

Designing Assessments for your subject

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What are your subject aims?

- Often inherited
- Published in the Handbook
- Mostly quite general

Example 1 ENGL30003

This subject **explores** a range of literature across 4000 years by examining ancient, classical, Christian and canonical texts to **identify** how they have influenced Western literature and culture. Students who complete this subject successfully will have **read** a representative range of classical and canonical literature (including epic, mythology, adventure, elegy, pastoral, and irony), will have **studied** some ancient Assyrian texts and books of the *Bible*, will have been **introduced to** various schools of interpretation, and will have investigated the many ways in which classical and biblical writings have influenced western thought, culture and literature across the centuries.

Example 2 CWRI20002

In this subject students will **explore** principles of the craft and theory of writing short narrative fiction. Students will **read** a variety of fiction texts from the beginning of the modernist era to contemporary fiction, ranging from Gogol to Chekhov, Hemingway, Faulkner, Munro, Garner, Keret and others.

What are the outcomes for students?



Cat image from wikimedia commons at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Curious_Singapura.jpg

Example 1 ENGL30003

On completion of the subject students should have:

- **read** a representative range of classical and canonical literary texts (including epic, mythology, adventure, elegy, pastoral, and irony);
- **studied** ancient texts and several books of the *Bible*;
- **investigated** the influence/s of ancient, classical and Biblical writings on Western thought and literature of the past two millennia;
- **been introduced to** major literary terms and theories.

Example 2 CWRI20002

On completion of the subject students should have:

- **demonstrated** a broad understanding of recent developments and changes in published short fiction;
- **made use of** elements of the poetics of fiction-writing in producing their own pieces of short fiction;
- **reflected on** the influences, aims and aesthetic decisions underlying their own creative work.

What are the assessment tasks?

Ideally, the assessment tasks will enable us to gauge whether or not students have achieved the outcomes we set up for them...

Example 1 ENGL30003

One 1500 word essay (35%) due mid-semester and one 2500 word essay (60%) due in the examination period. There will be two in-class assessment tasks to be completed in tutorials (totalling 5%) done during the semester. This subject has a minimum hurdle requirement of 75% attendance and regular participation in tutorials. Assessment submitted late without an approved extension will be penalised at 10% per day. In-class tasks missed without approval will not be marked. All pieces of written work must be submitted to pass this subject.

Example 2 CWRI20002

Written work totalling 4000 words comprising 3000 words of fiction and, in addition, written notes (up to 1000 words) on responses to fiction in the Subject Reader on how your fiction responds to the subject content 85% (due in the examination period), and regular participation including presenting a draft of work in progress for workshopping during semester 10%. This subject has a minimum hurdle requirement of 75% attendance and regular participation in tutorials. Assessment submitted late without an approved extension will be penalised at 10% per day. In-class tasks submitted late without approval will not receive feedback. All pieces of written work must be submitted to pass this subject.

How do the assessment tasks relate to the aims and outcomes?

- What are these tasks actually assessing or measuring:
 - Does this task make them read, write, research?
 - Did we ask them to analyse, develop new approach, describe the status quo?
 - Does the task make them become familiar with current or classic arguments in the area?
 - Did we ask them to investigate, critique and /or apply theory?
 - Does the task have expectations that they become creative with ideas from the subject?
- How does the task link to the aims and outcomes?

Example 1 ENGL30003

- 1. The Iliad, the Odyssey and the Aeneid figure as exemplars of the epic genre. Which features and tropes strike you as most significant in identifying these three texts as 'epics'? Which are most effective in moving each epic's narrative forward?
- 2. How does the founding of the Roman race in the Aeneid compare with other creation texts we have studied? Consider at least two other creation texts in your discussion of the Aeneid, focussing on the cost of creation.
- 3. Analyse the role of emotion in The Iliad OR The Epic of Gilgamesh AND at least one other text (that is, minimum two texts), considering in particular emotion as a motive for and/or explanation of events.

