School of Humanities and Fine Arts
Indiana University East

Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies
Assessment Report 2017-18

I. Student Learning Outcomes

IU East Program Level Student Learning Objectives Knowledge
1. Summarize, compare and contrast theoretical critical approaches to composition studies in reading and writing within complex cultural, historical, and social contexts.

2. Define characteristics and trends within composition studies scholarship.

3. Define a range of rhetorical genres from among composition studies to stylistics and teaching scholarship.

4. Analyze historically and culturally situated key rhetorical and linguistic concepts with knowledge to perceive those concepts to reading and writing in academic, work, and everyday contexts.

Skills
5. Compose, self-assess, and revise essays and ability to review and to critique the work of others and to present written and oral products to others using skills from among stylistics, proofreading, editing, and usability to solve rhetorical and stylistic issues in your own work across genres.

6. Apply concepts to complete critical and analytical reading and research skills of comprehension, summarization, close interpretation, and analysis within composition studies.

7. Create original claims about scholarly texts within composition studies and to support those claims with relevant research support from data, research, textual analysis, and personal experience.

8. Apply techniques of academic prose in the production and significant research and revision of scholarly writing.

9. Apply primary and secondary composition studies research using skills to locate, evaluate, and synthesize research and the ability to integrate other voices into students’ prose with appropriate documentation styles with attention to visual formatting details.

10. Develop a customized course of study and research projects that incorporates professional demeanor in approaches to primary and/or secondary...
research in Composition Studies as well as submission of work in professional manner leading to suitable application within the context of professional or academic work.

**Campus Level Learning Objectives**

**Graduate Principles:**

1. Demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills expected for the program and for professionalism and success in English studies.

2. Think critically and creatively to evaluate literature, solve problems, and improve practice in English studies, applying sound judgment in professional and personal situations.

3. Communicate effectively high level information from English studies to their peers, their clientele, and the general public.

4. Understand and abide by the ethical standards established for English studies and the profession.

5. Demonstrate the ability to conduct original research, scholarly project, or creative activity appropriate to the discipline.

**II. Assessment Procedures Details**

It is important to the Certificate faculty that students achieve their greatest potential for success as they complete the program. In order to ensure success, progress toward the completion of the certificate will be monitored in a number of ways:

A. Students must obtain a "B" or better in all courses applied to the certificate.

B. Student papers will be evaluated for the performance-based composition knowledge and skills.

C. Students will compile a program assessment portfolio of 3 projects of different focuses completed for courses and write a reflective essay of introduction. The portfolio will be reviewed by at least two English faculty members. The composition studies graduate director will coordinate the portfolio review process.
1. **Procedures for program evaluation and assessment**

a. Overview: The English Department will oversee the performance, progress, and timely completion of requirements by students and actively oversee student transition to further graduate education or to a professional career. Students will have a faculty advisor as well as certificate coordinator who will monitor the program. The IU Graduate School monitors all of its programs and periodically holds extensive program reviews in cooperation with the Office of Planning and Institutional Improvement.

b. Procedures: i) Individual students in the Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies Program will have at least two meetings with the Certificate Advisor each semester and be available during the summer. Student planning for coursework, selection of electives, and progress to date in the program will be addressed formally in meetings as well as informally on an ongoing basis. Students will have a program file where documentation of progress will be maintained. Results will both assist in assessing and improving courses along with overall program delivery and assist with the assessment of individual student progress. ii) Completion of course evaluation forms for each course will be tabulated and reviewed by the Director of Graduate Programs in English. Results will assist in improving courses and overall program delivery. iii) Students complete an exit survey and interview as they complete the program to assess individual courses and overall program delivery. Results will assist with the improvement of the courses and the program delivery.

c. Assessment Outcomes: Outcomes will be assessed largely through seminar papers, homework activities, and projects in the student's courses. Individual courses have specific evaluation and criteria in a syllabus that has been reviewed and approved by the Graduate School. Five major overarching learning competencies will be assessed in a program portfolio. The attached table outlines the general outcomes, objective findings, methods for imparting and measuring the outcomes, assessment expectations, and potential improvements based upon the assessment findings.

The assessment goal is to offer a mentoring system of assessment as well as a programmatic one. Particularly with this program being delivered online, intervention and individual assessment will greater ensure programmatic quality and integrity.

