

<b>Program:</b>	<b>English, PhD</b>			
<b>Cycle:</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>			
<b>Mission Statement:</b>	<p>The PhD program prepares students to become leading scholars, excellent teachers, and active members of the academic community by fostering critical engagement with the discipline of English Studies and its interdisciplinary practices. We offer courses in British and American literature, as well as courses in cultural studies, discourse studies, theory, transnational literatures, creative writing, rhetoric, and linguistics. Our students develop a knowledge base in a range of literatures and theories in their coursework, and go on to specialize by taking a set of rigorous doctoral examinations in a primary field and two supporting fields. Through small classes and independent work with an advisory committee, students gain expertise in articulating a research plan and carrying it out; in mastering the genres of academic writing; and in learning the protocols of the profession of English studies. The dissertation qualifies students to attain academic jobs. Students are encouraged to enter the profession by presenting their work at conferences and by publishing in scholarly venues, and are supported in their efforts to do so; they also participate in the governance of the department and, thus, learn the importance of departmental citizenship. Our students are trained to be teachers of writing, rhetoric, and literature; they receive sustained pedagogical training and enjoy the opportunity to teach courses in their areas of expertise.</p>			
<b>Outcome/Objective</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Finding</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>
	Measure 1: First Year Review committee and graduate faculty will evaluate the papers submitted by students beginning their second year of coursework, based on a rubric.	The main target for this measure is that all students will successfully pass the first year review, based on faculty evaluation of their portfolios. In particular, the paper receives extensive scrutiny because the paper evidences the student's ability to design and complete a sustained research project, to master strategies of argumentation, and to develop a professional writing style. Faculty-completed rubrics should show evidence that students have fulfilled the objective of designing and completing a sustained research project; this evidence will be each student scoring at least a 2 (out of 5) under the category of "project design." A 1 or 2 demonstrates that students are ready to do independent research and that their first year of coursework has prepared them to fulfill this objective. A score of less than 3 suggests that more work is necessary for students to fulfill this learning objective.	Target: Not Reported This Cycle We developed a new rubric for the first-year review papers to be used beginning in fall 2017. Therefore, we are not reporting any findings for this cycle. The new rubric is now posted under First Year Papers.	<i>No affiliated Action Plan</i>
Outcome 1: For the dissertation, students will be able to design a research project, identify the stakes of that project, and articulate how the project contributes to knowledge in the field.	Measure 3: The dissertation will be evaluated by the advisory committee. Each member will fill out an evaluation form, based on a rubric, and covering six categories.	All students will score at least a 5 OVERALL on all areas of the rubric that committee members use to evaluate student performance on the dissertation. 5-6 means "mastering;" 3-4 means "developing;" 1-2 means "emerging."	Target: Not Met Five students defended the dissertation in 2016-17 (Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Summer 2017). Of the five, four scored a 5 or higher overall (80%). This is an improvement over the previous cycle, in which only 62% scored a 5 or higher.	<p><b>Action Plan 1:</b> As a major departmental initiative our graduate faculty has pledged to incorporate writing instruction into their graduate seminars by workshopping drafts of papers, offering presentations from the University Writing Center, breaking down large research projects into their component parts, and working on academic style. This is a major change because, currently, the vast majority of graduate seminars offer no formal writing instruction, focusing instead primarily on teaching the content area. This action plan comes out of the data we collected about preliminary examinations and the dissertation, which showed us that students were not scoring high enough on the rubrics we use to evaluate these types of writing (all this is reported under measures, targets, and findings: please refer to that section for those details). In ENGL 602, students will read <i>The Elements of Academic Style</i>, as well as chapters on the seminar paper and publication in <i>Graduate Study for the 21st century</i>. They will also practice "mapping out" critical articles written in the field, and their own papers. These projects will enable students to get practice in identifying and practicing strategies of argumentation. Finally, faculty members will share their published writing and lead discussion of writing practices. At the end of the semester, students will participate in an indirect assessment in which they will describe how their writing has improved. In ENGL 611, students will draft conference abstracts, workshop those abstracts, and then revise them. This process will help students understand what it takes to write a successful abstract—a skill that they will need throughout graduate school and beyond. These abstracts will be directly assessed by a team of faculty members using a rubric. In ENGL 669, the final research paper has been broken down into its component parts in order to work on the SLO of "designing and carrying out a research project." The instructor has set up a Wiki where students will report on their progress and offer reflections on that process. At the end of the semester, students will do an indirect assessment in which they will describe how their ability to design and carry out a research project has improved. A team of faculty members will assess directly the final research papers using a rubric.</p> <p>Projected Completion Date: 6/29/2020 Responsible Party: Sally Robinson</p>

