

Central Student Outcomes of General Education

Final Version Approved by the Faculty Association at the April 4, 2002 Association meeting

I. Skills:

Students should be able to:

A. think critically, reason soundly, and argue effectively,
as demonstrated by the ability to:

1. analyze arguments according to standard criteria
2. assume and defend a position on a given topic
3. use systematic processes, including the collection and analysis of evidence, to form and support conclusions
4. read and analyze complex texts, including the analysis of rhetorical devices and modes of inference

Students should be able to:

B. demonstrate competence in the use of information technology,
as demonstrated by the ability to:

1. locate, retrieve, and filter information using appropriate resources
2. use appropriate software for developing written and graphic materials and for organizing, analyzing, and presenting data
3. use appropriate network communications software

Students should be able to:

C. communicate effectively,
as demonstrated by the ability to:

1. write coherent analytical and persuasive papers using effective expression
2. speak with clarity and organization of thought
3. address diverse audiences

II. Knowledge:

Students should know:

A. The natural and designed world,

1. demonstrating a general knowledge of current scientific understanding of the history and nature of the universe, the earth, and of life forms
2. demonstrating a general knowledge of the methods and traditions of analysis in the natural sciences

Students should know:

B. The social, political, economic, and psychological world,

1. demonstrating a general knowledge of scholarly understanding of the range of social, political, geopolitical, and economic organization
2. demonstrating a general understanding of human development, behavior, and health
3. demonstrating a general knowledge of American politics and society, including the experience of significant minority groups

4. demonstrating a general knowledge of the methods and traditions of analysis in the social sciences

Students should know:

C. History, literature, art, music, and philosophy,

1. demonstrating a general knowledge of the nature, origins, and contributions of major civilizations
2. demonstrating a more detailed knowledge of formative influences in the recent past
3. demonstrating a general knowledge of the methods and traditions of analysis in the humanities

Students should know:

D. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning

1. demonstrating general knowledge of the breadth, power, development of major areas of mathematics
2. demonstrating proficiency in solving problems using mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning

III. Values:

Students should value:

A. The creative arts,

responding aesthetically in a sufficiently sophisticated way to both contemporary and past works from several cultures, including American

Students should value:

B. The Other,

demonstrating an appreciation of the Other sufficient to motivate an understanding of individuals and groups who differ in significant ways from the Self, such as differences generated by race, gender, class, and culture in both domestic and international contexts

Students should value:

C. Ethical behavior,

1. acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for ethical judgment and its application to everyday life
2. developing the habit of reflecting on their own values and fulfilling their ethical and civic responsibilities

Program Assessment Test
The Writing Program at the University of North Florida

Your name, please: _____

Your social security number: _____

Please read the following short article—about an issue recently in the news—and then—in your blue book—write an essay in response. Introduce your topic, and then come to a thesis in which you claim either that the Banales signs should be removed, or that they should not. Use the body of your essay to argue for your position. Make as clear as possible the reasons for your choice.

Controversy has arisen in Corpus Christi, Texas, over a recent ruling by Judge Hector Banales. The judge has ordered that convicted sex offenders, out of jail on probation, must have attached to their cars signs that say, "Warning. Convicted sex offender in vehicle." They must also, according to the judge's ruling, post signs in front of their homes announcing that a convicted sex offender lives inside.

Judge Banales argues that his ruling is designed to protect the community from sexual predators. He points to a recent case in which a convicted sex offender, out on probation, had thirteen new counts brought against him for child molestation; Judge Banales believes that if the community had known of this offender's criminal past, this most recent child victim might have been protected. He points out that in Texas, it is already the practice to publish on the Internet the names and whereabouts of sex offenders in the state, and notes that the identities of sex offenders are also published routinely in the newspaper; he says the signs he has ordered are not, therefore, revealing information that would otherwise be private. They are instead, he says, only putting the information where those most in danger—the sex offender's neighbors, or the child who might be offered a ride in an offender's car—will be most likely to see it, and so be protected.

On the other side of this argument are the lawyers for the convicted offenders. They point out that the signs are causing their clients to be punished in ways never intended by the law—and that the signs punish not only the offenders, but their families. One convicted sex offender, forced to display the signs ordered by Judge Banales, and consequently reviled and threatened by his neighbors, eventually became so distraught he committed suicide. Two more, when their landlords learned about the signs, were evicted from their homes.

The lawyers for the offenders say their clients have already been judged and punished by the law, and that these signs represent a further unlawful punishment. They say the signs may encourage Texas citizens to impose their own unlawful penalties on these convicted offenders, and as evidence, they point to the fact that offenders' cars, with the Banales signs attached, are very often vandalized. They point out, too, that many of the sex offenders have families, and family members living in the homes with the signs outside, or driving in the cars with the signs, are subject to the same verbal abuse, threats, and even danger directed at the offenders themselves. Thus, they say, the signs are both leading to crime and punishing the innocent along with the guilty. Finally, they point out that those convicted of other kinds of crime are allowed, once they return to the community, to live without such damaging labels attached to their cars or posted in front of their homes. This being so, they say their clients are being denied equal protection under the law.

