

ASSESSMENT WEBSITE INFORMATION

College: Humanities and Social Sciences
Chair/Director: Janelle Collins

Degree Program: English BA

DATA SAY:

In Spring 2012 fifteen senior BA English majors took the Major Field Test in English developed by ETS. The highest scores were in American Literature to 1900 and the lowest in Literary Theory. These students also took a short exit survey to determine their satisfaction with the program in several different areas. The vast majority of students were very satisfied with the program (86.7% would choose the same major again), and they felt that ASU's English program had improved their writing skills to a great degree (73.3%) and their ability to analyze literature to a great degree (80%). They also felt that the program gave them knowledge of diverse writers and literary works (53.3% to a great degree and 26.7 % somewhat). Their satisfaction with the English program in regard to improving their research and documentation skills was markedly lower than in any other area; only 33.3% felt ASU's English program improved their research and documentation skills to a great degree, with 46.7% stating it improved their skills in this area somewhat. The faculty discussed these findings and decided they agreed with these students that ASU's English Department could do a better job preparing upper-level students in research and documentation skills.

SO WHAT:

English BA graduates need more direct instruction in research and documentation skills to prepare them for their upper-level research papers as well as for graduate school, law school, and other endeavors they will pursue following graduation.

HOW WE CHANGED:

All English faculty teaching 3000 or 4000-level courses in the 2013-14 academic year will include at least one full class period of instruction in research and documentation skills and will assess students' skills in these areas pre- and post-. All English faculty agree to emphasize research and documentation skills in all their upper-level classes, making sure students know how to find resources at Purdue University's Online Writing Laboratory (OWL). Also, the Introduction to Literary Theory class will be changed from a 4000 to a 3000 level course so that students are introduced to Theory earlier in the program. In addition, the faculty decided a capstone senior course should be required for all graduating BA English majors including the preparation of a paper and the presentation of that paper to faculty and students. Such a paper and presentation could be graded by the same rubric to be utilized in the two sophomore level intro courses already required for students in the major, thus allowing the department faculty to assess graduates' growth and competency in key areas such as research and writing.



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WHAT WE GOT:

We will assess upper-level student's research and documentation skills with a common instrument in upper-level classes during the 2013-14 academic year pre- and post- direct instruction in this area and will examine whether we see improvement in their ability and self-reported confidence in this area.

