

Written Communication Assessment

Fall 2019

Method:

Written Communication was assessed through the collection of samples of student work. Eleven courses were chosen for the assessment (see Table 1), which comprised 271 individual classes. These courses were selected for inclusion based upon course mapping to the Written Communication General Education Outcome, a sub-category of our General Education Communication Goal. A stratified random sampling method was used to select the courses for this semester's assessment. Two courses were randomly selected from each department from a list of all the courses mapped to the outcome from that department's programs. In this way, each department would be represented by two courses in the assessment. However, one selected course was determined to be a poor fit for the outcome and was removed from the assessment. In addition, one department had only one course mapped to the outcome which had no students enrolled for the semester, and another department's mapped courses had all already been selected for assessment in other departments. Therefore, the final sample only included 11 courses representing eight departments. Two students from each class of the selected courses were randomly chosen for assessment, for a total of 552 students.

Instructors were initially notified of their class's inclusion in the assessment with an email sent within the first month of the semester. This notice informed the instructors of the outcome that was to be assessed, and that they would be asked to submit a sample of student work that demonstrated the skills represented in that outcome. They were further asked to await specific instructions in an additional, forthcoming email notice. The second notice was sent in the second month of the semester following the running of the course audit when class rosters are finalized. This notice contained instructions for submitting the pieces of student work along with the names of their selected students. The email also included, as an attachment, the rubric that would be used to score the student artifacts to assist instructors in choosing an appropriate assignment to submit for the assessment. A reminder email that again contained the instructions and student names was sent approximately three weeks before the due date for submission. Submissions

were due after final exams, on the same day that grades were to be submitted. In total, faculty were notified of their need to participate three times throughout the semester.

Instructors were asked to send samples of work from the selected students that demonstrated the criteria of the outcome, as outlined in the rubric. Work could be submitted electronically or in paper form. If work could not be submitted, instructors were asked to indicate the reason for the lack of submission, such as the student dropped the course or did not complete the selected assignment. Instructors were also asked to submit a copy or brief description of the assignment to assist the assessors in evaluating the student work. Upon submission, both digital and paper artifacts submitted by faculty members were logged and anonymized by the Assessment Manager.

Members of CWAC and faculty with expertise in written communication were selected to serve as artifact scorers. The Chair of the Committee on Committees solicited faculty volunteers via email. In total, 16 assessors participated in a norming session prior to the scoring of the student artifacts. The norming session was conducted during a virtual meeting, with all attendees scoring the same five artifacts with the rubric in the Nuventive Improve assessment management system, then comparing scores and discussing scoring methods to ensure that the rubric was reliable and valid.

At the conclusion of the artifact collection period, all submitted artifacts were uploaded into the Nuventive system and randomly assigned to the assessors. Each artifact was assessed twice, by two different assessors. Assessors were able to access and score their assigned student artifacts using the rubric directly in the Nuventive system.

Table 1. Courses selected for assessment of Written Communication

Course	Number of Classes
ART 209	1
BIOL 102	4
CISE 200	3
ENGL 101	184
ENGL 102	59

ENGL 104	9
MLT 236	1
PLGL 104	2
PLGL 202	2
PSYC 213	8
PSYC 242	2

Results:

Artifacts were submitted for 271 students (49.09%). Artifacts could not be collected from 41 (07.43%) of the selected students because the students either dropped the course or did not turn in the assignment that was chosen for assessment. The remaining missing artifacts (240 (43.48%)) could not be accounted for.

Each of the 271 submitted artifacts were assigned to two of the sixteen assessors in the jury pool for assessment, resulting in a total of 542 scores. However, not all artifacts were scored for various reasons including unreadable files and incomplete ratings by assessors. Therefore, a total of 505 scores were recorded. Rubric scores for the assessed students are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency table of rubric scores for all assessed students

Criteria	4- Advanced	3- Established	2- Developing	1- Entry	Mean (SD)
Audience	63(12.48%)	249(49.31%)	166(32.87%)	27(5.35%)	2.68(.76)
Organization/Structure	75(14.88%)	233(46.23%)	155(30.75%)	41(8.13%)	2.67(.83)
Idea Delivery	60(11.95%)	244(48.61%)	166(33.07%)	32(6.37%)	2.66(.77)
Focus/Purpose	92(18.29%)	269(53.48%)	118(23.46%)	24(4.77%)	2.85(.77)
Content	101(20.08%)	231(45.92%)	149(29.62%)	22(4.37%)	2.81(.80)

All of the criteria for Written Communication had mean scores in between the Developing and Established levels. Mean scores for the criteria showed little variability, with the mean for the Focus/Purpose criterion being the highest with a mean of 2.85(0.77), and the mean for the Idea Delivery criterion being the lowest, with the mean of 2.66(0.77).