

General Education Assessment
Written Communication Action Plan

Please interpret the findings and provide a specific action plan that can be implemented to improve or reinforce student learning as a result of the assessment process. The action plan should address the area(s) in need of improvement or reinforcement. The plan does not have to be limited to general education student learning but could include departmental initiatives designed to improve student success.

Part One: Results Discussion / Reflection

Please provide insightful interpretations of the results presented in the Findings section, noting any relevant context / background or concerns the unit may have.

Discussion of ENGL 1100 Assessment Results

Expectations for the student performance in the SLOs of ENGL 1100 were not met. The Writing Foundations Committee discussed the results. We see some possibilities to the results of the assessment:

- Students taking ENGL 1100 in Fall 2016 are typically in their first semester of college and may struggle with getting acclimated to college-level work;
- Instructors teaching ENGL 1100 have not had as much professional development focused on teaching the course since we have been focused on our curriculum revision to ENGL 2201;
- Instructors teaching ENGL 1100 may not be emphasizing the objectives of the course in their assignments.

We are not surprised by the results for Critical Engagement with and use of Evidence and Formatting and Citation, which are related. Students often struggle with accurate citation practices. If an artifact in our sampling demonstrated plagiarism, the assessment score was “Insufficient.” It is possible that some faculty are not stressing proper MLA or APA documentation and citation practices in ENGL 1100 because of the emphasis on this in ENGL 2201. However, we need to address this and work with students in ENGL 1100 to develop ethical engagement with sources.

Discussion of ENGL 2201 Assessment Results

Expectations for the student performance in the SLOs of ENGL 2201 were not met either. The Writing Foundations Committee discussed the results. We see some possibilities to the results of the assessment:

- Students taking ENGL 2201 may not be uploading revised work to the Portfolio of Revisions
- Instructors teaching ENGL 2201 may not be offering clear guidelines for assignments or may not be creating assignments that explicitly align with course goals
- Instructors teaching ENGL 2201 may not be teaching formatting and citation practices thoroughly enough.

We are not surprised by the results for Critical Engagement with Evidence and Formatting and Citation, which are related. Students often struggle with accurate citation practices. If an artifact in our sampling demonstrated plagiarism, the assessment score was “Insufficient.” It is possible that some faculty are not stressing proper documentation and citation practices in ENGL 2201 because students use different styles based on their disciplinary preferences. However, the Writing Foundations Committee recommended texts that included multiple citation practices to support both instructors and students in these practices. Another important factor to remember is that this course is intended for sophomores who may still be learning and becoming comfortable with citation and formatting practices.

Part Two: Action Plan

Please describe what actions you will take as a result of the assessment.

Continue to offer Professional Development Workshops focused on instructor awareness of the SLOs

In 2017-2018, the Writing Foundations Committee sponsored workshops for faculty to help with fostering development of assignments that clearly and explicitly align with the SLOs of Writing Foundation courses. One workshop invited instructors to bring their semester’s assignments and we had them map the course SLOs to the assignments. We hoped this exercise would reinforce the goals of the course and promote revisions to assignments as needed to better help students meet the objectives of the course. The workshop was low attended by non-committee members. We will offer workshops in 2018-2019 that help instructors work with students to focus on critical engagement with texts and avoiding plagiarism.

Review textbooks

The Writing Foundations Committee reviewed textbooks/programs to implement in Fall 2018. We spent 2017-2018 reviewing Cengage’s MindTap, a plug-in for Blackboard that supplements the texts we use and our teaching. A few members of the Writing Foundations Committee piloted MindTap in their 2017-2018 courses in order to report on its effectiveness prior to the decision to adopt it for 2018-2020. We offered to all instructors exposure to the program in Spring 2018 and on-going training for instructors and GTAs throughout the summer and before Fall 2018 courses started. We added more samples of student writing to our custom edition of *Building Bridges* with the hope that samples of ECU student writing will help students and instructors see strategies of writing at work.

Secondary Assessment

Alternatively, we are moving to secondary assessment wherein we will collect samples of semester-worth formal project assignments from ENGL 2201 instructors and Writing Foundations Committee members will map the course goals to these project assignments to determine how well our assignments are asking students to do the work of the course. We hope this secondary assessment will provide us with information that may help instructors craft more explicitly clear guidelines and expectations in project assignments so that students’ writing is demonstrating better achievement of course objectives.

In addition to the above recommendations, we need to consider building dynamic rubrics that link our outcomes to national standards. While the outcome goals for English 1100 and 2201 are

influenced by the national standards of the Writing Program Administrators' First-Year Writing Outcomes, we do not have a mechanism to measure how well our students are doing in these specific areas. We will continue using Blackboard's Outcome assessment tool to possibly address this concern.