Effective Writing at
Harold Washington College

Harold Washington College Assessment Committee
Spring 2013

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the methodology, key findings and recommendations from the Effective Writing Assessment, undertaken by the Harold Washington College Assessment Committee (HWCAC) in the fall semester, 2011. Forty-nine class sections submitted a total of 714 usable samples of student writing for this specific college-wide assessment. The sample size was just under 10% of the student population and a close match in key demographic areas such as gender, race and ethnicity. It is noted that these categorizations have become more complex than those used in federal reporting requirements.

A team of ten faculty graders was recruited: five from the English Department and five from other college disciplines. A small-scale pilot ran in the summer of 2011, and inter-rater reliability training was provided at the beginning of fall semester before this large-scale grading task was undertaken. Grading faculty were compensated by a reduction in their registration hours, a new strategy for recognizing the additional and necessary work required for large scale college-wide assessments. Despite concerns expressed by non-English faculty, there was no significant difference in their grading capabilities; indeed, their scores for student writing samples were a little tougher. It was also found that handwritten student writing samples were graded significantly lower than those that were typed. Additionally, a range of caveats is explored, revealing lessons to be learned in future iterations of our Effective Writing Assessment.

Effective Writing findings are presented in two key areas: methodological and writing outcomes in relation to a range of student variables. No correlation was found between the strength of students' writing and the number of college credit courses they had completed at HWC or elsewhere. The amount of writing expected of students across different college disciplines is explored, as is the key impact of initial placement in English courses on effective writing skill in aggregate and in six specific subset skills that constitute this vital student capability.

The report concludes with seven important recommendations for the improvement of effective writing at Harold Washington College. Most significant in these recommendations is the call for fundamental changes in the placement, outcomes and success trajectories of students who enter college underprepared for college-level writing. This call for change is placed within the national context of the important successful completion agenda and provides solid evidence to support significant reforms in community college practices to improve effective writing outcomes.

Introduction

This report outlines the methodology, key findings and recommendations from the Effective Writing Assessment undertaken by the Harold Washington Assessment Committee (HWCAC) in the fall semester, 2011

In the fall of 2011, the HWCAC conducted a college-wide assessment of effective writing as a part of the broader general education outcome of *Oral and Written Communication.* This project began two years earlier when it was decided by the committee to look at student writing in the broadest context possible. The committee developed the learning outcomes associated with effective writing, and subsequently a methodology for how the assessment was to take place. It was decided that the way to get the most authentic writing samples from across the campus was to collect writing from assignments that were already taking place in the classrooms across all disciplines. Although this created challenges for data collection, the committee was committed to assessing writing that came from within the classroom experience-not writing that was created specifically for the Effective Writing Assessment.

A sub-committee drafted a broad rubric that could be used for a variety of writing samples. A comprehensive demographic survey was written that would capture student demographic data, academic progress and attitudinal information.

In fall 2011, a pilot was conducted with approximately 100 writing samples from a small sample of classes. The demographic survey was administered to the students in order to look for potential problems, to test strategies for the general assessment and to minimize any technological difficulties in advance of the full data collection process. The pilot also provided the writing samples that were used to train the readers for the actual assessment as part of our inter-rater reliability strategy for the multiple faculty graders required for this college-wide writing sample.

As is common practice at HWC, faculty volunteers were solicited to gather student writing samples from their courses and to administer the survey to those same students. The committee was hoping for a sample of 1,000 students, however, just over 700 student samples were collected. Faculty volunteers came from the English, Math, Humanities, Art, and Applied Sciences departments. The writing samples varied greatly in content and length. Each writing sample was submitted anonymously, yet numbered to match their demographic survey information.

Ten faculty members assessed the writing samples using an effective writing rubric. Each "reader" assessed just over 70 samples in the first round, the same number in the

second round, and only 10 or 11 samples for a third round. The reading and grading process was completed during the spring 2012 semester.

This report was completed during the summer and fall of 2012.

II. Project Description

Project History
The Assessment Committee began the task of defining the general education goal of Oral and Written Communication as far back as 2003. A cross-disciplinary group of faculty and administrators defined the outcomes and the then-current (2010-2011) Assessment Committee wrote the student learning outcomes associated with the specific subportion of the goal that was called "written communication."

The SLO's for effective writing were formally approved in spring of 2011.

Student Learning Outcomes - *The student will be able to:*
1. Compose texts across multiple disciplines and for various audiences, occasions and purposes.
2. Construct texts for communication, information, and expression which adhere to the rules of Standard Written English;
3. Compose texts that are focused, well-organized, and well-developed.

Once the SLO's were approved by the HWCAC, the plan to move forward was approved. A measure was developed, a rubric was written, and a timeline was created. The pilot, the assessment itself, and the grading were completed during the fall semester 2011 and the spring semester 2012.

Measure Development
The demographic portion of the assessment was developed to capture student demographic data as well as perceptions about writing. The primary goal of this portion of the assessment was to check the validity of the sample and to test links between the affective domain and actual writing skills.   It was also designed to examine students' perceptions as they relate to the process of writing, their feelings about writing, and their experiences about writing at HWC and in their lives outside of school.

The demographic survey was divided into several sections. The first was purely demographic, asking about gender and background. The second part asked about student academic status, such as credits completed at HWC and/or other institutions

and levels of writing courses completed. We have previously used these data to create methodological student journeys to capture skill shifts as students progress through college.

The third portion asked about student understanding of the role of writing in their lives and their futures. The fourth section looked at student's self-assessments about the levels of their ability and confidence in their writing skills. The fifth and final section asked about how frequently students were assigned writing tasks in the departments of the college, so that we could ascertain how and where students report practicing their writing skills.

The five-section survey, the grading rubric, and the student writing samples made up the whole of the Effective Writing Assessment.

III. Methodology

The Effective Writing Subcommittee and the Assessment Committee as a whole spent a considerable amount of time considering a variety of assessment measures to examine our general education goal of effective writing. It was decided by committee to develop a measure that was commensurate with the kinds of writing that is assigned throughout the college. We wanted to look closely at a variety of writing samples that were a true sample of how students write in a variety of disciplines, for a variety of purposes, and for a variety of audiences.

Through that process, it was decided that the assessment would look at writing samples that came from coursework occurring throughout the college during a three-week span from week 10 to week 13 of the semester. From experience we knew that waiting until the latter half of the semester would provide us with samples from students who were steadfast in their studies with intentions to complete the semester.

The Effective Writing Subcommittee wrote and revised a rubric that would capture the stated learning outcomes for effective writing. It consisted of six categories (areas of attainment): Focus, Organization, Voice, Coherent Development and Elaboration, Conventions, and Style and Diction. Each of these categories correlated to a three-point scoring scale:

3	2	1	0
Very Competent	Competent	Below Competent	Unsatisfactory

During the fall semester 2011, the Assessment Committee conducted a pilot of the Assessment. This was done to reveal out any potential problems, to train graders to read writing samples and use the rubric to assess them.

After completing the pilot, the subcommittee developed a timeline for completion of the assessment. This consisted of a 12 week schedule to ensure that the college was well-informed of the upcoming assessment, to ask for and confirm faculty volunteers, plan the distribution of surveys to the selected course sections, and develop written instructions for the administration of the survey and for the collection of the writing samples.

As per past practices at HWC, faculty members across the disciplines were asked to participate by volunteering course work for assessment. An open invitation from the Chair of the sub-committee was posted electronically to all full-time and part-time faculty. After the volunteers had been identified, instructions explaining the process were communicated to them. Faculty volunteered 55 sections of courses, but it was determined that 6 were ineligible to participate. Those sections were excluded either because they were developmental (therefore not in the purview of our charge) or they were not college courses at all (e.g. Tutoring Center). The total number of prospective writing samples from the 49 volunteered sections totaled 1,291.

The hope of the committee was to collect writing samples from 10% of the credit-earning students at that time, providing a target of 1,000 student writing samples. Although we had 49 eligible sections of courses volunteered, we only garnered 714 samples. This can be attributed to class attrition, overestimation of completed and submitted assignments by faculty, and a small number of faculty who did not participate even though they had volunteered. The samples came from a broad range of courses throughout the college. Day students, night students, and Saturday students were represented in the sample. Each department participated except Social Sciences and Business/CIS.

Each writing sample was scored in six areas: focus; organization; voice; coherent development and elaboration; writing conventions; and, style and diction. We used ten volunteer faculty graders, mostly HWCAC members and others recruited specifically for the task. All received inter-rater reliability training and were given remission from registration hours so that they had the time to undertake this large additional grading obligation. Graders reported that scoring the writing samples was challenging because there was a great variety of assignments from different courses and departments. Also, faculty are used to grading student work only from within their own discipline rather than from a campus-wide sample of writing artifacts. After each sample was read twice, the scores were analyzed to determine inter-reader agreement.

