

UHWO Assessment of General Education Requirements AY 2013-14

The General Education Requirements Assessment Plan scheduled the written communication (GELO-1) oral communication (GELO-2) for review during AY 2013-14. All faculty, instructors, and lecturers delivering ENG 100, ENG 200, writing Intensive (WI), and capstone courses were instructed to carry out assessments of student learning. According to the UHWO General Catalog, General Education program courses are only those courses that satisfy the lower-division Diversification and Foundations requirements. However some Writing Intensive (WI) requirements, English 200 and the Focus requirements which are technically Graduation requirements, are useful for assessing student learning. Tables 1 and 2 from the *UHWO Assessment Guidelines* are below.

Table 1 shows alignment of the General Education /Graduation curricular requirements with the General Education outcomes, and Table 2 shows alignment of the General Education outcomes with the revised ILOs.

Table 1 Alignment of the UHWO General Education and graduation requirements with the UHWO General Education Learning outcomes.

General Education Curricular Requirements	General Education Learning Outcomes							
	Written Comm.	Oral Comm.	Symbolic Reason.	Glob/Mult Perspect.	Arts, Hum. & Lit.	H-A-P Issues	Science Literacy	Ethical Issues
Foundation-Global Multi				X				
Foundation-Symbolic			X					
Foundation-Written	X							
D-Arts					X			
D-Humanities					X			
D-Literature					X			
D-Soc. Sci.							X	
D-Biological Science							X	
D-Physical Science							X	
Focus-Hawaii Asia Pacific						X		
Focus-Ethics								X
Focus-Oral		X						
Focus-WI	X							
English 200	X							

Table 2 Alignment of the General Education learning outcomes with the UHWO ILOs.

General Education Outcomes	Effective Communication	Cultural Awareness	Critical Thinking	Disciplinary Knowledge	Community Engagement
Written Communication	X				
Oral Communication	X				
Quantitative & Symbolic Reasoning			X		
Global & Multi-cultural Perspectives		X			
Arts, Hum. & Lit.		X			
H-A-P Issues		X			
Science Literacy				X	
Ethical Issues			X		

Table 3 Summary-Assessment Efforts of General Education Requirements AY 2013-14.

Written Communication Learning Outcome Assessment:

Assessing Faculty	Faculty Rank	Division	Course Alpha	Course Modality
Ms. Nolte	Lecturer	Humanities	ENG 100*	In-person
Ms. Nolte	Lecturer	Humanities	ENG 196*	In-person
Ms. Picard	Lecturer	Humanities	ENG 100	In-person
Dr. Odhiambo	Instructor	Humanities	ENG 200*	In-person
Dr. Hayes	Associate	Education	EDEF 310	Hybrid
Dr. Herman	Professor	Social Sciences	POLS 308	In-person
Dr. Mironesco	Associate	Social Sciences	POLS 316	Online
Dr. Sakuda	Assistant	Business Administration	MGT 370	In-person
Dr. Heller	Professor	Education	EDEE 424	Hybrid
Ms. J. Helfand	Lecturer	Public Administration	PUBA 432	Online
Dr. Major	Associate	Education	EDEF 444	Hybrid
Dr. Cordy	Professor	Humanities	ENG/HPST 478	In-person
Dr. Cox	Assistant	Business Administration	BUSA 486	Hybrid
Dr. Rosenfeld	Associate	Humanities	HIST 491	In-person
Dr. Kamai	Associate	Education	EDEE 492	Hybrid

*assessment of Dimension #5 only

Oral Communication Learning Outcome Assessment:

Dr. Rosenfeld	Associate	Humanities	HIST 231	In-person
Dr. Lee **	Associate	Business Administration	BUSA 307	In-person
Mr. Chaffin**	Lecturer	Business Administration	BUSA 338	In-person
Dr. Sakuda	Assistant	Business Administration	MGT 370	In-person
Dr. Choy*	Professor	Business Administration	BUSA 486	In-person

**not an "O" focus course

Procedures

Written Communication:

The written work of 193 students over fourteen courses in fifteen sections was evaluated in this written communication assessment exercise. Since this was the first assessment ever conducted on the General Education program there were some problems in coordinating the participation of dispersed faculty and also some challenges in motivating tenure-line composition faculty to participate. Though the involvement of two adjuncts and one instructor was a positive achievement, better training in completing their course assessments is needed. Indeed, the processes for getting broader assessment participation by faculty contributing courses to the General Education program need to be reviewed and changed for Fall 2014.

All participating faculty applied the UHWO Written Communication Rubric. As conveyed to faculty, the faculty conducting assessments may change the language in the rubric cells to better fit their discipline (i.e., APA style for the “Genre and Disciplinary Conventions” dimension on the rubric). However the number of dimensions and the 0-2 scale will be consistent throughout the rubric used for assessing the written communication outcome.

