

Department of English

English 201 Course-level Outcome Assessment

Spring 2020 Pilot Project

Introduction

Rio Hondo College's Department of English (English) conducted a course-level outcome assessment pilot project using data from English 201 taught during the spring 2020 semester. A team of seven faculty independently reviewed student essays and rated them Proficient or Not Proficient on the six English 201 course-level outcomes, Figure 1.

Figure 1. English 201 Outcomes

1. Students will write a clear, declarative thesis statement.
2. Students will integrate credible outside sources into their papers.
3. Students will organize their ideas logically.
4. Students will write persuasively.
5. Student papers will contain few or no errors in mechanics and grammar.
6. Students correctly documented outside sources using the designated citation format.

The data were provided to the Institutional Research & Planning Office (IRP) for analysis and results were prepared and presented at the September 2020 department meeting.

Methods

The English faculty coordinator requested a **representative sample** of spring 2020 English 201 sections from which to get 150 essays for assessment.

From the 41 sections offered during spring 2020, IRP identified **five random samples** of seven sections that could be used. Each of the five samples was **analyzed to determine if it represented all English 201 offerings** on three factors, instructor employment type (full-time or part-time), format and location (in-person on main campus, in-person at Educational Center, or online), and time of class (day or evening). The sample that most closely represented the entire spring 2020 English 201 offerings was selected for inclusion in the pilot project.

Instructors of the seven selected sections were notified and final student essays were collected for evaluation. Identifying information from the essays was redacted and a packet of essays from multiple sections was given to **seven volunteer evaluators** with instructions (see Appendix A). Each evaluator rated 16-18 essays for a total of **119 essays**.

Volunteers rated each paper **Proficient or Not Proficient** on each of the **six course-level outcomes**. Ratings and qualitative comments were given to IRP for analysis.

Results

Results from the pilot project are presented below. Figure 2 and 3 present the distribution of ratings by course-level outcome. Comments and feedback, about the data, and the evaluation process, are included in Figure 4. Totals disaggregated by evaluator can be found in Appendix B.

Figure 2. Evaluation Results Table

	Proficient		Not Proficient	
	%	n	%	n
Outcome 1. Thesis Statement	60.2	71	39.8	47
Outcome 2. Credible Outside Sources	62.2	74	37.8	45
Outcome 3. Logical Organization	68.3	82	31.7	38
Outcome 4. Persuasive Writing	63.9	76	36.1	43
Outcome 5. Mechanics and Grammar	74.2	89	25.8	31
Outcome 6. Citation Format	52.9	63	47.1	56

Figure 3. Evaluation Results Graph

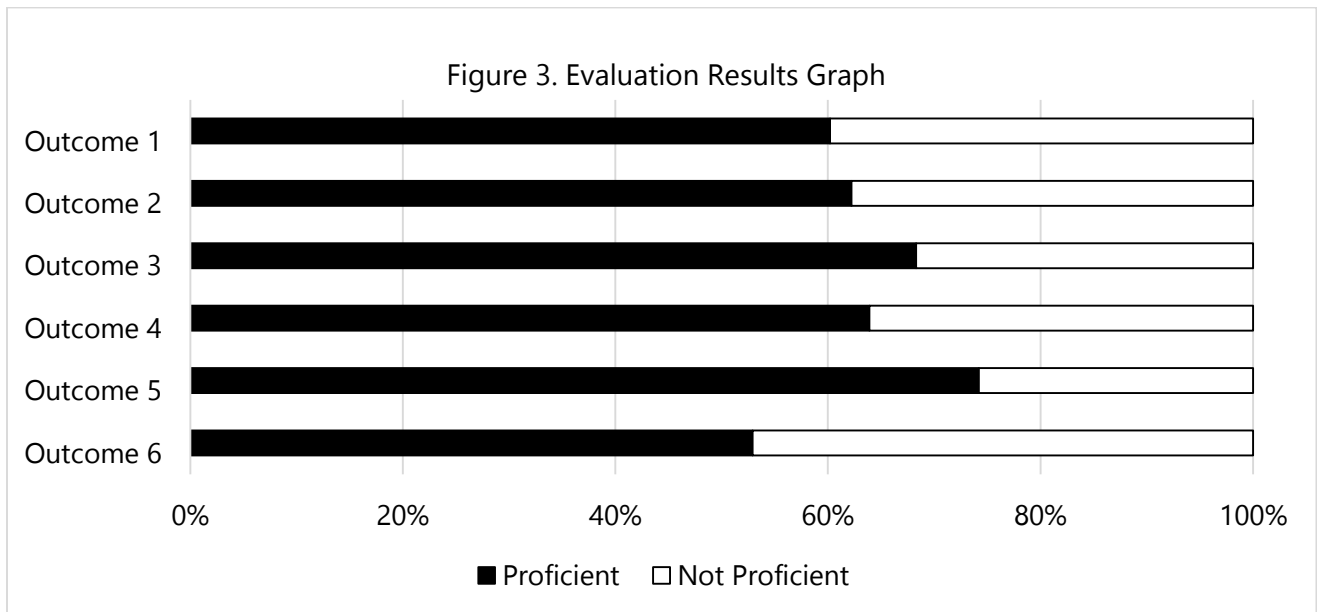


Figure 4. Evaluator Comments and Feedback

Outcome 1. Students will write a clear, declarative thesis statement.

