

Assessment of Competence in Written Communication

Seaver General Education Learning Innovators

2014-2015

WASCUC in 2013 revised their accreditation criteria and created a new accreditation handbook. As part of this revision they now require institutions to measure 5 core competencies— writing, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy and critical thinking. All of the core competencies must be measured at the point of graduation. In 2014-2015 Seaver College assessed the Core Competency of Written Communication with a twofold process. This included the assessment of “Writing Intensive” courses and senior level, program specific writing samples. This report presents the findings of this assessment. Further analysis and plans for “closing the loop” will follow after this report is distributed and discussed by faculty and administrators.

The Writing Intensive courses, which were major specific and often upper division were evaluated and scored using an adaptation of the AAC&U VALUE rubric by members of GELI, our general education assessment committee. Programs also assessed writing at the point of graduation. Each of the majors at Seaver College were asked to evaluate written work in their program as part of their annual assessment reports (which are completed by program-specific faculty). Faculty were particularly encouraged to use writing samples from their senior level students and to aim for a sample size of twenty percent of their total class. The AAC&U VALUE Rubric or an adaptation of it was used as the tool for measurement.

Training

Seaver faculty and students hosted two measurement workshops on assessing writing competency, hosted on November 19, 2014 and February 18, 2015. These workshops, attended by 39 and 60 people respectively (including two student members of our General Education Assessment committee in attendance at both), focused on the process of assessing writing with particular emphasis on the importance of collaboration, benchmarking, and norming. Faculty were introduced to and encouraged to adapt the AAC&U VALUE rubric on written communication. A calibration session held at the second workshop demonstrated how to establish inter-rater reliability and benchmarks.

In their annual reports, assessors were encouraged to use student work from the capstone course in order to assess the competency at the point of graduation. If no capstone course existed for the major, then assessors were encouraged to use writing samples from seniors in upper division courses.

This report provides overall results for Seaver College along with summaries from 15 majors as a representative sample across divisions.

Sample and Method:

Samples collected for GELI assessment of writing intensive courses:

One hundred and sixty eight (168) students participated in the assessment from the programs. The sample size was approximately 10 percent of the student population. In the future when this assessment is repeated a sample size of at least 20% will be the goal. Forty-three of the samples included in this report were from courses which meet the general education requirements. Some of the students in the General Education courses were not seniors. Since we had this data we included it more as a point of interest but with the understanding WASC expects the core competencies to be assessed at the point of graduation.

In some instances the raters scored a section “NA” if they believed the category was not applicable to the assignment, so some categories have a lower total number than the total number of samples rated. A dimension for diversity was added to the rubric and if the assignment allowed for this measurement it was also assessed. While this is not part of the Value rubric for written communication, it was added as a possible category due to our institution’s increased interest in promoting diversity.

Samples collected for the major reports:

A total of 245 student samples were assessed in program specific reports as part of each program’s annual review. By major, the sample sizes were:

Accounting	4
Business Administration	16
International Business	6
Communication	6 (intercultural com) 7 (rhetoric and leadership)
Journalism	21
Public Relations	7
Theatre	5
Art History	7
Film	18
History	12
Creative Writing	8
Liberal Arts	10
International Studies	14
Biology	20
Chemistry	13
Psychology	61
Sociology	10

The Value rubrics have a 4 point scale and 5 dimensions. The dimensions include: Framework for Writing, Content Development, Genre and Disciplinary Conventions, Syntax and Mechanics and Sources of Evidence. “Framework for Writing” evaluates the students’ understanding of context, audience, and purpose of the written work. “Content Development” is concerned with the content of the paper, specifically the students’ development and exploration of relevant ideas and arguments. “Genre and Disciplinary Conventions” scores students based on how well they follow the formal/informal rules for

writing in that specific genre or discipline. “Syntax and Mechanics” scores students on their mastery of the mechanics of language, specifically grammar and syntax. “Sources and Evidence” evaluates whether students use credible, high quality, and relevant sources, as well as how skillfully they incorporate those sources into their writing. The optional “Diversity” category evaluates the level of sensitivity with which students address issues of class, race, religion, or gender.

The expectation of the Value Rubrics for undergraduate students is to score a 2 to 3 out of the 4 point scale. Graduate students and alumni are expected to score at least a 3 and 4 on the value rubrics. This type of assessment is performed to identify trends for further examination, it does not serve as a summative form of assessment due to the nature of the assessment with variability among the assignments, small sample sizes and many different people scoring assignments. Having recognized this, the overall scores did not show large variability.

Overall trends:

- Framework for Writing was the strongest category.
- HUTE had the highest scores (the division includes several majors which focus on writing)
- Scores averaged between 2.5 to 3.0.

The scoring for this core competency was in the expected range with enough consistency to feel confident that Pepperdine undergraduate students are achieving these outcomes. This core competency will be repeated in the spring of 2019 but with the use of LiveText software we should have longitudinal data.

RESULTS: RUBRIC ON WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SCORED BY GELI

Division and Program	Number of Students	Average Score of Framework for Writing	Average Score of Content Development	Average Score of Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Average Score of Syntax and Mechanics	Average Score of Sources and Evidence	Average Score of Diversity
COM	14	2.93	2.57	2.86	2.57	3.07	2.67
Communication	14	2.93	2.57	2.86	2.57	3.07	2.67
FA	22	2.91	2.55	2.50	2.32	2.73	2.67
Music	6	2.67	3.00	2.67	2.17	3.17	2.50
Theatre	16	3.00	2.38	2.44	2.38	2.56	3.00
HUTE	26	3.35	3.08	3.35	3.04	2.96	3.25
Creative Writing	7	3.43	2.86	3.29	2.86	2.60	4.00
English	8	3.25	3.00	3.25	2.88	2.88	3.00
Film Studies	7	3.43	3.43	3.43	3.14	3.14	3.00
Philosophy	4	3.25	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.25	--
ISL	12	3.08	2.92	2.67	2.67	2.92	3.00
International Studies	12	3.08	2.92	2.67	2.67	2.92	3.00
NASC	19	2.89	2.61	2.68	2.42	2.00	2.00
Chemistry	1	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	--
Nutritional Science	10	3.00	2.60	2.70	2.20	2.20	2.00
Sports Medicine	8	2.88	2.57	2.63	2.75	1.67	--
SOSC	32	3.06	2.66	2.88	2.56	2.77	3.50
Political Science	11	2.91	2.45	2.73	2.55	2.73	3.00
Psychology	8	2.63	2.13	2.75	2.50	2.71	2.00
Sociology	13	3.46	3.15	3.08	2.62	2.85	3.75
Grand Total	125	3.06	2.73	2.86	2.61	2.77	3.13

General Education							
Division and Program	Number of Students	Average Score of Framework for Writing	Average Score of Content Development	Average Score of Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Average Score of Syntax and Mechanics	Average Score of Sources and Evidence	Average Score of Diversity
COM	7	2.50	2.00	2.67	2.00	2.00	2.75
Communication GE	7	2.50	2.00	2.67	2.00	2.00	2.75
NASC	26	3.08	2.80	3.00	2.62	2.62	--
Chemistry GE	20	3.25	2.95	3.10	2.65	2.82	--
GE (NASC)	6	2.50	2.33	2.67	2.50	1.75	--
SOSC	10	2.67	2.00	2.22	2.60	2.00	1.00
Psychology GE	10	2.67	2.00	2.22	2.60	2.00	1.00
Grand Total	43	2.90	2.49	2.78	2.52	2.39	2.40

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REPORTS

Business Division:

The business division assessed writing competency using the capstone course “Business Policy, Strategy, and Ethics” (BA 497) which is the capstone for all three business majors (Business Administration, Accounting, and International Business).

Method:

- Policy Capstone Course was used to collect student samples.
- Professors Constance James and Ben Postlethwaite and a student developed the rubric.
- The Written Communication Core Competency as well as the Business Administration Division’s PLO #3. PLO #3 as it pertains to writing is: “To produce clearly written, concise analyses.”

The SLOs related to writing for the Business Policy, Strategy and Ethics courses (BA 497.01 and 02) are:

1. Students will write analytical reports on the internal and external analysis of a corporation using their knowledge of different business disciplines including accounting, human resources, marketing, business law, and finance.
2. Students will work in groups to write a complete strategic analysis of a company’s business that is well researched including mission, vision and values; internal analysis; external analysis; and financial analysis. Students will present their final analyses at a professional level.

Assignment: In the first week of class, students receive their first case assignment. Their task was to write a strategic management analysis and recommendation paper for a multinational corporation (e.g. Apple Inc., Chipotle Corporation, or Netflix Corporation). The actual companies vary depending on the class and/or professor; however, students in each section wrote on the same corporation. The writing assignment includes a cover memo, executive summary, summary of analytical charts, analytical charts (Situation Analysis, Core Competence Analysis, financial ratios, etc.), strategic recommendations and conclusions. The requirements for the paper include proper citing and use of quality sources, including 10ks, Standard and Poor’s/Capital IQ Reports, Moody’s/Mergent On-line, and Harvard Business School cases. Requirements also include a complete bibliography.

Sample Size: Of the 125 graduating seniors, sixty-six (66) were Business Administration Majors, twenty-nine (29) were International Business Majors, and eighteen (18) were Accounting Majors... roughly 20% of the majors were assessed using individual student papers in the direct assessment. The breakdown of students assessed by major were:

Accounting – 4
Business Administration – 16
International Business – 6

Evaluation tools: Each paper was evaluated using a rubric. Each paper received a score for analysis, strategic recommendations, professionalism/completeness, research, and mechanics and syntax. Scores were broken down into four categories: excels, above average, meets (standards), and below (standards). It is expected that there will be a normal bell shaped curve for all majors combined, resulting in 10% of the students being excellent with perfect or near perfect scores and 10% of the students falling below standards. Of the remaining categories, 40% are expected to be above average and 40% are expected to meet standards. Given the small sample size, the results for each individual major are expected to be skewed.

The Rubric:

The business division used a modification of the AAC&U VALUE rubric.

We used a 7-point Likert scale as opposed to the 4 point scale in the AAC&U Rubric. This modification was made after an initial test of the rubric for inter-rater reliability. Results showed that inter-rater reliability was close to 90% with a 7-point scale. The faculty and student modified the rubric. This modified rubric was used to assess twenty-six student papers for the three Business Administration Majors: Accounting, Business Administration and International Business.

Scoring

Using the rubric, we gave each paper a score. Based on averages and standard deviations, 4.0 and from 1.5 to 2.0 were plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean. Papers that received a score of 4.0 out of 4.0 were considered to “excel.” Papers with a score of 3.0 to 3.5 were considered “above average.” Papers with a score of 2.5 were considered to “meet” the standards. Papers with a score of 1.0 to 2.0 were considered “below” standards.

Results:

For all **26 majors assessed**, only one student (4%) received a perfect score and three students (12%) fell below a 2.1, based on averages of all five items on the rubric. Of the remaining students eleven (42%) met expectations and eleven were above average. This result is within the norms expected for the first paper. Overall, students performed best on analysis as emphasized in the Business Administration Division major programs and second best on strategy and professionalism/completeness. Research skills and mechanics are last. (See Chart 1 for summaries of results for all majors.)

Overall, the four Accounting Majors performed well on all areas of the rubric, with no students falling below expectations. In general, Accounting Majors also perform well in this course and have a higher percentage of honors students than the other majors. Nonetheless, results may be skewed by such a small sample size. (See Chart 2 for Accounting results.)

The sixteen Business Administration Majors performed best on analysis and strategy. The results in Chart 3 show that there is room for improvement in professionalism/completeness, research, and writing mechanics and syntax.

Finally, the six International Business Majors in Chart 4 performed best on analysis, followed by research and professionalism/completeness. Their worst performance was in strategy, followed by writing mechanics and syntax.

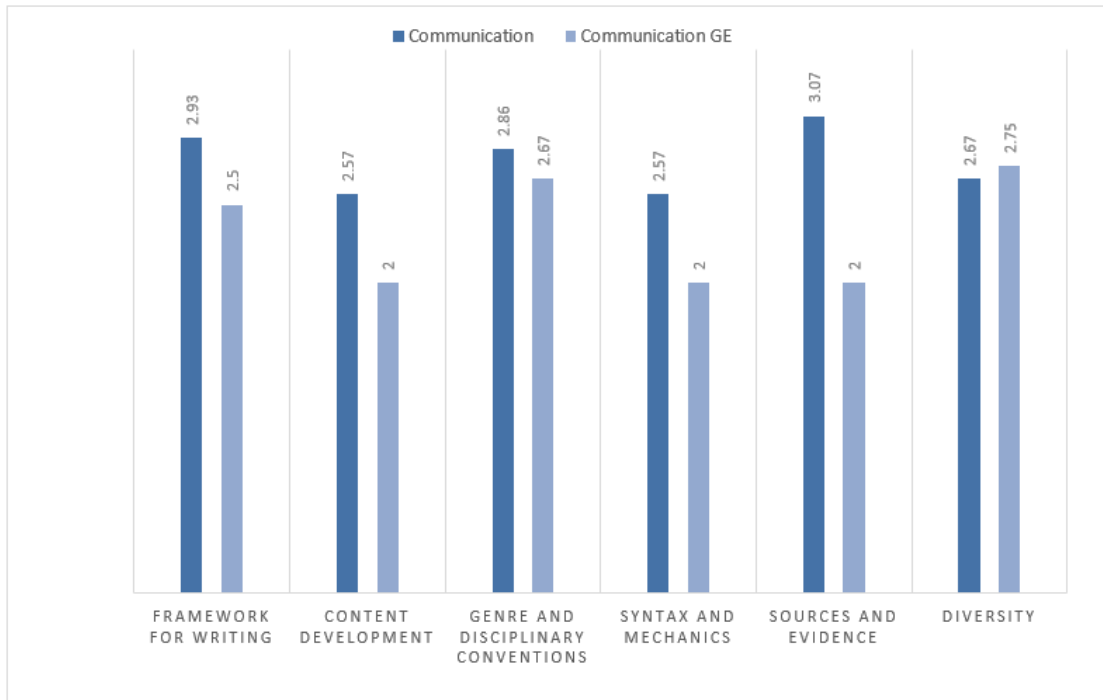
Conclusion: Based on this assessment, the assessors proposed the following action items to improve writing in the business division:

1. *Working with the technology department to put together writing modules.* In previous years, lectures which show students how to prepare professional reports have improved the professional quality of their work. With the ability to create these modules online and to use them both in class and outside of class, using writing modules is expected to improve professionalism and mechanics.
2. *Including a business writing class in the curriculum.* A business writing class would have significantly more time to focus on mechanics and different styles used in analytical versus research papers. It would also help students in writing cover memos and could address issues such as writing cover letters for jobs and building resumes.
3. *Working with the faculty in the division to develop a set of common standards for business writing.* Consideration would include using Chicago Turabian in all of the major classes, and developing a common rubric for assessing business writing.
4. *Improving in class exercises in the Business Policy, Strategy and Ethics Course.* As the syllabus and pedagogies for teaching Policy align, faculty are able to meet and develop common assignments and in class exercises to improve business writing.