Oral Communication:

The oral communication work of 70 students in five courses over six sections was evaluated in this assessment exercise. In one “O” focus class, there was a diverse composition of students with every university division represented. As encountered with the written assessment, there were problems in getting participation of tenure-line faculty to participate. Therefore, two non-“O” focus courses were included in this assessment. After review of procedures for getting more faculty participation, new processes will be implemented for the fall semester assessment of learning outcomes.

All participating faculty applied the UHWO Oral Communication Rubric. As with the written communication rubric, the faculty conducting assessments could change the language in the rubric cells to better fit their discipline (i.e., APA style for the “Genre and Disciplinary Conventions” dimension on the rubric). However the number of dimensions and the 0-2 scale will be consistent throughout the rubric used for assessing the written communication outcome.

After completing the assessments of written and oral communication on their respective courses, the participating faculty convened during the Spring 2014 UHWO Professional Development Day to discuss their course-level and divisional findings. These discussions led to

the identification of written and oral communication strengths and recommendations for program changes to address identified weaknesses in student learning.

Findings

Written Communication:

The written communication VALUE rubric evaluates student writing on five dimensions that include: 1) context and purpose for writing, 2) content development, 3) genre and disciplinary conventions, 4) sources and evidence, and 5) control of syntax and language. The UHWO Assessment Committee modified the original VALUE rubric to score these dimensions on a 3-point scale (0-2) of beginning (0), progressing (1) and advanced (2) performance.

In Table 4 the pre-test versus post-test performance shows that across seven courses the mean scores for each written communication rubric dimension increased between 0.3 to 0.5 rating points from the first to the second assignment. In most of the classes, the pre-, post-assessment comparison involved the first and last written assignments. This increase in writing performance shows that students are learning to write better as they progress through a given course, providing formative evidence on this outcome.

The initial low scores in the Genre and Disciplinary dimension show that students had not developed that profession-specific skill. There was marked improvement in this dimension, as well as the Source dimension. However, some instructors noted that many students were content to use just one source of information as opposed to seeking multiple sources for triangulation of evidence. Overall, the improvements in writing performance are likely due to receiving instructional feedback from the first written assignment, which in turn, improved writing skills for subsequent semester assignments.

In assessment of one of the composition courses, the most marked improvement was in the last dimension, syntax and mechanics. The instructor attributes the higher degree of improvement to a pilot program that involves embedding a qualified student, a Supplemental Instruction Leader (SIL) in the classroom. This SIL conducts after-class reviews and student support for 3 hours per week.

Table 4 Written Communication Rubric Dimension Results

Pre-test vs. Post-test Performance	Written Communication Rubric Dimensions				
	Purpose	Content	Genre	Source	Mechanics
First Assignment	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.0
Second Assignment	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3
In-person vs. Hybrid vs.					

Online Performance					
In-person	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.5
Hybrid	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.5
Online	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.1
Composition vs. Non-Composition					
ENG 100/200	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.5
Non-ENG 100/200	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4

As shown above, there is little difference in ratings between an in-person vs. a course delivery with some online component. The student work in the online-only delivery courses scored slightly lower in two dimensions, Sources and Evidence, and Control of Syntax and Mechanics. Comments on assessment reports for online classes were consistent, noting student weakness in finding and evaluating sources of evidence, and the ability to use language that provides a clear message to readers. Students may benefit from additional tutorials and guidance from library resources to improve their research skills in locating sources. These tutorials could be provided online. If students choose their paper topics earlier and are provided a link to a tutorial specific for their discipline, the strength of their sources may improve. In addition, there is more time for research and editing/revising their work if a significant written assignment is introduced early in the semester.

A comparison between the freshman composition classes and higher level courses is difficult given the small sample size in the ENG 100/200 assessment report results. Specifically there was one complete ENG 100 assessment report which evaluated the work of 16 students. However the writing coordinator met with two ENG lecturers and one ENG instructor (i.e., the ENG assessing faculty) to discuss their assessment findings. As noted, procedures to improve the participation by faculty and provide better training will be implemented for the fall semester. This will improve our assessment efforts, providing us with more evidence of both formative and summative assessments in the development and acquisition of writing skills.

For seven 400-level courses there were average ratings above 1.0 in all five dimensions. Therefore, there is some summative evidence that students are writing well in upper-level courses but there is room for improvement in all dimensions. In particular, all students may benefit from more training in locating resources and practicing language skills that may help communicate meaning to readers more clearly. In future assessments of written communication,

more courses with culminating projects will be included to provide more summative development.

Oral Communication:

The Oral Communication VALUE Rubric evaluates student oral presentation skills on five dimensions that include: 1) Organization, 2) Language, 3) Delivery, 4) Supporting Material, and 5) Central Message. These dimensions were scored on a 3-point scale (0-2) of beginning (0), progressing (1) and advanced (2) performance.

