

## Written Communication Assessment

Spring 2016

### Method:

Written Communication was assessed through the collection of samples of student work. Fourteen courses were selected for assessment (see Table 1), which comprised 254 individual classes. Two students from each of the classes were randomly selected for assessment, for a total of 508 students.

Instructors for the selected courses were sent an email notification within the first month of classes with instructions for submitting pieces of student work and the names of their selected students. Instructors were asked to send samples of work from the selected students that demonstrated the ability to write appropriately for audience, purpose, and genre; and demonstrate appropriate content, organization, syntax, and style. Attached to the email notification was a copy of the rubric that would be used in the assessment to better assist instructors in selecting appropriate pieces of student work. Instructors were also asked to submit a copy or brief description of the assignment in order to assist the assessors in evaluating the student work. 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. A reminder email was sent to all instructors of selected courses approximately two weeks before the due date for submissions.

All collected artifacts were anonymized and uploaded into the Tk20 assessment software program. A group of nine volunteers assessed the artifacts using the rubric. The analytic rubric consisted of four dimensions: Ideas/Engagement with topic, thesis/focus, organization, and mechanics. The dimensions were rated on a 5-point Lykert-type scale, ranging from 4, expert proficiency, to 0, no proficiency. Each artifact was assessed twice, by two different volunteers. Assessors attended a norming session in which five artifacts were communally assessed prior to assessing all artifacts in the Tk20 system.

Table 1. Courses selected for assessment of Information Literacy

Course	Number of Classes
ART 182	6
ART 185	2
COMM 203	7
COMM 222	2
EDUC 111	5
ENGL 101	119
ENVS 201	4
EXSC 102	1
MATH 202	21
MGMT 201	25
PHIL 225	14
PSYC 221	2
SOCI 201	41
THTR 101	5

### Results

Artifacts were submitted for 265 students (52.2%). Artifacts could not be collected from 65 (12.8%) of the selected students because the students either dropped the course or did not turn in the assignment chosen for assessment. The remaining artifacts were not submitted for various reasons, including the class having no required assignments suitable for assessment, or artifacts being submitted after the assessment deadline. Rubric scores for the assessed students are shown in Table 2. Note that row counts do not total the number of assessed students because each student was assessed twice.

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

Criteria	4-Expert Proficiency	3-Advanced Proficiency	2-Proficiency	1-Limited Proficiency	0-No Proficiency	NA/ Missing	Mean (SD)
Ideas/Engagement	62(21.1%)	203(39.6%)	204(39.8%)	34(6.6%)	10(1.9%)	19(3.6%)	2.53(.86)
Thesis/Focus	77(15.6%)	196(39.6%)	120(24.2%)	91(18.4%)	11(2.2%)	37(7.0%)	2.48(1.03)
Organization	93(18.3%)	217(42.6%)	145(28.5%)	49(9.6%)	5(1.0%)	23(4.3%)	2.68(.92)
Mechanics	68(13.3%)	238(46.6%)	149(29.2%)	50(9.8%)	6(1.2%)	21(3.9%)	2.61(.88)

All the criteria had mean scores falling between the “Some Proficiency” and the “Proficiency” rubric categories. The Organization criterion had the highest mean score (2.68), and the Thesis/Focus criterion had the lowest mean score (2.48).