Communication Division:

From GELI assessment:

Average scores in Written Communication Rubric – Communication Division



Communication Division	Communication	Communication GE	Total
Framework for Writing	2.93	2.50	2.80
Content Development	2.57	2.00	2.40
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2.86	2.67	2.80
Syntax and Mechanics	2.57	2.00	2.40
Sources and Evidence	3.07	2.00	2.75
Diversity	2.67	2.75	2.71
Number of Students	14	7	21

Communication Major:

The communication faculty explain the role of written communication in their major:

“The core competencies of oral and written communication are at the heart of everything we do in this division. We teach students how to communicate in the most appropriate manner for a given audience. Our curriculum covers a variety of forms of written communication including research papers, journal and/or blog entries, news, corporate reports, and more. We also teach students how to give speeches

and how to best communicate interpersonally. We cover online communication in courses such as COM 590: Social Media, and television and film in courses such as COM 512: Intercultural Media Literacy.”

The communication major is made up of several “sequences” from which students can choose. These sequences assessed their writing competency separately:

Intercultural Communication Sequence

Assessors: Milt Shatzer, Sarah Stone Watt, Charles Choi

Methodology/Sample Size: COM 515 was chosen as the class to use for this assessment because that class is the capstone for Intercultural Communication majors. Reflection papers from six seniors (100% of seniors in the major) were analyzed using the AAC&U value rubrics for written communication and critical thinking. Average scores for Drs. Shatzer, Stone Watt, and Choi were compared and discussed to make sure that each rater was no more than one point different on any category in the rubric. One area of the written communication rubric (genre and disciplinary conventions), and one area of the critical thinking rubric (conclusions and related outcomes), resulted in more than a one point difference. We discussed this issue and determined that the problem was likely a result of unclear expectations in these areas of the original assignment. This will be revised in the assignment in future years.

Average Scores and Differences Multiple Reviewers

Critical Thinking	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5	Paper 6
Explanation of issues	2.16 (2,2,2.5)	1 (1,1,1)	2 (2,2,2)	3.83 (4, 4,3.5)	3.5 (4,3,3.5)	3.33 (3,4,3)
Evidence	2.66 (3,2,3)	1.66 (2,1,2)	2.33 (3,2,2)	3.66 (4,3.5,3.5)	3.33 (4,3,3)	3.33 (4,3,3)
Influence of context and assumptions	2.33 (2,2,3)	1.33 (2,1,1)	2.66 (3,3,2)	3.16 (3,3,3.5)	3.33 (3,3,4)	3.66 (4,4,3)
Student's position	2.66 (3,2,3)	1.66 (2,1,2)	1.66 (2,2,1)	3.66 (4,3,4)	3.5 (3,3.5,4)	3 (3,3,3)
Conclusions and related outcomes	2 (2,1,3)	1 (1,1,1)	1.66 (1,2,2)	2.66 (2,2,4)	3.5 (3,4,3.5)	2.5 (2,2,3.5)

50% of Intercultural Communication majors scored a 3 or higher on all parts of the rubric except for “conclusions.” We would like to see this number increase in future years to 80% and have discussed how to better scaffold assignments in earlier courses to prepare students to write more advanced reflection papers. We suspect that clearer guidelines on the assignment will also improve the student responses.

Written Communication	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5	Paper 6
Context of and Purpose for Writing	2.33 (2,2,3)	1.66 (2,2,1)	3 (3,3,3)	3.66 (3,4,4)	3.66 (3,4,4)	3.83 (4,4,3.5)
Content Development	2.16 (2,2,2.5)	1.33 (2,1,1)	1.66 (1,2,2)	4 (4,4,4)	3.66 (4,4,3)	3.5 (3,4,3.5)
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2 (3,1,2)	1.66 (3,1,1)	2.66 (3,2,3)	3.33 (4,2,4)	3.83 (4,4,3.5)	3.83 (4,4,3.5)
Sources and Evidence	1.83 (1,2,2.5)	.66 (1,0,1)	1.66 (1,2,2)	3.33 (3,3,4)	3.16 (3,3,3.5)	2 (1,2,3)
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	2.66 (3,2,3)	1.33 (2,1,1)	3 (3,3,3)	3.66 (4,4,3)	3.5 (3,4,3.5)	3.66 (4,4,3)

50% of Intercultural Communication majors scored a 3 or higher on all parts of the rubric except for “sources and evidence.” Since this was a reflection paper, there may have been confusion about what types of sources were appropriate. The assignment will be updated to reflect this in future years. Since the intercultural communication major tends to attract higher numbers of international students, who sometimes have lower quality writing in English, the quality of written communication can vary greatly. We would like to see at least 75% of our majors achieve a 3 or better in future years.

Rhetoric & Leadership Sequence

Assessors: John Jones, Gary Selby, Sarah Stone Watt, students: Chelsea Harris, Marcelo Aldape, Bailey Blaise, Jared Welker, Brent Ludlow, Jeremy Schoenberg, Jessica Sims

Evidence: COM 588, Rhetorical Criticism, was chosen as the class to use for this assessment because it is the capstone for the Rhetoric and Leadership major. The course is built around the completion of a major rhetorical analysis of a communication artifact of the student’s choosing, which includes a reconstruction of the rhetor’s situation, a literature review that lays out the project’s theoretical perspective, a descriptive analysis of the artifact, and a critical analysis of the artifact, with conclusions and implications.

Methodology/Sample Size: Papers from seven students (6 seniors and 1 junior; 5 R & L majors, 2 minors) were analyzed using rubrics adapted from the AAC&U value rubrics for written communication and critical thinking. Papers were scored by Drs. Jones, Selby, and Stone Watt, as well as by students. Each cell in the table below includes a mean score from the two faculty raters, the scores of each faculty rater separately (in parentheses), and a mean score from student raters who also rated the papers using the same rubrics. All scores on the Critical Thinking rubric between the faculty raters were within one point or less of each other at an 83% level. Faculty scores on the Written Communication rubric were within one point or less of each other at a 91% level. Student ratings were generally one point or more higher than faculty ratings, which may reflect that they have a less rigorous or complete understanding of what constitutes excellence in writing and critical thinking compared to their faculty.

Average Scores and Differences with Multiple Reviewers

Critical Thinking	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5	Paper 6	Paper 7
Explanation of Issues	4 (4,4,4) SR: 4	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 4	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 3	3 (2,3,4) SR: 4	3.9 (3.5, 4,4) SR: 3	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 3	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3
Evidence	4 (4,4,4) SR: 3	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3	2.3 (2,2,3) SR: 4	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3.5	3.3 (3.5, 4,2.5) SR: 4	2.5 (3,2,2.5) SR: 3.5	2.5 (2,3,2.5) SR: 3
Influence of context and assumptions	4 (4,4,4) SR: 4	2.3 (2,2,3) SR: 3.5	2.7 (2,3,3) SR: 3	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3.5	3.5 (3.5,3,4) SR: 3	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 4	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3
Student's position	3.7 (4,4,3) SR: 3.5	2.7 (2,3,3) SR: 3	1.7 (2,2,1) SR: 3	1.8 (1.5,2,2) SR: 4	3.2 (3.5,3,3) SR: 3	2.7 (3,2,3) SR: 3	2.7 (2,3,3) SR: 3
Conclusions and related outcomes	4 (4,4,4) SR: 3	2.3 (3,2,2) SR: 4	1.7 (2,2,1) SR: 4	2 (2,3,1) SR: 3	3.5 (3.5,3,4) SR: 2	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 3	2.5 (2,3,2.5) SR: 2

43% of Rhetoric and Leadership students scored 2.5 or higher on 5/6 of the rubric categories; overall, 66% of the rubric cells were 2.5 or above. When we averaged scores of each category, it was clear that the students understand the general role of explaining issues and describing the overall artifact that they are critically analyzing (3.3/4). However, they are less able to formulate a clear thesis or claim (2.6/5) and offer evidence (2.7/5), examine assumptions (2.9), and discuss implications (2.7/5 each).

We would like to see this number increase in the future to 75% at the level 3 or higher, and are currently discussing how to build more instruction and practice on developing and supporting claims in oral and written communication in students' earlier classes. We will set a date in July 2015 for the Rhetoric and Leadership faculty to meet in order to discuss and develop plans for implementing argumentation more systemically within the curriculum.

Written Communication	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Paper 4	Paper 5	Paper 6	Paper 7
Context of and Purpose for Writing	4 (4,4,4) SR: 4	3.7 (3,4,4) SR: 4	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 3.5	3 (2,4,3) SR: 3	3.7 (3, 4,4) SR: 3.5	3.7 (3,4,4) SR: 3	3 (2,4,3) SR: 3.3
Content Development	4 (4,4,4) SR: 4	2.7 (3,2,3) SR: 3.25	2.7 (2,3,3) SR: 3.5	1.7 (2,2,1) SR: 4	3.7 (4,4,3) SR: 3.5	3 (3,3,3) SR: 3.5	3 (2,4,3) SR: 3
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	3.7 (4,3,4) SR: 3.5	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3.5	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3.5	1.7 (2,2,1) SR: 4	3 (3,4,2) SR: 3	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 3	2.7 (2,4,2) SR: 3
Sources and Evidence	4 (4,4,4) SR: 4	2.3 (2,2,3) SR: 4	3 (2,3,4) SR: 3.5	2 (2,2,2) SR: 4	3.8 (3.5,4,4) SR: 3.5	3.3 (3,3,4) SR: 4	2.7 (2,3,3) SR: 3.7
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	3 (3,3,3) SR: 3.5	2.3 (2,2,3) SR: 3	2 (2,2,2) SR: 3.5	1.5 (1.5,2,1) SR: 3	3.7 (4,3,4) SR: 2.5	2 (3,2,1) SR: 3.5	2.3 (2,3,2) SR: 3

71% of Rhetoric and Leadership students scored 2.5 or higher on 5/6 of the rubric categories; overall, 71% of the rubric cells were 2.5 or above. Students show mastery over how to contextualize their writing in terms of purpose and audience (3.5). They are reasonably strong in the areas of content development (3.0), genre and disciplinary conventions (2.7), and sources and evidence (3.0). Their greatest need for improvement lies in the control of syntax and mechanics (2.4).

Again, we would like to see 75% of our students score at the level of 3 or higher. As we have explored these results, our sense is that students are not learning to write in their lower division courses (both their major and general education courses). Many students reported that the capstone course was the first course that had truly challenged them to learn to write well. We are currently exploring how we might build more effective writing instruction into earlier classes that students take, perhaps setting aside a COM 300 Research Methods course that would be devoted to research and writing in the area of rhetorical criticism. We will set a date in July 2015 in order for the Rhetoric and Leadership faculty to meet in order to discuss and develop plans for better scaffolding the writing in the curriculum.

Journalism:

Assessors: Three journalism faculty members served as assessors. Since one of the professors (a fourth assessor) had already edited and graded the student work, she recused herself from the assessment activity.

Assignment: We used all final news analysis stories, both print and broadcast, submitted by broadcast and print journalism majors in the capstone class “Journalism in Culture and Society” (JOUR 561). Students chose the topic they wanted to research and write about.

Sample size: The sample included a total of 21 stories (seven broadcast and 14 print/web).

Methodology: The stories were coded using a 4-point rubric developed by one of the faculty members in accordance with assessment criteria. The rubric included seven variables relevant to writing and overall quality of reporting, including research; sources and interviewing skills; composition; and style.

After reviewing and refining the rubric, raters calibrated the rubric by having all three assessors rate one story from each of the two groups (broadcast and print/web). Satisfactory results were achieved. No scores for any of the variables were off by more than one point. Raters then divided and rated the rest of the stories.

During the final rating process, the assessors independently rated across the sample two of the remaining broadcast stories and three or four of the remaining print/web stories.

To assess inter-rater reliability, two raters scored two more of the same stories from each group (approximately 20-40% of the overall sample). Reliability, determined by no scores more than one point apart, was achieved for all but two variables in one story. To resolve the difference, the third rater scored the story.

Expectations: We agreed that we wanted students to demonstrate a mastery of writing, which we defined as 70 percent of the students receiving a combined ranking on all the writing components of at least a 3.0

Results:

Ratings:

Combined Overall = 2.76

Print/Web = 2.94

Broadcast = 2.41

Best performing variables:

Combined Overall = Research and Sources (3) /Interviewing Skills (2.92)

Print/Web = Research and Sources (3.39)/Interviewing Skills (3.11)

Broadcast = Sources/Interviewing Skills (2.55)/Style (2.57)

Worst performing variables:

Combined Overall = Story Lead (2.57) and Fairness/Balance (2.61)

Print/Web = Story Lead (2.71) and Fairness/Balance (2.71)

Broadcast = Ledes/Story opens: (2.31)/Research and Sources (2.24); Grammar/Spelling (2.26)

Conclusions: The assessors defined the following “points to consider for report:”

- 1) The overall 2.76 rating is lower than our expectation of 70 percent of the student stories being rated at 3 or above. Only nine of the 21 stories (42 percent) met this expectation and two of the stories were rated below a 2. This begs for more peer and faculty editing to be done in all journalism writing classes. Students need to go through a faculty revision process and be writing more drafts of their individual stories.
- 2) The broadcast stories overall ranked lower than the print/web stories. This points to a need for a broadcast-focused writing class earlier in the curriculum (JOUR 241) and increasing the amount of original writing and reporting done on the broadcast co-curricular. However, the broadcast stories were difficult to code because the soundbites from interviewees were not written out.
- 3) Informally, we are still seeing that students who participate in one or more of the journalism co-curricular programs perform better in their journalism writing and reporting classes. The students who spent the most time in the co-curriculars did the best work in the capstone class. In the future we may try to differentiate student assessment results into those who participated in our High Impact/Authentic Learning opportunities outside of class and those who did not.