The lawyers for the offenders have asked Judge Banales to reverse his ruling, so the signs can be removed. The judge insists the signs only speak the truth, which is already a matter of public record, and they do much to protect innocent citizens who might otherwise fall victim to these sexual predators. Should the ruling be reversed, and the Banales signs removed?

WRITING PROGRAM SURVEY

Your assistance is required in evaluating the success of the Writing Program classes. Please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey. The survey should take five to ten minutes. Your feedback will help to strengthen the writing program and make the classes more useful to future generations of UNF students. Thank you very much for your participation.

Current Writing Program Class

Current Section number

ie. ENC1101_801 (section number)
(ENC section numbers are in the 800s, LIT 2110
section numbers are in the 700s and LIT 2932
section numbers are in the 500s)

Current instructor's name

Current class standing

Current number of credit hours you are taking
at UNF

Current number of hours you are working at a
full- or part-time job

Previous Writing Program classes taken at
UNF

- ENC1101 ENC1102
 LIT2110 LIT2932

Previous Writing Program classes taken
elsewhere.
Please specify course number and institution.

Short Answer Questions:

What was the most important skill you learned? Why was that skill significant?

What have you learned that you foresee playing a role in your later academic career or your life?

--

What haven't you learned that you think you should have learned?

--

Please evaluate the following statements for YOUR CURRENT writing program class on a scale of 1-6:

1 indicates that you find the statement to be extremely true

2 indicates that you find the statement to be somewhat true

3 indicates that you find the statement to be somewhat untrue

4 indicates that you find the statement to be untrue

5 indicates that you have no opinion

6 indicates that you find the statement does not apply to your class

1. I became more skilled in using evidence to support my argument.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. I enhanced my ability to assume and defend a position on a given topic.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. I became more skilled at analyzing arguments.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. I improved my ability to understand and analyze complex texts.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. I enhanced my skill at writing in a coherent, analytical, and persuasive manner.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. I improved my public speaking either informally in classroom discussion or formally in oral presentations.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. I learned about a variety of perspectives on both familiar and unfamiliar issues.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I used a variety of perspectives to analyze texts (this might include either literary theory or general strategies for critical reading).

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. I located, evaluated, and made productive use of information from a variety of research sources.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. I improved my ability to be a more effective communicator.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. I sharpened my critical thinking skills.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Clear

Submit

The Writing Program at UNF

First Analysis of GE Outcome Data from On-Line Learning Survey

Results from Fall 2003

Based on 823 student responses

Strengths

In order of the percent of students who find each statement to be extremely or somewhat true:

5. This class has required me to write in a coherent, analytical and persuasive manner.	87.0
2. This class has required me to assume and defend a position on a given topic (that is, create an argument of my own).	85.9
9. This class has required me to locate, evaluate and make productive use of information from a variety of sources.	83.1
1. This class has required me to collect and analyze evidence.	82.4
3. This class has required me to analyze an argument (that is, analyze another person's argument).	81.6
10. This class has enabled me to be a more effective communicator.	81.3
4. This class has required me to read and analyze a complex text.	79.6
6. This class has required me to speak in the classroom with clarity and organization.	78.3
8. This class has required me to engage in a scholarly manner with the methods and traditions of literary analysis.	77.7
7. This class has required me to address diverse audiences.	66.3

The order in which our students were able to agree with the statements suggests that we are overall quite clear about the goals of the program. The two questions that address our central goal, reasoned argument (5,2) generated the greatest agreement. The next two highest levels of agreement were about using evidence and sources, which means that our students also recognize the centrality of evidence to a reasoned argument (9,1). Our success with textual analysis is shown in that one statement about that is next (3) and the other (4) comes quickly behind, following only the overall statement about being a more effective communicator (10). Agreement with the statement about speaking in the classroom is next, followed by agreement with the statement about methods of literary analysis. The statement that drags at the end is one that in retrospect I think needs revision.

Breakdown by course

I looked at the breakdown of answers by class type – ENC 1101, LIT 2110 and LIT 2932. In general, students in ENC 1101 show slightly more agreement with the statements (82.3%) as compared to the students in the other two classes (79.9% LIT 2110 and 80.3% LIT 2932). The students in LIT 2110 show the most disagreement with the statements (11.7%) as compared to the others (6.7% ENC 1101 and 6.1% LIT 2932). Those in LIT 2932 had the highest number of “no opinion/does not apply” responses (13.6%) as compared to the others (11% ENC 1101 and 8.4% LIT 2932). This suggests that we may be clearer about communicating our goals in ENC 1101 than in the other two classes. The numbers suggest we need to do a better job in terms of

explaining to students how the three courses in the writing sequence are connected, and pointing out, as they move from course to course, how the same skills are being used with different material and at different levels of complexity.