The distribution of the absolute differences of the two raters was modeled as a probability distribution of a gamma function to account for both spread and skewness. The fitting was accomplished by least squares optimization implemented in the GNU Scientific Library for C (GSL 1.15). This type of optimization is appropriate since it seeks to optimize the ordinate data (rater difference) respective to a constrained abscissa. A cumulative Krippendorff's alpha agreement test was applied to the data in statistical R 2.15.2. A cutoff of .8, the *de facto* standard determined by Fleiss JL, Levin B, Paik MC (Statistical methods for rates and proportions, 3rd ed. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons 2003) to be "very good", was chosen for this analysis. The Krippendorff alpha test was chosen over other Alpha and Kappa tests since it can be applied to interval data and is not limited to two raters. Essays that had less than a .8 alpha agreement were selected for a third read. With this statistical analysis and testing 91 samples needed a third round of reading.

These 714 student writing samples revealed the variety of writing assignments in the disciplines and departments, and the broad range of students' writing abilities. The assessment also showed academic departments' strong commitment to the ideal of writing across the disciplines.

IV. Caveats and Considerations

During spring, 2012, the Effective Writing Subcommittee brainstormed a list of all of the obvious and not-so-obvious caveats, problems and considerations that were encountered during the planning, execution and reading of the Effective Writing Assessment. For the purposes of this report, they are listed in no particular order, but each should be taken into account when reading and interpreting the data, as well as when planning our next Effective Writing assessment. These points of methodological learning fall into five distinct categories. These are: issues with samples, issues with demographic categories, issues with faculty volunteers, issues with faculty graders, and issues with our grading rubric.

Issues with the Samples
Despite instructions for faculty to submit ungraded and unmarked student writing samples, this was not always the case. There was also huge variety in the length of student writing samples, although parameters for length were also provided beforehand. Graders had to apply the same rubric to 12-page essays and to one-paragraph responses.

In our request for writing samples, instructors were asked to provide the context and or the prompts provided to students that generated the specific submitted student writing

samples. In actuality, not all volunteered writing samples provided this information; meaning graders did not have the context and prompts provided by instructors. However, some of the assignments included detailed instructions that seemed to provide the foundation for the student's written work, thus graders could easily understand the context of these writing samples.

Issues with the Demographics
Students were asked about the number of HWC courses numbered 101 and above they have "successfully completed" at HWC, we do not know if some students counted earning an "F" or a "D" as completion, while others may have only counted the courses that they passed. This is an issued we must consider in future assessments when we ask students to self-report course completion. Adding definitional guidance in these questions would help gain clarity and increase validity in these aspects of our survey.

The survey's questions about the first writing course completed at HWC and the highest-level writing course completed at HWC with a "C" or better did not take into account the number of courses that had to be repeated in relation to the student's performance on the Effective Writing Assessment. Nor did we ascertain, through student self-report the level at which each student actually began his/her college career if that student first took writing courses at other colleges. Therefore, the data presented here concentrates predominantly on HWC course experience and skill development.

The survey's question about the highest-level writing course students had completed at HWC with a grade of "C" or better does not take into account the total number of college-level English/Composition courses taken by a student. Therefore, a student who took several college-level English/Composition classes at another college or university, and who had not taken any English/Composition courses at HWC might be a very strong writer as a result of his/her past experiences in college-level writing courses. On the survey, this student is indistinguishable from another student who had never taken any college-level English/Composition courses, but in reality these students have very different academic backgrounds that are not completely accounted for by the data.

In our protocol and the subsequent college-wide writing sample we have no way of knowing if the submitted work was immediately produced or writing that had been revised. Therefore, the same rubric was applied to first drafts and to third or final drafts. This is in large part an effect of a data gathering methodology in which our usual "test" conditions had been removed. However, it probably reflects the diversity of student work, in that some will be well researched, planned and the result of numerous drafts and some will be rushed responses with little planning, research and drafting. *In the*

future, it would be helpful to have data about the nature of the writing sample factored into the writing sample.

Issues with the Faculty Volunteers

This is the first time we have collected authentic student writing samples as our primary assessment data. This required considerable effort on behalf of contributing faculty and also required that they followed our well-thought out protocol. This was an unreal expectation for a campus-wide data gathering process. As previously noted, guidelines about writing sample length were not always followed, nor was the provision of the writing prompts to accompany a batch of student writing samples.

In rare cases, faculty submitted student responses to numbered questions (without necessarily providing the corresponding questions) instead of submitting well developed writing samples from students; these samples provided challenges for graders.

Despite a range of attempts to encourage student samples from across campus including all departments and disciplines, we were unable to secure writing samples from the Social Sciences Department, and the Business/CIS Department.

Issues with the Graders and Readers

Inter-rater reliability training included two writing samples from different disciplines but similar length that matched the protocol guidelines. Inter-rater reliability training did not include detailed explanations for what to do in the cases of writing samples that were outside the scope of what was requested. Therefore, writing samples that were answers to numbered questions, or one-sentence responses, or of a variety of lengths, were left to the individual judgments of graders.

We were also deliberate in having a mix of English faculty and non-English faculty as our graders. This led to some concern from non-English faculty graders about their own skill level in reading and grading such a broad diversity of writing samples. In allocating writing samples, we were intentional in ensuring an English faculty member and a non-English faculty member graded every writing sample. This speaks to the strength and diversity of HWC's Assessment Committee participation. All graders we supported in this extensive and extra grading workload by an agreement with HWC administration to use registration hours for this tasks. This was a no-cost strategy developed by the HWCAC in response to our more restricted funding environment and the belief that additional, and extensive, assessment committee work must be institutionally supported to sustain a strong assessment culture across campus.

Issues with the Rubric

We used a six-category rubric to assess the writing samples. There was considerable debate among sub-committee members about the use of a "Voice" category in our assessment. For some disciplines this is an important criteria and for others less so. Some subcommittee members would have preferred to subsume "Voice" into the "Style and Diction" category.

It was decided to create a descriptive rubric rather than a holistic rubric. Each of the categories is a better indicator of student performance in specific areas of Effective Writing than the total score is. This is important to remember when considering our findings.

These total scores do not translate easily or directly into percentages or equivalent grades, as this would be impossible in a decontextualized assessment. Much discussion took place over how to make sense of these total scores. Whereas, the total score may be an overall indicator of student performance on some level, (a total score of 6 indicates an overall poor performance on this assessment), a score of 11 may indicate several things (very high scores in 2 categories and very low scores in others). In the presentation of findings we present the actual grading number from the 0 to 18 scale. We also accompany these actual grades with a roughly equivalent percentage grade. This is done for reasons of accessibility of the findings. Caution should be used in over-interpreting these normalized percentage scores: no student writing was graded on a 0 to 100 scale.

V. Findings

1. Sample Validity

In fall 2011 Harold Washington College had 5,158 full-time students and 4,193 part-time students for a total of 9,351 students. This census data is from October 2011 and is based on the Day-10 enrollment information. The assessment committee wanted to sample 10% of the student body with a goal of just around 1000 writing samples. Once all of the samples were gathered, we had just over 700 samples. Historically, the enrollment at the halfway mark is far less than that of the day-10 enrollment and it continues to decline as the semester progresses. Our samples were collected from the tenth through twelfth week of the semester, when enrollment has dropped dramatically. Whether or not our sample comprised 10% of the enrollment population is unclear, however, the 714 students represent what we believe to be very close to the 8-10% mark.

2. Demographics

In fall 2011, 54.9% of the student population was female and 45.1% of the student population was male. In our assessment we asked more complex gender questions and thus our student sample self-identified as 65.69% female, 33.75% male and 0.56% "other". It is not known why we achieved a student sample that was more female, perhaps there are different and gendered persistence rates leading to our week 10 through week 12 sample losing male students.

The racial/ethnic breakdown is shown below, where again our assessment committee demographic categories are not an exact match for those required by Federal racial and ethnic higher education reporting requirements.

	HWC Total	Effective Writing Sample Total
Asian		9.56%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11.9%	
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1.19%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0.4%	1.88%
Black/Non- Hispanic	35.7%	37.88%
Hispanic	30.4%	42.9%
White/Non Hispanic	18.3%	29.35%
Unknown	3.3%	
Multi-Racial		20.14%

It is clear from the above chart, that our sample represented a wide range of racial and ethnic self-identifications and indicates a close, if not perfect, sample of the HWC student body.

