

Classics

2018-21 Student Learning Improvement Plan (10.02.2018)

Focus/Target: The focus of this improvement plan is to improve student thesis writing. Based on faculty conversations about the performance of recent graduating seniors, writing – particularly writing for the thesis – is a major concern. With this, Classics faculty would also like to improve student ability to find, use, and appropriately cite secondary sources and primary sources in Greek or Latin.

Intervention: Classics faculty hypothesize two reasons why student thesis writing is not meeting their expectations:

- (1) While students write throughout the Classics curriculum, expectations for in-class papers differ from expectations for the thesis. Courses typically require students to write essays; not research. Also, in-class writing assignments typically do not require students to engage in the full process of writing (prewriting, drafting, and internalizing feedback from faculty to revise, edit, and resubmit writing).
- (2) Thesis writing suffers when students must spend time during their fourth year of study investigating and picking a thesis topic. If students were able to identify a thesis topic prior to the fourth year, they would have more time to focus on the writing process.

To address these issues, Classics faculty will institute a formal tutorial focused on research and writing. This tutorial, to be completed by all Classics AOC students in the spring semester of their third year, will require students to choose a research topic, engage in the writing process (responding to faculty feedback), and demonstrate appropriate use and citation of primary and secondary sources in order to produce a thesis-quality writing sample. Faculty acknowledge that it may not be possible for students to choose their thesis topics during this tutorial (or that topics may change prior to the thesis). Nonetheless, purposefully engaging students in a research-focused writing process *prior to* the thesis will improve student writing for the thesis.

This tutorial will be a cooperative effort, as both Classics faculty members will work to set expectations and requirements. While individual students in the tutorial will primarily work with a single faculty member, both faculty will ultimately evaluate the writing produced by students as a result of the tutorial. Once implemented, faculty will work with the Writing Resource Center (pending availability) to strengthen this tutorial.

Student learning outcome(s): By the end of the tutorial, students will have produced a thesis-quality writing sample incorporating feedback from faculty.

That writing sample will demonstrate: (a) skillful use of appropriate primary and secondary sources
(b) appropriate citation of primary and secondary sources
(c) appropriate, relevant, and compelling content
(d) successful execution of writing conventions (organization, formatting, style)
(e) clarity and fluency, with virtually no errors.

As a result of the intervention, thesis students will clearly and effectively express ideas in writing (as indicated by results from the Student Academic Program Assessment)

Assessment: Short-term effectiveness of the intervention will be assessed at the end of the tutorial. Both Classics faculty members will assess a final writing sample from each student completing the tutorial. To ensure consistency, faculty will work to develop a rubric (based on the [VALUE Written Communication rubric](#)). Results from this assessment will be recorded in each student's narrative evaluation for the tutorial. Faculty will consider assessing student writing at the beginning of the tutorial (or in a Fall third-year class) to measure individual student improvement. Long-term effectiveness of the intervention will be assessed using current thesis assessment methods (SAPA forms and baccalaureate exams).

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Intervention implementation	<p>The intervention (tutorial on research and writing) will be piloted in Spring 2019 to third-year Classics AOC students. Faculty have already discussed implementation, outlining expectations for students completing the tutorial.</p> <p>Classics faculty will develop a description of the tutorial (or syllabus) and schedule the tutorial for Spring 2019.</p>	<p>The tutorial will again be offered to all 3rd-year Classics AOC students.</p> <p>Based on results from the previous year, the tutorial may be modified.</p>	<p>The tutorial will again be offered to all 3rd-year Classics AOC students.</p>
Assessment of improvement	<p>With the small number of students in the tutorial, narrative evaluations will provide the most in-depth assessment of student performance. Narrative evaluations will be entered into the Student Evaluation System, accessible to institutional assessment staff.</p>	<p>Narrative evaluations will continue to be provided for students completing the tutorial. These narrative evaluations will be clearly linked to a rubric designed to assess the intended student learning outcomes.</p> <p>Students who completed the tutorial in 2018-19 will be completing theses this year. Thus, SAPA results from thesis students will provide</p>	<p>Narrative evaluations will continue to be provided for students completing the tutorial. These narrative evaluations will be clearly linked to a rubric designed to assess the intended student learning outcomes.</p> <p>Students who completed the tutorial in 2019-20 will be completing theses this year. Thus, SAPA results from thesis students will provide</p>
What will be reported	<p>A description of the tutorial will be provided to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA).</p> <p>Narrative evaluations will be entered into the SES.</p>	<p>A brief description of any modifications that may have been made to improve the curriculum and instruction of the tutorial will be provided to the IRA Office.</p> <p>Narrative evaluations will be entered into the SES. A part of each narrative evaluation will align with the rubric used to assess student writing.</p> <p>SAPA results will be provided for every Classics AOC graduate.</p>	<p>A brief description of any modifications that may have been made to the tutorial will be provided to the IRA Office.</p> <p>Narrative evaluations will be entered into the SES. A part of each narrative evaluation will align with the rubric used to assess student writing.</p> <p>SAPA results will be provided for every Classics AOC graduate.</p> <p>Classics faculty will provide a brief reflection on the effectiveness of the intervention to the IRA Office. The reflection will address how well the intervention was implemented, as well as the degree to which the intervention led to improvement in student writing. The reflection will recommend continuation, enhancement, or discontinuation of the intervention.</p>

Classics Improvement Plan for 2018-2021

Original Draft (August 1, 2018)

Think about what you reviewed throughout this process (SAPA results; curriculum map; pathway) and what you know about your students knowledge, skills, and abilities. Identify 1-3 areas of interest to explore or improve.

Improve student writing on thesis. In particular, improve student ability to find and use appropriate secondary sources and to cite them properly, and to use primary sources in Greek or Latin effectively and cite them properly.

What could you do over the next 2 years to improve this area? How will this change improve or expand students knowledge, skills, and abilities?

Beginning in spring 2019, and working with the WRC, to institute a formal tutorial in spring semester of third year focusing on research and writing.

How will you measure or assess improvement? What will be the basis for improvement?

Work with Autumn Harrell, Julie Morris, Brad Thiessen, or Hui-Min Wen to complete this section.

Develop a rubric with assessment professionals to measure student writing ability before taking the tutorial, and at its conclusion.

Guiding Questions

- *Think about the skills that your graduates have, and the skills you want them to have?*
- *Are there any redundancies, oversights, or bottlenecks in the pathway to completing the graduation requirements?*
- *Does your curriculum prepare students to complete the thesis (content knowledge, written communication, critical thinking)?*
- *Does your curriculum prepare students for life after New College (graduate school, employment, etc.)?*
- *What are you interested to know about your students? graduates?*

Other options for guiding questions ([source](#))

- *How will students be changed?*
- *How will we know students have changed?*
- *In order to be successful on the assessment, what will students need to know, think, or do?*
- *To meet the student learning outcomes, what educational curriculum must the students experience?*
- *What improvements to the curriculum and assessments could be made if students fall short of the outcomes?*