General Education Assessment Report
2018-19 Results for Literature

Executive Summary

In May 2019, faculty assessed 75 written artifacts to determine the extent to which students were achieving the specified outcomes for general education in lower division literature courses. The outcome that received the highest ratings was students' ability to *read literary texts from an eclectic selection of works written in a variety of genres and styles by writers who reflect diversity in race, gender, sexuality, class, region, religion, historical culture etc.* The lowest rated outcome was students' ability to *analyze literary texts*. Students demonstrated a limited ability to discuss how texts work by identifying technical components and their connection to the overall interpretation of the work. Faculty raters recommended that faculty be encouraged to provide more opportunities for analysis within the course, outline the use of technical elements within a literary text and its impact on the work, and to clarify analysis expectations within the assignment rubrics. Faculty raters recommended sharing their assignments with one another.

A description of the methodology, results and recommendations can be found in the full report below. Other information, such as the rubric, will be available on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment's website: https://tinyurl.com/geneduc

Literature Assessment Report

As part of Old Dominion University's general education requirement, students must complete the Literature requirement at the lower division level. The lower division literature (L) way of knowing are taught in the English as well as World Languages and Cultures 100-level courses (ENGL 112L, ENGL 114L, and WCS 100L). The criteria approved by Faculty Senate for L courses includes:

1. Read literary texts from an eclectic selection of works written in a variety of genres and styles by writers who reflect diversity in race, gender, sexuality, class, region, religion, historical culture etc.
2. Interpret literary texts.
3. Analyze literary texts.
4. Evaluate and apply critical thinking to literary texts.

Recommendations from the previous assessment in 2012-13 suggested that some of the outcomes be revised to better align with the curriculum and pedagogy. Outcomes were revised by a committee of faculty teaching or coordinating L courses.

Methodology

A rubric developed by faculty teaching L courses was used to assess Literature. In fall 2018 and spring 2019, faculty teaching general education literature courses in the areas of English were asked how and where students demonstrated the Literature outcomes. Faculty members were able to identify an artifact or series of artifacts that aligned with the Literature outcomes and embedded within the courses.

A two-day assessment summit was convened in May 2019, where six faculty read and rated a random sample of student artifacts from the courses. During the morning of the first day, a calibration session was conducted. First, faculty thoroughly reviewed and discussed the rubric and then independently applied the rubric to three sample artifacts. Raters shared their ratings and discussed any differences that arose after each "round" of rating. This discussion helped faculty come to a common understanding of what the student learning outcomes (SLO) meant and what to look for when rating the artifacts using the rubric's scale: exceeds standard, meets standard, approaches standard, needs attention. Once individual ratings on a shared artifact did not differ by more than one point, raters were given a set of 25 artifacts to rate. The artifacts were read twice by faculty and scored using the rubric. If faculty ratings differed by more than 1 point on the majority (50% or more) of the outcomes, the artifact was sent to a third reader.

One of the 75 artifacts reviewed required a third read due to discrepancies in ratings. A full description of the methodology, including inter-rater reliability data and the rubric, will be made available on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment's website: https://tinyurl.com/geneduc

Results
An overview of the findings by SLO is presented in Figure 1. The Literature outcome related to *reading literary texts* received the highest ratings (SLO 1: 61% exceeds and meets standards; 39% approaches standards and needs attention). The lowest rated outcome was *analyzing literary texts* (SLO 3: 41% exceeds and meets standards; 59% approaches standards and needs attention).