Findings 3: Total Effective Writing Scores

Total Essay Score Distribution
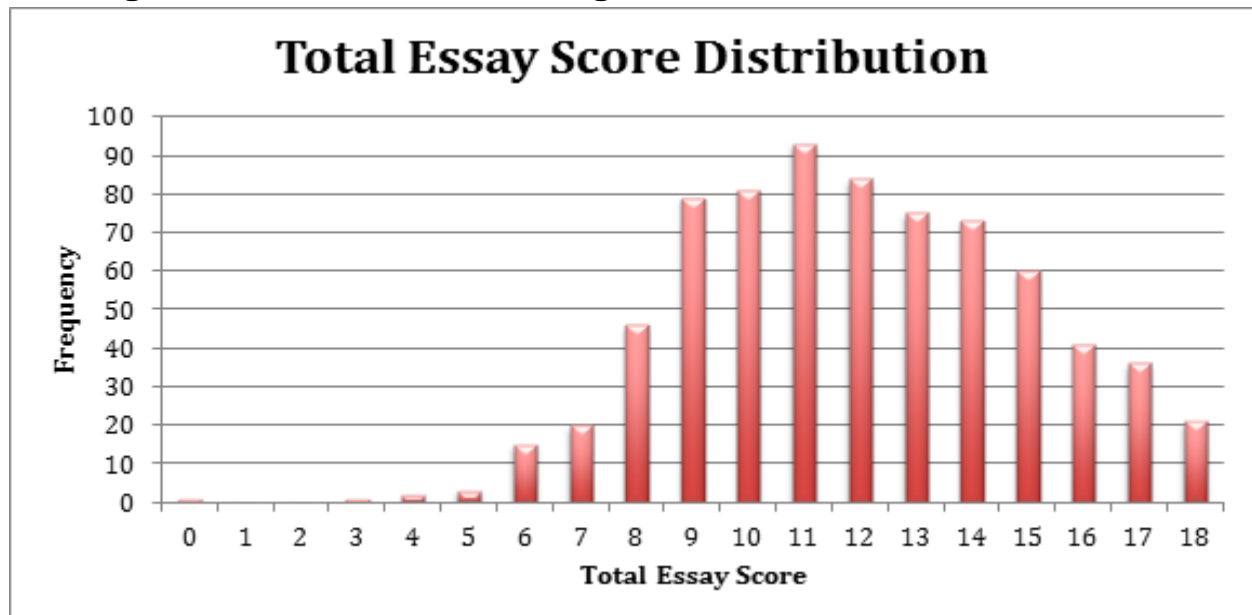
The above distribution graph represents the total median score of each essay, with a score of 11.5. Below are the mean, median and standard deviation.

Findings 4: Effective Writing Scores across six grading categories

Section Essay Score Distribution
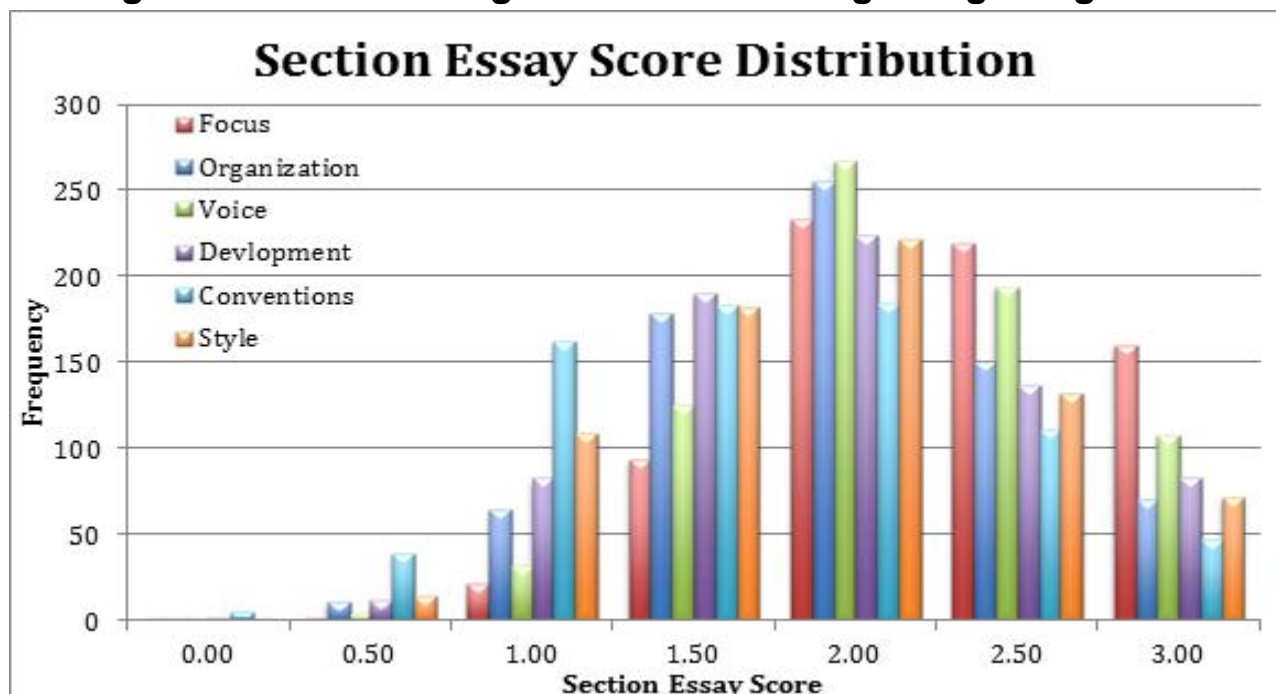
Section	Mean	Median	S.D.

Section	Mean	Median	S.D.
Total Essay	11.68	11.50	3.00

Focus	2.23	2.33	0.53
Organization	1.93	2	0.57
Voice	2.10	2	0.54
Development	1.90	2	0.61
Conventions	1.67	1.5	0.66
Style	1.85	2	0.62

This chart represents the breakdown of score based on the 6 areas of the rubric. Students scored the highest on Focus, with a 2.33 out of 3, and the lowest on Conventions, with a 1.5 out of 3.

We also wanted to investigate the data to see if other effective writing issues, ones that had much concerned the assessment committee during our planning stages, could be supported in these data. Thus we looked at whether the disputed category of "Voice" had any influence in the overall ratings of these diverse writing samples. These data tell us that there is no statistical difference in total scores after removing "Voice" as a category.
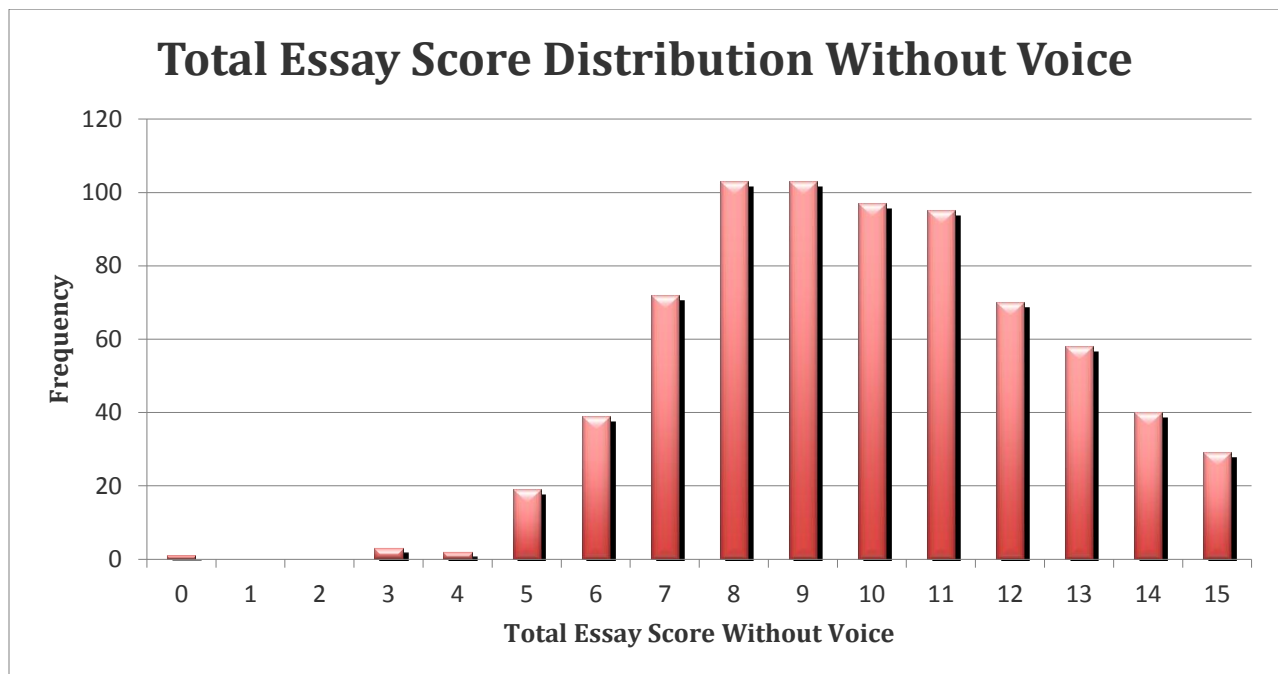
Section	Mean	Median	S.D.
Total Essay	9.58	9.50	2.56

Findings 5: Performance differences between typed samples and handwritten samples

We had also expressed some concern, when seeing the vast array of samples we had collected, as to whether well-presented and typed student writing samples would be graded differently from those that were handwritten. Some of the handwritten samples were clearly challenging in terms of legibility.