	<p>Measure 1: First Year Review committee and graduate faculty will evaluate the papers submitted by students beginning their last year of coursework, based on a rubric.</p>	<p>The main target for this measure is that all students will successfully pass the first year review, based on faculty evaluation of their portfolios. In particular, the paper receives extensive scrutiny because the paper evidences the student's ability to design and complete a sustained research project, to master strategies of argumentation, and to develop a professional writing style. Faculty-completed rubrics should show evidence that students have fulfilled the objective of mastering strategies of argumentation; this evidence will be each student scoring at least a 2 (out of 5) under the category of "thesis and argument." A 1 or 2 demonstrates that students are ready to do independent research and that their first year of coursework has prepared them to fulfill this objective. A score of less than 3 suggests that more work is necessary for students to fulfill this learning objective.</p>	<p>Target: Not Reported This Cycle We determined that we needed to revise the FYR paper rubric and will put the new rubric in effect in Fall 2017. The new rubric is now posted under First Year Papers.</p>	<p><i>No affiliated Action Plan</i></p>
<p>Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to construct a sophisticated and coherent argument in writing, identify the stakes of that argument, and to support that argument with adequate evidence.</p>	<p>Measure 2: Advisory committee members will evaluate each preliminary exam (comprised of both written and oral sections) based on a rubric.</p>	<p>All students will be scored a 5 by the advisory committee, on argumentation as described in the rubric (category 4). 5-6 means "mastering"; 3-4 means "developing;" 1-2 means "emerging"</p>	<p>Target: Not Met Eleven students took and passed the Preliminary Examination in the 2016-17 academic year. On the learning outcome of "mastering strategies of argumentation," 8 out of 11 (or 74%) scored a 5 or higher. The other 3 scored a 4, which means that strategies of argumentation are "developing" but are not yet "mastered." This score reflects a marked improvement over the previous cycle, in which only 3 out of 6 students (or 50%) scored a 5 or higher on this section of the rubric.</p>	<p><b>Action Plan 3:</b> The preliminary examination has both an oral and a written component. Our finding suggest that the examination is not wholly allowing students to demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes associated with it. Students are doing best with those outcomes related to "mastering the subject matter of English studies," and less well with those outcomes related to writing and to making an argument. The written portion is a timed writing, with students given 4 hours to answer 3 or 4 questions, and we plan to target this portion of the exam in this action plan, and work on improving student learning outcomes. One way to help students with the timed writing aspect of the exam is to build some practice into the program. There are two ways to do this: 1) Include, in the assignments for one or more graduate class, a timed writing exam, to be evaluated with the rubric we use for the preliminary exams. Students would get feedback on how close they are to "mastering" the skills identified with the preliminary exam learning outcomes, but primarily "written communication" and "argumentation." 2) We could develop a preliminary exam workshop that, like the workshop we offer for student about to undergo first year review, would provide students with feedback, from peers and faculty, on what makes a good preliminary examination answer, and how those answers demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes. Both options will be pursued over the next three years.</p> <p><b>Action Plan 5:</b> The preliminary examination has both an oral and a written component. Our finding suggest that the examination is not wholly allowing students to demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes associated with it. For the previous cycle, we developed an action plan for giving students more ways to practice writing the preliminary examination in order to help them succeed in fulfilling the learning outcomes association with it. We did two things: 1) developed a preliminary examination workshop in the months before students were to take the preliminary examination; and 2) offered timed writing assignments (and assessments) in several graduate seminars. We will continue to implement both portions of this action plan for the 2017-18 academic year. We are also adding two qualitative questions to the preliminary examination score sheets that accompanies the rubric. These qualitative questions were tried out in the course in which students did a practice prelim (that is, a timed writing) at the end of the semester, ENGL 680.</p> <p>Implementation Description: We will offer a preliminary exam workshop in October 2017. The faculty members teaching certain graduate courses will be asked to do timed writing assignments and to assess those assignments using the rubric for the preliminary examinations. Projected Completion Date: 7/30/2019 Responsible Party: Director of graduate studies and certain members of the graduate faculty who will be teaching graduate courses.</p>