Public Relations:

The public relations faculty explain the role of written communication in their major:

“Written Communication—Writing skills are foundational in the profession of public relations. Students take one course devoted to public relations writing (PR 380), and in every course in the major with the PR prefix there are numerous writing assignments and instructions for writing format and development of skills, including journalistic writing, social and digital media writing, report writing, business communication, narrative writing, and critical analysis. Beginning in Fall 2013 all Public Relations students were required to take an additional writing class—JOUR 241, Introduction to News Writing and Editing.”

Assessors: Denise Ferguson, Roslyn Satchel, George Drucker

Evidence:

PR 555 (PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS AND CASES): While not officially designated as a Writing Intensive course in the curriculum and academic catalog, PR 555 is heavily focused on research, analysis, and writing through the following assignments: cover letter, resume, research memo, campaign proposal, client contract, final report, case study analysis, reflection paper, and essay final exam. For the purposes of the 2014-2015 report, the case study analysis was selected for assessment of writing competency.

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS: The Public Relations major’s capstone course provides the primary direct and indirect evidence for assessing students’ written communication competency through the comprehensive case study analysis of a significant organizational and/or social issue or event. The assignment handout with detailed instructions (Appendix A) and the evaluation rubric (Appendix B) are provided in the Appendix.

The abbreviated assignment description from the syllabus is:

Midterm “Exam” Case Study Analysis (15%): You will write a 5-7 page analysis (double-spaced, not counting references or appendices) of an actual public relations situation covered that received substantial media coverage and had social impact. This should be an in-depth critical analysis in which you examine public relations techniques used effectively/ineffectively in handling the situation and alternate actions you believe should have been taken. You must reference at least three articles from public relations academic journals and three articles from current professional/trade publications. Follow APA style and use 12-point Times New Roman font.

Written Communication Competency Assessment:

Sample size: A random sample of seven case study analysis papers was selected, based on 20% of the population of 36 students.

Methodology: Inter-rater reliability was established in a meeting of the three public relations professors, using the AACU Written Communication Value Rubric. After discussing the rating form and rating a sample case study analysis, inter-rater reliability was established, with raters being no more than one numeric value apart on each criterion.

Expectations: Standard: 80% of each criterion rating 3 or higher.

Results: failed to achieve competency standard

Written Communication Competency Results (N=7 papers, 3 faculty assessors; 21 total)

CRITERIA	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)	Total Achieving Standard (3+)
Context and purpose for writing	3 (14%)	12 (57%)	5 (24%)	1 (5%)	71%
Content development	4 (19%)	9 (43%)	7 (33%)	1 (5%)	62%
Genre and disciplinary conventions	2 (9.5%)	9 (43%)	8 (38%)	2 (9.5%)	52.5%
Sources and evidence	4 (19%)	7 (33%)	8 (38%)	2 (9.5%)	52%
Control of syntax and mechanics	1 (5%)	11 (52%)	9 (43%)	0	57%

CAMPAIGN PROJECT: The major project involves: conducting extensive research and analysis of a nonprofit organization's communication-related problems and/or opportunities in the form of a professional research brief; developing and executing a comprehensive written campaign proposal to address them; critically evaluating the effectiveness of campaign strategies and tactics in meeting plan objectives; and providing detailed recommendations for future communication efforts in a written final report that is based on analysis of the campaign execution, results, and additional research. Excerpts from the assignment materials are below, with items that specifically address writing competency in bold.

The purpose of this project is to give you the opportunity to:

- 1) Simulate working in a public relations agency for a real "client."
- 2) Conduct primary and secondary research; analyze a real situation, problems, and opportunities the organization faces from a public relations standpoint; and write a professional research brief.
- 3) Based on comprehensive research and analysis, develop a public relations campaign/communication plan in the form of a proposal.
- 4) Execute the campaign/communication plan

- 5) Submit to the client a final report, critically analyzing the execution of the campaign/communication plan, providing copies of work product, budget, timeline, and recommendations for future public relations efforts based on critical analysis of the campaign and additional research.
- 6) Complete peer evaluations of your student agency members.
- 7) Receive constructive feedback from professional client representatives at the proposal presentation and post-campaign evaluation.

In addition to the combined assessment of a random sample of seven (20% of total items) case study analysis papers from PR 555, the following table indicates the percentages of PR 555 students who achieved mastery and failed to achieve mastery in course assignments that were writing intensive. It is important to note that the Campaign Research Memo, Campaign Proposal, Campaign Contract, and Final Report are all group projects that the student agencies complete as elements of the semester-long public relations campaign project they complete for a nonprofit client organization. Thus, the results may not apply to each individual student.

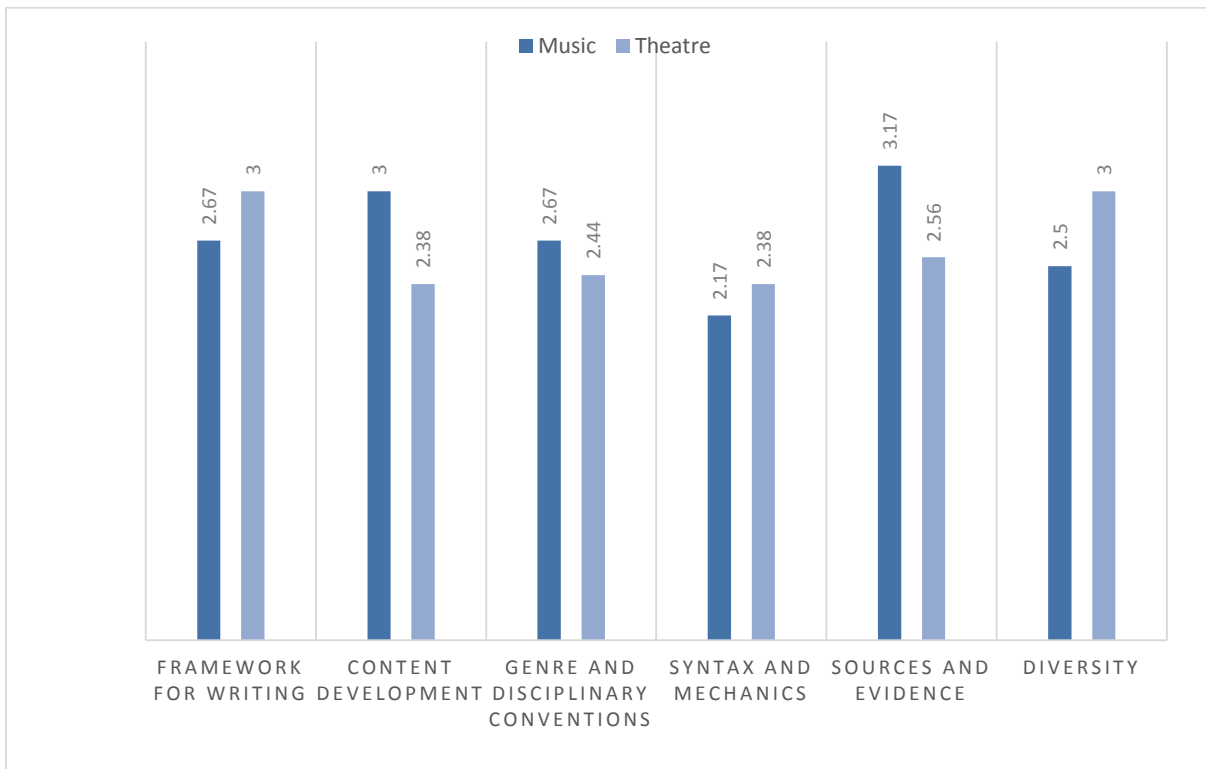
COMBINED ASSESSMENT OF DIRECT AND AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE OF MASTERY OF WRITING COMPETENCY BY DENISE FERGUSON, INSTRUCTOR. PR 555–Public Relations Campaigns and Cases–Spring 2015.

Assignment Assessed	Number Assessed	Written Communication Quality	% (#) At or Above Mastery of Skills (80%)	% (#) At or Below Mastery of Skills
Campaign Research Memo	8	Written Communication; Secondary and Primary Research	(87.5%) 7	1 (12.5%)
Campaign Proposal	8	Written Communication; Professional Formatting; Strategic Thinking	100% (8)	0
Campaign Contract	3	Written Communication; Professional Formatting	100% (3)	0
Final Report	8	Written Communication; Professional Formatting; Creativity; Strategic Implementation	100% (8)	0
Client Evaluation	5	Written quality of work produced	82% (4/5 agencies scored either a 4 or 5)	18% (3)
Case Analysis Paper	36	Secondary Research; Written Communication; Professional Case Study Format; Strategic Thinking	24 (67%)	(33%) 12

Fine Arts Division:

From GELI Assessment:

Average scores in Written Communication Rubric – Fine Art Division



Fine Art Division	Music	Theatre	Total
Framework for Writing	2.67	3.00	2.91
Content Development	3.00	2.38	2.55
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2.67	2.44	2.50
Syntax and Mechanics	2.17	2.38	2.32
Sources and Evidence	3.17	2.56	2.73
Diversity	2.50	3.00	2.67
Number of Students	6	16	22

Theatre:

Assessors: Scott Alan Smith, Ben Pilat, Melanie Watnick, Bradley Griffin, Rick Aglietti, Kailee Rogers (student)

Student Participation in Assessment: Kailee Rogers has helped in every step of the assessment process. She has assisted in the collection and collation of artifacts; she has rated artifacts alongside the faculty

members; she has calculated the inter-rater reliability data and has tabulated the scores for each of the criteria in the table. Finally, she has helped me (Bradley Griffin) write this report (Theatre annual review) and has served as my proofreader.

Evidence and Methodology: Using the writing rubric that has been approved by the GELI committee and has been adopted across Seaver College, we evaluated writing at the capstone level by reviewing 3 sets of artifacts. AUTHENTIC: we reviewed the technical direction paperwork for a senior thesis in production & design; INDIRECT: we reviewed a self-reflective essay on a senior thesis in lighting design; DIRECT: we reviewed graded journal entries from the master class series for seniors in Acting and Theatre & Music.

We performed a calibration session using one of the journal entries from THEA 593: Masterclass. There was no disagreement in our findings.

We reviewed 5 discrete artifacts that fell into the 3 categories listed above. Of these, 1 was selected for a second review to establish inter-rater reliability. There was no discrepancy between the first and second reviews.

Expectations: We had expected to find that 75% of our seniors were writing at a level 3 or higher in each of the criteria.

Results:

- Framework for writing
 - 100% met or exceeded Level 3 “Sound Understanding.”
 - 40% met Level 4 “Sophisticated Understanding.”
- Content Development
 - 80% met or exceeded Level 3 “Sound Understanding.”
 - 40% met Level 4 “Sophisticated Understanding.”
- Genre and Disciplinary Conventions
 - 80% met or exceeded Level 3 “Sound Understanding.”
 - 40% met Level 4 “Sophisticated Understanding.”
- Sources and Evidence
 - 100% met or exceeded Level 3 “Sound Understanding.”
 - 40% met Level 4 “Sophisticated Understanding.”
- Syntax and Mechanics
 - 100% met or exceeded Level 3 “Sound Understanding.”
 - 20% met Level 4 “Sophisticated Understanding.”

All of our data on writing can be found in Table 1.

Theatre Arts Assessment - May 2015: Writing Artifacts										
Artifact	Framework for Writing		Content Development		Genre and Disciplinary Conventions		Sources and Evidence		Syntax and Mechanics	
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 1	Rater 2
W-1	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
W-2	3		3		3		3		3	
W-4	3		2		3		3		3	
W-5	4		4		4		4		3	
W-6	4		4		4		4		4	
Average	3.33		3.17		3.17		3.33		3.17	
% of 2 or Higher	100%		100%		100%		100%		100%	
% of 3 or Higher	100%		80%		80%		100%		100%	
% of 4 or Higher	40%		40%		40%		40%		20%	
Inter-rater reliability	Correlation		Correlation		Correlation		Correlation		Correlation	
Discrepancy of 0	100%		100%		0%		100%		100%	
Discrepancy of 1	0%		0%		100%		0%		0%	
Discrepancy of 2	0%		0%		0%		0%		0%	
Discrepancy of 3	0%		0%		0%		0%		0%	

Conclusions:

- Require the students in THEA 593: Masterclass to provide a final typed reflective journal entry that reviews the entire semester. This document would become an artifact for the summative experience of the master class.
 - Timeline: immediate, could be in place by spring 2016

Art History:

Assessors:

- Kristen Chiem
- Cynthia Colburn
- 1 student: Matthew Finley

Evidence:

Instructor: Cindy Colburn

Class Title: Senior Thesis, ARTH 490

What was the assignment? Written version of student's senior thesis presentations

Sample Size:

How many students completed the assignment? 7

How many did we assess? 7

Number of Seniors? (100%)

Methodology:

We used the adapted **Writing Rubric (Based on Written Communication VALUE Rubric)**

Results:

Rubric Categories	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Context and Purpose for Writing	5	1	1	0
Content Development	4	2	1	0
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	4	3	0	0
Sources and Evidence	3	3	1	0
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	6	1	0	0

- We found that **86%** of artifacts achieved a 3 or higher on **Context and Purpose for Writing**.
- We found that **86%** of artifacts achieved a 3 or higher on **Content**.
- We found that **100%** of artifacts achieved a 3 or higher on **Genre and Disciplinary Conventions**.
- We found that **86%** of artifacts achieved a 3 or higher on **Sources and Evidence**.
- We found that **100%** of artifacts achieved a 3 or higher on **Control of Syntax and Mechanics**.
- We found that **89%** of artifacts achieved a 3 or higher **OVERALL (cumulative average)**.