	Typed Writing Sample	Handwritten Writing Sample
Mean	66.47%	63.58%
Median	66.67%	62.96%
S.D.	15.93%	17.47%
p-value	0.0218	

The data chart above compares handwritten writing samples to those that were typed. Typed samples scored on average 3% better than handwritten samples. This is a statistically significant difference. We may have an expectation that all college-level written work should be word processed, perhaps this finding should be clearly communicated to all students, to ensure they are receiving the maximum grade for their work.

Findings 6: Faculty grader differences – comparison between English and non-English faculty

As already identified, we had expressed some concerns about faculty grading differences, despite successful inter-rater grading reliability training. This was especially the case with non-English faculty who, in large part, felt less confident in their grading capabilities than English faculty who were both experienced in the mass grading of student written work. The following table shows the mean grading performance of each grader.

Grader	Mean	S.D.	Discipline
1	12.00	4.00	Non-English
2	12.02	3.10	English
3	11.49	4.51	English
4	13.75	3.80	English

5	9.90	3.41	Non-English
6	11.49	3.25	English
7	10.69	3.48	Non-English
8	12.15	2.51	English
9	12.00	4.30	Non-English
10	10.94	2.93	Non-English

Grader	Mean	S.D	T-test
English	12.18	0.93	0.10
Non-English	11.10	0.90	

The above data charts describe the variations in grading means between the 10 graders as well as the difference between English faculty as graders and non-English faculty as graders. The means ranged from a high of 13.75 (from an English faculty grader) and a low of 9.90 (from a non-English faculty grader). There is no statistical difference between the English faculty and non-English faculty graders as two distinct groups. It also appears non-English faculty were a little tougher in their grades in general.

Methods	Pearson Correlation	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha
2 reads	0.59	0.56	0.62
3 reads	0.83	0.78	0.89

This data chart indicates that samples that are read three times result in higher inter-rater reliability. The Pearson Correlation, Cohen's Kappa and Krippendorff's Alpha data analysis describes a perfect correlation or agreement as "1". Three readers score much closer to "1" than two readers. In reality, the choice of number of readers was both a resource and quality decision. We decided that both a non-English and an English faculty member should grade all writing samples. Third reads were only allocated when the two grades difference fell below the .8 alpha cut-off.

Findings 7: Effective Writing Performance and Number of Courses Taken

We are always interested in exploring student capabilities and how these are impacted as they progress in their academic journey with us and with other higher education institutions. We use broad credit course categories to represent student progress.

Credits	HWC	Other HE Institutions
60+	62.16%	68.59%
45-60	65.71%	70.41%
31-45	67.09%	65.56%
16-30	66.29%	64.20%
0-15	64.90%	64.90%
Pearson Correlation	0.0044	0.0751

According to the above data chart, there is no correlation between the total essay score and the number of credits obtained at Harold Washington College. This is also true of credits taken at another institution. Therefore, the number of credits a student has taken was not a good indicator of how students performed in this Effective Writing Assessment.

Finding 7: Effective Writing Performance compared to self-reported confidence in specific writing skills.

We asked students to report their confidence levels in overall writing and in six specific skill areas through which we could differentiate effective writing quality. The six skills sets are: Focus, Organization, Use of Supportive Evidence, Correct Spelling and Diction, and Grammatical Fluency.

Confidence and Focus:
"I am confident in my ability to write a clearly focused essay."

Focus Confidence	Mean Focus	Mean Total
Agree Strongly	78.78%	69.52%
Agree	74.21%	64.71%
Disagree	68.58%	58.75%

Disagree Strongly	75.93%	57.41%
Pearson Correlation	0.1625	0.2050

There is a very low correlation between the focus score and student confidence in that area. There is a very low correlation between the total essay score and student confidence in the area of focus. Student confidence is better correlated with their total score than the specific area of focus.

Confidence and Organization:
"I am confident in my ability to effectively organize and essay."

Organization Confidence	Mean Organization	Mean Total
Agree Strongly	67.09%	68.53%
Agree	64.90%	64.97%
Disagree	58.85%	59.16%
Disagree Strongly	62.50%	59.38%
Pearson Correlation	0.1156	0.1693

There is a very low correlation between the effective organization score and student confidence in that area. There is a very low correlation between the total essay score and student confidence in the area of effective organization. Student confidence is better correlated with their total score than the specific area of effective organization.

Confidence and Supporting Evidence:
"I am confident in my ability to use examples and evidence from text, experience, or imagination to support my thesis."

Coherence Confidence	Mean Coherence	Mean Total
Disagree Strongly	67.34%	69.20%
Disagree	62.25%	64.42%
Agree	64.37%	63.47%
Agree Strongly	60.37%	62.24%
Pearson Correlation	0.0986	0.1273

There is a very low correlation between the coherence score and student confidence in that area. There is a very low correlation between the total essay score and student confidence in the area of coherence. Student confidence is better correlated with their total score than the specific area of coherence.

Confidence and Correct Spelling and Diction:
"I am confident in my ability to write an essay using correct spelling and diction."

Style and Diction Confidence	Mean Style and Diction	Mean Total
Disagree Strongly	60.97%	69.69%
Disagree	55.61%	65.05%
Agree	50.62%	61.23%
Agree Strongly	50.88%	61.94%
Pearson Correlation	0.1381	0.1795

There is a very low correlation between the style and diction score and student confidence in that area. There is a very low correlation between the total essay score and student confidence in the area of style and diction. Student confidence is better correlated with their total score than the specific area of style and diction.

Confidence and Grammatical Fluency:
"I am confident in my ability to demonstrate grammatical fluency through mastery of standard forms of verb conjugation, punctuation, pronoun use, and complete sentences."

Convention Confidence	Mean Convention	Mean Total
Agree Strongly	67.24%	69.32%
Agree	61.55%	64.87%
Disagree	58.33%	62.19%
Disagree Strongly	53.85%	60.47%
Pearson Correlation	0.1224	0.1474

There is a very low correlation between the convention score and student confidence in that area. There is a very low correlation between the total essay score and student confidence in the area of conventions. Student confidence is better correlated with their total score than the specific area of conventions.

Finding 8: Overall self-assessment as a writer and effective writing total score: "How would you rate yourself as a writer?"

Rating	Mean Total
Excellent	69.25%
Above Average	70.25%
Average	63.52%
Below Average	58.77%
Poor	54.29%
Pearson Correlation	0.2178

The above data chart describes students' self-reports as writers. There is a positive correlation between how students rate themselves as writers and their scores on the effective writing assessment. Student confidence in a particular aspect of their writing is better correlated with their overall writing than that area. These students are not capable of specifying their confidences or abilities in the skill subsets identified by our grading rubric.

Finding 9: Effective Writing Performance and highest English course passed with a C.

In all of our assessments we are interested in student journeys and how these may impact competence in the general education disciplines. Our English curriculum contains sequences of courses that students can test into and thus begin their effective writing journey. There is considerable debate about the testing and placement of students into English courses and this is an issue we will also specifically address in our conclusions.

Highest Writing Course	Mean	S.D.
English 98/99	59.78%	14.53%
English 100/125	59.01%	16.53%
English 100	54.94%	18.79%
English 101	66.23%	17.23%
English 102	68.38%	15.25%
None/ Does not apply	65.53%	17.47%

Pearson correlation*	0.2402	

The above chart shows a gradual increase in scores from a mean of 59.78% in English 98/99 to a mean of 68.38% in English 102. This is a low positive correlation, but is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.0369. However, students who completed English 100/125 as their highest English course scored significantly better than those who completed the English 100 course only (without the Reading 125).