<p>Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to construct a sophisticated and coherent argument in writing, identify the stakes of that argument, and to support that argument with adequate evidence.</p>	<p>Measure 3: The dissertation will be evaluated by the advisory committee. Each member will fill out an evaluation form, based on a rubric, and covering six categories.</p>	<p>All students will score at least a 5 on "coherent argument supported with evidence" and "stakes of argument and contribution to a field" sections on the dissertation rubric committee members use to evaluate student performance on the dissertation.</p>	<p>Target: Partially Met Five students defended the dissertation in the 2016-17 year (Fall 2016, Spring, 2017, Summer 2017). Of the five, four scored a 5 or higher (80%) on one part of the rubric related to the SLO of "mastering strategies of argumentation": "coherent argument supported with evidence." Five of the five (100%) scored a 5 or higher on "stakes of argument and contribution to a field." The represents an improvement over the last cycle, in which only 50% scored a 5 or higher on these parts of the rubric.</p>	<p>See <i>Action Plan 1</i> above</p>
	<p>Measure 1: First Year Review committee and graduate faculty will evaluate the papers submitted by students beginning their last year of coursework, based on a rubric.</p>	<p>The main target for this measure is that all students will successfully pass the first year review, based on faculty evaluation of their portfolios. In particular, the paper receives extensive scrutiny because the paper evidences the student's ability to design and complete a sustained research project, to master strategies of argumentation, and to develop a professional writing style. Faculty-completed rubrics should show evidence that students have fulfilled the objective of developing a professional writing style; this evidence will be each student scoring at least a 2 (out of 5) under the category of "writing." A 1 or 2 demonstrates that students are ready to do independent research and that their first year of coursework has prepared them to fulfill this objective. A score of less than 3 suggests that more work is necessary for students to fulfill this learning objective.</p>	<p>Target: Not Reported This Cycle We developed a new rubric for the first-year review papers to be used beginning in fall 2017. Therefore, we are not reporting any findings for this cycle. The new rubric is now posted under First Year Papers.</p>	<p><i>No affiliated Action Plan</i></p>
<p>Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate competency in all aspects of writing required in the discipline of English. This includes writing clear, sophisticated prose, carefully editing and revising that prose, and communicating their ideas forcefully.</p>	<p>Measure 2: Advisory committee members will evaluate each preliminary exam (comprised of both written and oral sections) based on a rubric.</p>	<p>All students will be scored a 5 on the category of "written presentation" on the rubric the committee members use to evaluate student performance on the preliminary exams. 5-6 means "mastering;" 3-4 means "developing;" 1-2 means "emerging"</p>	<p>Target: Not Met Eleven students took and passed the Preliminary Examination in the 2016-17 academic year. 8 of the 11 (or 73%) scored a 5 or higher on the "written presentation"--which corresponds with the SLO "develop a professional style of writing." The remaining 3 scored in the 3-4 range, which means that the professional writing style is developing, rather than being mastered. This score reflects a marked improvement over the previous cycle, in which only 3 out of 6 students (or 50%) scored a 5 or higher on this section of the rubric.</p>	<p><b>Action Plan 4:</b> The preliminary examination has both an oral and a written component. Our finding suggest that the examination is not wholly allowing students to demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes associated with it. Students are doing best with those outcomes related to "mastering the subject matter of English studies," and less well with those outcomes related to writing and to making an argument. The written portion is a timed writing, with students given 4 hours to answer 3 or 4 questions, and we plan to target this portion of the exam in this action plan, and work on improving student learning outcomes. One way to help students with the timed writing aspect of the exam is to build some practice into the program. There are two ways to do this: 1) Include, in the assignments for one or more graduate class, a timed writing exam, to be evaluated with the rubric we use for the preliminary exams. Students would get feedback on how close they are to "mastering" the skills identified with the preliminary exam learning outcomes, but primarily "written communication" and "argumentation." 2) We could develop a preliminary exam workshop that, like the workshop we offer for student about to undergo first year review, would provide students with feedback, from peers and faculty, on what makes a good preliminary examination answer, and how those answers demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes. Both options will be pursued over the next three years.</p> <p>See also <i>Action Plan 3</i> above</p>