The program assessment focus on both student level and program level offers a two-tier system of ensuring that students succeed to the best of their ability. By having not only a program focused assessment, but also individual focused assessment throughout tenure in the program, faculty are able to intervene with greater effect on student success.
The final requirement for students completing the Graduate Certificate program in Composition Studies detailed within our program advising form is to submit two items as email attachments to the Director of Graduate Programs in English. First, submit a portfolio of work completed while in the program in a single word document. Second, complete and return an exit survey as email attachment (scroll down for survey included below). These items assist in gaining feedback from students to assist in improving the program. Due dates and details explaining these two requirements are below. Check in with your program adviser and director anytime with questions.

A. Exit Survey
**Purpose:** Your feedback on our program assists us in our efforts to continually improve our program delivery.

**Submission:** Complete the exit survey on the next pages and email as an attachment with subject line “Composition Studies exit survey” to the Director of Graduate Studies in English.

**Due Date:** November 15 for December graduation; May 1 for spring graduation; July 15 for summer graduation

B. Program Portfolio
**Purpose:** Your program portfolio assists us in assessing student outcomes for our program and enhances our ability to continually improve program content.

**Form:** A single word document

**Submission:** Submit to Director of Graduate Programs in English as an email attachment with subject line “GCP Program Completion Portfolio” to the Director of Graduate Programs in English.

**Contents:**
A) Letter of introduction: In two pages, offer an informal letter addressed to the program faculty addressing reflections on your experiences in the graduate certificate program. Your reflections might address, but are not limited to the following:

- What about the program worked well for you?
- What might have enhanced your learning experiences?
- Do you feel greater confidence in your abilities to teach?
- How have you grown as a writer?
- How have you grown as a reader of theory and scholarship in composition studies?
- What do the three projects you selected for your portfolio show about your growth as a student in the program?

B) Three seminar final projects completed while in the program. Projects should be from three different courses completed while in the graduate certificate program.

**Due Date:** November 15 for December graduation; May 1 for spring graduation; July 15 for summer graduation

**Questions:** Contact Director of Graduate Programs in English
Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies  
Exit Survey Questions  
Adopted Fall 2010

Date: ____________  Graduation:  Fall 20 ___  Spring ___ or Summer 20 ___

Knowledge
1. Rate how well the program helped you gain knowledge to define, to compare and to contrast theoretical critical approaches to composition studies in reading and writing within cultural, historical, and social contexts.
   (circle one) excellent  above average  average  below average  poor
   Comments:

2. Rate how well the program helped you gain knowledge to define characteristics and trends within composition studies.
   (circle one) excellent  above average  average  below average  poor
   Comments:

3. Rate how well the program helped you gain knowledge in defining a range of rhetorical genres from among composition studies to stylistics and teaching scholarship.
   (circle one) excellent  above average  average  below average  poor
   Comments:

4. Rate how well the program helped you gain knowledge in defining historically and culturally situated key rhetorical and linguistic concepts with knowledge to perceive those concepts to reading and writing in academic, work, and everyday contexts.
   (circle one) excellent  above average  average  below average  poor
   Comments:

Skills
5. Rate how well the program helped you gain abilities to compose, to self-assess, and to revise essays and ability to review and to critique the work of others and to present written and oral products to others using skills from among stylistics, proofreading, editing, and usability to solve rhetorical and stylistic issues is your own work across genres.
   (circle one) excellent  above average  average  below average  poor
   Comments:

6. Rate how well the program helped you gain abilities to complete critical and analytical reading and research skills of comprehension, summarization, close interpretation, and analysis within composition studies.
   (circle one) excellent  above average  average  below average  poor
   Comments:
7. Rate how well the program helped you gain abilities to develop original claims about scholarly texts within composition studies and to support those claims with relevant research support from data, research, textual analysis, and personal experience.

(circle one) excellent above average average below average poor

Comments:

8. Rate how well the program helped you gain abilities to employ techniques of academic prose in the production and significant revision of one or more genres of academic writing.

(circle one) excellent above average average below average poor

Comments:

9. Rate how well the program helped you gain abilities to conduct primary and secondary composition studies research using skills to locate, evaluate, and synthesize research and the ability to integrate other voices into students’ prose with appropriate documentation styles with attention to visual formatting details.

(circle one) excellent above average average below average poor

Comments:

Attitudes
10. Rate how well the program helped you develop a customized course of study that incorporates professional demeanor in approaches to primary and/or secondary research in Composition Studies as well as submission of work in professional manner leading to suitable application within the context of professional work or a higher academic degree (M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D.)

