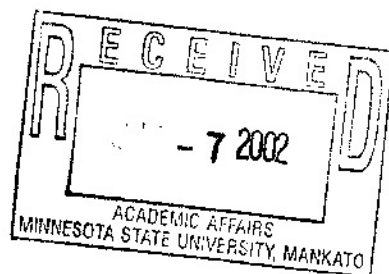


English Department General Education Assessment Report
English 101, Freshman Composition
March 29, 2002



In Fall 2001, the department created an ad hoc committee to assess its freshman composition program: John Banschbach (chair, department assessment committee), Michelle Friederichs (faculty), Cassandra LaBarion (teaching assistant), Tara Moghadam (teaching assistant), Anne O'Meara (department chair), Anne Rusch (faculty), Roger Sheffer (director of teaching assistants). All members of the committee were teachers of English 101.

The committee collected research essays, the assignment that involves most of the general education competencies for freshman composition, from 10% of the students enrolled in English 101. The students were selected randomly according to the final digits of their tech i.d. numbers. Instructors collected the essays and made copies before grading the essays, giving the copies to the committee. The collection occurred throughout the last half of fall semester, according to the due dates established by the instructors for that assignment.

The committee used holistic scoring to evaluate the essays. The committee members were trained by the assessment chair in the use of the rubric (attached) on January 9, 2002; they scored the student essays on January 10.

The numerical results of the scoring were as follows:

Score	Number of essays receiving that score
8	0
7	5
6	28
5	0
4	10
3	6
2	1
1	0

The rubric is a four-point rubric, scores of 3 and 4 given to successful essays, scores of 1 and 2 given to unsuccessful essays. Each essay was scored by two raters. An essay's final score is the sum of the two individual scores. Essays that initially received a 5 or a "split score," where one rater found the essay successful and a second rater did not, were scored a third time by the assessment chair.

The committee met on February 20th to analyze the results and to make recommendations.

I. The common problems in the unsatisfactory essays are these:

- A. insufficient sources
- B. sufficient sources but insufficient citation
- C. sufficient sources in the bibliography but reliance in the essay on only one or two

- D. few sources or citations and much of the essay unsupported personal opinion
- E. a failure to integrate material through quotation and paraphrase and summary, but instead a heavy reliance on quotation or the serial use of sources or even an unstructured listing of research notes
- F. no thesis, no focus, but a report on a general topic
- G. plagiarism

II. The committee's recommendations and comments are as follows:

A. Teachers of freshman composition need to devote more instruction to

- 1) the integration of source material through quotation, paraphrase and summary,
- 2) the development of a focus or thesis for research essays,
- 3) the rhetorical analysis of sources (the audience and purpose of the source).

This recommendation will be incorporated into the training of teaching assistants.

B. The committee agreed that students are not as prepared to master the skills of research papers as they need to be, and discussed the benefits of a two-semester freshman composition requirement.

C. The rubric should be revised into a six-part rubric, both to sharpen the distinction between successful and unsuccessful essays and to accommodate scorers' recognition of the great differences in quality among essays receiving scores of 3.

As a second method of assessment of the freshman composition program, instructors were surveyed as to the kinds of assignments they give and the methods of instruction they use to help students achieve the general education competencies assigned to freshman composition. An important finding of the survey is that students are given several opportunities to acquire each of the general education competencies.

Respectfully submitted,


John Banschbach