2014-2015 Millikin University Creative Arts Assessment Report
Student Learning in the Creative Arts Requirement (University Studies)

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The Creative Arts Requirement (CAR) is one of several non-sequential University Studies requirements that all Millikin University students must take to graduate. Students must earn three hours of Creative Arts credit in order to satisfy the requirement. The requirement can be taken at any time during a student's four-year experience, either as a single three-credit course or as multiple one- or two-credit courses.

This non-sequential requirement can be met with any creative arts course that blends experiential, theoretical, and reflective approaches. Examples include Art 101 and 107, Music History 100 and 101, and Theatre 103 and 107, among many others. Three combined credits of Applied Music, Music Organizations, or Dance—or a combination thereof—also satisfies this requirement.

(1)   Learning Goals

In creative arts courses, students appreciate the intellectual and aesthetic contributions that the creative, visual, dramatic, and/or performing arts make to their ability to understand themselves and others and to their capacity to enjoy their own and others' creative processes and products. Students develop an understanding of themselves and the ability to reflect on and express their thoughts and feelings responsibly.

The following learning outcome goals are delivered by all courses designated as meeting the Creative Arts Requirement.

Students will:
1. Demonstrate engagement in/with the creative process.
2. Respond to and reflect on the aesthetic experience of the creative arts.
3. Make connections between aesthetic experiences and the larger cultural context of creation.

These learning goals complement the university-wide mission in the following ways. Engaging in the creative arts sharpens the diagnostic/critical thinking skills necessary for professional success. By studying the arts, including nonwestern art forms, students become better global citizens. And, of course, studying and performing art aids in the understanding of our own humanity, thereby helping to create a personal life of meaning and value.

(2)   Courses Satisfying the CAR

On May 16, 2014 the Millikin University faculty approved a change from the previously existing Fine Arts Requirement (FAR) to our current designation of Creative Arts Requirement (CAR). This language change allowed for the expansion of courses satisfying this requirement, with the primary expansion being the inclusion of creative writing classes offered by the English Department in the list of courses satisfying the CAR.[1]

Courses satisfying the CAR are taught by senior and junior faculty, lecturers, adjunct faculty, and visiting artists and scholars. Classes may consist of studio work, lecture, or critique, or a combination of the above. Students from all four colleges (Arts & Sciences, Fine Arts, Professional Studies, and the Tabor School of Business) take these classes, and enrollment is often mixed between non-majors taking courses to satisfy the CAR and majors taking courses as part of their specific course of study.

Millikin University students satisfy the CAR in numerous classes, as virtually any three-credit class taught within the College of Fine Arts (CFA) satisfies the learning outcomes stated above. Due to the large number of Fine Arts majors taking most CFA classes, however, the CAR is most commonly filled from within a select list of courses. Among the most popular courses satisfying the CAR are:

- AR 101: Introduction to Visual Culture
- MH 100: Understanding Classical Music
- TH 103: Acting for Non-Majors
- EN 201: Introduction to Creative Writing

(3) Assessment Methods

As stated in previous reports, faculty across the College of Fine Arts—and the disciplines at large—consistently report the difficulty of finding effective assessment strategies for creative courses. By its very nature assessment asks us to quantify things, to make them measurable. The arts in general—and artists more specifically—often resist such attempts at quantification, finding much intrinsic value in the open-ended, interpretive elements of our respective disciplines. Asking a poet to reduce poetry to numbers can cause confusion, if not outright resentment, and as such we continue to struggle with our mode of assessment.

With that in mind, this year I—in collaboration with Dean Laura Ledford of the College of Fine Arts and Dr. Carmella Braniger of the Department of English—set out to introduce a new method for assessment. We revised the assessment rubric used in previous years to reflect the changes from FAR to CAR.[2] We continue to believe that the best practice for assessing the CAR is to target those courses where the majority of the students enrolled are non-majors using that class to satisfy the CAR.

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[1] For more discussion of this change and the process by which it was approved, please consult the 2013-14 FAR Assessment Report.
[2] This updated rubric may be found in the appended materials.

The primary change this year was to target specific courses for assessment, rather than collecting artifacts from all CAR courses at once. This change was primarily logistical, but I firmly believe that if followed for a multi-year period it will give us a very accurate picture of how the CAR functions at Millikin. For the 2014-15 academic year I elected to assess TH 103: Acting for Non-Majors in the fall and EN 201: Introduction to Creative Writing in the spring. I plan to assess a course from the School of Music in fall 2015 and one from Art in spring 2016, giving us coverage of all four areas in one two-year cycle.

Instructors in these courses gathered artifacts and submitted them to me for assessment, some electronically and others in hard copy. Assessment of both courses took place at the conclusion of the 2014-15 academic year.

(4)   Assessment Data

Again, assessment data was collected from two courses: TH 103: Acting for Non-Majors (Fall 2014) and EN 201: Introduction to Creative Writing (Spring 2015). Table One, below, shows information on participation percentage:

Course	Students Enrolled (Per MU Online)	Artifacts Collected	Participation Percentage
TH 103 (Fall 2014)	17	14[3]	82.3%
EN 201 (Spring 2015)	16	11	68.8
Totals	33	25	75.8%

Table One

One significant observation about the above data is that it reveals a larger participation percentage than the 2013 report[4]. In 2013, we had a 67.1% participation rate (based off 85 enrolled students across three courses). In 2015, we had a 75.8% participation rate (based off 33 enrolled students.)[5]

(5)   Analysis of Assessment Results

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[3] Though 14 students supplied data, only 9 provided data responding to all three learning outcomes. This will be discussed in more detail in section 5 of this report.

