

Minnesota State University Moorhead
2006-2007 Assessment Report Cover Sheet

(An electronic version of this form can be accessed at <http://www.mnstate.edu/assess>)

Note: All programs will complete this form.

Academic Program: Theatre Arts

Department: CSFT

College: Arts and Humanities

Date: 10/31/06

1. Name(s) of Department Assessment Coordinator and/or Assessment Committee Members

Dr. David Wheeler

2. List of All Student Learning Outcomes. (List all outcomes, placing an asterisk (*) by the outcomes you are assessing this year.)

*1. Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theatre history, literature, and dramatic theory, and have an ability to communicate effectively about these topics.

*2. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, design and construct theatrical scenery, lighting, costumes, sound and props using appropriate tools and technology, and have an ability to effectively communicate about this process.

*3. Students will act in a variety of performance styles, and demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding of this process.

*4. Students will direct for the theatre, and demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their knowledge and understanding of this process.

3. Signatures

Department Chair or Program Director

Dean or Director

Required Attachments:

1. Assessment Reporting Forms
2. Records of department meetings when Assessment Report was discussed and approved.

**Minnesota State University Moorhead
Assessment Reporting Form**

Instructions: Complete and print a copy of this page for each student learning outcome being assessed during the following two year period.

Academic Program: Theatre Arts

1. Learning outcome assessed.

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theatre history, literature, and dramatic theory, and an ability to communicate effectively about these topics.

2. Assessment measure used for this learning outcome.

Assess play analysis essays that use dramatic imagery. The following instrument will be used:

On a 1-10 scale with 10 the best

- 1. Essay states a clear thesis.**
- 2. Essay clearly identifies three significant images from the play.**
- 3. Essay explains the meaning of each image with quotes from the play.**
- 4. Essay explains the meaning of each image with descriptions from the play.**
- 5. The meanings of the images are related together.**
- 6. The meanings of the images are related to the thesis.**
- 7. The essay uses correct spelling.**
- 8. The essay uses correct sentence structure.**
- 9. The essay uses correct paragraph structure.**
- 10. The essay is generally effective.**

3. Expected Student Performance (from assessment plan)

Average scores of 8 for each item on the assessment instrument.

4. Actual Results (attach additional information, if necessary)

Spring 2005 - Development of Drama II

Narrative Evaluation

The results of the assessment indicate that students are generally effective at selecting significant images, explaining the meaning of the images with descriptions from the play, and using correct spelling, sentence, and paragraph structure. The average score is well above 9.

Students are significantly less able to formulate and state a clear thesis, relate the meanings of the images together, and then relate the meanings of the image back to the thesis. The average score here is approximately 7.

The average score for students' use of quotes to explain the images is very poor (5.9).

(See attached Spring 2005 Report for data on each point of the rubric.)

Spring 2006 - Contemporary Playwrights

Narrative Evaluation

The image essay assignment was last assessed in Spring 2005, using 22 students from THTR323 Development of Drama II. These students were all theatre arts majors or minors, and they were all sophomores, juniors, or seniors.

For Spring 2006 I assessed the image essays of 15 students in THTR425 Contemporary Playwrights. These students were all theatre majors or minors, and they included 6 freshmen. The actual preparation changes were slightly different from my original intention.

This is what I did in Spring 2006 to prepare the students to write their image essays:

- 1. I used two classroom activities. In the first, students were divided into groups of three. All of the groups then selected three images from a single common play, and each group then wrote a thesis statement. All groups then reported on their images and thesis to the larger class, with commentary and suggestions from both the class and the teacher. For the second activity, new groups were created, and each group chose an individual play from the class reading list. All students were familiar with the plays that were chosen. Each group then selected three images, wrote a thesis, and selected three quotes from the play to support the meaning of the three images. Each group then reported to the class, with commentary and suggestions.**
- 2. I wrote very specific instructions for writing the essay.**

5. Proposed action in response to results. (Please note if improvements can be made with existing department resources. If improvements cannot be made with existing department resources, consider applying for an Instructional Improvement Grant.)