	<p>Measure 3: The dissertation will be evaluated by the advisory committee. Each member will fill out an evaluation form, based on a rubric, and covering six categories.</p>	<p>Each student will earn at least a 5 on "style of writing" in the rubric committee members use to evaluate student performance on the dissertation. 5-6 means "mastering;" 3-4 means "developing;" 1-2 means "emerging."</p>	<p>Target: Met Five students defended the dissertation in the 2016-17 academic year (Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Summer 2017). All five scored a 5 or higher (100%) on the part of the rubric related to the SLO "develop a professional style of writing."</p>	<p>See <i>Action Plan 1</i> above</p>

<p>Outcome 4: Students will demonstrate knowledge of a body of literature in one or more specialty areas; students will be able to identify and practice methodologies of English Studies and to question and test their assumptions and the assumptions of other scholars in the field.</p>	<p>Measure 2: Advisory committee members will evaluate each preliminary exam (comprised of both written and oral sections) based on a rubric.</p>	<p>All students will score at least a 5 on "understanding the structure of the three fields," "knowledge of a body of literature," and "theoretical/methodological grounding" on the rubric committee members use for evaluating student performance on the preliminary exam. 5-6 means "mastering;" 3-4 means "developing;" 1-2 means "emerging."</p>	<p>Target: Not Met Eleven students took and passed the Preliminary Examination in the 2016-17 academic year. The three areas of the rubric related to the student learning outcome of "mastering the subject matter of English Studies" are: 1) understanding the structure of the three fields being examined; 2) knowledge of a body of literature; and 3) theoretical/methodological grounding. The findings are as follows: 1) understanding the structure of the three fields being examined: 7 of the 11 (or 64%) scored a five or higher. The remaining 4 scored in the "developing," rather than "mastering" range. 2) knowledge of a body of literature: 7 of the 11 (or 64%) scored a five or higher. The remaining 4 scored in the "developing," rather than "mastering" range. 3) theoretical/methodological grounding: 8 of the 11 (or 73%) scored a five or higher. The remaining 4 scored in the "developing," rather than "mastering" range.</p>	<p>See <i>Action Plans 3 and 4 above</i></p>
<p>Outcome 5: Students will demonstrate competency in teaching, which includes mastery of content; effective modes of communicating that content; effective course and syllabus design.</p>	<p>Measure 3: The dissertation will be evaluated by the advisory committee. Each member will fill out an evaluation form, based on a rubric, and covering six categories.</p>	<p>Each student will score at least a 5 on "knowledge of a body of literature" and "methodology" sections of the rubric the committee uses to evaluate student performance on the dissertation. 5-6 means "mastering;" 3-4 means "developing;" 1-2 means "emerging."</p>	<p>Target: Partially Met Of the five students defending the dissertation from Fall 2016 through Summer 2017, all five scored a 5 or higher on section of the rubric measuring methodology; four of the five scored a 5 or higher on the section of the rubric measuring knowledge of a body of literature (80%).</p>	<p><i>No affiliated Action Plan</i></p>
<p>Outcome 5: Students will demonstrate competency in teaching, which includes mastery of content; effective modes of communicating that content; effective course and syllabus design.</p>	<p>Measure 4: Late in the Fall, the graduate faculty approved a new mentoring program for graduate student teachers. First-time teachers are assigned a faculty mentor, and the faculty mentor will produce a mentor's report at the end of the first semester of teaching. Once a student has completed his or her first year of teaching, he or she will select a faculty member to serve as a teaching mentor for the remainder of the student's years in the program. These reports will help the faculty members write letters of recommendation for the students when they are seeking academic employment; these reports will also be factored into the annual evaluation of all PhD students written by the Director of Graduate Studies. Because the program was fully in place for the 2014-15 academic year, we will not be entering any findings for this cycle.</p>	<p>This is a relatively new focus for our doctoral program, and our current target is to get all doctoral students to select mentors and to set up class observations with those mentors.</p>	<p>Target: Met All of our PhD students have selected mentors to evaluate their teaching, observe classes, and write reports.</p>	<p><i>No affiliated Action Plan</i></p>
<p>Outcome 5: Students will demonstrate competency in teaching, which includes mastery of content; effective modes of communicating that content; effective course and syllabus design.</p>	<p>Measure 6: Each GAT (Graduate Assistant Teaching) should have a class observed by a faculty or advanced graduate student mentor. The mentor then submits a report to the DGS, to be included in the annual evaluation of doctoral students. This measure replaces the previous measure, titled "Mentoring report."</p>	<p>Because this is a new initiative, we are setting a quantitative target: 90% of all GATs will have a mentor's report (on the classroom observation) submitted each academic year.</p>	<p>Target: Not Met Of the thirty-three PhD students teaching classes at GATs in the 2016-17 year, twenty-seven had mentor's reports submitted on their behalf (82%). We have reason to believe that there are some class observation reports that will be coming in the next few weeks, so we will update our findings at the end of August.</p>	<p><i>No affiliated Action Plan</i></p>

