

24 May 2022

To: Committee on Assessment
FROM: Department of English
RE: Program Assessment 2022

The following members of the department met on Tuesday, 17 May 2022, to assess this year's outcome: Hope Coulter, Toni Jaudon, Julia Dasbach Kolchinsky Will Murray, Dorian Stuber, Alex Vernon (chair), Carol West.

This year we assessed our third of three program learning goals:

*Self-authoring: Students will practice purposeful
curiosity in developing their skills as thinkers and makers.*

Discussion

At the department's August 2021 annual retreat, we reviewed and discussed the senior surveys from the end of the prior year in their entirety. Those surveys included questions about all three program goals, not just the one we assessed last year. The original "Self-Authorship" goal aspired to include activities beyond the classroom such as Odyssey experience, internships, and other ways the student "self-authored." In considering the student responses, we concluded that (1) the students didn't understand exactly what we were asking about, and (2) that we weren't exactly sure we knew how to assess the goal as written.

Over the first weeks of the academic year, the department rewrote the goal to the "Self-Authoring" goal presented above. The major revision is restricting the goal to learning associated with coursework. We also determined that we need to be more transparent about the goals with the students—we need to talk about them and use their vocabulary. This year, we discussed "Self-Authoring" with students at our annual pre-registration meeting; in the thesis courses; and in ENGL 297: Literary Analysis.

In conducting our 2022 Assessment, we immediately realized we need to revise our assessment plan for this learning goal. Here is the old "Self-Authorship" plan:

From our Assessment Plan for Self-Authorship:

Indirect Assessment	Direct Assessment
Self-Authorship Senior survey, questions 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12	Oral thesis defense
	Capstone thesis project
Shared departmental reflection on student self-authorship in classes, in general, and at senior level, specifically—in relation to shared rubric.	Odyssey project proposals and reflections

The plan's designated questions do not map onto our current Senior Survey. We slightly altered the Senior Survey before administering it; more significantly, the revised "Self-Authoring" goal no longer corresponds to the old identified questions. Also, during our May 2022 conversation, we decided to revise the Senior Survey to produce better responses (see below). Because we are likely to continue to make small annual adjustments to the survey, we think it best not to include specific question numbers in the Assessment Plan.

As our revised Self-Authoring goal focuses entirely on coursework learning, we need to remove "Odyssey project proposals and reflections" as Direct Assessment Data.

The old plan included departmental reflection as Indirect Assessment. It is our understanding, however, that this is actually a Direct Assessment tool.

We therefore submit the following new Assessment Plan for Self-Authoring:

New Self-Authoring Assessment Plan

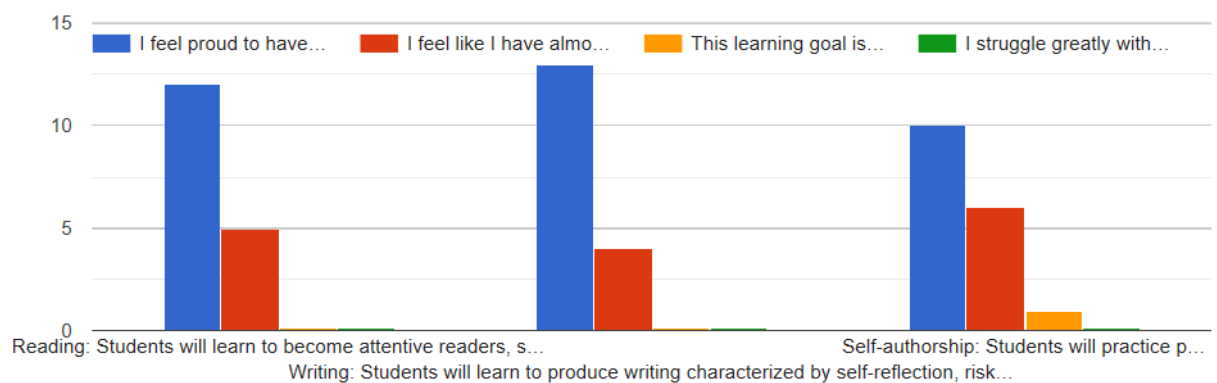
Indirect Assessment	Direct Assessment
Self-Authorship Senior survey questions	Oral thesis defense
	Capstone thesis project
	Shared departmental reflection on student self-authorship in classes, in general, and at senior level, specifically.