Outcomes ENGL30003: revised

On completion of the subject students should have:

- **read** a representative range of classical and canonical literary texts (including epic, mythology, adventure, elegy, pastoral, and irony);
- **studied and compared** ancient texts and several books of the *Bible*;
- **investigated and analysed** the influence/s of ancient, classical and Biblical writings on Western thought and literature of the past two millennia;
- **been introduced to** major literary terms and theories.

Instruction words (SE)

Student writing is the struggle to carry out institutional ritual activities to provide access to the academic literacy of the disciplinary community

(Richards & Pilcher, 2013, p.2)

Problem

What do instruction words mean?

What do they require?

'Analyse' = same for 1st and 3rd year?

What about cross-cultural issues:

“In Chinese discuss means to exchange your opinion with another...we can never discuss by yourself”

(Richards & Pilcher, 2013, p.8)

	Pros of an issue	Cons of an issue	Show similarities	Show differences	Your ideas	Synthesise	Others?
Describe							
Critically analyse							
Summarise							
Compare							
Contrast							
Discuss							

Glossaries

Compare your ideas from one glossary:
agree/ disagree?

<http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/writing-resources/essay-terms>

Instruction words: solutions (SE)

Stop using them.

Glossaries: limited use given lack of clarity

Let students write their own essay question (optional).

Scaffolding students into what *you* mean by these terms and what you expect in student responses (Williams, 2005).

Example 1 ENGL30003

Current

One 1500 word essay (35%) due mid-semester and one 2500 word essay (60%) due in the examination period. There will be two in-class assessment tasks to be completed in tutorials (totalling 5%) done during the semester.

could be

One 1500 word essay (35%) in which *you will apply* some of the key concepts covered in the course to one or more of the studied texts and *provide your opinion* as to the value of the concepts.

One 2500 word essay (60%) in which *you critically analyse* two approaches to the study of literature, leading to a discussion of which *you think is more appropriate and why*.

There will be two in-class assessment tasks to be completed in tutorials (totalling 5%) done during the semester.

What do we reward?

What do we give marks for?

Can we identify what we're asking them to do, and what behaviour/response we are rewarding?

How do we respond to students' efforts?

Feedback: what is it?

- Quality
- Quantity
- timeliness,
- Media
- formative-vs-summative
- Consistency between markers, moderation, second marking..

How do we provide feedback?

- Students prefer e-feedback
 - It's more accessible, legible, and timely
 - Ni Cheng et al. (2012). Electronic Feedback or handwritten feedback: What do undergraduate students prefer and why? *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, 1(1), 1-23.
- eFeedback is a permanent record of your comments
- Creates your own depository of student work
- Less effort for the student

How valuable is feedback?

- Students get most feedback on mechanical issues
- Students want **more feedback on concepts and argument**
- Valuable:
 - 67% of students reported receiving "general, overall comments" but **less than 50% of those students rated that feedback as "very helpful."**
- Voice or written:
 - 25% of students rate voice/audio comments as very helpful, but only 1.6% currently receive this type of feedback.
- Timely:
 - 50% get e-feedback in under 7 days
 - Turnitin. "Closing the Gap: What Students Say About Instructor Feedback." Turnitin.com. April 2013. Accessed [25-10-13].

How well do we articulate the development we expect to see across the undergrad years?

- Do we have examples of where this is spelled out, eg in handbook descriptions or on web?

The language of feedback

- Feedback should try to address the outcomes articulated in the student handbook
- EG1 'This is an excellent paper. You **critically analysed** Kennedy's position in relation to Khrushchev's foreign policy, identify a number of key inconsistencies. ...'
- EG2 'Your paper would have been improved by providing more **critical analysis** of Kennedy's responses to Khrushchev's foreign policy. For instance, you could have **evaluated** the extent to which...

Related topics...

- How satisfied are we with the current assessment in our subjects? What ideas are out there?
- We usually know a good essay but how do we know whether weaker papers are H2A, H2B, H3 or Pass?
- Can we build mini-assessment into the course so that *timely* feedback is provided?
- How do we cope with 1st year students taking 3rd year subject? Science students doing an Arts Breadth?