**Form C**

**ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**FOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>B.A.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Instructional Degree Program)</td>
<td>(Degree Level)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2009-Fall 2010</td>
<td>11-01-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Assessment Period Covered)</td>
<td>(Date Submitted)</td>
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**Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

*NOTE: There should be one form C for each intended outcome listed on form B. Intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.*

Outcome 3: Increased awareness and insight into human life, cultures, and time periods

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

_____a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

Identify the following for the means of assessment (target Spring 2010 semester)

- The artifact to be used, the source of the artifact (course/assignment) and the how the artifact will be evaluated (e.g. rubric, percent correct, etc.)
- Identify your criteria for success (e.g. “75% will achieve a rubric score of 4 or more” or “75% will score 80% correct on the knowledge test”)

During spring and fall 2010, three members of the English Outcomes Assessment committee met to analyze and discuss two of the English outcomes listed in the 2009-10 catalog. In order to conduct a comprehensive assessment, the committee decided to review three courses that collectively spanned the spectrum of English offerings at Nevada State College. Towards that end, the committee chose to review an English composition course (ENG 102: English Composition II), an intermediary literature course primarily geared towards non-English majors (ENG 231: World Literature I), and a required course designed for English majors (ENG 303: Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism). In keeping with prior assessments, the committee (all three of whom are English professors) reviewed papers from their own courses. During the data analysis, the committee noticed that each reviewer tended to rate the papers from her or his course higher than the other two committee members. While this could be attributed, in part, to an increased knowledge about the particular assignment, it is also possible that the reviewers may have been subconsciously biased towards their own class and students. With this in mind, the committee collectively agreed that to try to design subsequent assessments so that instructors review courses that they did not teach.

The English Assessment group used as criteria for success a rubric score of 75% scoring a 3 (Proficient or higher). The outcome delivery was said to be successful if 75% of the artifacts were proficient or higher in their average ratings.

Lastly, the English Assessment group broke down the Outcome into four separate sub-components, which were then evaluated.

Subcomponent 1 - This paper demonstrates an increased awareness into human life.
Subcomponent 2 - This paper demonstrates an increased awareness into cultures and time periods.
Subcomponent 3 - This paper demonstrates increased insight into human life.
Subcomponent 4 - This paper demonstrates increased insight into cultures and time periods.
The committee reviewed the recommendations from the last cycle (2007-9) to determine the progress being made towards their implementation. In the last cycle, the committee suggested that English 102 courses place a higher emphasis upon teaching students how to write argumentative or interpretative research papers. Towards that end, the Department modified its English composition guidelines (provided to part-time faculty) to reflect this emphasis and closely reviewed English 102 syllabi to ensure that this recommendation was being met. In the last cycle, the committee also recommended that upper division English instructors utilize more of a building-block method of assigning essays, whereby instructors would require students to turn in paper proposals, annotated bibliographies, and working thesis statements prior to submitting their final papers. The instructor who made this recommendation noted he has implemented this change in his upper-division courses and has seen improvement in the quality of the final papers.

Having already assessed two of the five outcomes during the last Outcomes Assessment cycle (2007-2009), the committee chose to assess two of the three remaining outcomes: 1) Increased awareness and insight into human life, cultures, and time periods; 2) Mastering language use in order to intelligently convey opinions, interpretations, and ideas. Statistically, the assessment indicated that the artifacts reviewed did not meet the committee’s goal of 75% or more of the students achieving a score of Proficient or higher. However, the committee noted that some students met (or exceeded) this goal in each class reviewed. In other words, the assessment revealed a wide range in student abilities and performance, from unsatisfactory to distinguished. While there was no noticeable difference in the scores between the two outcomes reviewed, the committee noted that, across the board, scores were highest in the upper-division English class (ENG 303) designed for English majors. This finding makes sense as students at that level not only would have completed the English composition sequence, but also, most have already taken intermediary and advanced English and/or Writing courses.

One of the challenges that faced the committee was the language and content of the first outcome reviewed: “Increased awareness and insight into human life, cultures, and time periods.” The committee had difficulty concretely defining “culture” as well as evaluating “increased awareness and insight into human life.” The committee did not have ideological differences on the nature of culture or human life. Rather, it was difficult to determine how to measure the level of students’ insight into human life, and it was also difficult to determine how to measure “insight” in a manner that is distinct from awareness. In addition, not all assignments for English courses require (or should require) students to conduct a historical and/or cultural analysis. Consequently, some papers that were generally proficient or distinguished received lower scores because the assignment prompts or requirements did not ask students to address this outcome. Ultimately, the committee felt that this outcome was too difficult to analyze, not applicable to enough English courses on all genres and levels, and already was generally covered (and better expressed) by another existing outcome for the English major (“Facility to develop significant interpretations of a wide variety of literary texts and cultural or social issues.”). Towards that end, the committee agreed that the outcome should be removed from the English degree.

The committee also discussed ways to modify English courses in order to help students meet departmental goals, and they collectively came up with several specific ways English courses could be modified in order to promote student success. These specific recommendations are described below:

1. The Outcome “Increased awareness and insight into human life, cultures, and time periods,” should be removed from the English degree as it is already covered by another, better phrased outcome. In addition, as is, the outcome is extremely difficult to measure concretely and is not applicable to some English courses.
2. In order to promote student success, the committee felt that English composition instructors could (especially towards the beginning of their course) utilize a building-block approach to teaching writing, whereby students would be required to turn in portions of their paper to the instructor (e.g., a working thesis) for feedback.

3. Intermediary literature courses designed primarily for non-English majors do not always require students to write a literary research paper. However, the committee agreed that, especially for courses that focus on non-contemporary literature, students may write more effective papers if they were required to use legitimate historical sources and to submit an annotated bibliography.

4. The committee also reviewed a required class for English majors (ENG 303: Introduction to Literary Theory and Criticism) and made three recommendations. First, the committee felt that this course needed to remain a requirement in order to maintain our overall objectives in the major. Second, they collectively agreed that students could be encouraged to slow down as readers, take more comprehensive notes while reading, and generally master the skill of close reading and analysis. Towards that end, one committee member has decided to experiment by having students read assigned material on iPads. The hope is that through their use of an iPad, students will be encouraged to take notes while they read and annotate their reading assignments. Finally, the committee discussed the disparity between the students understanding of theoretical material (as shown in class discussions) and their ability to express these ideas in writing. The committee agreed that ENG 303 may benefit from more writing assignments. This proposal adheres to the committee’s overall feeling that a “building-block” model produces more effective results.