Closing the Loop:

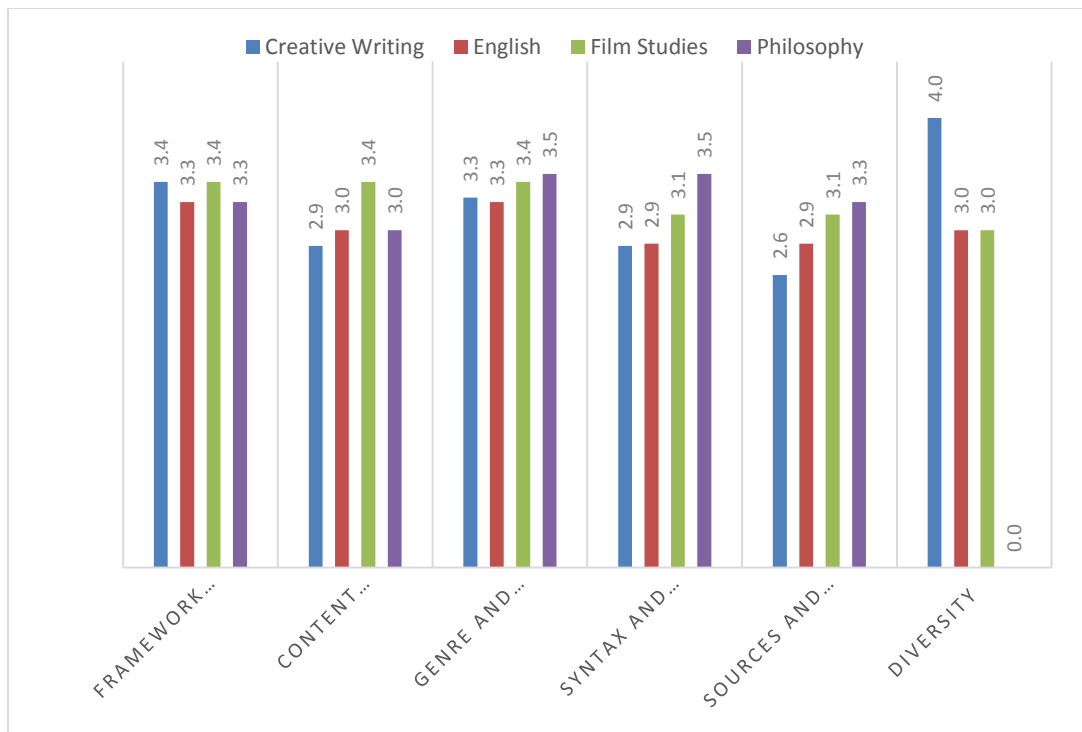
- Seniors are meeting our expectations related to writing.
- Based upon our discussion of these findings, we believe that presentation skills were a critical component of success in articulating key points and developing an original thesis. We plan to discuss strategies for increasing opportunities for both written and oral presentation skills in our lower-level courses. Based on student feedback, we also plan

to meet with our seniors during the fall semester of their senior year so that they may begin thinking about their theses over the winter break.

Humanities Division:

From GELI Assessment:

Average scores in Written Communication Rubric – Humanities Division



Humanities Division	Creative Writing	English	Film Studies	Philosophy	Total
Framework for Writing	3.43	3.25	3.43	3.25	3.35
Content Development	2.86	3.00	3.43	3.00	3.08
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	3.29	3.25	3.43	3.50	3.35
Syntax and Mechanics	2.86	2.88	3.14	3.50	3.04
Sources and Evidence	2.60	2.88	3.14	3.25	2.96
Diversity	4.00	3.00	3.00	n/a	3.25
Number of Students	7	8	7	4	26

Film Studies:

Assessors: Joi Carr, Associate Professor of English and Film Studies [Assessment Team, Lead/Principal Writer]; Leslie Kreiner Wilson, Associate Professor of English [Assessment Team]; Steve Parmelee, Associate Professor of English and Film Studies [Assessment Team]; Andrew Harrington, Adjunct Faculty in Film Studies [Assessment Team]; Maia Rodriguez, Seaver Student (graduating senior English major)[Evaluated Graduating Senior Papers]

Methodology: For purposes of this aspect of the assessment process, we utilized a rubric in which the writing competencies are broken down into six categories, each of which is separately rated for each student assignment evaluated:

Rubric Components

1. Context of and Purpose for Writing
2. Content Development
3. Genre and Disciplinary Conventions
4. Syntax and Mechanics
5. Sources and Evidence
6. Diversity Exploration

Give each assignment a rating of:

“4” (“sophisticated understanding, developing toward mastery stage, reflection of the characteristics pertaining to this component of the PLO”),

“3” (“sound understanding, developing toward mastery stage, reflection of the characteristics pertaining to this component of the PLO”),

“2” (“satisfactory/basic understanding, developing stage, reflection of the characteristics pertaining to this component of the PLO”),

“1” (“minimal understanding, unsatisfactory reflection of the characteristics pertaining to this component of the PLO”),

“0” (“unacceptable, does not meet any benchmarks/characteristics pertaining to this component of the PLO”),

or “N/A” (“reflecting knowledge of these components was not necessarily pertinent to or required of this assignment”).

Evidence: We evaluated the following assignments for all graduating seniors—the senior capstone reflective paper and one critical paper from an upper division course:

Capstone Courses for Assessment of Writing Competency

SPRING 2014

FILM 480	J. Carr	capstone final project: thesis paper (1), reflective paper (1)
FILM 480	V. Knutsen	capstone final projects: reflective, papers (5)
FILM 480 paper (1)	L. Kreiner Wilson	capstone final project: screenplay (1), reflective

Other Upper Division Courses

FILM 315	B. Graf	final paper (1)
FILM 365	M. Sugimoto	final papers (2)
FILM 410	N. Dodd	screenplay (1)
FILM 421	S. Parmelee	final papers (1)
FILM 441	J. Carr	final papers (1)
FILM 451	S. Parmelee	final papers (1)
FILM 462	J. Carr	final papers (2)

Expectations: We conclude that 85% of our graduates should be able to provide evidence for a skill level at or exceeding a basic understanding toward sound understanding (score of 2 or higher).

Sample Size: We assessed nine capstone assignments and nine upper division final paper assignments for graduating seniors.

Results: The results are as follows:

PLO #4 Component	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1	Score 0	N/A	Students Scoring 2, 3, or 4
Context of and Purpose for Writing	4/18 = 22.22%	13/18 = 72.22%	1/18 = 5.56%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	18/18 = 100%
Content Development	3/18 = 16.67%	9/18 = 50%	6/18 = 33.33%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	18/18 = 100%
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2/18 = 11.11%	11/18 = 61.11%	5/18 = 27.78%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	18/18 = 100%
Syntax and Mechanics	3/18 = 16.67%	9/18 = 50%	6/18 = 33.33%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	18/18 = 100%
Sources and Evidence	1/18 = 5.56%	6/18 = 33.33%	2/18 = 11.11%	0/18 = 0%	0/18 = 0%	9/18 = 50%	9/9 = 100%
Diversity	2/18 = 11.11%	3/18 = 16.67%	8/18 = 44.44%	3/18 = 16.67%	0/18 = 0%	2/18 = 11.11%	13/16 = 81.25%

We are pleased to confirm that 100% of our graduating seniors scored above the 85% threshold of demonstrating the ability to write in a satisfactory manner in this competency.

Conclusions: We note that the critical studies students seemed to be stronger in the area of writing that includes extensive research. We conclude that this phenomenon might be attributed to their core upper division courses that require more of this kind of development in the discipline. The reflective assignments reveal that our students are comfortable and quite adept at articulating poignant, critical self-reflective thought.

History:

Special Assessment of Writing: Senior Thesis Capstone Course, History Major, 2015

Evidence: In their senior year, all History majors must complete a 20-25 page (30-35 pages for honors) thesis involving original research.

Sample Size: In the 2014-15 academic year, twelve students completed this assignment. On May 12, 2015 the History faculty assessed all twelve of the theses for writing competency according to the AAC&U rubric for written communication.

Assessors: The assessing faculty were the following: Darlene Rivas, Loree Hunnicutt, Bryan Givens, Sharyl Corrado, Tanya Hart, and Stewart Davenport.

Expectations: We decided on the following benchmark: 83% of our students (10/12) must achieve a 3 or better according to the AAC&U rubric.

Methodology: All six history faculty members established inter-rater reliability using two senior theses. These theses represent the highest achievement of our seniors in writing and the lowest. Collectively, we assessed L.B.'s thesis as being at the capstone level (4) for all five rubric categories, while we assessed M.Z.'s thesis as being at milestone level 2 for all five rubric categories.

In assessing all twelve of the senior History majors, we divided the twelve senior theses into three groups of two faculty members each. In each group there was never more than a one-point differential, and thus never a need to ask for a mediator.

Results:

Student	Rubric Categories					Average of Individual Student
	Context and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Sources and Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics	
A	4.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.4
A2	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.8
L	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
K	4.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.1
H	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.8
C	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.0	4.0	3.5
J	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.6
J2	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.6
W	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.6
C2	4.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	4.0	3.5
H2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
M	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Average of Total	3.3	2.9	3.1	2.8	3.3	3.1

Results:

We set a benchmark of 83% (10 out of 12 seniors) receiving an average of 3 or higher. Our results are that only 58% (7 out of 12) seniors received an average of 3 or higher.

Conclusions: Even though we established inter-rater reliability, we believe this problem rests more with our process of assessment than with our students. Three of the five students who failed to get an average of 3 or higher (H.L., J.M., and J.M.2) were assessed by the same team of two faculty members, indicating that they possibly had a different understanding of the rubric's values. We believe this anomaly can be rectified in the future by having all faculty members norm a broader range of theses together rather than just the outliers, i.e. the highest and the lowest.

In our discussion, the History faculty agreed to make changes to the Senior Thesis syllabus. In order to encourage more focused argument-making and writing, students will now be required to consult with an additional faculty member with expertise in the student's topic, rather than with the instructor of Senior Thesis alone. We believe that this will help students utilize more credible and relevant "sources and evidence." We also agreed to cut the requirement in the fall of writing an abstract of a secondary source. Instead, seniors will write an abstract of their own thesis, which they will submit with the final draft in the spring. We believe that this assignment will improve students' writing by forcing them to write more succinctly and clearly.

Creative Writing:

Assessors: Jeffrey Schultz and Heather Thomson-Bunn

Evidence: We gathered a sample of final essays students turned in as part of a portfolio project in CRWR406, the Advanced Poetry Workshop. This is the prompt for the essay:

“In an essay a minimum of five full pages in length, discuss the pieces in your portfolio in relation to your own thinking regarding *what* poetry should do, *why* poetry should do that, and *how* poetry should go about doing that, that is, what compositional strategies will help poems to reach these goals. You may, but you are not required to, refer to any of the texts we read this semester, either as support or as something to argue against. You may, but you are not required to, refer to outside texts in the same manner.

Successful essays will demonstrate a clear and specific link between what poetry should do and what you, as a writer, are doing and have done. This does not mean that you have to argue that your pieces were ultimately successful, but you should reflect on how your personal aesthetics have influenced and might continue to influence your choices as a writer in the future.

There are no specific structural or organizational requirements for the essay, so long as they discuss the material outlined above. If you have questions about possible structures and organizations, please ask.

Formatting and citation should conform to MLA guidelines.”

Sample Size: Fifteen total students completed this assignment, including a number of juniors. Jeffrey Schultz and Heather Thomson-Bunn assessed a sample of eight essays, all written by seniors. This sample constitutes 67% of seniors graduating in CRWR in 2015.

Expectations: We expect 80% of the students to achieve 3 or better in the various categories of the AAC&U Rubric.

Methodology: Each reader scored and discussed a common set of two essays in order to establish inter-rater reliability. Upon comparison, we found no significant differences between raters’ scores.

Essay #	Context Purpose	Content Development	Genre Disciplinary Conventions	Sources & Evidence	Syntax & Mechanics
1	4	4	3	4	4
2	3	3	3	3	4
3	3	3	3	2	3
4	3	3	3	3	3
5	3	2	2	3	2
6	3	4	4	4	3
7	3	3	3	4	4
8	4	4	3	3	4

Of the 40 individual scores in the five categories of the rubric, a total of four, or 10%, fell below a score of three. Ninety percent of scores fell at three or better, somewhat exceeding our expectations.

Liberal Arts:

Assessors: Carrie Birmingham, Stella Erbes, and Carrie Wall (core faculty for Liberal Arts major)

Evidence: In order to assess the writing competency of our graduating seniors, we chose to analyze seniors' writing performance on the Performance Assessments for California Teachers (PACT) Task 2 on Planning. In this task, students are to (1) select a learning segment of 3-5 lessons that develops students' abilities to comprehend and/or compose text through the use of literacy skills and strategies and that develops their reading, writing, and use of academic language; (2) create an instruction and assessment plan for the learning segment and write lesson plans; and (3) write a commentary that explains their thinking behind the plans. The PACT is a state-approved Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) designed to assess teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and abilities as articulated in the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs). Though not all Liberal Arts majors pursue their teaching credential, most do.

Because the Liberal Arts major does not have a capstone course and our "Writing Intensive" course is usually taken in the sophomore or junior year, we chose to analyze writing competency on the PACT Task 2 because it is the last significant writing assignment completed in the major for those Liberal Arts majors completing their credential. We are aware that this data sample may not represent the writing competency of all Liberal Arts graduates, but it was a convenience sample given our constraints and still captures data from almost half of our graduating Liberal Arts majors.

Sample Size: As of April 14, 2015, there were a total of 76 active Liberal Arts majors, 24 of whom graduated May 2, 2015. Sixteen of those 24 graduates are pursuing or completed their teaching credential(s). To assess the writing competency of our graduating seniors, we collected and analyzed writing from 10 seniors enrolled in EDUC 530 (Advanced Student Teaching), the final course in the Teacher Preparation Program. We chose to use the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Written Communication VALUE rubric to determine students' writing competency.

