

Major Field Assessment: English for Information Systems

Philosophy of the College of Liberal Arts

The College of Liberal Arts offers programs and courses that prepare students to enjoy a full life and earn a living. By their very nature, the liberal arts are worthwhile to study for their own sake, and provide life-long activities. They are the foundation of successful careers and are an essential part of higher education. They expand the imagination and stimulate mental growth, as well as provide relaxation. Throughout the College, computers, hypermedia, electronic communication, and other kinds of technology are employed in practical and imaginative ways.

The goals of the English majors are closely related to the DSU mission in that both majors provide instruction in computers, hypermedia, electronic communication and other kinds of technology.

Background and Faculty Involvement

In the fall of 1992, faculty developed a draft of goals and assessment criteria. They were sent both to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Assessment Coordinator, and they have been distributed and discussed, culminating in a complete revision during the spring of 1994.

In 1988, faculty prepared exit assessment tests for graduating seniors. These tests were reviewed and revised each semester they were given. Intensive discussion in April, 1994, resulted in additional procedures for assessment of English programs: under this new approach, all students now prepare portfolios for assessment, and write a reflective essay, explaining the significance of pieces chosen for their portfolios. Beginning in 1999, faculty began addressing the need to make seniors' portfolios more uniform. A rubric was developed and was given to students to aid them in assembling their portfolios. Exit portfolios are submitted on or before the appropriate Assessment Day and students write their reflective essays on Assessment Day. Both the essays and the portfolios are examined by English faculty and a grade of "Pass" or "Not Pass" is assigned to each. Although these grades do not currently affect graduation, students are encouraged to put forth their best efforts in order to secure the most positive employment and graduate school recommendations.

Curriculum Improvement Based on Assessment

The following curricular changes were based specifically on information derived from assessment of the English major. [Note: A system-wide common course renumbering initiative, undertaken at the direction of the BOR has significantly changed the names and numbers of many English courses. Names and numbers have been used or modified to minimize confusion.]

In assessing graduates in 1992, faculty learned that students made little or no use in their formal studies of programming skills attained in ENGL 420, SNOBOL and SPITBOL, and in ENGL 450, Computers, Literature and Writing; therefore English faculty changed these two programming classes to the junior level in order to encourage students to complete them earlier so that programming skills could be used in other courses. In 2004, ENGL 420 (which has undergone several numbering and name changes since then) was removed from the curriculum.

Based on students' modest background in text analysis, a full Text Analysis Option was developed in 1993, and the newly renamed ENGL 350, Computer Text Analysis (formerly ENGL 450, Computers, Literature and Writing), was moved from the core of the major to this new option. In 1997, a new course, ENGL 450, Corpora Analysis was added to the curriculum: ENGL 350 (now ENGL 467) and ENGL 355 (now ENGL 466) were moved back to the core of the curriculum; those courses were replaced by Corpora Analysis in the Text Analysis Specialization.

To provide English majors with capstone experience opportunities, ENGL 491, Senior Thesis, and ENGL 485, English Internship were added to the curriculum. In 1992, the title of ENGL 491 was broadened to Senior Research, to allow increased flexibility.

Based on student interests and their need for knowledge of potential workplaces, a curricular change was made in 1993 to allow students to complete either ENGL 491, Senior Research, or ENGL 485, English Internship to satisfy the capstone experience requirement. Students interested in advanced study are encouraged to complete ENGL 491; students interested in seeking employment are encouraged to complete ENGL 485. MCOM 389, Portfolio and Professional Development was also added to the core of the major to assist students in preparing employment-oriented, professional portfolios. This course also addresses the Exit Assessment Portfolio, mentioned above.

Following a South Dakota Department of Education review, the linguistics requirement for English Education majors was revised. Formerly, students could take either LING 403, Introduction to Linguistics or LING 443, History of the English Language. Based on the review team's recommendations and to make the program more uniform, English majors must now complete LING 443, History of the English Language.

Following an external program review by independent consultants, ACTG 210, Accounting I, was moved from the core of the English major to the Business Specialization. MCOM 360, Technical Publishing, was also added to the core of the major.

Following faculty development activities, new courses were added to the core of the English Education major: ENGL 480, Contemporary Rhetoric; ENGL 384, Literary and Linguistic Research; and most recently, ENGL 309, Computer-Supported Collaborative Writing.

English for Information Systems

Mission Statement

The Bachelor of Science in English for Information Systems is designed to prepare students to write technical documentation, to edit many kinds of publications, and to use computers to analyze texts. Graduates with this degree can enter the job market as writers for software companies, newspapers and publishing firms and a variety of businesses. Careers in writing, editing, and publishing, particularly those that use computers or deal with the subject of computers, continue to grow quickly. In addition, an English major is recognized as one of the best preparations for advanced study, especially in law and divinity.

Goals, Outcomes, and Assessment Criteria

1. Students should be able to do academic research and to write clear, well-structured texts.

- a. Find, evaluate and use various types of secondary textual resources, in both print and electronic form.

