

Objective Review Committee Report

Objective 1, Written Communication, Spring 2018

Objective Review Committee Membership: Jim Skidmore, Jennifer Attebery, Steven Hall, Lydia Wilkes

A. Evaluate the assessment plan for each course, together with its implementation. Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

Approved plans are in place for ENGL 1102 and HONS 1101, and the committee sees no problem with these plans. A distinct plan for ENGL 1101 is still needed. The implementation of the plan for ENGL 1102 is underway and is proceeding well. The implementation of the HONS 1101 plan, however, does not seem to have begun. The committee recommends that HONS 1101 be incorporated into the assessment framework that already exists for ENGL 1101/1102, perhaps with participation from an Honors program representative. If, however, the Honors program wishes to conduct its own assessment of HONS 1101, it should commit to begin carrying out its approved assessment plan as soon as possible.

B. Evaluate the assessment *outcome* for each course. To what extent are students in each course satisfactorily achieving the learning outcomes for the objective? Provide a brief summary of the Committee's findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

Because no data has yet been collected for HONS 1101, the committee cannot make a judgment about the extent to which students in this course are meeting the learning outcomes. The same applies to ENGL 1101. The committee notes that in the case of ENGL 1101 it is *not expected* that students will adequately meet all the learning outcomes for Objective 1 (since that course is not designed to meet them all).

Assessment for ENGL 1102 is in its early stages, but the data thus far suggest that the overwhelming majority of students are meeting the learning outcomes to at least an *adequate* degree. This seems to be true of Early College and online sections as well, although sample sizes are too low as yet to make confident judgments. English has identified some areas of concern emerging from the assessment. Results have shown a need for further professional development related to competencies that students find the most difficult (e.g., source synthesis) as well as a need for assessment attuned to the modality of instruction (e.g., face-to-face, online). Finally, a comparison of grade distributions to assessment results revealed grade inflation in Early College Program sections of ENGL 1101. The department plans to address these findings through professional development of faculty on campus and in high schools.

C. Evaluate the list of courses currently approved to satisfy the objective. To what extent does the current list contribute to a strong, coherent system of general education. Would a reduction or increase in the number or variety of courses in this objective

strengthen the overall system? Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings. Describe any recommended changes.

The committee sees the first-year writing sequence (ENGL 1101/1102) as crucial to a strong, coherent system of general education. Both of these courses must remain at the core of Objective 1. Eliminating or replacing either of these courses would be detrimental.

The committee is concerned that the trend toward relocating these courses to high school campuses, as the Early College Program does, may also damage the system of general education. In addition to the grade inflation concern mentioned above, there is some anecdotal evidence that students who complete part or all of Objective 1 on high school campuses are not adequately prepared for the writing demands of upper-division courses. The committee believes that high school students will be best served if Early College sections are located on an ISU campus rather than on a high school campus.

Finally, there is some concern among members of the committee concerning the fit of HONS 1101 in Objective 1; the course seems more naturally suited to Objective 4. But more information is needed (in the form of assessment materials from this course) to make a judgment about this.

D. Evaluate the stated learning outcomes of this general education objective. Are there any problems with the learning outcomes as currently described, or ways in which they might be improved? Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

The committee is satisfied with the current learning outcomes for Objective 1 and does not recommend changes. English faculty participate on the statewide Written Communication disciplinary group, and the department has confidence in the work of that group, including the creation and annual review of the learning outcomes.

E. Evaluate the objective itself and its place within the system of general education. To what extent does the objective, in its current form, contribute to a strong overall system of general education? Are there ways in which the objective could be modified to improve it? Could the system be improved with its elimination or replacement? Provide a brief summary of the Committee’s findings in this area. Describe any recommended changes.

The committee sees Objective 1 as crucial to general education. Eliminating this objective, or watering down its requirements, would be a serious mistake. The current 2-course sequence is in line with national best practices and should not be altered.

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