Table 5 shows the results of the oral communication course assessments. Two of the seven courses were “O” focus courses and in these courses, a pre-test, post-test analysis of student oral presentation skills were conducted. Clear progress was made in all five dimensions, with improvement ranging from 0.2 and 0.6 rubric points. There is strong formative evidence in the delivery and central message dimensions. Course level assessments reported that presentation by students early in the semester reflected student difficulty with delivery techniques such as making eye contact, posture, proper use of notes, and non-verbal language. From instructional feedback on early presentations as well as providing other ways for students to develop their oral communication skills, such as student-led discussions, the ability of students to communicate well orally improved.

Table 5 Oral Communication Rubric Dimension Results

Pre-test vs. Post-Test Performance	Oral Communication Rubric Dimensions				
	Organization	Language	Delivery	Materials	Message
First Presentation	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.7
Last Presentation	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.3
“O” Focus Courses vs. Non-“O” Focus Courses					
“O” Focus Courses	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.3
Non “O” Focus	1.1	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.1

Comparing the scores of student presentation work in “O” focus courses to student work in non-“O” courses, it appears that student performance is better in every dimension, with the largest difference in the language and delivery dimensions. In an “O” focus class, there is more opportunity for practicing these particular communication skills. This may indicate that encouragement of more student oral participation and providing assignments that require oral presentations, whether large or small, can help in this communication development area. One of the non-“O” focus classes is a capstone course. Additional evidence is needed from capstone

courses to provide more summative evidence of oral student work. Given prospective changes in the assessment process for the fall semester, broader participation of faculty will provide more evidence.

Conclusions

Written Communication: The assessment findings provide evidence that students benefit from instructional feedback throughout the semester. In some areas, the writing performance of students in online courses was weaker than that of students in classes of different modality. Students need more instruction in developing research skills, locating relevant evidence for their assignments. In addition, more writing assignments would generate additional feedback which could broaden their language usage.

Oral Communication: The students show significant improvement in an “O” focus course over the course of the semester. This formative evidence supports that students improve in their delivery and ability to convey a meaningful message if there is instructional feedback from the instructor throughout the course of the semester.

Recommendations

After discussion among the assessing faculty, the following recommendations to address the weaknesses have been made:

Overall Assessment Process:

1. This semester the UHWO Assessment Committee plans to review processes for getting broader participation by faculty in assessment of all GELO's. This plan will be implemented for assessment of scheduled learning outcomes in the 2014 fall semester.
2. The UHWO Assessment Committee will make plans for the 2014 fall semester to implement better training of faculty, instructors, and lecturers participating in the assessment process. After the 2014 fall semester assessment, the processes of both participation and effectiveness will be reviewed again.

Written Communication:

3. Faculty from each division can work with library personnel to provide students, whether an in-person, hybrid, or online class, a discipline-specific tutorial to help students in locating relevant sources for their research assignment.
4. A pilot program, Student-In-Leadership (SIL), should continue and perhaps, be made a permanent program.

5. Major research papers should be assigned early in the semester to allow time for providing model writing samples, sufficient research, and additional drafts before the final paper due date.

6. Students in need of additional writing instruction should be required to seek help at the No'eau Center for one-to-one, in-person assistance. There should be faculty follow up with No'eau staff to coordinate the efforts.

7. The *GradesFirst* advising system can be utilized to support students who show difficulty in their written assignments.

8. Use the Written Communication Rubric as in guide in instructing students to be more effective writers.

Oral Communication

9. Instructional guidelines can be provided for an oral presentation, including correct and incorrect methods of delivery.

10. Examples/models of a “good” oral presentation can be provided to students, with instructional material on how the presentation meets/exceeds expectations in the oral presentation rubric.

11. Consistent with the first recommendation for improving written communication, a library tutorial will help students locate supporting materials for their oral presentations.

Attachments (18):

Written Communication:

ENG 100_Nolte_Lecturer

ENG 100_Picard_Lecturer

ENG 200_Odhiambo_Instructor

EDEF 310_Hayes_Associate

POLS 308 and 316_Herman_Professor and Mironesco_Associate

MGT 370_Sakuda_Assistant

EDEE 424_Heller_Professor

PUBA 432_J Helfand_Lecturer

EDEF 444_Major_Associate

ENG_HPST 478_Cordy_Professor

BUSA 486_Cox_Assistant

HIST 491_Rosenfeld_Associate

EDEE 492_Kamai_Associate

Oral Communication:

HIST 231_Rosenfeld_Associate_Oral

BUSA_FIN 307_Lee_Associate_Oral

BUSA 338_Chaffin_Lecturer_Oral
MGT 370_Sakuda_Assistant_Oral
BUSA 486_Choy_Professor_Oral

Reported By: Sharon K. Lee, General Education Representative on the UHWO Assessment
Committee