Finding 10: Effective Writing Performance and Current English Class

Class comparison	p-value	Mean Score
98/99 - 100	0.8794	59.78% - 54.94%
98/99 - 100/125	0.2906	59.78% - 59.01%
98/99 - 101	0.1618	59.78% - 66.23%
98/99 - 102	0.0369	59.78% - 68.38%
100/125 - 100	0.3623	59.01% - 54.94%
100/125 - 101	0.1007	59.01% - 66.23%
100/125 - 102	0.0182	59.01% - 68.38%
100 - 101	0.0007	54.94% - 66.23%
100 - 102	0.0000	54.94% -68.38%
101 - 102	0.0990	66.38% - 68.38%

This data chart compares the overall scores of students currently in English courses. The biggest difference in student performance is between students in English 100 and English 102, followed by English 100-English 101, English 100/125-English 102 and English 98/99 – English 102. These are statistically significant differences in theses scores with 95% confidence between the courses.

Highest Course	Total Essay Score														
	First Course														
	English 98/99			English 100/125			English 100			English 101			English 102		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
English 98/99	58%	14%	15	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	-	-	0
English	-	-	8	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0

100/125															
English 100	54%	22%	21	-	-	1	56%	17%	27	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 101	57%	21%	20	57%	11%	16	69%	16%	17	69%	17%	105	-	-	1
English 102	57%	13%	25	62%	18%	13	63%	17%	20	73%	13%	78	70%	14%	27

This Effective Writing Assessment discovered a correlation between the students' initial placement in HWC's English Composition courses and the students' scores on the assessment. The sequence of composition courses from the lowest to the highest is the following: English 98/Reading 99 (a developmental course covering writing and reading); English 100/Reading 125 (a developmental course covering writing and reading); English 100 (a developmental writing course without reading instruction); English 101 (a college level writing course); and English 102 (a college level writing course). In general, the higher students' initial placement, the higher their mean scores in our Effective Writing sample.

Students who placed in college level composition courses (101 and 102) were more likely to receive scores on this assessment equivalent to 70% and higher on the standard college grading scale. Students who placed in developmental courses (98/99, 100/125, and 100) were more likely to receive scores on this assessment equivalent to a grade below 70% on the standard college scale. The issue of writing placement and the findings of this assessment will be discussed further in the conclusion to this report.

However, there were some anomalies in the relation between course placement and students' Effective Writing assessment scores. For example, students who placed at the 101 level and later took 102 received the highest mean score (equivalent to 73%). However, students who placed at the 102 level received a slightly lower mean score (equivalent to 70%).

As for students who placed in developmental courses, their scores did not increase to 70% when they reached the 102 level. Indeed, at the 98/99 level, the scores actually decreased: from 58% to 57%. At the 100 level, there was improvement in their progress to the 102 level, but the students did not reach the 70% score: 100/125 (from 56% to 62%) and 100 (from 56% to 63%). Thus, the average student requiring remediation was unable to receive a score on the assessment equivalent to a passing college grade, despite his or her progress through the composition-course sequence.

These results remained consistent when we tested each of our assessment rubric criteria individually. The pattern was consistent in focus, organization, voice,

development, conventions, and style. The data charts for these findings can be found in Appendix F.

Finding 11: Effective Writing Performance and Reported Writing Frequency

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
English	35.19%	60.93%	61.60%	65.71%
Humanities	59.29%	61.51%	65.76%	67.82%
Social Sciences	60.24%	61.81%	64.59%	68.09%
Mathematics	65.57%	67.75%	62.00%	62.05%
Natural Sciences	63.08%	65.79%	65.63%	66.31%
Average	56.67%	63.56%	63.92%	65.99%

This data chart shows an increase in performance on the Effective Writing Assessment based on how frequently the students were asked to write in their English, Humanities, and Social Sciences courses. We don't see that same increase in the Math and Science courses.

VI. Recommendations

The data gathered from the Effective Writing Assessment is revealing. This section is divided into two distinct areas both intended to support improved student writing across campus and build our strong body of assessment knowledge. The first set of recommendations concerns our methodological learning and is intended to improve future iterations of our effective writing assessment. The second set of recommendations concentrate on changes, grounded in the extensive data presented here, designed to improve the quality of effective student writing at HWC.

Future Effective Writing Assessments
Before planning the next Effective Writing Assessment, HWAC members should be aware of the range of sample issues identified in this report. This was a largely successful attempt at gathering authentic student writing samples from across campus. However, as many college managers and administrators know, expecting exact compliance to complex instructions across all faculty, is a challenge. This reality should be factored into the next iteration of any Effective Writing Assessment.

We did not reach our target sample size and this probably has a relationship to the complexity of the task we were asking faculty to do when they volunteered their class sections. We recommend that any future Effective Writing assessment, that utilizes

authentic student writing samples, has a much longer lead-in time to work with contributing faculty to identify, through advance planning and in their syllabi, the exact writing samples to be collected and assessed.

It will be up to the Assessment Committee of the future to decide whether or not to remove the Voice category from the rubric. Although these data do not suggest that there is any statistical difference between the use of our 6-category rubric, we will no doubt continue to debate the use of a 5-category rubric, where Voice is subsumed within the Style category.

As is always the case, the demographics portion of the survey should be revisited so that it accurately reflects the race, ethnicity and gender categorizations that are inclusive and accurately capture the diversity of our student body. It should also be noted we did not look at English 101/197 specifically, and this course should be included in future Effective Writing assessments.

Despite the initial concerns about equivalency across all ten of our faculty graders, the data presented here demonstrates strong inter-rater reliability. Our training was short and completely electronic. It is suggest that future training includes bringing faculty together to discuss the two writing samples and their grades. Grading faculty should also discuss a range of "what if" scenarios, to cover the sample issues we encountered in this assessment.

This was the first time that the graders were compensated for their time by reassignment of registration duties. This worked as a whole; however, the graders should be made aware that if the grading continues into the semester, as it did in 2012, it is their responsibility to ensure that the work gets done, even though registration is long over.

A minimum amount of writing must be insisted on for the next round of this assessment. The variations in length proved to be challenging, both as some samples were far too long and others were far too short. Volunteering faculty should be partnered with well in advance to maximize the submission of "developed" pieces of student writing. Some very long full essay samples were less problematic as there was more to base the scores on; however, they proved to be taxing for the graders.

The next Effective Writing Assessment should include questions in the survey that probe the use of support services in the college, i.e., the tutoring center, writing tutors, embedded tutors, etc. Data collected from these types of questions could be useful in determining who needs services, who seeks services and where those students go for

services. We have a strong investment in services to support student writing, it would be very helpful to know by whom and how these are accessed. It would be informative to evaluate use and access of writing tutorial support and match this with Effective Writing assessment results. All college stakeholders have a clear mandate to improve student skills in effective writing. We recommend that HWC administration explore ways in which Effective Writing Assessment findings can be matched with strategies to improve all student support services in maximizing student achievement through strong writing skills.

It should be noted that neither the Business/CIS Department nor the Social Sciences Department volunteered any sections for participation in this assessment.   Both departments were appealed to directly and still did not volunteer any writing samples. Ideally, writing samples should be collected from every department in the college, so that we can speak across departments and disciplines more thoroughly.

Effective Writing Recommendations

The data contained in this report indicates clear areas for improvement in all three of our intended student learning outcomes for Effective Writing. Our student learning outcomes should be reiterated here.

Students at Harold Washington College will be able to:

1. Compose texts across multiple disciplines and for various audiences, occasions and purposes.
2. Construct texts for communication, information, and expression which adhere to the rules of Standard Written English;
3. Compose texts that are focused, well-organized, and well-developed.

The data presented here demonstrates that only a proportion of our students are meeting the above SLO's and there are many who struggle in their Effective Writing skills. This is not unexpected, knowing what we know about our student body and their skills upon entry to college.

We recommend the following:

1. Students who place into English 100 should also be placed in English 125 as there is clear evidence that the Reading Section (125), which can also be seen as "wrap around" English preparatory support, is making a difference in student performance in Effective Writing.

2. Students who placed into pre-college English did not perform as well on the Effective Writing Assessment as those who came in at college level English. In light of Reinvention Goal #4, the effectiveness of remedial courses needs to be re-examined with special focus on student learning outcomes, course content, and teaching/learning pedagogy.

3. Criteria for successful course completion from remedial courses to college-level English should be re-examined.

4. Application of completion criteria in transitioning students from lower to higher-level courses should also be re-examined. The data presented here indicate that approximately a third of this student sample need more practice in the mastery of the basic writing skills.

5. The data clearly indicates that students who are asked to write more often in English, Humanities, and the Social Sciences perform better in Effective Writing than those who are asked to write less often. More frequent writing should be expected in those disciplines across the board.

6. The data also indicates that there is no correlation in the math and science disciplines between the frequency of writing that students are asked to do and how they performed on this assessment. Numeracy issues rightly concern Math and Science Departments, first and foremost. These departments should be asked to review how and where student writing is expected in their courses and how math and science courses can contribute to improving effective student writing.