Argument

I next looked at individual questions. I look first at the core of our work – analyzing and creating arguments: (2), “This class has required me to assume and defend a position on a given topic (that is, create an argument of my own),” and (3), “This class has required me to analyze an argument (that is, analyze another person’s argument).” The students in ENC 1101 were clearest about this objective: 86.4% agreed that they were analyzing arguments (3) and 89.4% agreed that they were creating arguments (2). Comparing the results of LIT 2110 (68.5% and 81.1%) suggests that we don’t routinely present literary texts as arguments, nor are we clear that literary interpretation is argument. In LIT 2932 the results are slightly better: 78% recognize that they are analyzing arguments and 82.3% recognize that they are writing arguments.

Percent choosing extremely or somewhat true	1101	2110	2932
3. Analyze an argument	86.4	68.5	78
2. Create an argument	89.4	81.1	82.3

Looking at question 5, however, “This class has required me to write in a coherent, analytical and persuasive manner,” we see the gap is not so wide: ENC 1101, 89.4% (the same as those recognizing that they were creating arguments), LIT 2110, 88.8% and LIT 2932, 83.9%. Nevertheless, the numbers go down with each successive course the students take, which suggests we need to be clearer about the central goals in the two later classes.

Evidence

Looking at the questions about using evidence (question (1), “This class has required me to collect and analyze evidence,” and question (9), “This class has required me to locate, evaluate and make productive use of information from a variety of sources”), again the students are most clear that they are doing this in ENC 1101 and less so in LIT 2110 and LIT 2932, but the gap is smaller.

Percent choosing extremely or somewhat true	1101	2110	2932
1. Collect and analyze evidence	83.1	81.1	80.9
9. Locate, evaluate, use variety of sources	86.9	78.9	78.6

Textual Analysis

The level of perceived complexity of texts appears to rise throughout the sequence, which is as it should be, though all these numbers could be higher.

Percent choosing extremely or somewhat true	1101	2110	2932
4. Read and analyze complex text	73.5	82	86.5

Speech

When asked about our speech component, there appears to be agreement in ENC 1101 and LIT 2110, but confusion in LIT 2932: not only are the LIT 2932 answers overall less in agreement, but there was a high rate of no opinion/does not apply (17.5%), where there was stronger disagreement in LIT 2110 (13.6%).

Percent choosing extremely or somewhat true	1101	2110	2932
6. Speak in class with clarity and organization	80.8	80.7	73.9

Literary Analysis

Agreement with question (8), "This class has required me to engage in a scholarly manner with the methods and traditions of literary analysis" was clearest among students in LIT 2110 (80.5%). I am not surprised that those in ENC 1101 did not agree as strongly to that statement (74.9%), but I am surprised that those in LIT 2932 did not agree more strongly (79.5%).

Overall Assessment

When asked the overall assessment question, (10), "This class has enabled me to be a more effective communicator," again the strongest agreement was in ENC 1101, with 84.1%, as compared to 76.7% (LIT 2110) and 79.7% (LIT 2932).

Changes for Spring 2004

Several of the questions (particularly (7), "This class has required me to address diverse audiences") have been rewritten to translate them better into student terms. We changed all the questions into statements about what the students learned, rather than what the class taught them, in keeping with focus on learning rather than teaching. We added an extra question to explicitly measure their perceptions about their own critical thinking.

New Questions:

1. I became more skilled in using evidence to support my argument.
2. I enhanced my ability to assume and defend a position on a given topic.
3. I became more skilled at analyzing arguments.
4. I improved my ability to understand and analyze complex texts.
5. I enhanced my skill at writing in a coherent, analytical and persuasive manner.
6. I improved my public speaking either informally in classroom discussion or formally in oral presentations.
7. I learned about a variety of perspectives on both familiar and unfamiliar issues.
8. I used a variety of perspectives to analyze texts (this might include either literary theory or general strategies for critical reading).
9. I located, evaluated and made productive use of information from a variety of research sources.
10. I improved my ability to be a more effective communicator.
11. I sharpened my critical thinking skills.

Overall, this assessment suggests that we have been successful in conveying our main program goals--textual analysis and reasoned argument--to our students. Student awareness of our focus on critical thinking is implicit in several of the questions, but after this spring we will

be able to measure it explicitly. It certainly came up a lot in the narrative answers, and when we get that data analyzed I am confident that we will have some evidence of our strength in that area as well. We can document a high degree of success in balancing pedagogical freedom with program coherence.

Dr. Leslie G. Kaplan
Assistant Director, The Writing Program at UNF

The Writing Program at UNF Basic Grading Rubric

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Weak
Substance (the quantity and quality of your ideas, examples, evidence: the weight of your argument).				
Structure (the degree to which the organization of your paper serves its argument (by, for instance, establishing a focus clearly at the outset, ordering evidence, providing an effective conclusion)).				
Focus (your concentration on relevant material, useful to your argument; the degree to which everything in your paper serves to support or develop your thesis).				
Accuracy (the degree to which your report of the text(s) is reliable and your quotes are absolutely precise).				
Technical Control (your mastery of grammar and graphics).				