

## AWC Written Communication Embedded Writing – Spring 2009

In 2007-08 33 essays for Embedded Writing were gathered. The LEAP committee acknowledged the low response rate which would not produced a valid report. The LEAP Committee recommended in spring 2009 (with approval of the English Department) that we assess writing in English 101 courses using the same General Education outcomes and tools for assessment.

### Learning Outcomes

Written Communication outcomes state that learners provide writing that is clear, with a specific thesis and awareness of audience; fully develops examples to support thesis in a logical, coherent manner; demonstrates original thinking, depth of analysis, and comprehension of material used; and that shows high proficiency in standard English grammar, spelling and punctuation.

### Tools for Assessment and Criteria for Success

Faculty in English 101 courses scored the students essays that were submitted as their class finals and the scores were then forward to the division office. The criterion for success in 2008-09 was set the same as our General education Written Communication as: 100% of the writing artifacts evaluated with a 5 point locally developed rubric will receive a score of 3 or higher.

### Data Collection

180 essays were scored by faculty in English 101. The written communication rubric consists of 5 points from 1 to 5; however, results received included minus and pluses (-, +). Furthermore, the data did not have student identifiable data which does not allows us to provide an in-depth study of student performance. The data chart below was provided by the English faculty to the Assessment and Program Review Office.

### Assessment Results

Highlighted area indicates writing artifacts score of -3 or higher. If we are to look at all 3's regardless of – or + , 122 students met the criteria for success; however, eliminating the -3 from the scoring leaves 115 students meeting the criteria for success while 65 students fell at -3 and below.

Score:	Number of Essays
Number of Scores equivalent to 1	8
Number of Scores equivalent to -2	1
Number of Scores equivalent to 2	47
Number of Scores equivalent to +2	2
Number of Scores equivalent to -3	7
Number of Scores equivalent to 3	66
Number of Scores equivalent to +3	9
Number of Scores equivalent to -4	4
Number of Scores equivalent to 4	30
Number of Scores equivalent to +4	0
Number of Scores equivalent to 5	6
Total	180

### Data Trends in Embedded Writing

In spring 2008, the results forwarded to the Assessment and Program Review Office (above) were conducted differently than in the past and a trended data comparison could not be developed but analyzed. The writing artifacts and score sheets were not available in an effort to re-run this data. The information, though limited, still provides us with data to analyze. In spring 2009, 64% of the students met the criteria for success.

#### N = 180 in spring 2009:

64% (N=115) met the criteria for success at or above a 3; 36% fell below the criteria

#### N = 33 in spring 2008:

In averaging all scores, all 33 students fell below the criteria for success in each outcome.

1 student scored 5's in each outcome

24% (n=8) of the students scored 4 or above

42% (n=14) of the students scored below a 3

42% (n=14) of the students scored below a 3 in all categories: thesis, thesis support, analysis, comprehension / punctuation / spelling.

#### N = 93 in spring 2007:

The average score of the 93 students scored at or above the criteria for success in each outcome

2 students scored 5's in each outcome

24% (n=22) of the students scored 4 or above

25% (n=23) scored below a 3

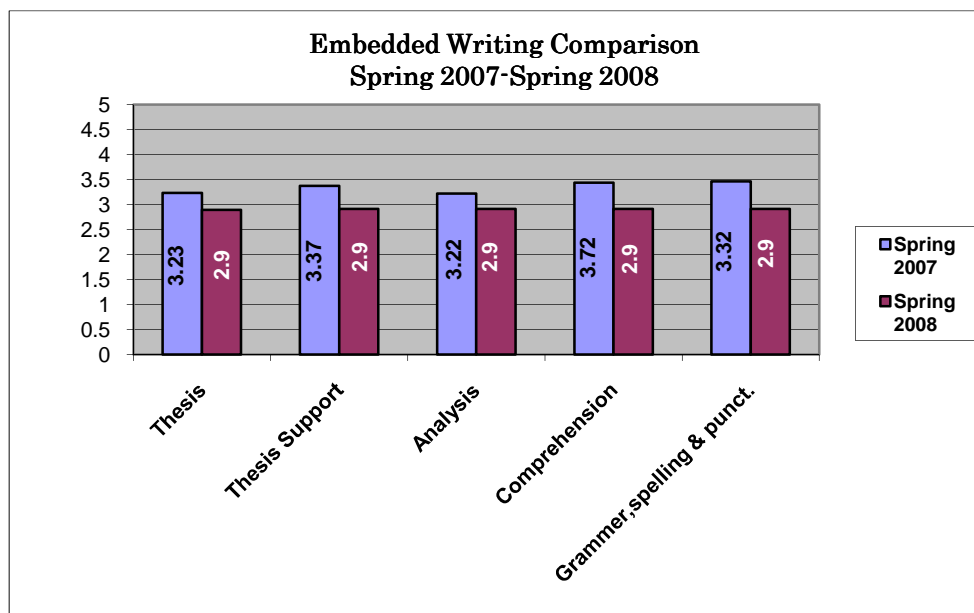
Thesis and depth analysis were the lowest scores among students.