[4] Due to the mid-year process of changing from the FAR to the CAR, no assessment data was collected for the 2014 report. For more, see the 2013-14 report.

[5] The significantly smaller number of students represented in this year's report is largely attributable to the classes chosen to assess. AR 101 and MH 100 both have far larger enrollments than TH 103 and EN 201. The number of students assessed should be significantly higher next year.

I will examine each of the two courses assessed individually, before drawing some conclusions afterwards. The CAR Assessment Coordinator reviewed all artifacts submitted.

The artifacts were scored on a 5-3-1 scale per prompt, with 5 indicating "Excellent," 3 indicating "Adequate," and 1 indicating "Nominal." Scores were then totaled, or a final score out of 15. Totals of 12-15 indicated "Excellent," 8-11 "Adequate," and 3-7 "Nominal." For total scores, 12-15 indicated "Green," 8-11 "Yellow," and "1-7" Red.

TH 103: Acting for Non-Majors was taught in Fall 2014 by Ann Borders. Students in this class submitted two artifacts, which between them addressed all three learning outcomes for the CAR. As referenced in footnote 3, above, however, only 9 of the 14 students submitting artifacts in this course submitted the materials addressing all three learning outcomes. The other five were missing an assignment, which naturally has the potential to skew the data very significantly.

Learning Outcome One: Demonstrate engagement in/with the creative process.

Green (Excellent)	Yellow (Adequate)	Red (Nominal)	Not Submitted
8	2	0	4

Table Two

Learning Outcome Two: Respond to and reflect on the aesthetic experience of the creative arts.

Green (Excellent)	Yellow (Adequate)	Red (Nominal)	Not Submitted
11	2	0	1

Table Three

Learning Outcome Three: Make connections between aesthetic experiences and the larger cultural context of creation.

Green (Excellent)	Yellow (Adequate)	Red (Nominal)	Not Submitted
3	2	8	1

Table Four

I believe the best way to assess the efficacy of this curriculum is to look only at those students who actually submitted materials for a certain learning outcome. For example, I don't believe it accurately reflects the learning being done to factor in four students not submitting materials for learning outcome one. With that in mind, Table Five below shows the arithmetic means for each learning outcome above.

Learning Outcome One	4.60
Learning Outcome Two	4.69
Learning Outcome Three	2.23
TOTAL	11.52 (Very high end of "adequate)

<div align="center">**Table Five**</div>

Using the rubric established for the CAR, this data reveals that for Acting for Non-Majors we are doing an exceptional job meeting learning outcomes one and two, and that learning outcome three is a bit of a struggle. That said, having reviewed both the assignment and the artifacts, the large number of "Red" scores for learning outcome three come from students skipping a portion of the assignment. They were asked to do this, but many simply did forgot to address the second prompt on the assignment.

EN 201: Introduction to Creative Writing was taught in the spring by Dr. Carmella Braniger. Students in this class submitted lengthy writing portfolios, which were used to assess all three learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome One: Demonstrate engagement in/with the creative process.

Green (Excellent)	Yellow (Adequate)	Red (Nominal)	Not Submitted
11	0	0	0

<div align="center">**Table Six**</div>

Learning Outcome Two: Respond to and reflect on the aesthetic experience of the creative arts.

Green (Excellent)	Yellow (Adequate)	Red (Nominal)	Not Submitted
6	5	0	0

<div align="center">**Table Seven**</div>

Learning Outcome Three: Make connections between aesthetic experiences and the larger cultural context of creation.

Green (Excellent)	Yellow (Adequate)	Red (Nominal)	Not Submitted
8	3	0	0

<div align="center">**Table Eight**</div>

Learning Outcome One	5.00
Learning Outcome Two	4.09
Learning Outcome Three	4.45
TOTAL	13.54 (excellent)

<div align="center">**Table Nine**</div>

I think this data shows that folding creative writing courses into this requirement was an absolutely successful plan. In all categories Introduction to Creative Writing is excelling at delivering the learning outcomes of the CAR.

Looking at the aggregate data across the two courses reveals the following information:

Learning Outcome	Green	Yellow	Red	Average
One	19	2	0	4.81
Two	17	7	0	4.42
Three	11	5	8	3.25

Table Ten

Added together, the overall scores come to 12.48 for the courses assessed as part of the Creative Arts Requirement this academic year, putting us in "Excellent" territory. Broken down more closely, we are "excellent" for both of the first two learning outcomes, and only "adequate" on the third. This is a trend that mirrors what was shown in the 2013 FAR Assessment Report. Scores have climbed dramatically for learning outcomes one and two, but continue to lag in learning outcome three.

(6)   Conclusions

Based on the data analyzed above, it is clear to me that the Millikin University Creative Arts Requirement is meeting its goals. While we continue to have work to do in addressing learning outcome three, it appears from the data that students are getting what they should out of these courses, and that the CAR is contributing to the well-rounded education of Millikin students.

(7)   Plans for Future

I intend to continue this method of assessment next year, and I will soon contact the professors of those courses to be assessed informing them of the need to collect artifacts for assessment purposes.

We need to investigate moving to a more centralized electronic collection of artifacts, such as through Moodle. I had intended to explore this idea this year, but simply ran out of time to get it done prior to the start of the school year.

Plans had been made to hand the mantle of CAR coordinator off to Dr. Mark Samples, Asst. Professor of Music, at the conclusion of this year. Unfortunately, Dr. Samples has taken a position at another university and thus will be unable to do that. This leaves me once again in the position of being a solo assessment team. I continue to yearn for further support of CAR assessment practices, both in terms of training and an assessment team. Still, I believe despite some limitations of coordinator skillset, the Creative Arts Requirement is working well, and I expect it to continue to do so for the foreseeable future.