Develop a sense of audience and an authentic authorial voice, and understand and use the conventions of standard, written, academic English.

Recognize and use different textual organizational structures for various written communication purposes.

Understand the use of deductive and inductive reasoning as ways of presenting arguments and supporting their assertions.

- (1) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: From their courses in composition, literature, documentation, and linguistics, students produce a portfolio of five to nine texts for various audiences and occasions, including at least one research paper, exhibiting adherence to the current citation standards of the Modern Language Association, and at least one text from their area of specialization. Student portfolio texts should exhibit a tone and authorial persona appropriate to the specific audience intended. Portfolio pieces must exhibit standard American spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax. One hundred percent (100%) of students will achieve a “score” of “Y”es for the following criterion: “Contains the specified texts for various audiences and occasions.”

- (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve an Overall Portfolio score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher.
 - (3) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve a score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on the following criterion: "Demonstrates primary and secondary research skills."
 - (4) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve a score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on the following criterion: "Texts exhibit standard American spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax."
 - (5) Graduate Survey: Students will indicate that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their ability to research a subject and present their findings in writing.
 - (6) Graduate Survey: Students will indicate that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their ability to communicate in writing with co-workers.
- b. Reflect upon their own texts and evaluate their improvement and their current skill level along a range from novice to expert.
- (1) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students will write a self-evaluative essay on the contents of their portfolios assessing their own strengths and weaknesses as writers.
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve an Overall score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on their reflective essay evaluation.
 - (3) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 90% of English majors will rate their written communication skills as strong or very strong.
- c. Employ the most technologically sophisticated features of the latest word processing software to produce publishable texts and communicate effectively within a professional environment.
- (1) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve a score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on the following criterion: "Exhibits a tone and authorial persona appropriate to the intended audience."
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve a score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on the following criterion: "Either one text, or the portfolio itself, successfully demonstrates the effective use of document enhancing technologies."
 - (3) Course Outcome: Students must pass ENGL 401, Advanced Writing, with

a grade of C or above.

- (4) Employer Survey: Employers will indicate that DSU graduates are "good" or "very good" at using text processing software and using effective written communication skills.

2. Students should understand the nature and function of the English language.

- a. Define human language and differentiate it from non-human language;
Define the function of language in social contexts;
Explain reasons for the inevitable changes that occur in language;
Demonstrate that English is a subset in a hierarchy of languages;
Define the concept of grammar and its subsystems;
Differentiate between prescriptive and descriptive grammar.

- (1) Course Outcomes: English majors must pass ENGL 307, Principles of Grammar and LING 443, History of the English Language, with a grade of C or above.

- (2) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 80% of English majors will rate themselves as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their knowledge of the English language.

3. Students should understand the nature and function of literature.

- a. Recognize the relationship of literature to contemporary American culture.

- (1) Course Outcomes: English majors will satisfactorily complete a minimum of seven courses (at least two survey courses, three author/period/genre courses, and two courses in literary criticism) which require a critical understanding of literature.

- (2) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 80% of English majors will rate themselves as "sensitive" or "very sensitive" to diverse aesthetic expression.

- b. Appreciate the cultural and ethnic differences among people.

- (1) Course Outcomes: English majors will satisfactorily complete courses which discuss literature as a reflection of differing cultures and ethnicities.

- (2) Graduate Survey: 80% of English majors will indicate that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their awareness of and respect for cultural and ethnic differences among people.

- c. Understand the value of critical approaches to literature.
 - (1) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve a score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on the following criterion: "At least one text successfully demonstrates knowledge of literary and linguistic research tools – i.e., awareness of critical approaches to literature."
- d. Apply principles gained from their reading to problem solving.
 - (1) Course Outcomes: English majors will satisfactorily complete courses which discuss the relevance of literature to their everyday lives and which indicate possible ways to apply this knowledge.
 - (2) Graduate Survey: 80% of English majors will indicate that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their ability to apply problem-solving skills.
- 4. Students should be able to use computers to create and analyze texts.
 - a. Use word processors for composition and editing.
 - (1) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Throughout their portfolios, students will demonstrate skill in creating, editing, and designing text.
 - (2) Graduate Survey: 90% of English majors will indicate that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their ability to use computers effectively and to use software.
 - (3) Employer Survey: 80% of employers will indicate that English majors are "good" or "very good" at using computer software and using effective written communication skills.
 - b. Understand the uses of and potential for non-numeric computing in literary analysis.
 - (1) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve a score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on the following criterion: "At least one text successfully demonstrates an understanding of current applications of non-numeric text analysis."

5. Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization should understand document design and publishing.
 - a. Apply the principles of audience analysis to document design.
 - (1) Course Outcomes: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will satisfactorily complete one course in electronic publishing which stresses audience analysis as it pertains to typeface, font, layout and arrangement of published materials (the psychology of reading).
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will have at least one portfolio piece which demonstrates the principles of good document design.
 - (3) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: 80% of students will achieve a score of 4 (on a 6 point scale) or higher on the following criterion: "Portfolio Design Concept -- Demonstrates skill in creating, editing, and designing text."
 - (4) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 85% of students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will rate themselves as "knowledgeable" or "very knowledgeable" of the principles of good document design.
 - b. Demonstrate a familiarity with the publishing process.
 - (1) Course Outcomes: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will satisfactorily complete two courses in electronic publishing which discuss the publishing process, from writing and revising through preparing final printed copy.
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 85% of students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will rate themselves as "knowledgeable" or "very knowledgeable" of the publishing process.
6. Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization should understand and be able to produce documentation for a variety of audiences and situations.
 - a. Apply the principles of audience analysis in creating appropriate documentation.
 - (1) Course Outcomes: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization take two courses in software documentation that stress audience analysis and how it pertains to producing

documentation. Students learn the differences between user tutorials and user reference guides, and the substantial differences between online and print documentation.

- (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will have at least one portfolio piece which demonstrates the principles of audience analysis as it pertains to documentation.
- (3) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will have the opportunity in the reflective portion of the exit assessment process to discuss the rationale for including any portfolio pieces which demonstrate audience analysis as it pertains to documentation.
- (4) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 80% of students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will rate themselves as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their ability to produce appropriate documentation for a variety of audiences.

b. Apply appropriate technology to enhance documentation.

- (1) Course Outcomes: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization complete courses which include a variety of technologies which they can use to enhance their documentation. These technologies (screen capture programs, graphic arts programs, etc.) are made available both in documentation and graphic arts courses.
- (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will have at least one portfolio piece which demonstrates effective use of documentation enhancing technologies.
- (3) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 75% of students in the Documentation and Publishing Specialization will rate themselves as "familiar" or "very familiar" with documentation enhancing technologies.

7. Students in the Computer Programming Specialization will learn the principles of structured programming for applications in business and the humanities.

a. Write computer programs in multiple languages with the necessary job control language.

- (1) Course Outcomes: 90% of students in the Computer Programming Specialization will satisfactorily complete CSC 150, CIS 251, CIS

277, CIS 330, CIS 331, CIS 332, and ENGL 408.

- (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the Computer Programming Specialization will have at least one portfolio piece which demonstrates their command of programming languages.
- b. Understand systems analysis, design and documentation.
- (1) Course Outcomes: 90% of students in the Computer Programming Specialization will satisfactorily complete CIS 332 and ENGL 408.
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the Computer Programming Specialization will have at least one portfolio piece which demonstrates their knowledge of systems analysis, design and documentation.
8. Students in the Business Specialization should understand the principles of accounting, management, business law, and marketing and be familiar with one of the following areas of business practice: statistics, merchandising, sales/sales management, or administration policy .
- a. Course Outcomes: 90% of students in the Business Specialization will satisfactorily complete the six required Business Specialization courses (ACCT 210, ACCT 211, BADM 310, BADM 350, BADM 360, BADM 370) and one optional business course (BADM 220, BADM 371, BADM 425, BUS 474 or BADM 481).
- (1) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: At least one portfolio text will represent their business option course work, and exhibit the tone, authorial persona, and textual standards appropriate to the specific professional function the document was intended to serve.
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Survey: 90% of students in the business option will rate their understanding of the principles and practices of business as "strong" or "very strong."
 - (3) Graduate Survey: 70% of those responding indicate that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with current knowledge in the field.
 - (4) Graduate Survey: 70% of those responding will indicate that they are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with DSU's contribution to their knowledge in the field.
 - (5) Employer Survey: 85% of those responding will rate our graduates as needing the "usual" or "less than the usual" amount of additional training.

9. Students in the Text Analysis Specialization should be able to use computers to analyze and process large and small texts and they should understand the nature and structure of major periods of literature and literary genres.
 - a. Use computer programs designed for advanced applications of text analysis and corpora analysis.
 - (1) Course Outcomes: 90% of students in the Text Analysis Specialization will satisfactorily complete ENGL 467, Computer Text Analysis, ENGL 466, Text Mark-Up and Processing, and ENGL 450, Corpora Analysis.
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the Text Analysis Specialization will include at least one piece in their portfolio which demonstrates their knowledge of textual and/or corpora analysis.
 - b. Understand critical approaches to literature and the basic literary and linguistic research tools.
 - (1) Course Outcomes: 90% of students in the Text Analysis Specialization will satisfactorily complete ENGL 384, Literary and Linguistic Research.
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Students in the text analysis option will include at least one piece in their portfolio which demonstrates their knowledge of literary and linguistic research tools.
 - c. Understand classical rhetorical theory and its application to contemporary rhetoric.
 - (1) Course Outcomes: 90% of students in the text analysis option will satisfactorily complete ENGL 480, Contemporary Rhetoric.
 - (2) Exit Assessment -- Portfolio: Writing in student portfolios will demonstrate sound rhetorical content, and at least one portfolio piece will document an understanding of current applications of computer technology for rhetorical analysis.