26% (n=24) of the students scored below a 3 in Thesis

23% (n=21) of the students scored below a 3 in Thesis Support

25% (n=23) of the students scored below a 3 in Analysis

14% (n=13) of the students scored below a 3 in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling



## Use of Results

(The use of results for embedded writing is the same as for the general education written communication.)

- (1) Rubric: In January 2009, the Learning Excellence Assessment Process (LEAP) committee recommended and voted to use the revised Written Communication (**Appendix #**) rubric for AY2008-09 that was used by the English Department and replace the eight year old version currently in use. The revised rubric remains as a 5 point scale (5 to 1). It had been discussed throughout the LEAP meetings that there were missing elements in the current rubric and needed revision. A revised rubric was used for scoring the 2008-09 essays. replaced the old rubric was 'Organization' and 'Development' as these areas are important in any written material. The 'thesis support' of the old rubric became 'Organization / Paragraph Development' in the new rubric. This was needed to be able to score the artifacts organizational and developmental structure on paragraphs and transitions. In the old rubric, 'Analysis' and 'Comprehension' became 'Analytical Content' in the revised rubric. The writing artifacts needed to demonstrate analytical ability with original thinking. 'Grammar, Spelling & Punctuation' in the old rubric was revised to 'Mechanics & Syntax'. Mechanics & Syntax encompasses grammar, spelling, and punctuation as well as sentence variety and clarity which did not exist in the old rubric.
- (2) Rubric Training: During the 2008-2009 academic year, score teams received training by English faculty members before scoring the artifacts so that teams would have a better understanding of this transition and as well as how to apply the newly revised GE Written Communication Rubric. Update:
- (3) Explanations to the rubric were added during summer 2009 to raise the level of faculty and student awareness as to the expectation of the writing achievement.
- (4) Dissemination of the Written Communication results were shared during an *Assessment Conversation Retreat* and will be to Lead Faculty with recommendation to also share these results during Fall 2009 Faculty Start-up.
- (5) Develop a website for faculty to use as a writing resource. Website will be developed by the Assessment and Program Review Office in collaboration with the English department.  
UPDATE-July 2009: Writing Resources: A **Writing Resources** webpage was developed in collaboration with the English Department and the Assessment and Program Review Office. The purpose is to 'house and store' writing resources that could be useful for faculty and students. The Writing Resources page is housed in the CTE Website at [www.azwester.edu/cte](http://www.azwester.edu/cte). An explanation sheets title, **Rubric with Explanations** was developed to better assist faculty in the use of the recently revised rubric (Appendix #). This is also in place in the Writing Resources webpage. In addition to the *rubric with explanations* sheet placed in the CTE website, the recently revised **Student Writing Guide** is now posted in the Writing Resources webpage and we completely eliminated the traditional copied handouts to an electronic version. This guide can also be found in the Writing Resources webpage. Web links are currently in place at various AWC websites such as the Academic Library and Student Success Center for students to access the guide. Faculty members have reported that the link to the *Student Writing Guide* have also been posted on their Blackboard shells or have sent the link to their students. The CTE Writing Resources page has become a housing unit for a variety of writing resources for faculty as well as students. Faculty can now locate **samples of writing** for their courses as well as **tips on evaluating student writing**.
- (6) Offer professional development workshops to both full-time and associate faculty in writing, exposure to the writing resources webpage and tips.
- (7) Update-September 2009: As a result of the CTE professional development workshops on "Writing Matters: Improving student learning outcomes in writing" we learned that faculty member use rubrics in their current grading. The Office of Assessment and Program Review conducted a call-out for rubrics via email to faculty and posted the rubrics at the Writing Resources webpage. A collection of rubrics that are currently being

used throughout different departments and disciplines at AWC are now posted on the website to demonstrate and share how other departments have embraced Writing Matters throughout the community.

- (8) AWC Assessment Academy Team (made up of members of the LEAP Committee) attended the Higher Learning Commissions Assessment Academy -February 2009 Cohort and developed a student project to focus on AWC's General Education Outcomes. The following **Responsibilities and Timeline** were developed and **Obstacles and Solutions** were also identified and can be located in the *Learning Outcomes Annual Report 2008-2009*.
- (9) As one of the recommendations made by the AWC Assessment Academy Team, we followed through on a retreat concept with the support of the LEAP Committee and in May 2009 a half-day *Assessment Conversations Retreat* was held off campus at the AWC Entrepreneurial Center. Results of the conversations retreat and action items can be found in the *Learning Outcomes Annual Report 2008-2009*.
- (10) As a result of the work in Items #8 and 9 of the AWC Academy Team and the Assessment Conversations with faculty and administration present, a recommendation to the Vice President of Learning Services was to declare a year of writing for the academic year 2009-2010. In July 2009, in collaboration with faculty from the English department, the 2009-2010 Academic Year will be titled, "**Writing Matters: Writers with Purpose, Writers with Voice.**"