Spring 2005 - To address student difficulties with stating a clear thesis, I will do a classroom exercise. I will break the students into groups of three and have them work together to formulate a thesis that might result from a discussion of three images from a play. (I will provide each group with three images from a play with which they are already familiar.) Then I will have a representative from each group report to the class as a whole by reading their formulated thesis and discussing the reasons for its selection. The class and I will have the opportunity to discuss the thesis selection. This will give each student the opportunity to participate in the formulation of a thesis, to benefit from the insights of fellow group member in the thesis formulation, to participate in a discussion about thesis formulation, and to examine the work of the other groups.

I believe that with a stronger thesis, the students' ability to relate the meanings of images back to the thesis will be greatly enhanced.

Current students are provided with a sample essay that models good essay writing using images. To improve students' ability to relate the meanings of images together, I will place greater emphasis on how that is done in the sample essay.

The poor average score for students' use of quotes to explain images is caused by a significant variation among students. Ten of the twenty-two students whose work was assessed received a perfect score of 10. Nine of the twenty-two students received a minimum score of 1. The reason for this difference is that some students used quotes liberally, and other students did not use them at all! The model essay used quotes, and I discussed the use of quotes in the class, but the written instructions for the essay did not specifically address the use of quotations. I will amend the instructions so that the use of quotes is a specific requirement of the essay. I believe that this will improve student scores in this area.

Implementation of Recommendations

I will implement the new measures discussed above in a similar assignment for THTR 425 Contemporary Playwrights, which I will teach in the spring of 2006.

Reassessment

The essay in Contemporary Playwrights will be assessed using the same assessment form that was used for this assessment.

Spring 2006 - The results of the Spring 2006 assessment were encouraging. The use of quotes improved to a 9.9 on a ten point scale. Stating a thesis improved to a 9.1. Relating the meaning of the images together improved to 7.9. Relating the images to the thesis improved to 8.5.

(See attached Spring 2006 Report for data on each point of the rubric.)

Implementation

Clearly the classroom activities were an effective way to improve the essay writing of my students. I will implement these or similar activities into all of my essay writing assignments.

These improvements have been made using only department resources.

**Minnesota State University Moorhead
Assessment Reporting Form**

Instructions: Complete and print a copy of this page for each student learning outcome being assessed during the following two year period.

Academic Program: Theatre Arts

1. Learning outcome assessed.

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, design and construct theatrical scenery, lighting, costumes, sound and props using appropriate tools and technology, and have an ability to effectively communicate about this process.

PART ONE - DEPARTMENT EVALUATION OF THE POLICIES AND METHODS IN SPONSORING STUDENTS TO ACTF.

The problem that is identified is the lack of participation by our department in ACTF Festivals. It has been the department's policy to only send Irene Ryan nominees and their chosen partners. ACTF was closed to other theater students. Likewise, only Directing Faculty were sponsored to go. As a result no one in technical theater or design benefited from the conventions. Obviously this would offer regional or national insights into theater across America. It offers an opportunity to understand processes that might inspire new or better methodologies to meet the student's needs. It is a terrific place to scout out Graduate programs, jobs and to network. Most important it expands an individual students ability to see the competitive world they are about to enter.

The major reason given to justify the policy was lack of funding. The other major problem was timing of our own productions that were in direct conflict with the conventions. In the spring of 2004 the Department offered me an opportunity to be sponsored to go to the nationals. This gave me an opportunity to see for myself what others were doing. Over the last 25 years only one Design student has ever entered or attended ACTF. In the fall of 2005 the Department and the university found funding for our first design student entry. The undergraduate student won 2nd place in the Barbizan competition, where over 65 other university were competing. Her competition was among many of the best, even among graduate programs in the Midwest.

PART TWO - STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Theater Design students should attend ACTF regional festivals and other theatre conferences with a focus on theatre design and technology. Students will utilize critical analysis, problem-solving techniques and the elements of design to conceptualize and develop their own set design for a theatrical production. Students will learn to effectively communicate in language of design through the art of scenes design. Students will gain appreciation and understanding of the competitive world of theater.

2. Assessment measure used for this learning outcome.

The student needs to prepare for the ACTF competition.

PART TWO:

The student needs to prepare for the ACTF competition.

1. Paper – Do a detailed script analyses

2. Paper- Do research: the author, the play, different types and styles of scenery, period styles, interior design and exterior architecture.

3. Read and Discuss - Explores the kinds of choices a scene designer makes to communicate to an audience.

4. Develop a concept statement - Students will utilize critical analysis, problem-solving techniques and the elements of design to conceptualize and develop their own set design for a theatrical production..

