Expected Outcomes:

Students in the ENGL 4800, the literature capstone, will demonstrate effective written communication skills in the form of a substantial research paper of at least twenty pages. Specifically, papers were judged on the following:

1. analysis of literary texts
2. analysis of literary genres
3. creation of an effective research paper
4. ability to establish a compelling critical voice
5. ability to discuss literary movements and period

Related typical general education outcomes:

2  Analytical and Critical Reading
4  Ability to Construct Arguments
7  Written Communication

Assessment methods

Method:

A check list was developed to assess the learning outcomes. Students in ENGL4800 developed term papers on the basis of primary literary and secondary critical sources text during the course. Twenty-four students submitted electronic copies of their final papers. The papers were assessed by six faculty members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Two committee members evaluated each paper with yes/no responses to the five questions above. If the raters disagreed on a question, a third rater judged the paper. Initial inter-rater reliability was 88.1.

Findings:

Students performed at the following levels by item:
1. One hundred percent of the students produced a sustained analysis of a literary text.
2. Seventy-one percent of the students were able to analyze a literary genre.
3. Eighty percent of the students produced effective research papers.
4. Eighty-eight percent of students established an acceptable critical voice.
5. Eighty-eight percent of students discussed literary movements and period.

Looking at the data another way, the results indicate that fifty-four percent of the students met all five criteria.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The program is largely accomplishing its stated objectives with slightly more than half of the students meeting all of the learning objectives. The results were shared with area faculty with an eye to further improving student achievement.

Additional comments:

None