Expectations: We expected 80% of students to have a mean score of 2 or above because a score of 2 demonstrates awareness of the context, audience, and purpose of the task; is sufficiently supported by appropriate and relevant content; follows disciplinary conventions; utilizes credible sources; and is clear.

Methodology: When the Liberal Arts core faculty gathered on May 4, 2015, we first conducted a calibration exercise in order to reach consensus on how to apply the AAC&U writing rubric to the PACT Task 2 documents. Then, we each read over the documents and rated them by applying the AAC&U rubric. We established inter-rater reliability by selecting 20% (2 of the 10) artifacts at random to be reviewed by a second faculty member. These artifacts subjected to the secondary review were rated identically or differed by no more than 1 point, verifying that the reviewers applied the rubrics to the artifacts in the same way.

Results:

The scores in the five categories listed above were averaged for each student to provide a mean score for each student. These mean scores and the total mean score of all 10 students are provided below.

Student Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Mean Score (N = 10)
Mean score	3.8	1.8	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.4	3.0	3.4	2.2	2.6	2.7

The distribution of scores and mean scores for each category are provided below.

	Capstone # of students who scored 4	Milestones # who scored 3 # who scored 2		Benchmark # who scored 1	Mean Scores (N = 10)
Context of and Purpose for Writing	2	7	1		3.1
Content Development	2	3	4	1	2.6
Genre & Disciplinary Conventions	1	4	5		2.6
Sources and Evidence	1	3	6		2.5
Control of Syntax and Mechanics		8	1	1	2.7

The results indicate that the Liberal Arts graduates have exceeded our expectations which were that at least 80% of students would have a mean score of 2 or above. Only one student (10%) had a mean score of less than 2 (1.8). The rest (90%) scored at the “milestone” or “capstone” level of proficiency in writing meaning their writing demonstrated an awareness of the context, audience, and purpose of the task; was sufficiently supported by appropriate and relevant content; followed disciplinary conventions; utilized credible sources; and was clear.

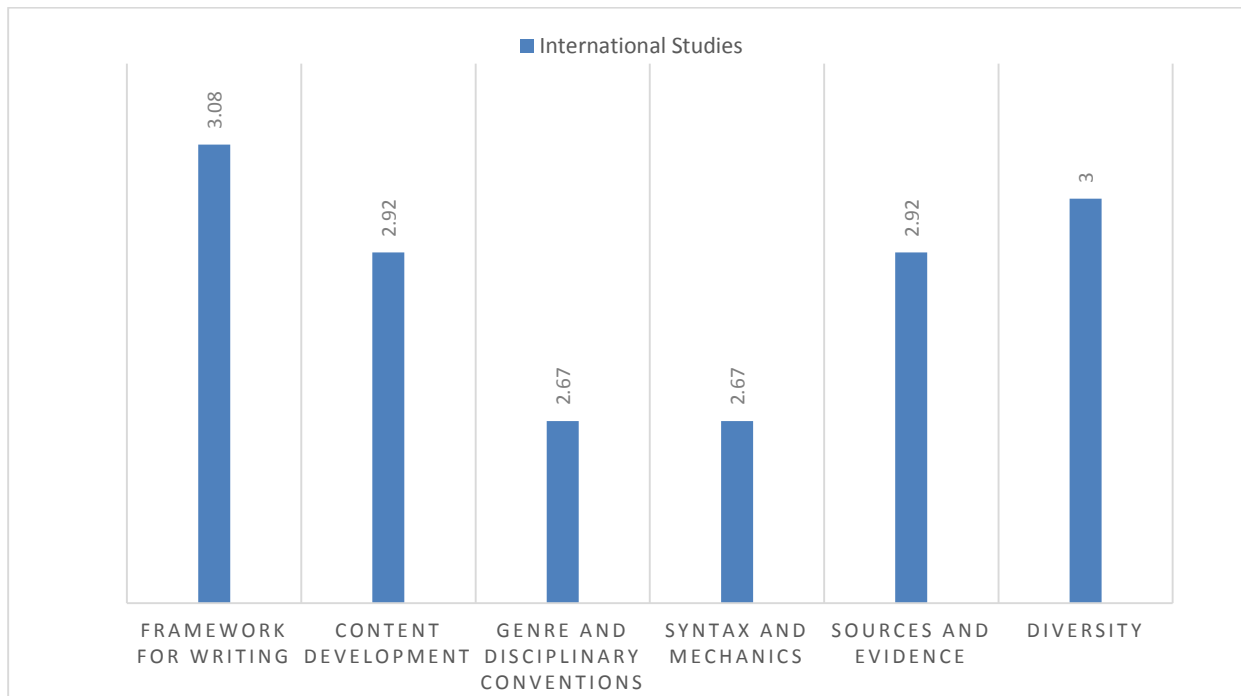
This ability to meet the Liberal Arts program goal for writing is probably based on the fact that our multiple subject teacher candidates have a great deal of experience utilizing academic language to write lesson plans, reflecting on their instructional decisions, and articulating the way they differentiate instruction to promote comprehensible input for all students. This is the quality of writing competency we would expect of our Liberal Arts graduates.

Conclusions: One area of needed support in writing is in the area of providing sources and evidence. Analysis of the writing from 10 of our recent graduates revealed that our graduates use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the field of education, but that there is room for improvement. Though our candidates have a great deal of experience using academic language to appropriately address writing tasks in the field of education, they have less experience articulating the evidence and theory that informs their instructional decisions. Teacher Education faculty have scheduled a meeting on May 29, 2015 to discuss how we can address this aspect of writing in our courses most effectively.

International Studies Division:

From GELI Assessment:

Average scores in Written Communication Rubric – International Studies Division



International Studies and Languages Division	International Studies Major
Framework for Writing	3.08
Content Development	2.92
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	2.67
Syntax and Mechanics	2.67
Sources and Evidence	2.92
Diversity	3.00
Number of Students	12

International Studies (major):

Assessors: Sharyl Corrado, David Simonowitz, Charles Choi, Darlene Rivas

Expectations: The assessors expected 80% of students to achieve 3 or higher, since it is a senior capstone course.

Evidence: We assessed writing in the International Studies major capstone, INTS 497, a writing and research intensive seminar taught in several sections according to various emphases within an interdisciplinary major. The interdisciplinary major includes the following emphases: Economics IEEO, Intercultural Communication INTC, Management INTM, Political Studies INTP and Area Studies: Asia INTA, Europe INTE, Latin America INTL, and Middle East/North Africa MENA. Economics is the only emphasis that uses a different course for the capstone than the INTS 497 Senior Seminar; we did not include economics.

In INTS 497, students in all emphases except for one wrote senior theses from 20-30 pages, requiring significant research and writing. The management emphasis required a different major project that did not require writing, so we used a short 2-4 page exam comprised of several answers to assess writing in INTM. INTS 497 professors provided a cross section of papers of varying quality. In the two directed studies, faculty provided one of one and one of two papers respectively. Instructors uploaded papers to a Sakai/courses page. There were 14 papers, 35.8% of seniors in INTS 497 capstones.

Emphasis	Students Enrolled	Papers Assessed	% of Papers Assessed
Political Studies	17	4	23.5%
Intercultural Communication	5	2	40%
Management	8	4	50%
*Area Studies	9	4	44.4%
Total	39	14	35.8%

*Area Studies: Europe & Latin America (6 students); INTA (2 students); MENA (1 student).

Methodology: The four assessors met on April 11. We established inter-rater reliability by discussing the AAC&U VALUE Rubric. We discussed definitions and shared our understanding of categories. We calibrated our understanding by using the rubric to assess the same paper (Chumsai), discussing our ratings and coming to a common understanding to rate the paper within one point on each category. We repeated the process with a second paper (Sanchez). We agreed we had a good understanding of the rubric and had established inter-rater reliability, with no differences beyond one.

We divided the remaining papers between two groups of two assessors each, Corrado and Choi, Simonowitz and Rivas. Each group read six papers, rated them independently, and then compared their ratings. Each pair discussed any ratings that were more than two numbers apart and came to agreement to within one point for each category.

Paper Ratings

Student	Context and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Sources & Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Average Score
C	2.0	3.0	2.3	2.3	2.8	2.5
S	2.8	3.5	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.2
A	3.0	3.0	3.5	2.0	2.5	2.8
A2	2.5	1.5	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.8
M	2.5	1.5	3.0	1.5	3.0	2.3
R	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.1
M2	2.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.6
B	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.0	4.0	3.7
C2	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.3
C3	2.5	1.5	2.5	2.0	1.0	1.9
B2	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.2
P	3.0	3.5	4.0	3.0	3.5	3.4
H	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	2.7
C4	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.1
Total Average	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.7

RESULTS	Number of students	% of students
Totals		
2	4	29%
2 1/2	2	14%
3	6	43%
3 1/2	1	7%
4	1	7%

Results summary: Six students or 43% rated below a 3 and eight students or 64% rated a 3 or higher. This result is below the 70% benchmark. Because we asked for a range of quality from small sample sizes, the samples may not be as representative as we had hoped. Still, this raises concerns about writing in the major. In particular, the results suggest that learning in writing is weak in the management emphasis.

Discussion:

1) There was not a great deal of difference in student writing across categories. Their weakest category by a small amount was sources and evidence (77) and the strongest was control of syntax and mechanics (93). There was little variation among the three categories of understanding the context and

purpose for writing (88), content development (87), and genre/disciplinary conventions (85). Particularly low use of examples in the exam papers hurt the evidence category (the exam did not require outside sources, so we looked for use and quality of examples supporting general claims to calculate use of evidence).

2) The four exams from the management emphasis (28.5% of our samples) did not show evidence of strong writing (three of them rated a 2) in part because of the nature of the assignment. We rated these exams according to the purpose of the assignment and deliberately did not compare them to the senior theses from the other sections. We tried to be consistent, but if anything we rated them higher than we thought they deserved. Even given the benefit of the doubt, the students showed weak writing skills for seniors. There were no other writing samples to use from this section, because the students in INTM do not write much. They do complete another rigorous assignment, “an Excel based project that requires integrated end to end selection, implementation, and a numerical justification of a business concept.” Still, the students are not demonstrating an appropriate level of learning in the core competency of writing in their senior capstone, and we are concerned. We also noted that these papers represented writing by students for whom English is a second (or third) language. Since INTS 497 is designated as a writing intensive seminar and is the senior capstone, we believe that students in INTM need more practice and rigor in writing assignments. We are not suggesting that this writing should be a senior thesis, since the current senior project provides a real-world exercise important to the emphasis. We think it is important that INTS management faculty find ways to enhance writing opportunities rather than have us recommend specific assignments. We do recommend consultation and discussion among INTM faculty, the INTS program director, and other INTS faculty. See below for possible ways to close the loop.

3) We noted particular challenges exist in assessing student learning because of the diversity of approaches since this is an interdisciplinary major. INTS by its nature will have diversity in genre methodology and expectations. A similar assignment (senior thesis) did and may continue to yield different results (e.g. different proportions of attention to such matters as rhetorical structure of the argument or to literature reviews and their relationship to the context/purpose of writing or to the analysis and clear integration of source material). Students may have chosen different approaches because of flexibility within a particular emphasis (like area studies, which foster disciplinary variation because the focus is on a region, not a discipline). Different emphases/professors also have somewhat different expectations on similar assignments. Variation is a strength, but it also means that assessors may inadvertently bring biases from their particular approaches or methods to the assessment of writing or any other learning outcome. We suggest that it would be helpful to have the faculty involved in teaching the senior seminars be more engaged in the actual assessment of papers so that they can communicate with each other and learn from each other about their approaches and about their expectations for student learning. When calibrating the rubric, we wonder if we might have calibrated higher with greater input from more of the faculty members who taught the senior seminar sections. It is important to note, however, that faculty in INTS are often committed to assessment in additional programs, which can make additional assessment demands on their time particularly onerous.

4) We discussed a related issue to interdisciplinary strengths and challenges. While we focused on writing for this assessment, the nature of senior theses as based on research combined with the language and expectations in the rubric kept us circling back to issues related to research methodology. We noted a dilemma in that research is listed as being introduced in a core course (INTS 514) that has one disciplinary focus (COM), so presumably only students in that emphasis would necessarily follow up to master that methodology in their senior capstone (the INTC section). Students in the other emphases may learn some general research skills in the earlier class or possibly other courses where it is not designated as a learning outcome, but INTS students will likely need to adapt to different methodologies and expectations for their particular emphasis when they take their senior seminar. The point is that an interdisciplinary major requires flexibility of its students, including in writing and research among genres and methods as they move through their diverse courses. Such flexibility isn't measured in single assessments like this one. Perhaps a portfolio approach would be helpful to assess INTS students' learning. Ultimately, to assess student learning in an interdisciplinary major, we as faculty must be flexible as well. We need more conversation among INTS faculty about student learning.