5. Execution - Demonstrate communication skills in: through painting techniques, Drafting elevations, Model building, developing and drafting a production ground plan, Model building

6. Presentation - Develop a strategy for presentation and execute the plan for presentation.

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3. Expected Student Performance (from assessment plan)

PART TWO: Average scores of 7-10 for each item on the assessment instrument

4. Actual Results (attach additional information, if necessary)

PART ONE:

The Theater Department has begun discussion on reevaluation our policies and funding possibilities for suport of students to go to ACTF and other theatre conferences.

- 1. It has been decided to open up participation to all theater majors interested.**
- 2. The department still needs to find ways to financial help sponsor students in each emphases of our major each year, not just acting emphasis students.**
- 3. The theater department also needs to re-assess our production calendars to better allow students to attend. Discussion is underway**

5. Proposed action in response to results. (Please note if improvements can be made with existing department resources. If improvements cannot be made with existing department resources, consider applying for an Instructional Improvement Grant.)

An Instructional Improvement Grant will be proposed to begin the process of involving theatre arts students in theatre conferences that have some focus on design and theatre technology (eg. ACTF and USITT).

**Minnesota State University Moorhead
Assessment Reporting Form**

Instructions: Complete and print a copy of this page for each student learning outcome being assessed during the following two year period.

Academic Program: Theatre Arts

1. Learning outcome assessed.

Students will demonstrate knowledge, understanding ability with acting performances in a variety of settings and styles, and an ability to communicate effectively about these topics.

2. Assessment measure used for this learning outcome.

Assess Vocal Production focused on Support and Awareness of Space. The students worked in teams to speak the second Chorus speech from Henry V. They were instructed to split up the speech in an interesting way, so that they were sharing lines and feeding off of each other's energy. They performed the pieces on the Hansen Stage. The students were assessed in four major areas of expected development. The following instrument was used:

40 possible points:

--points assigned by category

_____ 1. Physical release and awareness of alignment (10) _____

_____ 2. Sound rooted and on the breath (10) _____

_____ 3. Aware of situation, supported appropriately—filling space (12) _____

_____ 4. Work with partner—prepared and effective communication (8) _____

3. Expected Student Performance (from assessment plan)

My expectation (hope) is an average score of 35 total points (B) for the class as a whole

4. Actual Results (attach additional information, if necessary)

**Fall 2006 - Voice For Acting
Narrative Evaluation**

The results of the assessment indicate that most of the students are learning to effectively support their voices and fill space appropriately. The students performed a bit above my expected average, which I am glad to see.

This is how the overall scores break down:

37-40	A	67%
33-35	B	29%
32-29	C	1%
28-below	D-F	0

I will address each area assessed:

1. Physical release and awareness of alignment (10) _____

10 points = 54%
9 points = 29%
8 points = 17 %

This was the first element of the voice on which we worked, so it is not surprising that students are performing well in this area overall. A few of them are still carrying tension or resorting to old physical habits that limit their ability to communicate.

2. Sound rooted and on the breath (10) _____

10 points = 62%
9 points = 25%
8 points = 33%
7 points = 1%

The class is also doing fairly well with this element, because, like the physical release, we have spent the most time working on it in class.

3. Aware of situation, supported appropriately—filling space (12) _____

12 points = 29%
11 points = 25%
10 points = 41%
9 points = 1%

This is the area in which the students need the most work. Both of the previously listed areas must be functioning for a person to fill a space with sound, but the awareness required to discern if the space is truly filled takes time and much

practice to develop. This was their first attempt at the task, and it is not surprising that many of them are still struggling with it a bit.

4. Work with partner—prepared and effective communication (8) _____

8 points= 50%

7 points= 29%

6 points= 13%

5 points= 1%

5. Proposed action in response to results. (Please note if improvements can be made with existing department resources. If improvements cannot be made with existing department resources, consider applying for an Instructional Improvement Grant.)

I plan to make improvements on this assignment in two areas:

1. Because students are struggling the most with successfully projecting their voices, I plan to augment this assignment by requiring them to perform the piece in two different venues in the future. Projection is not so much a matter of learning to be louder as it is a matter of developing a sensibility and a sensitivity to space. I have learned that the students need more time to practice this skill, and plan to augment the time allotted to this particular ability by requiring two different performances.

