Expected Outcomes: Write Accurate Thesis Statements

Students in the BA program in theatre are expected to develop their ability to write clear and accurate thesis statements that articulate their key thoughts. Students are also expected to be able to organize their writing so that it clearly reflects and supports their thesis statements.

Related typical general education outcomes:

7 Written Communication

Assessment methods

Method: Research Paper

Students will write a 2500-word research paper for THEA1010, the introductory course for the major. These papers are on a topic of the students’ choosing related to theatre. A random sample of 25% of the class will be assessed by members of the BA faculty using a rubric to measure the student’s ability to articulate a clear thesis statement in the paper and to relate the content of the paper to the thesis statement.

Findings:

Our random sampling of 8 papers from the 2011 THEA 1010 class demonstrated mixed results as to the success of the students in writing and abiding by thesis statements. Approximately half of the papers demonstrated clear knowledge of this skill set and the ability to use it.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We feel that we still need to work on this area of our program. We will place greater emphasis on the thesis statement in the outline assignment that prepares students for their final papers, as well as spend more time on it in class.

Additional comments:

None

Method: Seminar Paper

Students will write a 5,000 word paper as part of their requirement for their junior/senior theatre theory/literature/history seminar. A random sample of 25% of the class will be assessed by members of the BA faculty using a rubric to measure the student’s ability to articulate a clear thesis statement in the paper and to relate the content of the paper to the thesis statement.

Findings:

Last year we planned to use a couple of methods that we found unsatisfactory in terms of the data they provided about student growth in this area. We initially said that we would use an article precis from 1110, but realized during the semester that this class is taken the semester following 1010 and really does not allow time for growth. We also suggested that we were going to look at thesis statements in theatre manifestos students write for their Senior Capstone course. When we looked at those assignments, however, we realized that we were comparing apples to oranges since they are very different kinds of writing.
How did you use findings for improvement?

This year we are using a seminar paper for comparison since it more directly relates to the skills they learn in the freshman year.

Additional comments:

None