(circle one) excellent above average average below average poor

Comments:

(Send completed survey as an email attachment with subject line “Composition Studies Exit Survey” to the Director of Graduate Programs in English)
IV. Program Completion Portfolio Guide and Assessment Rubric

English Department Program Assessment
Indiana University East

Graduate Studies in Composition and Rhetoric
Program Completion Portfolio Assessment Rubric

Overall Rating: ___________

Semester: Fall ___ Spring ___ Year 20 ___ Date: __________________

Rater Name: ________________

Descriptors of Numeric Ratings:
5: Exemplary, Outstanding Progress; Substantial Evidence
4: Consistent, Strong Progress; Good to Substantial Evidence
3: Adequate, Consistent Progress; Adequate Evidence
2: Some Progress; Some Evidence
1: Little to Inadequate Progress; Little or No Evidence

Knowledge
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Skills:

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II. Rater Reflections
1. General Comments/Observations on Student Portfolio:

2. Thoughts/Ideas for Curriculum Revision (courses you plan to teach):

3. Thoughts/Ideas for Curriculum Revision generally:
V. Targets

Target Outcomes:
Portfolios: Average of 4 on a scale of 1 to 5
Surveys: Average of 4 on a scale of 1 to 5

VI. Distribution of Outcomes

Sharing of data and results:
• Data will be compiled in understandable form, with overall comments about what were strong and weak points of the projects;
• Assessors will also make some recommendations about what or how to make improvements in the English programs and courses

Discussion and implementation of changes to English degree programs focus:
• After data and comments have been disseminated, an English meeting will be devoted to what reasonable changes we want to make to English programs and to classes
### VII. Statistical Outcome Summaries

#### 2017-2018

**A. Portfolio Outcomes (Target Outcomes: Average of 4.0 on a scale of 1 to 5)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Portfolio Assessment Outcomes-2017-18</th>
<th>Mean on 5 point scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>(2016-17 ratings in parenthesis; averages without low outliers in brackets)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Summarize theoretical knowledge in complex contexts</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Define characteristics and trends</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Define rhetorical genres within composition studies</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Analyze historically and culturally situated key concepts</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Compose, self-assess, revise, and critique writing</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Apply concepts to critical and analytical reading and research</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Create original claims on scholarly issues and support with research</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Apply techniques of academic prose production and revision</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Apply primary and secondary research methods in research</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Develop customized course of study and professional demeanor</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### B. Survey Outcomes (Target Outcomes: Average of 4 on a scale of 1 to 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Survey Assessment Outcomes-2017-18</th>
<th>Mean on 5 point scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>(2016-17 ratings in parenthesis)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Summarize theoretical knowledge in complex contexts</td>
<td>(4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Define characteristics and trends</td>
<td>(4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Define rhetorical genres within composition studies</td>
<td>(4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Analyze historically and culturally situated key concepts</td>
<td>(4.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Compose, self-assess, revise, and critique writing</td>
<td>(4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Apply concepts to critical and analytical reading and research</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Create original claims on scholarly issues and support with research</td>
<td>(4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Apply techniques of academic prose production and revision</td>
<td>(4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Apply primary and secondary research methods in research</td>
<td>(4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Develop customized course of study and professional demeanor</td>
<td>(4.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Reviewer Comments: Portfolios
(Note: this is the first portfolio set reviewed with new influx of students from education backgrounds satisfying HLC requirements; 16% of scores were especially low)

Themes among Strengths:
- thorough research
- balance of theory and practice
- digital, visual components
- depth of analysis
- teaching and engaging pedagogy
- innovation of pedagogy development
- digital focus
- engagement with scholarship and theory

Themes among Suggestions:
- over presence of education theory
- imbalance of theory to practice
- absence of theoretical contexts
- problems with writing itself

Disaggregation
- gender of respondents corresponded with balance of gender in graduates
- no statistical differences picked up based on gender
- outcomes stronger among those with MFA or PhD in English or Education

D. Student Comments: Portfolios

Selected Comments on Strengths:
- peer discussion and interaction
- exposure to a wide variety of theory and scholarship
- daily conversations with fellow students from across the United States
- helpful, flexible professors
- growth as a writer fostered
- informative and practical courses
- exposure to different perspectives from across the country
- increased confidence as writer
- flexibility for full-time employed students
- increased abilities to teach writing
- made a stronger scholar and researcher
- apply knowledge from program to own teaching
- exploring composition theory from a variety of angles/perspectives
• freedom to apply scholarship and research to needs of own teaching practice
• grounding teaching pedagogy in sound theory and scholarship
• encouraged to take risks
• growth as a reader of theory and scholarship
• integration of theory and practice
• integration of strong communication

