Wright College Academic Department/Program Assessment Project
Spring 2018 – May 2018

WHAT?
Describe the purpose of this assessment project.

To gather information on student learning relative to ethical scholarship in English 101. To correlate student learning achievement in English 101 with the fourth General Education student learning outcome regarding ethical values.

The relevant English 101 SLO indicates that upon completion of the course, the student will be able to: establish a framework of organization appropriate to the writing task and the thesis by doing of the following: employing rhetorical strategies consistent with the purpose of the writing task; incorporating rhetorical tools such as transitions, examples, explanations, concrete and relevant details; integrating the student's own ideas with those of others, utilizing appropriate documentation; and identifying and avoiding intentional and unintentional plagiarism.

The department also contributed two subject-specific case studies for the college's first annual Ethics Bowl. These highlighted the ethical challenges and decision-making skills related to plagiarism in the discipline.
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WHY?
Describe your department/program's reasons for taking on this project and the areas of your department/program that are involved.

For the past three academic years, the department has undergone a process of assessing student learning achievement in English 101 via the Critical Essay Rubric, which was developed based upon the approved student learning outcomes for the course. As a consequence of the centrality of written communication and the comprehensiveness of the student learning outcomes for English 101, the department's assessment process has been able to work in tandem with the college's assessment objectives. That is, the SLOs for English 101 reflect to a high degree most aspects of the college's General Education student learning outcomes.

As was the case in previous academic years in which the department focused on critical thinking, purpose/audience, and information/digital literacy, the department will now look closely at the "Organization and Development" student leaning outcome, which includes a concern for the students' abilities to write ethically. In this way, the department will continue its longitudinal assessment of student learning outcomes achievement in English 101 as well as support the goals of the college Assessment Committee's assessment of student learning in the college's General Education curriculum (of which English 101 is part).

The case studies were contributed to the college's Ethics Bowl in order to participate in the college-wide discussion and assessment of ethical values in socially relevant academic contexts.
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HOW?
Describe the participants, methods, and the timeline for this project.

Participants: Students enrolled in and faculty teaching English 101 in fall 2017 as well as, indirectly, in spring 2015 to spring 2017 via the data collected relative to "Organization and Development" student learning outcomes achievement. For the case studies, an English faculty member developed the cases.

Methods: Students will complete a/the critical essay in English 101. Faculty teaching English 101 will assess the degree to which students achieve the learning outcomes in English 101 via the Critical Essay Rubric. To assess for student learning relative to ethical values, the department will focus on the "Organization and Development" outcome, which includes an assessment of the degree to which ethical values are exhibited in the critical compositions of students enrolled in English 101 (see the box to the bottom-right). The data gathered this semester will be aggregated and compared to the data collected from the past six to eight semesters relative to the "Organization and Development" criterion. The results of this comparison will be used to determine the need for and, in the case they are necessary, inform interventions designed to improve student performance in the aforementioned criterion. For the case studies, reviews and reflections upon common discipline-specific ethical challenges were utilized in the development of the specific aspects of the cases.

Timeline: Ongoing. Data have been collected (spring 2015-spring 2017) and will continue to be collected (fall 2017). These data will be aggregated and compared relative to the "Organization and Development" criterion/outcome. The results of this comparison will be used to determine the need for and, in the case they are necessary, inform interventions designed to improve student performance in the aforementioned criterion/outcome. For the case studies, they were developed, drafted, revised, and disseminated in spring 2018.

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WHAT WE FOUND
1. Describe the way in which your department/program will collect results. 2. Provide the results.

Early and previous data suggest that students are performing well in the "Organization and Development" outcome, which includes ethical writing and scholarship. Specifically, between spring 2015 and fall 2017:

1. An average of 68% of students performed at the levels of 'Beginning Apprentice" and "Advanced Apprentice," which indicates that the majority of students either approach or meet the standards of this outcome in the course.
2. An average 21% of students performed at the level of "Emerging Scholar," which indicates that nearly a fourth of the students exceed the standards of this outcome in the course.
3. An average of 62% of students performed at the levels of 'Emerging Scholar" and "Advanced Apprentice," which indicates that the majority of students either meet or exceed the standards for this outcome in the course.
4. Combined, an average of 89% of all students enrolled in English 101, at least "approach" the standards established by the course in this particular outcome.

These data are correlated well with success rates for the course during this time period. These data are also well-correlated with preliminary data from spring 2018.

For the case studies, the students were able to debate effectively the vicissitudes of ethical decision-making within the context of the English discipline.
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