7. These students have difficulty assessing themselves as writers. They have more difficulty assessing themselves in terms of the specific areas of writing (Focus, Organization, Voice, Elaboration, Conventions, and Style and Diction). When providing feedback to students about their writing, faculty should provide specific feedback about where the problems are and how the student can improve in those areas. Broad statements about written work, in general, are not helpful and will not improve student writing. Professional development should be provided to work with *all faculty* in the best way to give useful feedback to students to improve student writing specifically.

VII. Conclusions

In HWCAC's Effective Writing assessment over 700 students provided authentic writing samples in which there was huge variability. Some writers had a unique voice, organized and developed their ideas skillfully, and wrote with technical proficiency. On the other hand, some authors failed to organize and develop their ideas, and clearly struggled with the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling. There were many essays and reports that were somewhere between these two extremes.

Effective writing is an essential skill for everyone. Harold Washington students who graduate with a recognized academic qualification should be, at least, competent writers who are able to produce written communications that serves a diversity of purposes. The world of work, at all levels, requires people who can write well and effectively communicate what is required of them. Effective writing is a necessary and much sought after skill. The data presented here indicate that for a good proportion of our students, effective writing is a challenge. More specifically, students who test into our developmental courses, do not perform as strongly as they should at the college level.

Although it is not examined here, we suggest that speedy success in developmental English courses must be improved, since our data clearly shows that students placing in pre-credit writing courses continue to underperform in effective writing skills. There a range of strategies such as gateway courses, embedded tutors, cohorts with mandated support and services, that are being tested and showing positive results in allowing our least able students to quickly progress, rather than become disheartened and drop out.

In "Core Principles for Transforming Remedial Education: A Joint Statement" (December 2012) by the Charles A. Dana Center, Complete College America, Inc., Education Commission of the States, and Jobs for the Future, a clear case is made for change with regard to the success of students who place into what we classify as developmental courses. On page one they state:

"As states and institutions embark on ambitious reforms, it has become increasingly clear that improving the success of students who are currently assessed and then placed into remedial education courses is pivotal to the college completion agenda in states. With half of all students in postsecondary education taking one or more remedial education courses and college completion rates for those students well below state and national goals, it is critical that remedial education reform is an essential component of state and national college completion efforts at both the institutional and state policy level

This Effective Writing assessment provides specific findings that strongly support this broader picture. As a college we must develop new strategies and responses that change and improve how we respond to students who arrive at our doors unprepared for college-level writing. These data show that HWC students beginning their academic journey with us at higher levels of English capabilities are significantly better at effective writing. This is a key skill that opens up the full college experience to them, broadens their educational understanding and presents more highly valued employment opportunities.

It is hoped this assessment contributes to a college-wide dialogue about how we can all contribute to improved student writing and thus college success.

Appendix A

Student Profile - Fall, 2011
Prepared by the CCC Office of Research and Evaluation, October 10, 2011

Gender

Women		Men		Total
Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
5,131	54.9%	4,220	45.1%	9,351

Ethnic Background

	Total	Percentage
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,115	11.9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	40	0.4%
Black/Non Hispanic	3,335	35.7%
Hispanic	2,843	30.4%
White/Non Hispanic	1,709	18.3%
Unknown	309	3.3%

Enrollment Status

Full-Time-12 or more credits	5,158	55.2%
Part-Time-fewer than 12 credits	4,193	44.8%

Appendix B

Effective Writing Demographic Survey

Please fill in marks like this: ●   not like this: ⊘ ⊗

Demographics

1. What is your gender?
- ○ Female
- ○ Male
- ○ Other

2. Are you Hispanic/ Latino? (A Hispanic or Latino is a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race)
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

3. Select one designation from the races in the following list:
- ○ Black or African American
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ○ White
- ○ Asian
- ○ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ○ Multi-racial

4. What is your age?
- ○ Less than 20
- ○ 21-25
- ○ 26-40
- ○ 41-60
- ○ 61 +

5. Please indicate your current academic status:
- ○ Full Time
- ○ Part Time

6. How many credits have you successfully completed at HWC (from courses numbered 101 or above)?
- ○ 0-15
- ○ 16-30
- ○ 31-45
- ○ 45-60
- ○ 60+

7. How many credits have you successfully completed at other colleges or universities (from courses numbered 101 or above)?
- o 0-15
- o 16-30
- o 31-45
- o 45-60
- o 60+

8. What is the first writing course you completed at HWC?
- o English 98/99 (Formerly INTCOMM 99)
- o English 100/125 (Formerly INCOMM 100)
- o English 100
- o English 101
- o English 102
- o None/ Does not apply

9. What is the highest-level writing course you have completed at HWC with a C or better?
- o English 98/99 (Formerly INTCOMM 99)
- o English 100/125 (Formerly INCOMM 100)
- o English 100
- o English 101
- o English 102
- o None/ Does not apply

10. In which college-level writing course are you currently enrolled? Check all that apply
- o English 98/99
- o English 100/125
- o English 100
- o English 101
- o English 102
- o Creative Writing
- o Journalism
- o Advanced Composition
- o None/ Does not apply

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. There are no correct or incorrect answers.	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11. Writing helps me understand the world around me.	○	○	○	○
12. For me, writing involves exploration, investigation and/or creativity.	○	○	○	○
13. I need to be able to write well in order to achieve my career goals.	○	○	○	○
14. Writing is an important tool that helps me learn other subjects.	○	○	○	○
15. Writing allows me to be creative and discover things for myself.	○	○	○	○
16. Writing helps me make intelligent decisions about my life.	○	○	○	○
17. Writing is useful not only to people who do specialized work but also to everyday life.	○	○	○	○
18. An accomplished writer needs only to know sentence structure, punctuation, grammar and spelling.	○	○	○	○
19. Writing is a form of experimentation.	○	○	○	○
20. I don't need to write well in order to achieve my career goals.	○	○	○	○
21. There are different styles of writing depending on the audience.	○	○	○	○
22. There are different styles of writing depending on the purpose.	○	○	○	○
23. I am confident in my ability to write a clearly focused essay.	○	○	○	○
24. I am confident in my ability to effectively organize an essay.	○	○	○	○
25. I am not confident in my ability to use examples and evidence from text, experience, or imagination to support my thesis.	○	○	○	○
26. I am not confident in my ability to write an essay using correct spelling and diction.	○	○	○	○
27. I am confident in my ability to demonstrate grammatical fluency through mastery of standard forms of verb conjugation, punctuation, pronoun use, and complete sentences.	○	○	○	○
28. An accomplished writer needs to know only organization, development, focus and voice.	○	○	○	○

Please select *ONE* answer for the following questions.

29. What part of writing do you **most** like?
    ○ Organization of ideas   ○ Development of ideas   ○ Spelling/vocabulary
    ○ Grammar/Punctuation   ○ I like all parts of writing.

30. What part of writing do you **least** like?
    ○ Organization of ideas   ○ Development of ideas   ○ Spelling/vocabulary
    ○ Grammar/punctuation   ○ I dislike everything about writing.

31. What part of the **writing process** do you **most** like?
    ○ Planning/outlining the rough draft   ○ Writing the rough draft
    ○ Revising the rough draft   ○ I like everything about the writing process.

32. What part of the **writing process** do you **least** like?
    ○ Planning/outlining the rough draft   ○ Writing the rough draft   ○ Revising the rough draft
    ○ I dislike everything about the writing process.

33. How would you rate yourself as a writer?
    ○ Excellent   ○ Above Average   ○ Average   ○ Below Average   ○ Poor

34. How frequently are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in **Math**?
    ○ Often   ○ Sometimes   ○ Seldom   ○ Never   ○ Not Applicable

35. How frequently are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in the **Natural Sciences**? (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.)
    ○ Often   ○ Sometimes   ○ Seldom   ○ Never   ○ Not Applicable

36. How frequently are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in the **Humanities**? (Fine Arts, Philosophy, etc.)
    ○ Often   ○ Sometimes   ○ Seldom   ○ Never   ○ Not Applicable

37. How frequently are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in the **Social Sciences**? (History, Economics, Psychology, etc.)
    ○ Often   ○ Sometimes   ○ Seldom   ○ Never   ○ Not Applicable

38. How frequently are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in **English?** (English 100, English 101, English 102, Literature, etc.)
    ○ Often   ○ Sometimes   ○ Seldom   ○ Never   ○ Not Applicable

Appendix C

Frequency Report - Effective Writing Demographic Survey Results

Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Female	469	65.69	469	65.69
Male	241	33.75	710	99.44
Other	4	.56	714	100.00

Hispanic

Hispanic	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Yes	305	42.9	305	42.9
No	406	57.1	711	100.00