Indirect Assessment: Senior Survey Data

17 students completed the online senior survey out of 17 enrolled in the two thesis section seminars for a 100% response rate. Actually, one enrolled student is an interdisciplinary major, but as the surveys are completed anonymously, we have no way of removing this respondent.

Here is the data from the questions directly tied to the departmental learning goals:

Our English Department has recently whittled down a long list of learning goals into three points of focus: reading, writing, and self-authorship. No matter your emphasis within the major, we try to build our curricular and co-curricular experiences around helping you to achieve mastery in these areas. Please indicate where you think you are in relation to these learning goals. We recognize that learning is lifelong and always in progress, of course, but we are curious as to how you assess--in relation to what seems possible at the undergraduate level--your strengths in relation to these areas.



On this year's learning goal, Self-Authoring:

- 10 "feel proud to have mastered"
- 6 "feel [they] have almost mastered"
- 1 recognizes that the goal is "still in-progress"
- 0 are "struggling"

We are satisfied with the student self-evaluation. In fact, the single student who reports this goal as "still in-progress" demonstrates a self-awareness potentially indicative of a higher rating.

The second question asks for qualitative comments. The survey asks one question to cover all three goals:

We welcome your reflections on the previous question. Are there things that you're learning as an English major that *aren't* subsumed within these three learning goals? Anything else you want to add here?

11 responses

n/a

Honestly, I don't think so.

Not really.

Implementation of peer/instructor feedback and critiques on written work.

This relates to the reading component but I want to share a little more: I have always seen literature as a window into the history, sociology, psychology, and philosophy of both its authors and characters and as a medium through which to learn more deeply about people. That is a major reason why the ENGL major has been so valuable to me.

No.

I have learned how to develop my writing and personal voice beyond the academic voice.

I feel like "reading" might should be changed to "analysis" to more accurately represent the

No, that seems to cover it pretty well

I think all the things I did fell under those three learning goals.

Nothing in these qualitative comments point to any areas of concern for departmental faculty.

However, we suspect that lumping all the learning goals into a single open question might have worked against the eliciting of insights on specific goals. Going forward, we will revise the Senior Survey such that each learning goal includes both a quantitative and a qualitative response.

The other questions identified in the old Self-Authorship plan attempted to capture co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences. These no longer apply to the new Self-Authoring goal.

Direct Assessment: Departmental Collective Reflection

For this assessment work, the departmental faculty drew on student performance in Senior Capstone (thesis) and the Oral Defense as well as our experience of each student over the course of their career in the program. It should be noted that the Oral Defense includes a question that asks the student to comment on their experience with the thesis, on its role in their learning and development, and on any additional reflections they have about their time in the program.

Using the same language as in the Senior Survey, the faculty determined that of our 16 graduating seniors:

- 10 students have “mastered” Self-Authorship
- 3 have “almost mastered” it
- 3 are still “in-process”
- 0 are “struggling”

Our direct assessment closely aligns with the student self-evaluations.

Conclusion

We are satisfied with student development in this area.

That said, the department recognizes that the capstone project was instituted about fifteen years ago. Our faculty have developed as teachers; our courses and assignments have changed. Especially regarding the Literary and Film Studies emphases, it’s possible that course goals and methods has drifted from a direct scaffolding to the thesis goals. We’ve decided, then to begin a process of reviewing our 300 and 400 level courses in context of the current thesis design and goals, to consider whether and how we need to revise the thesis process or goals.