

**Form E-1A for Boston College "Literature Core" Course Assessment
Dept. of Romance Languages & Literatures (May 2022)**

1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed?

Students enrolled in RLL Literature Core courses will be expected, at the end of the course, to demonstrate the following abilities:

- ¶ Students will demonstrate the ability to read and evaluate texts critically.
- ¶ Students will demonstrate mastery of mature, effective expository prose, able to analyze texts and issues with logical coherence, clarity and engagement.
- ¶ Students will demonstrate an understanding of the differences between literary genres.
- ¶ Students will recognize the major texts of the target culture(s) pertaining to the specific themes, questions, problems or time period examined in the course.
- ¶ Students will be able to identify and analyze the distinctive features of literary productions.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published?

They are published on the "Undergraduate Program" page of the RLL Department website:
<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/romance-languages/undergraduate-programs.html>

3. Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

- A. Direct Evidence: Analysis in-class discussions, quizzes and exams, and a representative sampling of final papers.
- B. Indirect Evidence: Student survey. An online Qualtrics student survey is administered in each Lit Core class, asking how well they believe they have achieved the learning outcomes, what they found especially helpful, and what suggestions they have for improvement of the course in future iterations.

This year, in carrying out our assessment, we chose to focus on the specific Learning Outcome: "Students will demonstrate mastery of mature, effective expository prose, able to analyze texts and issues with logical coherence, clarity and engagement." The reason for this choice is the general feeling among all of our instructors, teaching in any language, including English, that our undergrads find the mastery of good expository prose an especially difficult challenge and we wanted to double-check this year that last year's very positive results were not an anomaly.
- C. Faculty Group Discussion: the Lit Core Instructors meet as a group to share their experiences and impressions of the semester regarding their work with their students in their progress towards the Learning Outcomes.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The evidence is interpreted by the instructors of the courses in question who submits a summary of their discussions to the Dept Chair (who is also the dept “Core Liaison”). The results of the online student surveys and the discussions by the Lit Core instructors are then also shared with and discussed by the entire FT faculty of the department, who might suggest revisions in light of the collective experience of the department in Core courses that they have taught in past semesters.

5) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? Why were they made?)

Results of 2022 Assessment Process:

As far as direct evidence is concerned, again, this year as last, the consensus was that by and large the students had achieved this outcome, to varying degrees, from "acceptable" to "excellent." The skill of expository writing is one that we have long worked on in all of our department courses, as it is essential to study and work in the humanities, and is an important "life skill" for most future employment: the ability to express oneself clearly and logically and engagingly. It is one that takes much practice to perfect, especially in a foreign language, especially since many students arrive at college without the full necessary training in this skill in high school.

According to the "indirect evidence" (students' own perceptions as registered in the online Qualtrics Questionnaire), students in our Lit Core sections also feel that this LO has been reached. Of the 45 students who completed the survey, 37 "strongly" agreed and 8 "mildly" agreed that the LO had been reached.

NOTE: in the course of discussing the Lit Core students written skills, the faculty questioned their students' skills in clear, coherent, mature oral communication. Few students are able to express themselves in oral communication effortlessly and gracefully (i.e, in complete sentences, without the frequent interjections of “You know,” “kind of like,” etc.) The latter skill (of mature oral communication) is not one of our official Learning Outcome and some debate occurred as to whether it should be. No consensus was reached within the time at our disposal in May, so we will take up the matter at greater length in the fall.

Recent Curricular Changes Based on 2021 Assessment Results: No curricular changes were made last year since our Assessment process concluded that available evidence last year clearly indicated that all Lit Core students evaluated met the proficiency requirement with respect to last year's designated Learning Outcome. However, we chose the same LO this year in order to confirm that last year's positive results were not an anomaly.

6) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

The last Self-study and External Review were carried out in 2010.