Race/Ethnicity

Race	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Black or African American	222	37.88	222	37.88
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	7	1.19	229	39.08
White	172	29.35	401	68.43
Asian	56	9.56	457	77.99
American Indian or Alaskan Native	11	1.88	468	79.86
Multi-Racial	118	20.14	586	100.00

Frequency Missing =128

Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
Less than 20	239	33.61	239	33.61
21-25	274	38.54	513	72.15
26-40	143	20.11	656	92.26
41-60	50	7.03	706	99.30
61+	5	.70	711	100.00

Frequency Missing = 3

Academic Status

Academic Status	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
Full-Time	568	79.55	568	79.55
Part-Time	146	20.45	714	100.00

Credits at HWC

Credits at HWC	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
0-15	376	53.03	376	53.03
16-30	162	22.85	538	75.88
31-45	81	11.42	619	87.31
45-60	59	8.32	678	95.63
60+	31	4.37	709	100.00

Frequency Missing = 5

Credits at Other Colleges

Credits at Other Colleges	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
0-15	501	71.67	501	71.67
16-30	78	11.16	579	82.83
31-45	31	4.43	610	87.27
45-60	26	3.72	636	90.00
60+	63	9.01	699	100.00

Frequency Missing=15

First Writing Course

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
English 98/99 Formerly INTCOMM 99	89	12.55	89	12.55
English 100/125 Formerly INTCOMM 100	42	5.92	131	18.48
English 100	69	9.73	200	28.21
English 101	202	28.49	402	56.70
English 102	34	4.80	436	61.50
None/Does Not Apply	273	38.50	709	100.00

Frequency Missing=5

Highest Writing Course

Highest Writing Course	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
English 98/99 Formerly INTCOMM 99	16	2.27	16	2.27
English 100/125 Formerly INTCOMM 100	22	3.12	38	5.38
English 100	50	7.08	88	12.46

English 101	163	23.09	251	35.55
English 102	169	23.94	420	59.49
None/Does Not Apply	286	40.51	706	100.00

Frequency Missing = 8

Current Writing Course	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Percent
English 98/99 Formerly INTCOMM 99	4	.56	4	.56
English 100/125 Formerly INTCOMM 100	6	.84	10	1.41
English 100	10	1.41	20	2.81
English 101	211	29.68	231	32.49
English 102	142	19.97	373	52.46
Creative Writing	3	.42	376	52.88
Advanced Comp	3	.42	379	53.31
None/Does Not Apply	332	46.69	711	100.00

Question # 11-**Writing helps me understand the world around me**.

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	236	33.15	236	33.15
Agree	383	53.79	619	86.94
Disagree	83	11.66	701	98.6
Disagree Strongly	10	1.4	712	100.00

Frequency Missing =2

Question # 12-**For me, writing involves exploration, investigation and/or creativity.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	340	47.82	340	47.82
Agree	340	47.82	680	95.64
Disagree	26	3.66	706	99.30
Strongly Disagree	5	.70	711	100.00

Frequency Missing = 3

Question # 13-**. I need to be able to write well in order to achieve my career goals.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	411	57.89	411	57.89
Agree	252	35.49	663	93.38
Disagree	41	5.77	704	99.15
Disagree Strongly	6	.85	710	100.00

Frequency Missing = 4

Question # 14-**Writing is an important tool that helps me learn other subjects.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	331	46.62	331	46.62
Agree	332	46.76	663	93.38
Disagree	41	5.77	704	99.15
Disagree Strongly	6	.85	710	100.00

Frequency Missing = 4

Question # 15-**Writing allows me to be creative and discover things for myself.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	311	43.68	311	43.68
Agree	334	46.91	645	90.59
Disagree	59	8.29	704	98.88
Disagree Strongly	8	1.12	712	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

Question # 16-**Writing helps me make intelligent decisions about my life.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	196	27.72	196	27.72
Agree	353	49.93	549	77.65
Disagree	143	20.23	692	97.99
Disagree Strongly	15	2.12	707	100.00

Frequency Missing = 7

Question # 17-**Writing is useful not only to people who do specialized work but also to everyday life.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	334	46.84	334	46.84
Agree	331	46.42	665	93.27

Disagree	37	5.19	702	98.46
Disagree Strongly	11	1.54	713	100.00

Frequency Missing= 1

Question # 18-**An accomplished writer needs only to know sentence structure, punctuation, grammar and spelling.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	136	19.10	136	19.10
Agree	128	17.98	264	37.08
Disagree	287	40.31	551	77.39
Disagree Strongly	161	22.61	712	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

Question # 19-**Writing is a form of experimentation**.

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	187	26.41	187	26.41
Agree	415	58.62	602	85.03
Disagree	95	13.42	697	98.45
Disagree Strongly	11	1.55	708	100.00

Frequency Missing = 6

Question # 20-**I don't need to write well in order to achieve my career goals.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	21	2.96	21	2.96
Agree	68	9.58	89	12.54
Disagree	295	41.55	384	54.08
Disagree Strongly	326	45.92	710	100.00

Frequency Missing = 4

Question # 21-**There are different styles of writing depending on the audience.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	374	52.75	374	52.75
Agree	311	43.86	705	96.61
Disagree	20	2.82	705	99.44

Disagree Strongly	4	.56	709	100.00

Frequency Missing = 5

Question # 22-**There are different styles of writing depending on the purpose.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	397	55.68	397	55.68
Agree	307	43.06	704	98.74
Disagree	8	1.12	712	99.86
Disagree Strongly	1	.14	713	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

Question # 23-**I am confident in my ability to write a clearly focused essay.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	212	29.87	212	29.86
Agree	402	56.62	614	86.48
Disagree	87	12.25	701	98.73
Disagree Strongly	9	1.27	710	100.00

Frequency Missing = 4

Question # 24-**I am confident in my ability to effectively organize an essay.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	224	31.64	224	31.64
Agree	395	55.79	619	87.43
Disagree	81	11.44	700	98.87
Disagree Strongly	8	1.13	708	100.00

Frequency Missing = 6

Question # 25-**. I am not confident in my ability to use examples and evidence from text, experience, or imagination to support my thesis.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	45	6.34	45	6.34
Agree	146	20.56	191	26.90
Disagree	337	47.46	528	74.37
Disagree Strongly	182	25.63	710	100.00

Frequency Missing = 4

Question # 26-. **I am not confident in my ability to write an essay using correct spelling and diction.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	38	5.36	38	5.36
Agree	153	21.58	191	26.94
Disagree	315	44.43	506	71.37
Disagree Strongly	203	28.63	709	100.00

Frequency Missing = 5

Question # 27-**I am confident in my ability to demonstrate grammatical fluency through mastery of standard forms of verb conjugation, punctuation, pronoun use, and complete sentences.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	165	22.31	165	22.31
Agree	392	55.27	557	78.67
Disagree	138	19.49	695	98.16
Disagree Strongly	13	1.84	708	100.00

Frequency Missing = 3

Question # 28-**An accomplished writer needs to know only organization, development, focus and voice.**

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Agree Strongly	105	14.77	105	14.77
Agree	154	21.66	259	36.43
Disagree	330	46.41	589	82.84
Disagree Strongly	122	17.18	711	100.00

Frequency Missing = 3

Question # 29   - What part of writing do you **most** like?

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Organization of Ideas	138	19.63	138	19.63
Development of Ideas	41	5.83	179	25.46
Spelling/ Vocabulary	345	49.08	524	74.54
Grammar/ Punctuation	131	18.63	655	93.17
I like all parts of writing.	48	6.83	703	100.00

Frequency Missing = 11

Question # 30   - What part of writing do you **least** like?

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Freq	Cum Per
Organization of Ideas	148	21.61	148	21.61
Development of Ideas	315	45.99	463	67.59
Spelling/ Vocabulary	85	12.41	548	80.00
Grammar/ Punctuation	40	5.84	588	85.84
I like all parts of writing.	97	14.16	685	100.00

Frequency Missing=29

Question #31- What part of the writing process do you **most** like?

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Planning/ outlining the rough draft	229	32.86	229	32.86
Writing the rough draft	167	23.96	396	56.81
Revising the rough draft	211	30.27	607	87.09
I like everything about the writing process	90	12.91	697	100.00

Frequency Missing= 17

Question #32- What part of the writing process do you **least** like?

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Planning/ outlining the rough draft	259	37.98	259	37.98
Writing the rough draft	42	6.16	301	44.13
Revising the rough draft	147	21.55	448	65.69
I like everything about the writing process	234	34.31	682	100.00

Frequency Missing = 17

Question #33- How would you rate yourself as a writer?