2. There is no good reason why all of the students should not have gotten perfect scores in the final section (collaboration and effective presentation). This piece was spoken in pairs, as I mentioned before, and some groups simply made poor choices in dividing up the monologue (for example: merely splitting the thing in half), which they were docked for. Also, I was surprised to see a couple of the students were not perfectly memorized and had to use the book, which was a serious drawback. I have learned that I need to be clearer about my expectations for how they distribute the lines as a team. I also plan to be firm about memorization. In fact, students who are not perfectly memorized (still on book) will not be allowed to perform at all. This is a second year acting class, and I need to set higher standards for them in this area.

**Minnesota State University Moorhead
Assessment Reporting Form**

Instructions: Complete and print a copy of this page for each student learning outcome being assessed during the following two year period.

Academic Program: Theatre Arts

1. Learning outcome assessed.

Students will demonstrate knowledge, understanding ability with theatrical directing, and an ability to communicate effectively about these topics.

2. Assessment measure used for this learning outcome.

Assess rehearsal techniques and process associated with one-act directing project. Directing students were allowed to expand upon their theoretical directing experience by directing a one-act play. The students were responsible for all areas associated with production. The final performances were held on the Gaede Stage. The assessment tool was utilized approximately three-quarters into their rehearsal process. The students were assessed in four major areas of expected development. The following instrument was used:

40 possible points:

- _____ 1. Actor communication (8) _____**
- _____ 2. Awareness of space (8) _____**
- _____ 3. Awareness of tempo and picturization (8) _____**
- _____ 4. Director preparation and analysis (16) _____**

3. Expected Student Performance (from assessment plan)

The expected outcome for student performance is an average of B or 32 points.

4. Actual Results (attach additional information, if necessary)

**Fall 2004 - Advanced Stage Directing
Narrative Evaluation**

The results of the assessment indicate that most of the students are learning to effectively implement directing theories into their practical work; however, an

overriding issue of space limitations plague the ability for the students to overwhelmingly achieve success. (This will be addressed more later.)

Overall class achievement:

37-40	A	60%
33-35	B	39%
32-29	C	1%
28-below	D-F	0%

1. Actor communication (8) _____

8 points = 60%
7 points = 30%
6 points = 10 %

This part of the directing process is more clear and easy to understand for young directors. Most of the directors are actors themselves, therefore it is one that they can connect with on an intimate level. The one challenge is guiding the directors to find their "voice" rather than each director creating a regurgitation of directors that they have encountered.

2. Awareness of space (8) _____

8 points = 45%
7 points = 20%
6 points = 30%
5 points = 5%

This assessment tool was utilized during the transition from the Green Room into the performance space, the Gaede Stage. Because the stage is only available on a limited basis, and with rehearsal space at a premium, the impact on their work is clearly apparent. Young directors need the ability to work more hands-on in the performance space, as it allows them to understand their craft on a more meaningful level.

3. Awareness of tempo and picturization (8) _____

8 points = 32%
7 points = 39%
6 points = 28%
5 points = 1%

Key elements of tempo and picturization are intimately tied with awareness of space. To that end, students are struggling a bit in the practical application of these components and more adherence to in-class exercises will be explored.

4. Director preparation and analysis (16) _____

16 points= 52%

15 points= 31%

14 points= 16%

13 points= 1%

Students generally scored well in their preparation and analysis. This is a clear indication that work being done in complimentary courses is serving as a solid foundation, and the students are able to sythesize the prior information and institute in a deeper, more theoretical way in this course.

5. Proposed action in response to results. (Please note if improvements can be made with existing department resources. If improvements cannot be made with existing department resources, consider applying for an Instructional Improvement Grant.)

According to the assessment information, it is clear to me that additional space is needed. The students are unable to fully realize their potential within the current, limited infrastructure. To that end, it is my assertion that one or more of the following should happen:

- Re-examine the scheduling process of both the rehearsal and performance venues.**
- Seek additional campus space suitable for young directors and their projects.**
- Seek additional community space suitable for young directors and their projects.**
- Scale back the expectation of the student learning outcome.**

The re-examination of the scheduling process and the student learning outcome can be doone within current departmental resources. The investigation of additional space will, most likely than not, need additional funding sources.

Assessment Report – Spring 2006
Theatre Arts – Writing
Prepared by David Wheeler

Student Learning Outcome

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theatre history, literature, and dramatic theory, and an ability to communicate effectively about these topics.

