Assessing the Foundations
Written Communication Program

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Today’s Goals

1. Present findings (20 minutes)
2. Help you generate ideas you can use to enhance instruction (60 minutes)
Background

• Student Learning Outcome:
  “. . . compose a text that seeks to achieve a specific purpose and responds adeptly to an identifiable audience.”

• This study used student writing as evidence:
  1. Student-selected writing sample
  2. 30-minute, in-class, written reflection on their sample’s purpose and audience
**Participants**

First-year students from all FW sections were randomly selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Type</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. English 100 with no mentor</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. English 100 with a mentor</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. English 101+Lab</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. English 100A</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. English Language Institute 100</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**                                           **204**
STUDENT-SELECTED WRITING SAMPLE
Rubric to Score the Student-selected Sample

• Initial rubric: holistic, vague
• Revised rubric
  – Primary trait so results would be more useful
  – Maintained original rubric emphasis on statements/claims, evidence, and purpose
  – Created 2 sets of parallel descriptors: “logos”-based and short story/narrative
  – Defined audience as “critical, informed readers”
Scoring the Writing Sample

Readers applied a rubric and gave each writing sample a score on each dimension:

1. Content
2. Organization
3. Language and style
4. Mechanics (grammar, punctuation, citation rules)
Interpretation of Scores

The research team “mapped” the scores to one of four categories.

Categories

a) Not prepared for future writing and writing-intensive courses
b) Partially prepared
c) Prepared
d) Well prepared
Results: ALL DIMENSIONS

Content and Organization weighted 60%;
Language & Style and Mechanics weighted 40%
Results: CONTENT

- All students:
  - Not prepared: 4%
  - Partially prepared: 24%
  - Prepared: 67%
  - Well prepared: 5%

- ENG 100 not mentored:
  - Not prepared: 5%
  - Partially prepared: 28%
  - Prepared: 66%
  - Well prepared: 1%

- ENG 100 mentored:
  - Not prepared: 3%
  - Partially prepared: 21%
  - Prepared: 68%
  - Well prepared: 9%

- ENG 101:
  - Not prepared: 9%
  - Partially prepared: 32%
  - Prepared: 50%
  - Well prepared: 9%

- ENG 100A:
  - Not prepared: 18%
  - Partially prepared: 0%
  - Prepared: 82%
  - Well prepared: 0%

- ELI 100:
  - Not prepared: 11%
  - Partially prepared: 11%
  - Prepared: 78%
  - Well prepared: 0%
Results: ORGANIZATION

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Results: LANG. & STYLE

- All students: 3% Not prepared, 23% Partially prepared, 68% Prepared, 6% Well prepared
- ENG 100 not mentored: 2% Not prepared, 20% Partially prepared, 76% Prepared, 2% Well prepared
- ENG 100 mentored: 1% Not prepared, 19% Partially prepared, 68% Prepared, 13% Well prepared
- ENG 101: 9% Not prepared, 36% Partially prepared, 55% Prepared, 0% Well prepared
- ENG 100A: 0% Not prepared, 0% Partially prepared, 0% Prepared, 9% Well prepared
- ELI 100: 11% Not prepared, 11% Partially prepared, 78% Prepared, 0% Well prepared

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Results: MECHANICS

- All students:
  - Not prepared: 10%
  - Partially prepared: 22%
  - Prepared: 65%
  - Well prepared: 3%

- ENG 100 not mentored:
  - Not prepared: 6%
  - Partially prepared: 22%
  - Prepared: 68%
  - Well prepared: 4%

- ENG 100 mentored:
  - Not prepared: 6%
  - Partially prepared: 21%
  - Prepared: 69%
  - Well prepared: 4%

- ENG 101:
  - Not prepared: 0%
  - Partially prepared: 32%
  - Prepared: 41%
  - Well prepared: 27%

- ENG 100A:
  - Not prepared: 0%
  - Partially prepared: 9%
  - Prepared: 91%
  - Well prepared: 0%

- ELI 100:
  - Not prepared: 0%
  - Partially prepared: 11%
  - Prepared: 56%
  - Well prepared: 33%
IN-CLASS REFLECTIVE ESSAY
In-Class Reflective Essay Prompt

The instructions asked students to think about the following:

• What specific purpose(s) were you hoping to achieve through this piece?
• What do you want your audience to understand, feel, and/or do?
• Who is your intended audience or audiences?
• In what specific ways have you attempted to respond to your audience within your selected writing sample?
Interpretation of Scores

The research team “mapped” the in-class essay scores to four categories:

Categories

a) **Superficial/Cursory** treatment of purpose and/or audience

b) **Somewhat Superficial**

c) **Somewhat Specific/Complex**

d) **Specific/Complex**
Results: REFLECTIVE ESSAY

* ENG 100A: A change in data collection methods late in the assessment process may have led to ENG 100A students scoring lower on the reflective essay.
Why does reflection matter?

Meta-discursive fluency and rhetorical awareness (potentially) help writers to

• Revise more extensively and strategically
• Collaborate more effectively with other writers
• Approach instructors with greater confidence
• Give and garner more useful feedback
• Adjust to new writing situations
• Identify varying disciplinary expectations
OBSERVATIONS FROM COMP/RHET AND ELI

Jim Henry and Kenton Harsch

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Your Turn . . .

Appreciative Inquiry Activity

What works well?
How can we do more of it?
Steps

1. Inquire (partners, 10 minutes)
2. Share (small groups, 15 minutes)
3. Imagine (small groups, 10 minutes)
4. Discuss and share (full group, 15 minutes)

Appreciative Inquiry
What works well?
How can we do more of it?
1. Inquire
(5 minutes per person)

Interview a partner using the Interview Guide

Appreciative Inquiry
What works well?
How can we do more of it?
2. Share in small groups  
(2 minutes per person)

a) Form a group of 6
b) In 2 minutes, tell your partner’s story and wish to the group.

★ Listen for and write down themes ★

Appreciative Inquiry
What works well? How can we do more of it?
3. Imagine
(10 minutes)

a) As a group, use what you heard to answer this question:

Imagine a classroom in which students learn to write to an identifiable audience and achieve a specific purpose. What would that class look like—e.g., assignments, pedagogy, classroom environment?

b) Record answers on flipchart paper & get ready to share.

Appreciative Inquiry
What works well?
How can we do more of it?
4. Share & Discuss  
(15 minutes)

a) Choose a spokesperson for your group  
b) Let’s share & then discuss!
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Mahalo a nui loa

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