- Thesis with direction vs. announcement (?) of type - struggle here.
- Some did not have a direct thesis statement but often had clear direction and focus.

Outcome 2. Students will integrate credible outside sources into their papers.

- Needs the word "effectively" added to make it more evaluative in a meaningful manner. Many "proficient" would be marked "not proficient" if that word was present.
- Mix - sometimes good integration of general not as substantive info, sometimes good writing without integration of support.

Outcome 3. Students will organize their ideas logically.

No comments

Outcome 4. Students will write persuasively.

No comments

Outcome 5. Student papers will contain few or no errors in mechanics and grammar.

No comments

Outcome 6. Students correctly documented outside sources using the designated citation format.

- A few papers using APA format seemed to use only certain features of APA documentation.
- I'm not sure why an instructor is teaching APA in an English 201 class. Course outcome stated that MLA is required.
- More success with APA than MLA.
- Some essays used APA, I marked it as correct (designated format) but with the assumption the instructor allowed it - as it was not in MLA.
- A few of these papers seemed to be in a rough draft stage with places left open to plug in sources. One student used personal knowledge as her key source and it was powerful, but I could not give her credit for "documented sources in designated citation format."

Other Comments

- Evaluator stated that one essay was labeled English 101. Scores were noted but not included in tally.

Summary

The English 201 pilot project produced the following course-level outcome assessment results:

- 60.2% of students assessed wrote a clear, declarative thesis statement.
- 62.2% of students assessed integrated credible outside sources into their papers.
- 68.3% of students assessed organized their ideas logically.
- 63.9% of students assessed wrote persuasively.
- 74.2% of student assessed had few or no errors in mechanics or grammar.
- 52.9% of students assessed correctly documented outside sources using the designated citation format.

This information can be used by the Department of English to focus a conversation about course-level outcomes and student learning.

Questions for Faculty Consideration

- Are the **course-level outcomes** understood by evaluators in the same way?
- Do the **course-level outcomes** accurately and meaningfully reflect student learning?
- Is there **variation across evaluators**? What can this variation be attributed to? How does it impact outcomes assessment?
- What is the department's **benchmark for proficiency** on course outcomes?
- What **themes of success** emerge from the assessment data? How can this be built on?
- Are there outcomes that should be **targeted for improvement**?
- What **resources** are needed to ensure improvements come to fruition?
- When it comes time in the **curriculum process for course revision**, what (if any) changes need to be made to this course?
- Did this process produce **meaningful data** for the Department of English? How can it be improved in the future?

Appendix A. Instructions

Spring 2020 English 201 Pilot Outcome Study Evaluation Sheet

Outcomes	Proficient	Not Proficient
Students will write a clear, declarative thesis statement.		
Students will integrate credible outside sources into their papers.		
Students will organize their ideas logically.		
Students will write persuasively.		
Student papers will contain few or no errors in mechanics and grammar.		
Students correctly documented outside sources using the designated citation format.		

Instructions for English 201 Pilot Outcomes Study for Spring 2020.

1. You have received a packet of English 201 essays. All identifying information has been redacted. The essays from the sample have been thoroughly mixed up, so the packet you have represents papers from several different instructors. The names of the students and the instructors participating in the study will never be revealed, and this applies to the reader evaluators as well.
2. Evaluate each essay for all six outcomes. You can mark the boxes as appropriate with a check mark or a single line. Each essay should receive six marks. You need not read the entire essay to determine the level of proficiency for each outcome.
3. Please feel free to make qualitative comments on this paper and return it with you tally in the enclosed postage paid envelope.
4. Please return the packets and scores, they will be delivered to the office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) for analysis. We hope to discuss the results at our English Department meeting in September or October.

Qualitative comments: Please write any comments below or on the back side of this paper. All comments will be included in the pilot study outcomes report generated by IRP.

Appendix B. Data

		Outcome 1. Thesis Statement (n=118)		Outcome 2. Credible Sources (n=119)		Outcome 3. Logical Org. (n=120)		Outcome 4. Persuasive Writing (n=119)		Outcome 5. Mech. & Grammar (n=120)		Outcome 6. Citation Format (n=119)	
Evaluator	Essays	Prof.	Not Prof.	Prof.	Not Prof.	Prof.	Not Prof.	Prof.	Not Prof.	Prof.	Not Prof.	Prof.	Not Prof.
1	17	12	5	12	5	13	4	17	0	14	3	5	12
2	16	9	7	8	8	11	6	12	4	7	9	6	10
3	17	10	7	11	6	12	5	15	2	16	1	4	13
4	17	13	4	11	6	13	4	12	5	17	1	11	6
5	18	6	11	9	9	12	6	4	14	8	10	9	9
6	17	11	6	9	8	16	1	13	4	11	6	12	5
7	17	10	7	14	3	5	12	3	14	16	1	16	1
SUM		71	47	74	45	82	38	76	43	89	31	63	56
Percentage		60.2%	39.8%	62.2%	37.8%	68.3%	31.7%	63.9%	36.1%	74.2%	25.8%	52.9%	47.1%

Note: Three faculty marked a different number of evaluations on one of the outcomes. For this reason, the number of essays and evaluations vary slightly across outcomes.