Specific Assessment

Students will effectively write a play analysis essay utilizing dramatic images.

Assessment Method

The assessment form below was used to evaluate the midterm essays in THTR425 Contemporary Playwrights, Spring 2006. Fifteen essays were evaluated. The results are indicated on the chart on the attached page. The assessment reflected pedagogical changes made after assessment conducted in Spring 2005.

CSFT Department Assessment – Theatre Arts
Image Essays – Spring 2006 – Contemporary Playwrights

On a 1-10 scale with 10 the best

- _____ 1. Essay states a clear thesis.
- _____ 2. Essay clearly identifies three significant images from the play.
- _____ 3. Essay explains the meaning of each image with quotes from the play.
- _____ 4. Essay explains the meaning of each image with descriptions from the play.
- _____ 5. The meanings of the images are related together.
- _____ 6. The meanings of the images are related to the thesis.
- _____ 7. The essay uses correct spelling.
- _____ 8. The essay uses correct sentence structure.
- _____ 9. The essay uses correct paragraph structure.
- _____ 10. The essay is generally effective.

Narrative Evaluation

The image essay assignment was last assessed in Spring 2005, using 22 students from THTR323 Development of Drama II. These students were all theatre arts majors or minors, and they were all sophomores, juniors, or seniors. At the time of the assessment, the students did poorly on the use of quotes (5.9 on a ten point scale). The students did only fair (approximately 7 on a ten point scale) on stating a thesis, relating the meanings of images together, and relating the meanings of images back to the thesis.

After examining the assessment results from spring 2005, I resolved to:

1. Use classroom activities to emphasize writing a thesis and working with quotes.
2. Amend the essay writing instructions to emphasize the use of quotes.
3. Spend more time discussing the sample essay that was provided.

For Spring 2006 I assessed the image essays of 15 students in THTR425 Contemporary Playwrights. These students were all theatre majors or minors, and they included 6 freshmen. The actual preparation changes were slightly different from my original intention.

This is what I did in Spring 2006 to prepare the students to write their image essays:

1. I used two classroom activities. In the first, students were divided into groups of three. All of the groups then selected three images from a single common play, and each group then wrote a thesis statement. All groups then reported on their images and thesis to the larger class, with commentary and suggestions from both the class and the teacher. For the second activity, new groups were created, and each group chose an individual play from the class reading list. All students were familiar with the plays that were chosen. Each group then selected three images, wrote a thesis, and selected three quotes from the play to support the meaning of the three images. Each group then reported to the class, with commentary and suggestions.
2. I wrote very specific instructions for writing the essay.
3. I did not provide a sample essay to the students.

The results of the Spring 2006 assessment were encouraging. The use of quotes improved to a 9.9 on a ten point scale. Stating a thesis improved to a 9.1. Relating the meaning of the images together improved to 7.9. Relating the images to the thesis improved to 8.5.

Implementation

Clearly the classroom activities were an effective way to improve the essay writing of my students. I will implement these or similar activities into all of my essay writing assignments.

Student	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	total	aver
Assessment Criteria																	
Clear statement of thesis	7	10	10	8	10	10	8	10	10	9	8	10	10	10	5	135	9
Clearly identifies three significant images	6	10	8	10	10	8	10	10	10	7	8	10	10	9	10	136	9.1
Explains the meaning of each image with quotes	10	10	10	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	148	9.9
Explains the meaning of each image with descriptions	10	10	10	7	10	9	9	10	10	9	9	10	10	7	10	140	9.3
Meaning of images are related together	8	10	5	6	10	7	10	10	9	9	7	8	7	5	8	119	7.9
Meanings of images are related to the thesis	8	10	8	8	10	8	8	10	10	9	7	9	8	8	6	127	8.5
Use of correct spelling	10	10	10	7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	8	10	145	9.7
Use of correct sentence structure	8	10	8	6	10	10	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	138	9.2
Use of correct paragraph structure	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	148	9.9
Essay is generally effective	7	10	7	7	10	8	8	10	10	9	8	9	9	8	8	128	8.5
Total for each student assessed	82	100	86	77	90	90	91	100	99	92	87	96	94	84	86	1364	
Total average for each student assessed	8.2	10	8.6	7.7	9	9	9.1	10	9.9	9.2	8.7	9.6	9.4	8.4	8.6	9.1	