;
2. Use formal techniques of sound, line-breaks and metaphor in poetry;
3. demonstrate the effective use of English;
4. demonstrate an engaging and original voice.
Using formal techniques in fiction and creative nonfiction means the demonstration of skill with elements of writing seen as especially important to the craft of fiction; control of narrative point of view (who is telling the story), of description, and of dialogue are crucial among the many elements that give a piece of fiction or nonfiction its particular shape or form.

Using formal techniques in poetry means the demonstration of skill with elements of writing seen as especially important to the craft of poetry; control of sound (rhythm, rhyme, cadence), of line-breaks, and of metaphor are crucial among the many elements that give a piece of poetry its particular shape or form.

Effective use of English means that the writer demonstrates skill with language, using it creatively and appropriately in ways consistent with his or her artistic goals for a given text.

Demonstrating an engaging and original voice means that the writer uses his or her skill with language to construct an effective and distinct literary persona.

In Fall 2012, four portfolios were assessed; in Spring 2013, eleven portfolios were assessed with a total of fifteen portfolios for academic year 2012-2013.

Findings
The table below compares the results for Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. Cumulative results are also presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion #</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Spring 2013</th>
<th>Total 2012-2013</th>
<th>Total 2011-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Point-of-view, description, &amp; dialogue</td>
<td>50% (2/4)</td>
<td>11/11 (100%)</td>
<td>13/15 (87%)</td>
<td>88% (29/33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sound, line-breaks, &amp; metaphor</td>
<td>75% (3/4)</td>
<td>11/11 (100%)</td>
<td>14/15 (93%)</td>
<td>82% (27/33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Effective English</td>
<td>75% (3/4)</td>
<td>11/11 (100%)</td>
<td>14/15 (93%)</td>
<td>97% (32/33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Effective voice</td>
<td>75% (3/4)</td>
<td>10/11 (91%)</td>
<td>13/15 (87%)</td>
<td>91% (20/33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Percent of students achieving objectives of the Creative Writing Track
Cumulative results indicate that with the exception of Criterion 1 (use of point-of-view, description, and dialogue), Creative Writing students are performing quite well. Performance on Criterion 2 (use formal techniques of sound, line-breaks and metaphor in poetry) and Criterion 3 (Use of effective English) showed improvement. Students seem to have some problems achieving Criterion 4 (Use of effective voice).

A rater-training session substantially improved inter-rater agreement in Fall 2012. Inter-rater reliability remained high in Spring 2013 at 87%.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

The number of students taking each of our capstone classes is relatively low because they are distributed across the Department’s three tracks. This raises the issue of reliability with respect to annual assessment results. Nevertheless, faculty members will be targeting to improve teaching on the aspects of formal features in Poetry Writing (use of sound, line-breaks, and metaphor) and in Fiction Writing (use of point-of-view, description, and dialogue) for next year's assessment.

We currently use a two-category (i.e., yes/no) system of assessment but plan to move to a four-category system (i.e., advanced, intermediate, basic, little or none) for the next academic year. We are hopeful that this will better reveal areas of success and those in need of improvement. Additionally, track faculty are reviewing the rubric with an eye to clarifying rubric terms and demanding more from our creative writing students.

**Additional Comments**

In order to create an indirect measure, we will be working with OIRA this year to develop and draw data from a survey of recent graduates in the Creative Writing Major to target the four criteria:

1. Use of formal techniques of point of view, description, and dialogue in fiction and creative nonfiction;

2. Use of formal techniques of sound, line-breaks and metaphor in poetry;

3. demonstration of effective use of English;

4. demonstration of an engaging and original voice.