Selected Comments on Suggestions:
• preference for semester versus summer session courses offered (addressed in scheduling for 2018-19)
• interest in clearer sequencing/ordering (addressed in 2018-19 course rotations plan)
• struggle with theory
• want more interaction and scholarly engagement from peers

Selected Survey Comment Excerpts:
• The scholarship chosen benefitted me as well as the corresponding with such a diverse group of educators. Without this program, I would not have encountered people from all over the country.
• I feel I have a much stronger grasp on both the historical and cultural perspective now that I have taken the classes in the program. Having to apply what we were learning into classroom activities helped me tremendously.
• The in-depth responses pertaining to scholarship helped enormously. I especially liked how we utilized the material later for projects. I required some of this in my own classes in the past but have implemented more since taking classes in the certificate program.
• I appreciate the fact that the lessons I created in Drs. Thomas-Evans and Helton’s classes are being utilized today in my secondary and dual-credit classes where I teach. The practicality of this experience varies greatly from my other graduate experiences. Useful, applicable material – instead of theoretical, abstract study – is a far greater benefit to me as an English educator. Thank you.
• I definitely felt like I was challenged and allowed to explore the various research interests that I wanted to pursue.
• Overall, I found the program to have great faculty and intensive program requirements that really prepared me for real world applications!
• Each course was filled with a cross section of philosophies.
• Not only did the courses define a range of ideas, but also allowed for me to apply them to my teaching.
• I was challenged in all of my readings and the research in every class.
• The work with scholarship in the field helped me stay current in writing theory for sure!
• All of the classes were unique and exposed me to all aspects of the field.
• The rigor was demanding but rewarding.
• Thanks for all of the hard work, organized classes, and professional feedback!
Every course provided significant opportunities for practice and mastery. The instructors effectively modeled the skills and provided helpful feedback.

I believe my skills and abilities were tested and honed to a higher level through the many opportunities provided by practical assignments.

I credit this program and instructors for helping me polish my skills. I have generated five conference proposals accepted by four different organizations including NCTE and NACADA.

This program gave me a solid foundation for professional growth and development as a compositionist.

Prior to the program, I was not aware of any theoretical critical approaches to composition studies in reading and writing. I had very limited knowledge of the extensive research that is available.

After taking the courses, I realize that there have been changes and trends in composition studies from the earliest times that have greatly influenced how we understand and teach composition.

Although I had some strong writing skills prior to the course, I have learned how to refine my writing. I have also improved in giving feedback to colleagues. However, I still need to work on providing feedback to students.

When I first started in Composition Studies, I had not read any research on composition, and the readings were a challenge for me. I used to read and summarize what I was reading as I was reading the assignments. It was a very slow and laborious process. As I have progressed through the courses, I have found it much easier to read and understand and analyze the text as well as apply it to my own teaching and writing.

Prior to the courses here, I did not have any experience researching on a graduate level. As a special education teacher who collaborated with general education teachers in science and history, I was exposed to researching skills. In the courses I teach at the community college level, I also had experience with the school librarians in guiding my developmental writing students in their limited research. This was my first experience conducting research and really studying the research of others and producing a lengthy research project. It has been very enlightening and informative, and I have learned much that I can incorporate into my teaching.

As a result of my studies at IUE, I am very comfortable in creating a course of study for my college, and I have been working on this in our newly created Integrated Reading and Writing program. I share what I have learned here with colleagues and students, and it has an impact on what my department accomplishes, the faculty and the students.

I especially valued the multicultural and stylistics theory.

I was introduced to important researchers and research studies.

I recommended this program to a friend/colleague, and I hope this assures you that I truly value this program and the teaching professors.

Selected Portfolio Letter Excerpts on Program:

I want to thank you all for such an amazing learning experience in this online graduate certificate program. I’ve been teaching English at a community college for eight years now but, despite earning a M.A. in literature, never felt truly prepared for my primary responsibilities: to teach students how to write. My graduate degree in literature certainly made me a better writer but I can’t
honestly say that it fully prepared me to teach others the skills that I gained—at least, there was very little direct preparation for teaching composition. This program has changed that: it’s not only given me direct instruction on composition pedagogy, theory, practice, etc. but it has also confirmed for me how much I actually already did know about teaching college-level composition (again, after eight years’ worth of experience doing so). Now I can go into my classrooms with greater self-confidence, greater surety, and greater understanding of my own methods. Again, thank you for that!