<p>Outcome 6: By the time of graduation, PhD students should have at least one scholarly publication either in print, or accepted and forthcoming. This is a program outcome, not a student learning outcome.</p>	<p>Measure 5: The CVs of all students graduating with the PhD will be read for information on publications.</p>	<p>All students graduating with a PhD will have one peer-reviewed article (or creative work) published or accepted for publication by the time of graduation.</p>	<p>Target: Not Met Seven students graduated in the period of this cycle (August 2016 to May 2017). Of those seven, six had published a peer-reviewed article or juried creative writing piece (86%).</p>	<p><b>Action Plan 2:</b> This action plan was prompted by our findings that only 86% of doctoral graduates have published a paper in a peer reviewed journal. We are organizing accountability groups for students who are preparing to go on the job market and need to have competitive CVs, including at least one publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Modeled on programs in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (with which the English Department is affiliated), these groups have proven successful in shepherding graduate students to be competitive on the job market by, among other things, having pieces of the dissertation published. You can find more information on the NCDD website, for a short version is that accountability groups work by making students accountable to each other. So, for example, everyone agrees to write for 30 minutes every day, and reports on their progress to the group. We currently also have a weekly 4-hour writing session, held in LAAH 453, in which students can show up to write for as long as they have time to write. Such measures have proven to be successful. Again, refer to the NCDD website for more information on how this works. <a href="http://facultydiversity.site-ym.com">http://facultydiversity.site-ym.com</a></p> <p>Responsible Party: Sally Robinson Nandra Perry</p>
<p><b>(Analysis Question #1) Consider the Findings and the Action Plan(s) established this cycle. How did the program/unit identify these next steps for action? Why does the program/unit believe this Action Plan(s) should improve future assessment results?</b></p>	<p>Based on our findings evaluating student writing at the preliminary examination and dissertation stages, we decided to implement a plan to work on writing earlier in the students' program.</p> <p>As indicated in the action plan for "working on graduate writing" in the previous cycle, the graduate director started making more of an effort to get more faculty teaching graduate courses involved in the teaching and assessment of graduate student writing. Although the program did not directly assess student writing in coursework in the 2016-17 cycle, we did identify a strategy and plan for doing so in the 2017-18 year.</p> <p>The department has three faculty members who are willing to work on graduate student writing in their seminars this fall. One assessment, focusing on designing and implementing a research project, will be carried out in ENGL 669; another, focusing on styles of writing, will be implemented in ENGL 611.</p> <p>ENGL 602--which is required for all first-semester PhD students--this fall will be explicitly focused on student writing. Class time every week will be spend discussing the standards and conventions of good writing; students will evaluate the writing of professionals in the field (including some of our own faculty) and they will also evaluate their own writing.</p> <p>We identified these next steps for action because we want to make active discussion of writing a central part of our graduate curriculum. To be clear, when we refer to "writing," we mean not only the use of language, organization, etc., but also mastering strategies of argumentation (which is one of our student learning outcomes). These steps were also taken in an effort to get more faculty involved in assessment and to get on board with projects geared toward improving student learning outcomes. The fact that three faculty members stepped up to get involved is encouraging.</p> <p>We have now held two rounds of "prelim" practice and workshops. The students are finding this practice to be valuable, and they are feeling more prepared to take their prelims. We will continue to hold these practice sessions and workshops, and to assess the preliminary examination.</p> <p>We believe that all of these plans will improve assessment results because the more direct discussion of, and practice in, improving student writing, the more likely it is that student writing will improve.</p>			

