

FOCUS ON WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

General Education Assessment at Lindenwood

General education assessment is a key measure of institutional effectiveness because it helps an institution substantiate broad claims it makes about student learning. For example, Lindenwood's Institutional Learning Outcome 3.1 asserts that "Lindenwood graduates are effective writers." General education assessment provides one way to illuminate this claim by assessing how well students are achieving this outcome during their general education program. Importantly, general education assessment provides actionable insight toward continuous improvement, because it shows us where student learning needs to improve in order to achieve our learning goal.

Lindenwood University has four institutional learning outcomes (ILOs), each with multiple components. Lindenwood students develop and demonstrate these ILOs through general education coursework, within their majors, and by participating in co-curricular experiences. All general education courses are mapped to at least two ILO components, and at least one assignment within each course is identified by the instructor for institutional assessment purposes.

2016

The ILOs are approved, and a new general education assessment process is piloted within Canvas.

2017

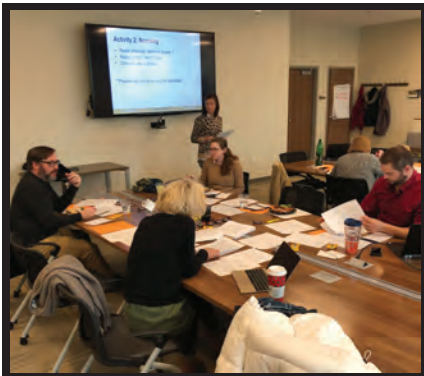
The general education assessment pilot is rolled out to all general education courses.

2018

Key performance indicators are developed, and assessment occurs in all general education courses by the respective course instructor.

2019

A Community of Practice model is introduced to provide a focused approach and to improve the reliability of the assessment data.



Community of Practice Model of Assessment

A community of practice is a group who has a collective interest in and desire for improvement. This approach to assessment enhances the validity of assessment data, builds an advocacy network across campus, and aligns with national best practices for general education assessment. The first community of practice was formed in Fall 2019 to focus on Institutional Learning Outcome 3.1: Written Communication.

Community of Practice for Written Communication

Pictured from left to right

Andrew Millians, School of Arts, Communications, and Media

Susan Edele, Writing Center

Elizabeth MacDonald, Library

Kristen Norwood, Lindenwood Learning Academy

Jessica Randolph, School of Health Sciences

Lynda Leavitt, School of Education

Elizabeth Fleitz, School of Humanities

Lauren McCoy, School of Humanities

Bethany Alden-Rivers, Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Not pictured

Laura Wehmer-Callahan, Plaster School of Business and Entrepreneurship

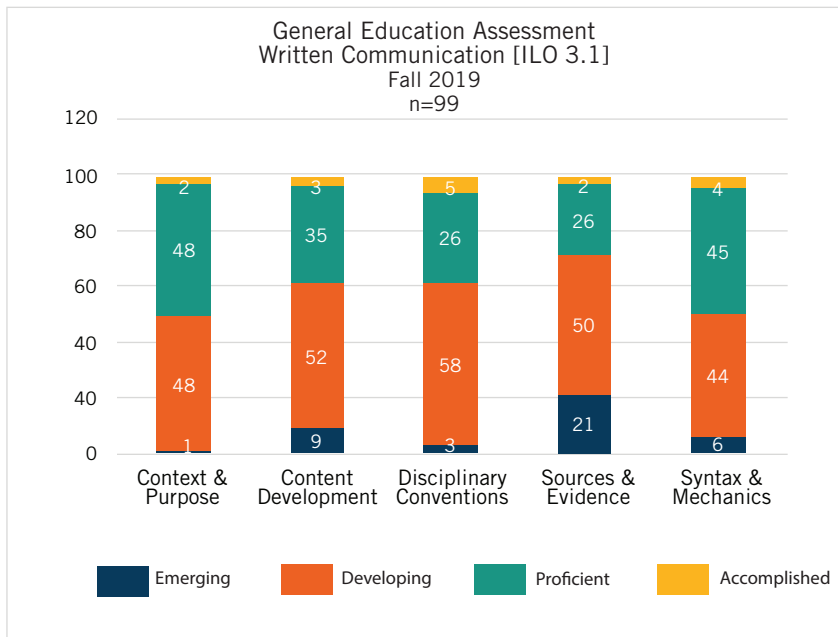
Peter Weitzel, Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Megan Woltz, School of Sciences



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Results



Methodology

The Sample

A stratified sample of 100 assignments from ENGL 17000 (Spring 2019) was collected from Canvas and anonymized. Of these, 99 were deemed usable for this study.

The Rubric

During a workshop in October, faculty from the English Department adapted the VALUE Rubric for Written Communication. The revised rubric uses a four-point scale to score five criteria.

The Data

Each artifact was scored by two different members of the Community of Practice using the new rubric. In 11% of the cases, the gap between the scores was greater than one, so a third member was used.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Broad Themes from Data Workshops

- More coordination is needed between the general education assessment team and course instructors to ensure there is clear communication with and support for instructors developing assignments that align to the new Written Communication Rubric.
- It would be helpful for students (and other stakeholders) to provide input into the rubric and the assessment process.
- It may be helpful to review the English placement process and systems for providing additional or developmental support to students.
- It will be important to consider how upper-division courses help students further develop and demonstrate their ability to write effectively.
- Working together, we need to determine an internal benchmark for student learning, i.e., which point on the scale we expect students to demonstrate after they complete ENGL 17000.

Contact

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What's Next?

- 1 The Community of Practice for Written Communication will score upper-division (300 or 400 level coursework) student artifacts in Spring 2020.
- 2 Results from written communication assessment will inform "The Year of Effective Writing," a 2019/20 project that focuses on assessing and improving student learning toward ILO 3.1.
- 3 Working with campus partners, an action plan will be developed to address the themes that emerged from the November 2019 data workshops.