- As far as increasing my confidence in my teaching is concerned, I think the courses have done that because I have a deeper understanding of the history of the field and the readings focused on composition studies scholarship and discussions with peers have given me more ideas for making creative changes in my teaching materials and curricula in general. And I have grown in my knowledge of composition theory and will continue to refer to some of the texts that I found particularly useful.

- I had the wonderful opportunity of working with so many talented instructors during my enrollment time in the Graduate Certificate program in Composition studies at Indiana University East. This program worked well for me in that it was entirely an online course with no “on site” requirement which was a primary criteria for me when looking at graduate work. Since I work full time and have many other obligations that would have hindered strict time frame adherence for attendance, this program worked especially well for me. I was very impressed at the online presence demonstrated during each of the courses to help me connect with both instructor and classmates, but also allow easy access to the instructor for questions or concerns. It made a very intimidating and challenging venture for me, more comfortable.

- The biggest intellectual change for me was developing a bit of militancy that I didn’t expect. I became committed to the idea that if my education degree supposedly didn’t prepare me to teach writing at a community college, my colleagues’ degrees in literature don’t either. Harsh, I know. Still, I have come to firmly believe that Composition Studies clearly represents a unique body of knowledge. It draws on the disciplines of education, sociology, philosophy, and psychology, probably more than it does from literary studies. I will walk away from the IUE Composition Studies program believing that anyone who wants to teach writing—whether it’s in the first-year writing classroom or a writing-in-the-disciplines classroom—needs to have some grounding in the scholarship and theory of writing.

- I entered the Graduate Program in Composition Studies somewhat reluctantly. My purpose was simply to gain the necessary credit hours so that I could continue teaching dual-credit courses at my institution. This program worked well for me because it was a simple way to complete that goal – simple in that the courses were mostly well-outlined with logical, manageable due dates that made sense for working teachers. This being said, there were times when I found the workload daunting. I am not usually one to skim my reading or flat out skip parts altogether, but I found myself doing that during various times in this program. Working full-time plus a part-time job, combined with this program,
became a little more than I could handle. During one course, the assignments were so closely spaced and involved that I had no idea how I would make it—and, I’m sad to say, when we received a new instructor for that course, I felt this amazing sense of relief . . . I know that I have grown as a learner and consumer of information on teaching reading and writing. I continue to be amazed at the lack of reading research done regarding students at the secondary level.

- Recently I complete the twenty credit hours in the IUE Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies, and it was one of the best education experiences I have had. The program, the faculty, and the overall take away from the classes is beyond advantageous to me and my future teaching. The classes at first glance look to be dry and a great deal of rule orientation. But the doctors and professors made the information so attainable. The reading was a bit of a struggle to complete at times, but it was quite enriching. And the final projects and writings really did underline the information we were studying.

- My experiences in Composition Studies have been among the most rewarding in my life. For many years, I have learned on my own and taken advantage of all of the free professional development that was offered everywhere I taught. However, two short years ago, I enrolled in this program, and the “interest” I have earned on my investment is unequal to any other investment I have ever made, thanks to my professors, colleagues, and the many researchers I have been studying. My teaching career in English Language Arts and Special Education has spanned many years at all levels, from teaching in the primary grades through middle school and high school and community college, to facilitating online courses in teaching language arts. During that time, I witnessed what was happening to the teaching of writing, and I could not do anything to control it. I saw reading and writing courses being condensed with little time for either reading or writing . . . I am now more than ever committed and dedicated to compensating for that loss that my adult learners have experienced. Furthermore, I promise I will be more vigilant in learning about educational changes that are recommended in “higher” places and become more active in monitoring them. Every aspect of the program worked well for me. These included communication with faculty, time requirements, guidance, resources. Instructors were always available to answer questions and posted frequently in the announcements on Canvas as well as sending information via email.

- The courses were all manageable in terms of allowing enough time to complete the readings and be prepared for discussions as well as the time allowed for submitting assignments.

VIII. Application of Program Assessment Results Program Improvement

A select list is below:

- First set of portfolios with new influx of education prepared students meeting HLC requirements
• Need for further support on writing through writing center and individual attention

• Need to address theoretical struggles of education to English students (i.e. portfolios outcomes were extremely high with 16% especially low with poor engagement in theory and scholarship as the evidence)

• Ongoing revision of assessment plan (i.e. alumni and student experience surveys added in 2018)

• Composition and rhetoric faculty line added to English department to replace vacancy

• Continued growth in out of state student population (MFA, PhD, and Education MA)

• New course development (i.e. W590 and L646)

• Online MA with option to focus in composition studies began development in fall 2015 (in consortium phase at system-level for potential fall 2018 roll out)