Figure 1. Literature assessment results
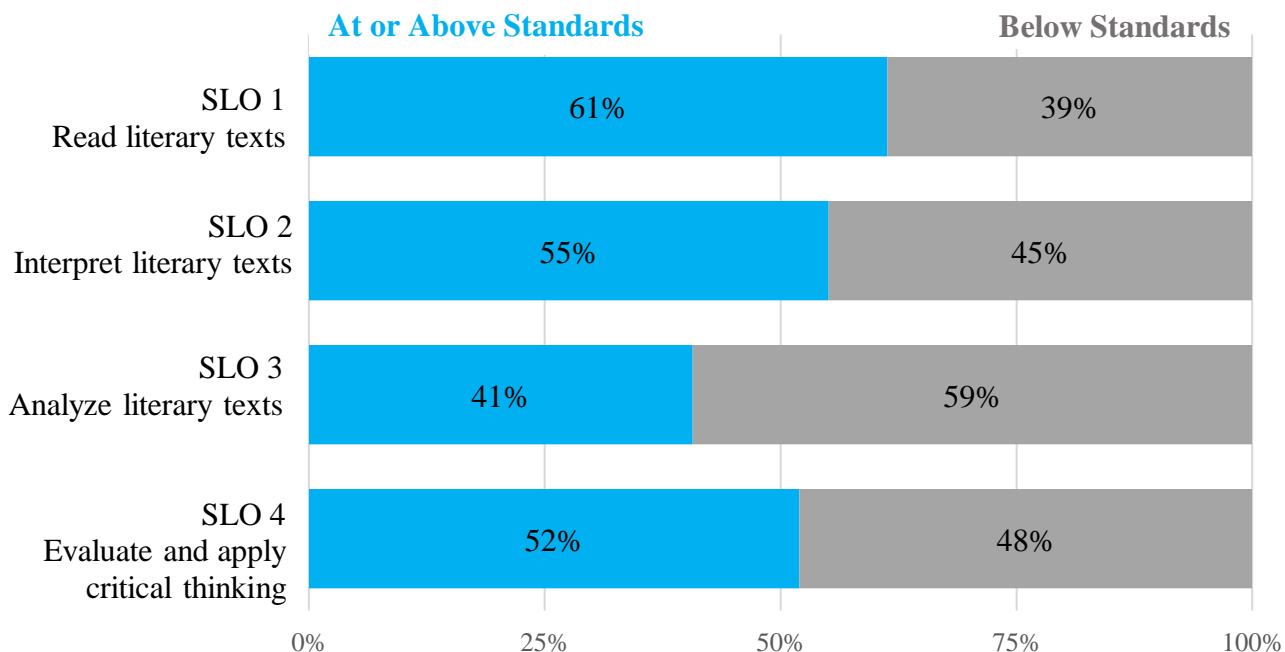
Faculty Rater Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion
At the end of the second day, faculty were asked to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of students. Overall, faculty noted that students demonstrated familiarity with a range of literature by addressing separate genres of literature and a mix of works (SLO 1). Student performance on the interpretation of literary texts (SLO 2) was weaker. Students made generalities about the text instead of making interpretative arguments. Students showed strength in their ability to make connections between thematic contexts and larger ideas. Student performance was weakest in the area of analysis (SLO 3). Students who did not meet the standard demonstrated a limited ability to discuss how texts work by identifying technical components and their connection to the overall interpretation of the work. Raters also noted that this outcome was not found in some of the artifacts. Raters observed that students who evaluated and applied critical thinking to literary texts provided personal connections, evaluations throughout the paper, and rationales for their evaluations. Students who approached the standard (SLO 4) provided a limited reflection and struggled to make original arguments.

Recommendations
Faculty raters identified the following recommendations to improve Literature outcomes:
- Utilize more assignments that incorporate close reading of specific lines or passages from literary works.
- Create explicit assignment directions and rubric criteria about the use of technical elements within the analysis section of papers to strengthen student work.
- Provide examples and outline the use of technical elements within a literary text and its impact on the work.
- Provide opportunities for students to select or personally connect with the literary texts.
- Strengthen outcomes in current assignments and consider redesigning assignments to ensure that all outcomes, especially analysis (SLO 3), are included.

Plan to Improve Learning
- Assignment design workshops are being offered to give faculty opportunities to strengthen their assignments and their alignment with the literature outcomes.
- A committee of faculty was created to evaluate the assignment guidelines for student portfolios.
- The Literature Coordinator is building resources (e.g., selected readings, assignments, and activities) for adjunct faculty.

Faculty Senate Recommendations
- Faculty Senate Committee A reviewed the General Education Assessment results for Literature during 2019-2020. Committee A accepted the report and provided no recommendations.