Closing the Loop:

1. To enhance student learning, instructors in INTS core courses might identify students that appear deficient in writing and provide their names to the INTS program director. This would catch students earlier than the senior capstone. These students might be required to consult with the writing center or attend a special writing workshop in which they rewrite a paper or two from previous INTS classes. A workshop would require resources.
2. As mentioned in the discussion section, we recommend consultation and discussion on writing in the management emphasis among INTM faculty, the INTS program director, and possibly other INTS faculty. We recommend the integration of greater opportunities to write and receive feedback on writing in assignments that INTM faculty consider appropriate to the genre in all INTM classes, including the INTM senior seminar. If new writing assignments are onerous in the senior capstone given the Excel major project, students might be required to create a portfolio for the class that compiles samples of writing from previous INTM classes that they must rewrite to an appropriate level of proficiency.
3. We could improve the assessment process. A) Even though the senior thesis assignments were similar, there was enough difference in result that it would be helpful to have the different prompts for the senior theses to note the nuances in requirements among sections/emphases. B) In future assessments, we recommend discussing alternative ways to choose paper samples. C) Include more INTS faculty in the actual assessment of papers (as discussed above on discussion point 3).
4. A short workshop or full day retreat to brainstorm and enhance collaboration among INTS faculty and to explore what it means to be interdisciplinary would be helpful. We might also discuss whether a portfolio of student work would be helpful to our students in integrating what they are learning in the different disciplines of the major, and if it would be helpful to us in assessing their learning. Again, INTS

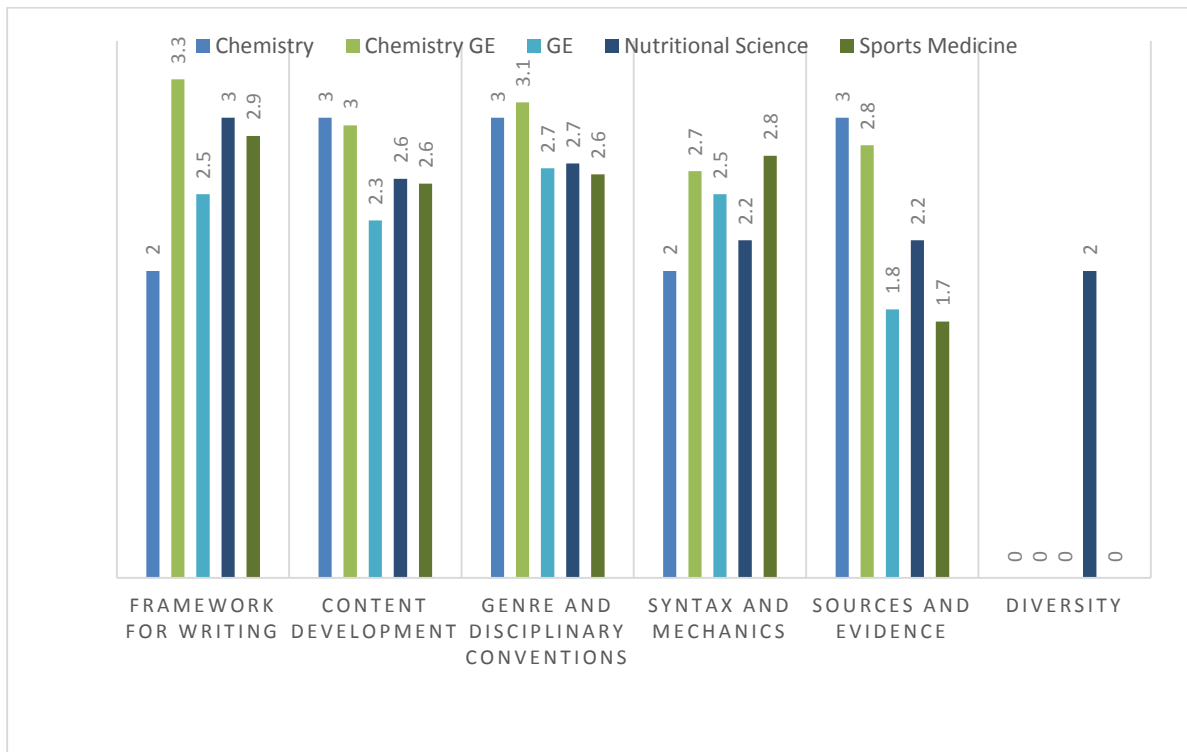
faculty members are actively engaged across many programs, so the timing would need to be optimal. Incentives would be appropriate and probably necessary.

5. We will share our findings with INTS faculty by circulating this report via e-mail attachment.

Natural Science Division:

From GELI Assessment:

Average scores in Written Communication Rubric – Natural Science Division



Natural Science Division	Chemistry	Chemistry GE	GE	Nutritional Science	Sports Medicine	Total
Framework for Writing	2.00	3.25	2.50	3.00	2.88	3.00
Content Development	3.00	2.95	2.33	2.60	2.57	2.72
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	3.00	3.10	2.67	2.70	2.63	2.87
Syntax and Mechanics	2.00	2.65	2.50	2.20	2.75	2.53
Sources and Evidence	3.00	2.82	1.75	2.20	1.67	2.39
Diversity	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.00	n/a	2.00
Number of Students	1	20	6	10	8	45

Biology:

Assessors: The assessors were Dr. Vandergon and Dr. Honeycutt.

Evidence:

The writing assignment assessed was titled: Next Generation Genome Sequencing

Assignment:

1. Write a brief (one paragraph) summary of the main idea(s) and concept(s) discussed in the three articles read for the topic Next Generation Genome Sequencing. The papers to summarize include: Johansen Taber et al. (2014) *JAMA Int. Med.* 174 (2):275-280; Pilgrim et al., (2014) *BJS* 101:889-898; and Clarke, A.J. (2014) *Brit. Med. Bull.* 111:17-30.
2. In reading these articles and also in discussion of the issues related to Next Generation Genome Sequence Technologies in medicine, you will have gained some practical knowledge about the scientific promise of this technique, but also some perspectives on the economic, social and ethical challenges currently being faced by modern society with the use of the NGGS.

Consider your knowledge AND your understanding of biology, genetics, economics, and ethics to inform your response to the following scenario.

You are a trained biologist who works for a consulting firm that lobbies congress in matters related to the biomedical industry and biomedical technology (mostly pro biomedical technology). Your bosses have met with a client who would like to promote the use of NGGS in both prenatal and postnatal (newborns) as a means of developing a database of genomic data to help address early signs of hereditary disease but also to provide life-long exome data to physicians to improve long-term care of all individuals with or without genetic disorders.

After this meeting, you are assigned the task of researching some of the current uses of NGGS in prenatal and postnatal testing, and then examining the pros and cons of performing prenatal and postnatal NGGS testing. You are then asked to prepare a very short summary report that outlines two (2) major reasons to support both prenatal and postnatal whole exome NGGS. The first major reason should provide one well documented and supported reason to promote this testing based on scientific and medical benefit. The second major reason should provide one well documented and supported reason that would show economic or social benefit. Finally, you are asked to provide some feedback on how the data generated in the neonatal or postnatal testing might be protected or access controlled for the individual (i.e., the tested neonate or newborn) for future medical benefit.

After your summary paragraph (above), write three short paragraphs where you:

- 1) Succinctly describe the SUPPORTED reason to promote NGGS testing for medical or scientific benefit in neonates and postnatal individuals.
- 2) Succinctly describe the SUPPORTED reason to promote NGGS testing for economic or social benefit.
- And 3) to briefly provide feedback on NGGS data protection and access issues related to possible future

Sample Size: Twenty (20) students completed this assignment in the 2015 senior capstone course and all students were assessed.

Expectations: Our benchmark for senior biology majors is always 70% or higher of students achieving at the minimum milestone level (>2) in writing. The inter-rater reliability should be less than a 0.5 point average difference with few if any individual score categories rated more than 1.0 point difference.

Results:

The data from evaluation of senior biology student capstone writing in biology 491 using the AAC&U assessment tool are shown in **Figure 10**.

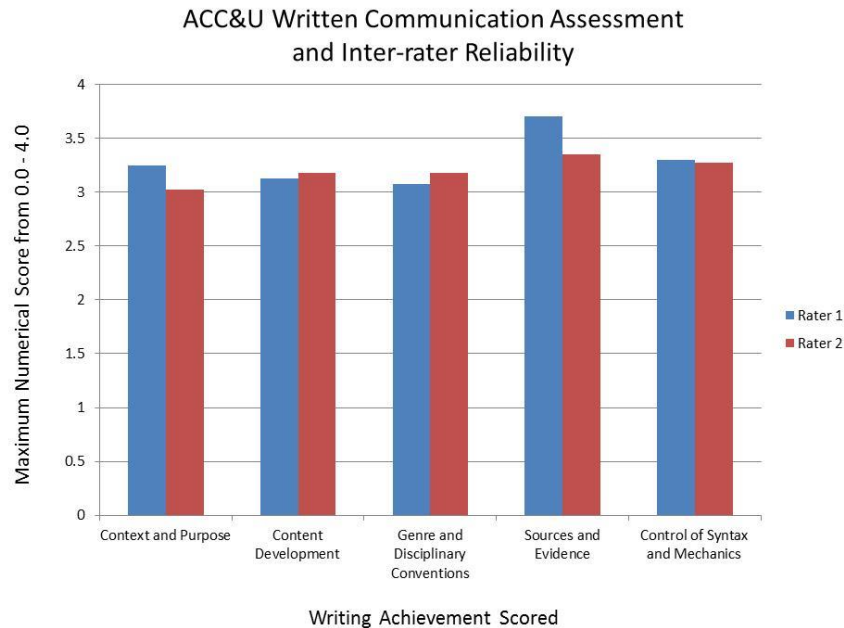


Figure 10. Comparison of average scoring for two independent raters in five application categories determined using the AAC&U Written Communication Value Rubric for Writing Assignment 1 in the Biology 491 senior seminar capstone course in Spring 2015.

The average score for 20 seniors in the biology capstone course across the five assessment categories all exceed the 3.0 (High Milestone) level. This indicates a high level of writing ability and achievement in our graduates in both summary and application (see above) writing within the field. Inter-rater reliability was high with average differences in scores much less than 0.5 in each category. Out of 100 score comparisons only two of the 100 comparisons exceeded a score difference of 1.0 between the two raters (see scoring criteria above), interpreted as a 98% inter-rater score reliability.

We established a benchmark of at least 70% of graduating seniors scoring above the base benchmark value (1). In other words, 70% of seniors should show an average score of 2 or better in writing. For the 20 seniors used in this writing survey, only two (2) scored at the benchmark level (average score less than 2.0), meaning that 90% of seniors met our writing standard.

Closing the Loop:

While senior students were generally successful in their responses to the written case study assignments, the senior students are not on average much above the Milestone (High) achievement level. On the first AAC&U writing assessment, the graduating seniors showed reasonable success and exceeded our expectation for success. As this was the first time to use the writing rubric to assess the writing in this course, and there is a limited sample, I would place more value on our long-term directed rubric results for assessing senior writing ability.

While this certainly demonstrates that our students are capable and are worthy of a biology degree from Pepperdine, we actually had hoped that the average would have been closer to the “Capstone” level. Considering this is a consistent trend across now four years of data, we realize that this result is

not necessarily consistent with our other knowledge of these students' performance in prior courses. As indicated in the last assessment, we suspect that this 'weaker' than desired performance is not really due to lack of preparation or to curriculum deficiencies, but really pinpoints a lack of senior focus and dedication to the assignments in this credit/no credit course. Many seniors just do not care enough to put an effort into these assignments as the cost to benefit ratio is low considering the many activities and demands both academic and social that exist on the graduating senior. *We are moving to address this problem by changing the course to a graded course. We are also considering moving the course to the fall term of the senior year to reduce [stress from] graduation and other distractions, or possibly increasing the unit value of the course, although this is unlikely given the current heavy unit load in place.*

Chemistry:

Chemistry 340 (Quantitative Chemistry): Program Learning Outcome #2

Program Learning Outcome 2. Written and Oral Communication

Reports of independently obtained laboratory results and analysis must be presented in the scientific format. The effectiveness of presentation and the linguistic quality of the report will be evaluated. A seminar must be presented on a current or historical topic in chemistry in which all of the chemistry department community is invited to attend. The effectiveness and quality of presentation will be evaluated.

Evidence: Every student in the chemistry major and minor must enroll in Chemistry 340 and, as part of this course, will perform chemical analyses and present their work in the form of manuscripts in (1) chemistry journal manuscript format, (2) manufacturer Application Note format, or (3) analytical client report format.

When writing in journal manuscript format, students follow, at their choice, either the American Chemical Society or Elsevier manuscript format. Application Note format is an abbreviated style used by chemical instrumentation manufacturers to describe methods and results without a detailed Introduction section, since the reader would not require more than cursory context for the rest of the report. Client Reports are extremely terse, results-only reports that would be suitable for providing requested information to clients requesting analytical chemistry services. All three formats are used in the field depending upon the targeted audience.

Quantitative Chemistry is a prerequisite course for a small number of advanced courses where refined writing skills are expected. In addition to the basic assessment of the learning outcome which corresponds to Written Communication (PLO 2) in CHEM 340, we followed five students' writing careers from their first year chemistry courses (General Chemistry I/II: CHEM 120/121) through the assessed course and finally to two more elective advanced courses (Instrumental Analysis: CHEM 341 and Advanced Analytical Chemistry: CHEM 440).

Early in General Chemistry, students write detailed laboratory reports in a modified journal format describing their results for their laboratory investigation during the prior week. These reports are prepared by the two or three person teams that performed the experiment together. During the first few weeks of the courses, teams are given detailed descriptions of the layout of the report, items that should be included, and hints to improve writing in the scientific style. An exemplar manuscript with grader comments is also made available to provide each student with examples of good text and how grading of inferior text would occur. Of the 22 laboratory investigations performed over the two semesters, 18 require detailed reports.

In the assessed course (Quantitative Chemistry), the expectation for quality is, naturally, higher. Students are not only provided with the grading rubric, they are also provided with two successfully published manuscripts for modeling their manuscript format and are expected to engage in the primary chemistry literature to improve their writing style, syntax, and presentation.

Five students were tracked from General Chemistry I through Quantitative Chemistry to 2 elective upper-division courses. These students were selected from the pool of chemistry majors who completed the ultimate course in chemical analysis (CHEM 440) since they gave the longest available tracking history.

Longitudinal Assessment of 340: 2011-2014

The assignments utilized for the assessment were three journal format manuscripts taken from the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. Only the semester composite scores were used in the semester. All students in the course were used in the assessment; no other sampling was implemented.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
No. of students in assessment	9	10	18	13
No. of assignments in assessment	27	30	54	54
Average Score (1 standard deviation)	81%(8)	76%(12)	81%(9)	82%(5)
Range of scores	55-102%	53-94%	49-99%	51-95%
Course GPA (1 standard deviation)	2.7(0.7)	3.1(0.8)	2.6(0.9)	2.8(0.6)
No. to withdraw from course	2	2	5	2
No. to engage in research	3	4	7	7

There are no statistical differences in any of the measured parameters from 2011 (publication of latest program review) to 2014. 2011 was the first year that the grading rubric was provided to students in advance of submitting their manuscripts and 2012 was the first year where exemplar manuscripts were provided early in the semester. In most cases, but not all, the students who withdrew from the course had the lowest writing scores in the class. In all but one or two cases, students who withdrew from the course also withdrew from the chemistry major or minor. There is a weak correlation indicating that mastery of writing in the scientific content and style is a proxy measurement for success in the major.