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Excellent	33	4.67	33	4.67
Above Average	209	29.60	242	34.28
Average	408	57.79	650	92.07
Below Average	45	6.37	695	98.44
Poor	11	1.56	706	100.00

Frequency Missing = 32

Question #34 - How frequency are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in **Math**?

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Often	92	13.03	92	13.05
Sometimes	90	12.77	182	25.82
Seldom	182	25.82	364	51.63
Never	268	38.01	632	89.65
NA	73	10.35	705	100.00

Frequency Missing=9

Question # 35- How frequency are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in the **Natural Sciences** ?(Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.)

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Often	131	18.66	131	18.66
Sometimes	198	28.21	329	46.87
Seldom	164	23.36	493	70.23
Never	56	7.98	549	78.21
NA	153	21.79	702	100.00

Frequency Missing=12

Question # 36- How frequency are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in the **Humanities** ?(Fine Arts, Philosophy, etc.)

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Often	335	47.38	335	47.38
Sometimes	151	21.36	486	68.74
Seldom	46	6.51	532	75.25
Never	30	4.24	562	79.49
NA	145	20.51	707	100.00

Frequency Missing = 7

Question #37 - How frequency are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in the **Social Sciences ?** (History, Economics, Psychology, etc.)

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Often	286	40.45	286	40.45
Sometimes	194	27.44	480	67.89
Seldom	68	9.62	548	77.51
Never	34	4.81	582	82.32
NA	125	17.68	707	100.00

Frequency Missing = 7

Question # - How frequency are/were you required to write (e.g., essays, research papers, lab reports, journals, etc.) in **English**? (English 100, 101, 102, Literature, etc.)

	Frequency	Percent	Cum Frequency	Cum Percent
Often	629	88.97	629	88.97
Sometimes	34	4.81	663	93.78
Seldom	10	1.41	673	95.19
Never	3	.42	676	95.62
NA	31	4.38	707	100.00

Frequency Missing = 7

Appendix D

Effective Writing Volunteer Request Form

Between the 10th week and the 12th week of the fall, 2011 semester, the Assessment Committee will be collecting student writing samples from across the college in order to assess the general education outcome of Effective Writing. We are looking for faculty from all disciplines in college credit courses to collect writing samples from their students, have those same students complete a short demographic questionnaire (10 minutes) and then submit the samples and the questionnaires to the Assessment Committee. The samples and questionnaires will be anonymous and will not be connected to any particular instructor or student.

We are seeking volunteer faculty from a wide range of disciplines and time periods (day, evening and weekend classes) to assess a broad range of the college's students. Please help us in achieving our target of 1,000 writing samples. Volunteering a class will not necessarily result in the section being chosen to participate in the assessment. If chosen, you will be notified, with further instructions before week #10. Acceptable writing samples include; journal entries, essays, creative writing assignments, long answer exam questions, laboratory writing, etc. The writing simply needs to be something that would happen organically in your class and is long enough to assess.

Please complete the following form and submit it as soon as possible. The Assessment Committee thanks you in advance for your time and attention to this exciting assessment.

Your name

1. I am willing to volunteer the following course:

This course meets on (day of the week)

This course meets (at what time)

How many students are in this section?

2. I am willing to volunteer the following course:

This course meets on (day of the week)

This course meets (at what time)

How many students are in this section?

3. I am willing to volunteer the following course:

This course meets on (day of the week)

This course meets (at what time)

How many students are in this section?

Appendix E

HWC Effective Writing Assessment Part 2 Writing Sample
Written by HWC Assessment Committee, 2011

Between the 10th week and the 12th week of the fall, 2012 semester, the Assessment Committee will be collecting student writing samples from across the college in order to assess the general education outcome of Effective Writing. We are looking for faculty from all disciplines in college credit courses to collect writing samples from their students, have those same students complete a short demographic questionnaire (10 minutes) and then submit them to the Assessment Committee. These writing samples will be anonymous and will not be connected to any particular instructor or student.

We are seeking volunteer faculty from a wide range of disciplines and time periods (day, evening and weekend classes) to assess a broad range of the college's students. Please help us in achieving our target of 1,000 writing samples. Volunteering a class will not necessarily result in the section being chosen to participate in the assessment. If chosen, you will be notified, with further instructions before week #10. Acceptable writing samples include; journal entries, essays, creative writing assignments, long answer exam questions, laboratory writing, etc. The writing simply needs to be something that would happen organically in your class and is long enough to assess (3-4 paragraphs or one page of text, at a minimum).

Below is the rubric that will be used to grade the writing samples:

Focus	Organization	Voice	Coherent Development and Elaboration	Conventions	Style and Diction
Writing is clearly focused. It holds the reader's attention.	Writing includes a strong beginning, middle, and end with clear transitions and a focused closure.	Writes with a distinct, unique voice/point of view. Writing is skillfully adapted to the audience.	Writing makes clear sense and flows logically. Relevant details enrich the writing. The thesis and purpose are clear to the reader and closely match the writing task.	Follows the conventions of Standard Written English (SWE), e.g., grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and punctuation.	Sentences are varied, complex, and employed for effect. Diction is precise, appropriate, using college-level vocabulary.
Very Competent 3 Competent 2 Below Competent 1 Unsatisfactory 0	Very Competent 3 Competent 2 Below Competent 1 Unsatisfactory 0	Very Competent 3 Competent 2 Below Competent 1 Unsatisfactory 0	Very Competent 3 Competent 2 Below Competent 1 Unsatisfactory 0	Very Competent 3 Competent 2 Below Competent 1 Unsatisfactory 0	Very Competent 3 Competent 2 Below Competent 1 Unsatisfactory 0

Appendix F

Data tables showing relationships between Reading and Writing course placement and individual Effective Writing assessment criteria.

Focus

Focus Essay Score

Highest Course	First Course														
	English 98/99			English 100/125			English 100			English 101			English 102		
	Mean	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*
English 98/99	71%	20%	15	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	-	-	0
English 100/125	-	-	8	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 100	67%	24%	21	-	-	1	65%	20%	27	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 101	66%	25%	20	68%	14%	16	77%	17%	17	78%	18%	105	-	-	1
English 102	68%	16%	25	74%	17%	13	77%	19%	20	83%	15%	78	81%	12%	27

Organization

Organization Essay Score

Highest Course	First Course														
	English 98/99			English 100/125			English 100			English 101			English 102		
	Mean	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*
English 98/99	59%	19%	15	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	-	-	0
English 100/125	-	-	8	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 100	59%	27%	21	-	-	1	57%	18%	27	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 101	58%	24%	20	59%	16%	16	69%	20%	17	67%	20%	105	-	-	1
English 102	58%	15%	25	63%	19%	13	65%	20%	20	71%	16%	78	67%	16%	27

Voice

Voice Essay Score

Highest Course	First Course														
	English 98/99			English 100/125			English 100			English 101			English 102		
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
English 98/99	66%	18%	15	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	-	-	0
English 100/125	-	-	8	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 100	60%	23%	21	-	-	1	61%	19%	27	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 101	58%	21%	20	61%	16%	16	71%	13%	17	76%	17%	105	-	-	1
English 102	66%	16%	25	69%	20%	13	66%	19%	20	77%	16%	78	76%	15%	27

Development

Development Essay Score

Highest Course	First Course														
	English 98/99			English 100/125			English 100			English 101			English 102		
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
English 98/99	57%	20%	15	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	-	-	0
English 100/125	-	-	8	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 100	53%	25%	21	-	-	1	52%	20%	27	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 101	57%	23%	20	57%	19%	16	69%	19%	17	66%	22%	105	-	-	1
English 102	57%	16%	25	58%	21%	13	65%	19%	20	73%	19%	78	67%	18%	27

Conventions

Conventions Essay Score

Highest Course	First Course														
	English 98/99			English 100/125			English 100			English 101			English 102		
	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	N
English 98/99	44%	20%	15	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	-	-	0
English 100/125	-	-	8	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 100	42%	26%	21	-	-	1	47%	18%	27	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 101	50%	25%	20	48%	14%	16	66%	22%	17	61%	20%	105	-	-	1
English 102	43%	18%	25	52%	25%	13	50%	21%	20	64%	20%	78	62%	22%	27

Style

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Style Essay Score

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Highest Course	First Course														
	English 98/99			English 100/125			English 100			English 101			English 102		
	Mean	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*	*Mean*	*S.D.*	*N*
English 98/99	53%	15%	15	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	1	-	-	0
English 100/125	-	-	8	-	-	11	-	-	2	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 100	46%	23%	21	-	-	1	55%	20%	27	-	-	0	-	-	0
English 101	55%	22%	20	50%	18%	16	62%	19%	17	67%	19%	105	-	-	1
English 102	52%	19%	25	57%	24%	13	58%	17%	20	71%	16%	78	69%	16%	27