<p><b>(Analysis Question #2)</b>  <b>Provide an update for completed or ongoing action plans from the previous year(s). Discuss any successes, challenges, and/or obstacles the program/unit has experienced while implementing the Action Plan(s). Address whether or not the program/unit has seen any improvement in assessment results for the targeted Outcome(s) the Action Plan(s) were designed to address and why the action plan may/may not have resulted in improvements.</b></p>	<p>Here is an accounting of progress on our action plans:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Expand assessment in 2015-16. This is completed, and the assessment liaison is far better equipped to satisfy institutional requirements.</li> <li>2) Mentor students more aggressively. We have constructed a mentoring map for PhD students and a "road map" to the PhD, given to first-year students. We have also included in the required First Year seminar direct discussion of different career paths for humanities PhDs. Finally, we have encouraged all of our students to take advantage of the services offered through our institutional membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity.</li> <li>3) Writing workshop for FYR papers. We revised the rubric for assessing the papers, but are not reporting on the outcomes this cycle.</li> <li>4) Plan workshops on digital publication. The IDHMC has offered several of these, and a session of the Placement seminar was devoted to this, as well. We had two students publish a major digital project this year.</li> <li>5) Preliminary exam groups and preparing students to achieve on prelims (these two action plans should be combined into one).</li> <li>6) Set clearer guidelines for mentoring graduate student teachers. We now have in place a clear set of guidelines, and the majority of graduate students in 2016-17 had class observations which resulted in mentoring reports.</li> </ol> <p>This was the first cycle in which we implemented the action plan to improve student performance on preliminary examinations. The two main parts of that action plan were to: 1) develop a preliminary examination workshop to give students practice in the kind of timed writing required for the preliminary examination; and 2) have faculty in certain graduate courses design and implement timed writing assignments that would allow students practice in the kind of writing required for the preliminary examination and to get feedback on their performance based on a rubric.</p> <p>The first of these plans targeted students who were getting reading to sit for the exams during the fall semester; the second plan targeted students who were a full semester away from sitting for these exams. We asked students to write a preliminary examination question based on one of their prelim reading lists, and to submit them to the DGS. The DGS looked at the questions and tweaked them to make them more like the types of questions faculty write for these exams. The students were then to sit down and write an answer to that question, simulating the conditions of the preliminary exams: that is, no books or notes (only the reading lists and a dictionary), no internet access, and only one hour, twenty minutes to answer the question, proofread, and print.</p> <p>We then distributed these exams to all of the students, and asked them to read them all before a workshop that was scheduled for three hours one day. The students were also asked to rate each "exam" using the preliminary examination rubric that faculty use to assess performance. The group met, discussed the experience of writing the exam, and then discussed the scores they had given their own exams and those of their peers. Given the improved scores for this cohort of students taking the preliminary examination in the 2017-18, it seems clear that the assessment results for the targeted outcomes (particularly, mastering strategies of argumentation and developing a professional writing style) demonstrate that the action plan is already showing positive results.</p> <p>The second part of the action plan targeted students in the semester before they were to take prelims. These same students will be asked to participate in the preliminary examination workshop in fall 2017 (the semester in which they will sit for the exam). It is our hope that these students will even better demonstrate the student learning outcomes because they will have had the benefit of two forms of practice for prelims.</p> <p>In ENGL/WGST 680, students were asked to write two preliminary examination questions, based on the course readings and to submit those questions to the instructor. The instructor commented on the questions, asked for some revisions, and ultimately approved all of the questions. The students agreed to simulate the conditions of the preliminary exam in writing their answers: they were not to use any books or notes (they could use the syllabus), they were not to have internet access, and they were to spend no more than 3 hours answering the two questions. The students had already been given a preliminary examination rubric adapted to this different context and told that their answers would be evaluated using it. The instructor was careful to tailor her expectations to the constraints of this particular type of timed writing, and filled out the score sheets for each exam.</p> <p>As indicated in our Findings on the measure of the Preliminary Exam, we did see some marked improvement which, we believe, is a result of the first part of the action plan—that is, the preliminary examination workshop. The scores for the two learning outcomes we were particularly targeting ("master strategies of argumentation" and "develop a professional style of writing") improved significantly. There were also nearly twice as many students taking the preliminary exam in this year than in the previous year, suggesting that this is a real, statistically significant improvement. Because of this, we are continuing into 2017-18 with the action plan as implemented in 2016-17, with the hope that we will get even closer to meeting our targets.</p>
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