It is also interesting that the best student authors in this course over the four-year study have also engaged in undergraduate research and published their work in a scientific journal or presented their work at a regional or national conference. One student in the 2012 manifold was one standard deviation below the average and presented her research at the ACS conference at UC San Diego in 2014. Clearly, exceptions exist between writing aptitude and ability to complete and present original research.

Temporal Assessment of 5 Students from 2011-2015

The five students selected for this assessment are all contemporaries and span both the Chemistry B.S. and B.A. majors with emphases in either chemistry or biochemistry. Manuscript scores are composites for each course, and with the exception of CHEM 340, 341, and 440, they did not necessarily share instructors. Numbers in parentheses are the number of writing assignments evaluated for the assessment.

Student	1	2	3	4	5
General Chemistry I (10)	80	82	85	88	87
General Chemistry II (6)	87	88	88	86	87
Quantitative Chemistry (6)	80	86	85	90	89
Instrumental Analysis (4)	85	86	84	93	90
Advance Analytical Chemistry (2)	83	89	90	91	92

These results suggest that, in general, these students did improve their writing over their 4 year academic career despite the increasing challenges and expectations at each course level. Anecdotally, these results are representative but not comprehensive. Although we did not include any student who did not complete CHEM 440, there were some students who did satisfactorily at lower level courses but did not meet the challenges of the upper level courses, despite the additional writing resources provided. In some cases it was clear that improving their writing skills was not a priority for the students regardless of their scores, available resources, and feedback.

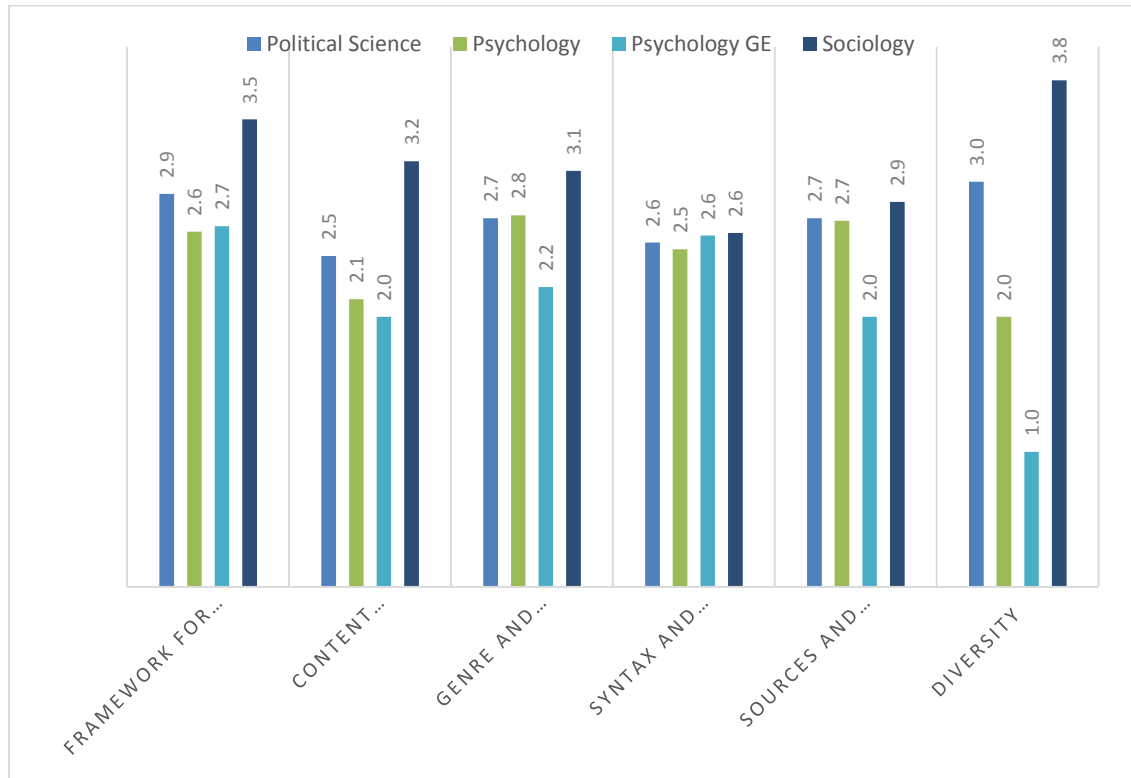
Conclusions: Based on the results of the 2014-15 assessments, we find that no major changes in this course are warranted or necessary. However, while our student-authors are showing overall good prowess, we still seek to improve the lower 50% of the classes.

Dr. Green proposes to introduce even more primary literature into the upper-division courses he is teaching and to focus more often on how a practicing author must make conscious decisions for inclusion or exclusion of material and data in the scientific manuscript. The primary goals are selective reporting of data and results, better use of the primary literature to place investigations in context, and overall improved presentation in the scientific style. The most recent significant evolution of the writing requirements in the upper-division analysis courses occurred during the years 2000-2004 with the introduction of exemplar manuscripts and again in 2010-11 with published rubrics. The sophistication of our students suggests that they are ready for the next stage in this evolution.

Social Science Division:

From GELI Assessment:

Average scores in Written Communication Rubric – Social Science Division



Social Science Division	Political Science	Psychology	Psychology GE	Sociology	Total
<u>Framework for Writing</u>	<u>2.91</u>	<u>2.63</u>	<u>2.67</u>	<u>3.46</u>	<u>2.98</u>
<u>Content Development</u>	<u>2.45</u>	<u>2.13</u>	<u>2.00</u>	<u>3.15</u>	<u>2.50</u>
<u>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</u>	<u>2.73</u>	<u>2.75</u>	<u>2.22</u>	<u>3.08</u>	<u>2.73</u>
<u>Syntax and Mechanics</u>	<u>2.55</u>	<u>2.50</u>	<u>2.60</u>	<u>2.62</u>	<u>2.57</u>
<u>Sources and Evidence</u>	<u>2.73</u>	<u>2.71</u>	<u>2.00</u>	<u>2.85</u>	<u>2.65</u>
<u>Diversity</u>	<u>3.00</u>	<u>2.00</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>3.75</u>	<u>3.27</u>
<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>42</u>

Psychology:

Assessors: Jennifer Harriger, Steve Rouse, Janet Trammell, Ashley Martin (senior honors psychology student)

Evidence: As the assessment coordinator, Jennifer Harriger asked faculty who taught capstone classes or a writing intensive class to assess their graduating seniors' writing using the rubric provided by the SALT team or their own modified rubric.

Harriger received writing samples from Steve Rouse and Janet Trammell and also submitted writing assignments from one of her courses.

Sample Size: Steve Rouse submitted writing assignments from 43 graduating seniors in PSYC321 (Personality).

Janet Trammell submitted 4 papers from graduating seniors in her PSYC 310 (Research Methods) class.

Jennifer Harriger submitted 14 papers from graduating seniors in my PSYC434 (Child Clinical Psychology) course.

Methodology:

Each professor submitted copies of graduating seniors' papers and their assessment of writing competency for each paper. After receiving the papers, Harriger trained Ashley Martin, a senior honor's psychology student to assess writing competency using the two rubrics. Ashley assessed approximately 20% of the student papers in order to establish inter-rater reliability.

Raters*	Inter-rater Reliability
Rater 1 and Rater 2	81.25
Rater 1 and Rater 3	87.5%
Rater 1 and Rater 4	83%

Rater 1 = Ashley Martin (undergraduate senior), Rater 2 = Steve Rous (professor of psychology), Rater 3 = Janet Trammell (assistant professor of psychology), Rater 4= Jennifer Harriger (associate professor of psychology)

The agreement between Ashley's ratings and that of the psychology faculty was 83%, which is considered acceptable in psychological research.

Expectations: In order to demonstrate writing competency, we would expect 80% of graduating seniors to score a 3 or higher in each of the assessed areas.

Results:

Scores	Context and Purpose for Writing		Content Development		Disciplinary Conventions		Sources and evidence		Control of Syntax	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Students who score 2	1	1%	3	3.9%	2	3.9%	1	1.4%	4	4.8%
Students who Score 3	13	22%	20	29.7%	28	46.4%	6	9.9%	26	44.2%
Students who score 4	47	77%	38	66.4%	31	49.7%	50	84.9%	31	51%
N/A	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	3.7%	--	--
Total	61	100%	61	100%	61	100%	61	100%	61	100%

	Context and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Disciplinary Conventions	Sources and evidence	Control of Syntax
Number of Student	61	61	61	57	61
Average Scores	3.75	3.57	3.48	3.86	3.44

In each of the assessed areas, our graduating seniors demonstrated writing competency (as measured by 80% of students scoring a 3 or higher). This indicates that our senior psychology majors have demonstrated writing competency.

Sociology:

Assessors: Three sociology professors, Robin Perrin, Jennifer Rosen, and Dan Morrison assessed each of the ten papers along with a student, Kami Bates.

Evidence: We examined the writing competency of students in one of our upper-division sociology classes during the Spring 2015 semester using a writing rubric based on the Written Communication Value Rubric provided by the Association for American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Ideally, we would have liked to assess our students' writing in Senior Seminar, which is a capstone class taught during the Spring semester by Robin Perrin for graduating seniors in Sociology. Robin Perrin, however, was overseas during the Fall 2014–Spring 2015 school year as faculty for the Buenos Aires International Program. We therefore did not offer Senior Seminar in Spring 2015. Given this situation, we chose to assess the written assignments for an upper division course in Sociology that tends to have the most seniors, Sociological Theory, which is taught by Rebecca Kim.

Ten papers were selected from a file of written assignments that Rebecca Kim had collected in her Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 Sociological Theory courses. Papers were selected based on whether or not the student who wrote the paper would be a senior in Spring 2015. Sociology had six graduating students in Spring 2015. The papers of all but one of the six graduating Sociology majors in Spring 2015 were included in this study. The rest of the papers that were assessed in this report are from Senior-level Sociology students who are not yet graduating.

The papers assessed were in response to one of the final written assignments that students submitted in Sociological Theory (SOC. 391). Students were prompted to write a short theory paper (3-4 pages) on any sociological topic of their choosing. The instructions for the theory paper are included in Table 1. All of the names and identities of the students who wrote the ten papers were deleted, and each of the papers was assigned a number ranging from 1 to 10. The ten papers were then distributed to the four assessors along with the writing rubric during the Spring 2015 semester.

Table 1. Social Theory Paper Writing Instructions

Social Theory Paper Information
<p>What is a social theory? Systematic explanations, generalizations, classifications of the social world, structures, and relations; i.e., answers why and how we act, relate, and organize ourselves.</p> <p>Your paper must include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A central sociological question of your interest (introduce and discuss your question) 2. A review of what other theorists/intellectuals have written on your subject/question (at least three studies/works) 3. Your own intelligent theoretical response to your question (i.e., your own theory) 4. Support of your arguments/theory using logic, empirical examples, and/or ethical appeals 5. Properly cite your work following the American Sociological Association’s Style Guide: http://www.asanet.org/Quick%20Style%20Guide.pdf <p>*Page limit: 2-3 pages single spaced or 5-6 double spaced, 12 point font *In addition to a hard copy, you must turn in an electronic copy of your paper to “Turn-it-in” on Courses</p>

The writing rubric that was used to assess the papers focused on two features of writing: 1) Content Development and 2) Syntax and Mechanics (Table 2). The four assessors provided two scores for each of the ten papers, a score for content development and another score for syntax and mechanics, using a scale ranging from 1 to 4 (Table 2).

Two of the tenure-track Sociology faculty (Dan Morrison and Rebecca Kim) also attended a writing assessment meeting and discussed inter-rater reliability in relation to assessing students’ writing and setting the writing benchmark for our students. After attending the writing assessment meeting, Rebecca Kim constructed the writing rubric for Sociology based on the AAC&U rubric for the purposes of this review (Table 2). She also met with Kami Bates on two occasions to discuss the writing rubric and the assessment of students’ writing.

Table 2. Writing Rubric for Sociology 2014-2015 (based on the AACU Writing Rubric)

	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Benchmark: Before the assessment, the Sociology faculty agreed that we would want at least 75% of our students to achieve 3 or higher for their writing score.

Results: Table 3 shows how each of the four assessors scored each of the ten students' papers for a) "Content development" and b) "Syntax and mechanics". The average scores that each of the four assessors gave for content and syntax are all at or near 3. The most common score, the mode, is 3. The total average score for both content and syntax for all of the papers is 2.9.

Kami Bates, the lone student assessor, gave students the lowest scores on both content and syntax on their papers (average score of 2.7 for content and 2.6 for syntax). When Rebecca Kim discussed with Kami how she rated the papers, Kami shared that she graded the papers in the "harshest possible" manner and tried to grade "objectively" as an "English major who is used to getting her papers back with markings and comments written up everywhere." She also elaborated that she did not give anyone a 3 or 4 for content if they "didn't do anything new" in their paper in terms of the arguments that they presented. As for syntax, Kami noted that she did not give a 3 or a 4 if there were "any errors that made the argument at all confusing" within the paper. In short, Kami may have assessed the papers more strictly than the other three sociology faculty who have more experience assessing students' writing and are used to seeing a range of writing skills among our students.

Even with Kami's lower scores incorporated into the assessment, however, the rounded average scores for each of the ten papers by all of the assessors suggest that our students have met our writing benchmark. With the average scores rounded to whole numbers, we can see that 80% of the papers received an average score of 3 or higher on "Content" development and that 80% of the papers received an average score of 3 or higher on control of "Syntax" and mechanics. Putting the scores for content and syntax together, 80% of the students received a total average score of 3 or higher.

Writing	Average Scores	Most Common Score
Content	2.9	3
Syntax	2.9	3

Paper #	Content	Syntax	Both Content & Syntax
1	2.8	2.0	2.4
2	3.0	3.0	3.0
3	3.8	3.5	3.6
4	3.5	3.3	3.4
5	3.5	3.3	3.4
6	2.3	2.3	2.3
7	2.5	3.0	2.8
8	2.5	3.0	2.8
9	3.0	2.8	2.9
10	2.3	2.8	2.5
Total	2.9	2.9	2.9

Papers Meeting Writing Goals (75%+ scoring 3 or higher)	Number	Percent	Total
Papers that received an rounded average score of 3 or higher on Content	8	80%	10
Papers that received a rounded average score of 3 or higher on Syntax	8	80%	10
Papers that received a total rounded average score of 3 or higher in both Content and Syntax	8	80%	10

Overall, we have met our benchmark. We could, however, work harder in helping students to develop their writing skills. We certainly have room for improvement.

Closing the loop:

- A. Have clear writing rubrics on content as well as syntax and mechanics in the Sociology classes.
- B. Provide opportunities for students to revise drafts of their writing and get feedback from faculty.
- C. Replace a fourth sociology faculty position, left vacant by the departure of Dan Morrison. With only three faculty, it would be difficult to maintain the curriculum, including teaching and developing more writing intensive upper-division courses.

Conclusion from program reviews

In this sampling of reports on writing competency, 10 of the 15 programs (67%) found that their expectations for writing competency were met. In the programs in which expectations were not met, assessors often mentioned ways their assessment methods could be improved for better accuracy of results and/or considered ways in which the instruction of writing could be improved. The increase in direct evidence and data reporting since our pilot critical thinking program is encouraging, and the fact that many of these assessors are considering ways to improve writing competency, even in programs where expectations were met, shows that our faculty are focused on improving student learning.

The Rubric: an adaptation of the AAC&U Value rubric for written communication

	4 Sophisticated Understanding	3 Sound Understanding	2 Basic Understanding	1 Minimal Understanding	0 Unacceptable
Framework for Writing (<i>considers textual sensitivity, context, audience, and purpose</i>)	Demonstrates a sensitive and thorough understanding of text, context, audience, and purpose	Demonstrates adequately clear consideration of text, context, audience, and purpose	Demonstrates awareness of text, context, audience, purpose	Demonstrates minimal understanding of text, context, audience, purpose	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline	Uses appropriate and relevant content to explore ideas through most of the paper	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the paper.	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions (<i>Formal and informal rules for writing in the genre/discipline</i>)	Demonstrates detailed attention to conventions of organization, content, presentation, format, and style	Demonstrates consistent attention to conventions of organization, content, presentation, format and style	Demonstrates basic attention to conventions of organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category
Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning with clarity and fluency (virtually error-free)	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning with few errors	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers but includes a number of errors	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources and evidence to develop ideas	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources and evidence to support ideas	Attempts to use credible and/or relevant sources and evidence to support ideas	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources and evidence to support ideas	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category
Diversity *Optional. Only assess if diversity was part of prompt	Addresses issues of class, race, religion, or gender with sensitivity	Explores issues of class, race, religion or gender in some detail	Acknowledges issues of class, race, religion or gender with few details	Mentions issues of class, race, religion or gender but does not develop	Does not meet any benchmarks in this category

Appendix A.

Indirect Evidence: Student Survey

Using Survey Monkey, we sent out a survey to all students who were enrolled in a course designated by the catalog as Writing Intensive in Fall 2014. The survey was opened on December 1, 2014 and closed on December 10, 2014.

The survey was made up of 11 questions: the first asked students how they would describe their writing competency in comparison to their peers at Seaver. Questions 2 -9 asked students to rate how well they believed specific components of the GE curriculum had shaped their writing competency. The last 2 questions were open-ended format, allowing students to describe courses they believed had shaped their writing competency and to give an overall impression of the teaching of writing at Seaver College.

Out of 617 students who were sent the survey, 60 responded (9% response rate). The low response rate may be because the survey was sent out late in the semester; many students may have chosen not to participate because of impending finals and end of the semester projects.

Survey Results:

Question 1 asked students:

Writing competency is defined as being able to write clearly and effectively using the appropriate arguments, data, and context for the intended audience. Using this definition how would you describe your competency in writing?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely competent when compared to other Seaver graduates	39.0%	23
Reasonably competent when compared to other Seaver graduates	44.1%	26
Fairly competent when compared to other Seaver graduates	16.9%	10
Not at all competent when compared to other Seaver graduates	0%	0

In questions 2-9 of the survey, students were asked to rank various classes at Pepperdine in terms of how helpful the classes were in developing writing competency. The results were as follows:

	Extremely helpful in developing my writing competence 4	Helpful in developing my writing competence 3	Somewhat helpful in developing my writing competence 2	Not at all helpful in developing my writing competence 1	I have not taken this course OR I enrolled in this course at a different college/university 0	Total of Students
Writing Intensive	15	23	8	3	n/a	49
	30.6%	46.9%	16.3%	6.1%	n/a	100.0%
English Composition	9	11	7	1	22	50
	18.0%	22.0%	14.0%	2.0%	44.0%	100.0%
Great Books	4	3	0	0	41	48
	8.30%	6.30%	0%	0%	85.40%	100.0%
SAAJ	2	2	1	0	43	48
	4.20%	4.20%	2.10%	0%	89.60%	100.0%
First-Year Seminar	10	13	15	4	8	50
	20%	26%	30%	8%	16%	100.0%
Language GE	1	9	13	6	19	48
	2.10%	18.80%	27.10%	12.50%	39.60%	100.0%
Literature GE	5	7	10	5	21	48
	10.40%	14.60%	20.80%	10.40%	43.80%	100.0%
Senior Seminar or Capstone	1	2	0	2	43	48
	2.10%	4.20%	0%	4.20%	89.60%	100.0%

Comments on questions 1-9:

**How would you describe your competency in writing?
(in comparison to other Seaver Students)**

- I've taken business classes at Pepp, and in those classes I have noticed that my writing skills are far superior when compared to those of the business students.
- Many of my peers are at a disappointingly low level of writing competency in my opinion
- My high school history teacher taught me many valuable skills in writing that I still use in my college essays.
- I love writing and have had an excellent writing experience since high school.
- I feel as though my writing ability is sufficient but there is always room for improvement
- After reading other students' work, I believe that my writing is competent in comparison.

Writing Intensive Course

- I have learned how to compose a strong argument and thesis, with evidence that not only defends but provokes further thought.
- All of my major courses are writing intensive, with many research papers and book reviews. I've had to learn how to write effectively in order to do well in these courses. There's a lot of writing required but it has prepared me for life beyond Pepp which I am thankful for.
- Organizational Behavior is a class all business students should take. The material is of course important, but as it pertains to writing, knowing how to write a comprehensive yet succinct case analysis is crucial in the business world, I believe
- We do not write enough, and what we do write is less than 300 words. I have been extremely disappointed in our lack of writing practice.
- It has helped me to identify and address specific parameters set by the professor, as well as organize my material, but I would not venture to say it has helped me write more persuasively.
- Im not in a writing class right now.
- There was little instruction as to how to write - the assignments did not even have specific format written on them, yet specific formats were required. How are we supposed to know?
- The various assignments have each contributed to the development of different writing skills, which has been beneficial.

English Composition

- My AP in high school got me out of the class.
- Prof Brooks gave helpful feedback on writing. We had an in-class writing activity at the start of each class, which allowed me to become more comfortable with creative writing. The out of class writing assignments also helped me develop stronger writing skills.
- This course was somewhat helpful, but I feel like I got the same writing experience in ENG 101 and a different writing intensive course that had a research emphasis.
- I took the Great Books Colloquium instead.
- I did not take this course because I got 5's on the AP literature and language exams

Great Books

- It has helped me organize material and make the paper flow more smoothly, but it has not helped me write more persuasively
- I have grown incredibly as a writer in these courses

SAAJ

- SAAJ was the first place I learned to write a research paper (more like a literature review with analysis). The teacher did a really good job of walking us through the process and resources so that we were properly prepared going into upper divisions.

First-Year Seminar

- Dean Davis gave us regular writing assignments, plus a final paper. These assignments helped me develop my writing skills.
- Took Great Books

Language GE

- Have not taken the full courses.
- Did some in class writing assignments, but no long or major essays, largely because we did not have the vocabulary necessary to communicate clearly in such a long writing assignment. Our instructor did review some essay writing norms which was helpful.
- My foreign language course is my major's writing intensive course, not a GE.
- Many of the foreign language teachers that I have had only expect small amounts of writing in the foreign language and set expectations for grammar and language low.
- I have not done much writing, if at all, in my foreign language classes

Literature GE

- I enjoyed the readings (I took modern plays) but I felt like the papers were superbly challenging
- Dr. Selby's course was incredibly helpful in developing my writing skills. We had many writing assignments, all of which were given constructive feedback. He had high standards for us and pushed us to improve our writing skills.
- I took Great Books instead.
- I took this course in a foreign language but the class was not extremely helpful in teaching or improving my writing in that language.
- Great Books

Senior Seminar or Capstone

- Writing an Honors Thesis has helped me further develop my writing skills. The 40 page assignment has helped me develop clarity in my writing, a stronger sense of organization, and an enhanced ability in analyzing and synthesizing. One of the most helpful courses in developing writing competency.

Open Ended

If there is another course or courses which have enhanced your writing competency, please comment:

- Analytical Chemistry enhanced my writing competency because it showed me how to get my ideas out in the open clearly.
- My ENG301 class, which is a class required for Creative writing majors, is one of the most influential classes I have participated in. It has provoked deep discussions of faith and has increased my ability to write analytically, spiritually, and creatively.
- -Organizational Behavior with Prof. Postlethwaite -History 424, History of Latin America (336?), History 429, all with Dr. Rivas' -History 200 with Dr. Corrado -History of Revolutionary America and Historiography, both with Dr. Davenport -Negotiation (Dr. Pownall) and mediation (Prof. Bell), Conflict resolution series -Humanities 212 with Dr. Lastilla in Florence -Humanities 313 with Dr. Frye
- History 204 with Hoang required essays instead of exams, and I found that they required effort that was challenging, which probably meant they enhanced my writing competency
- SPAN 341
- INTS 344 aided my writing in terms of research and presenting ideas in a unique and eloquent manner
- Research Methods in Psychology extremely helpful in developing my writing competence
- History 304, International Political Economy INTS 354, and also my previous marketing classes
- As an Asian Studies major, majority of my required upper division classes enhanced my writing competency.
- Jeffrey Schultz intro to creative writing made me into a poet. He is a genius and a fantastic teacher. He needs a salary raise and to be thanked for what he does.
- My Religion 301 course.
- Communication theory (com 200) taught me how to write in APA style, which is very helpful for my major!
- POSC 344 with Dr. Carolyn James was the first WI course I took. The course was extremely helpful in learning how to write a lengthy (5000 word) research paper. I attribute much of collegiate level writing skills and research ability to that one paper.
- N/A
- I have taken Intro and Intermediate creative writing, which in an indirect way have definitely helped my writing competency. In addition, COM 200 was somewhat helpful in developing my writing competency
- PSYC 310 Research Methods has been the most helpful to me.

Overall comments about your experience with writing instruction at Seaver:

- The writing instruction is decent at Seaver, but could be better. Most of my writing ability came from high school and that has really been the essence of my writing ability.
- My experience has been good. It has focused less on analysis (than my experience in high school) and more on research and defense of an argument, which is a skill I had not developed before.
- Every single major course (History) that I have taken at Pepperdine would qualify as "writing intensive." This semester alone, I've written over 80 pages of writing for my 13 units. In comparison with other majors, the History major requires so much more writing. I wish that there was more consistency across majors in terms of writing. The JWP project is pointless and an inefficient use of my time for writing intensive majors such as history. Since I've written so many papers, asking me to submit 4 for the assignment seemed unnecessary. My History profs have given helpful, constructive feedback on how to improve my writing style. They have pushed me and set high standards for me. I wish that the writing center would offer grad school tutors to help upperclassmen. The tutors are able to help the freshmen students in GEs effectively, but don't meet the needs of upperclass students writing for major and theses classes. Also, I wish that the GE classes better prepared me for the writing in my major classes.
- This semester is the only one out of the five I've taken that had heavy writing components. The timing at the end of the semester has been weird, so I will have to write 50-70 pages within the next week. I don't quite know how that happened, but I think it's doable if I can somehow discipline myself and manage my time a little more responsibly. This is a very overwhelming amount, to me, so I would recommend that students not take the same combination of classes as me (HIST 204, COM 442, and BA 366 are the main reasons for my distress). The rest of the semester was manageable, but it's just this last couple of weeks that have proven to be kind of difficult. I don't think any of this means that Seaver should change things, but I just wanted to share my own experience.

- I absolutely loved the improvements I made through my SPAN 341 course. However, I did not think ENG 101 was helpful at all.
- In general, teachers tend to focus on content more than vocabulary or grammar, which are equally important in writing effective papers.
- The standards of my professors are higher than I expected, which I am grateful for because it has pushed me to become a better writer. My writing has improved exponentially since graduating high school. I also enjoy research and writing a lot more than in years past.
- I came to Pepperdine as an extremely strong writer already, and I don't contribute any courses at Pepperdine to my writing competency, as it has mostly plateaued during my time here.
- I have had great professors who have taught me much about writing. Since coming to Pepperdine, my writing has improved by leaps and bounds.
- Each class has taught me a different style of writing as the teachers have a required style that they accept and with this, I get to learn more about the perspectives in my years at Seaver College.
- Writing style really depends on the professor's preferences.
- I believe my writing has somewhat improved.
- Please realize that Schultz is the smartest professor at all of Seaver and really needs some rewards soon for his successes or he'll go to work for Columbia MFA poetry.
- I feel that I have improved as a writer and increased my ability to write in diverse styles and on diverse topics.
- In French classes the writing experience has been rather poor. The stylistics class FRE 377 needs to be offered more often so that we can take it before taking other French classes that would benefit from that learning. In courses in the English language writing has been intensive and overall a fair and good experience.
- Nearly all of my professors place a high value on writing—even in courses that are not designated WI. This is extremely beneficial and overall has allowed me to improve my writing style.
- I am a new transfer student, so my experience at Seaver has been limited. My writing intensive class, History 200, has been a learning experience. My professor's feedback has been very beneficial for my writing.
- Some students come in to Pepperdine with a much lower level of writing preparation than others so I think that Seaver does well with trying to create an even level of competence in freshman GEs and freshman seminars.