

Writing Assessment

Spring 2011-Fall2012
A small pilot using AACU rubrics
Dept. of Communication
Sciences and Disorders

The Baseline Process

Spring: 2011

- Sampled a majority of students using the same question for all students (UG and G) [total n=124]
- Scored using the AACU rubrics for written language and critical thinking.
- Faculty read and scored the students' work using the 2 AACU rubrics for writing and critical thinking.
- In addition, an outside reader from the writing center scored using the same writing rubric.
- To have students do a self-assessment we asked them to provide a score, based on the rubric. (one group of students did not self-score)

The Assignment

In recent years health care and healthy living have become media 'hot topics' across all forms of media and all aspects of health (e.g., specific health problems, particular disorders such as autism, pharmaceutical marketing, prevention, 'Obama care', insurance provider marketing, and so much more).

In not more than two pages, double-spaced, no less than 10pt font, with 1" margins, please address the following question:

What are the pros and cons of the current use of media serving as the primary sources of information for individuals and families regarding health issues?

(see handout for full description of assignment)

Results

Student ID	Program	Term	Written Communication -- Student					Written Communication -- External					Written Communication -- Department					Written Communication Average (Individual)			
			Context of and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Sources and Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Average (WCS)	Context of and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Sources and Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Average (WCE)	Context of and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions		Sources and Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Average (WCD)
Average (all students)			4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.33	3.23	2.39	2.06	1.84	1.19	1.92	1.88	2.12	1.84	1.94	1.23	2.19	1.96	2.13
Average (Pre-BA)			4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.26	2.51	2.07	1.87	1.48	2.05	2.00	2.05	1.65	1.95	1.43	2.15	2.00	2.32
Average (BA)			4.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	4.00	3.21	2.21	1.90	1.63	1.03	1.91	1.74	2.10	1.79	1.67	0.83	2.17	1.87	2.13
Average (MA)			###	###	###	###	###	###	2.47	2.23	2.00	1.13	1.82	1.93	2.29	2.17	2.29	1.62	2.33	2.07	2.00
Average (AuD)			###	###	###	###	###	3.00	2.33	2.07	1.93	0.87	1.77	1.79	2.06	1.83	1.78	0.56	2.06	1.86	1.84

Analysis

Written language

- It was determined that students' scores were more positive than those of faculty or outside reviewer's scores (students average: 3; faculty average: 1.84; outside reader: 1.79).
- There were no significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students' performance.
- There were no specific areas more deficit than other areas rated on the rubric.

Analysis

Critical thinking

- [No outsider reviewer used for scoring]
- It was determined that students' scores were more positive than those of faculty scores (students average: 3; faculty average: 2.11).
- There were no significant differences between undergraduate and graduate students' performance.
- There were no specific areas more deficit than other areas rated on the rubric.

Conclusions from Baseline

Overall

1. Faculty need to agree on use of zero as an option for scoring (this was not standardized in advance)
2. Students paid little regard to the rubric, although they were given the rubric and told that was the basis for scoring.
3. Students need a more thorough understanding of the meaning of the criteria stated on the rubric.
4. Because this was a baseline, we intentionally did not give them direction regarding how to best address the elements of the rubric. Such basic instruction would be beneficial.

Conclusions from Baseline continued

5. Composing a question that can be used across students with such diverse content knowledge is difficult.
6. It took each reader an average of 15 minutes per paper to read and score.
7. Faculty felt that giving written comments to students would be beneficial to them for future writing, but that would add substantially to the time required for reading and scoring.
8. Follow-up feedback to students, generally, will be important and a re-assessment following intentional instruction on the target skills will provide guidance for further curriculum development and implementation.

Follow-up Fall 2011

- November, 2011: All MA and AuD students given the same question as Spring 2011. (n=70 students)
- This provided a re-assessment of students who were in their last semester undergraduate program in CSD at WSU, in the spring of 2011, and are now first-semester graduate students and all graduate students who were in the MA or AuD program in the spring of 2011.
- This provided baseline information on all newly admitted MA and AuD students who completed the undergraduate major at Universities other than WSU.
- Students were given feedback regarding performance on the baseline measures and some instruction on how to use the rubric as a guide to better writing performance.

Process

- Students given a month to complete the assignment
- Scored only for writing and not critical thinking
- Because there was good agreement between faculty and outside reviewer, it was concluded that we could rely solely on outside reader.
- Secured assessment funds to pay outside reader from the writing center

Results

Student ID	Program	Term	Written Communication -- Student					Written Communication -- External						
			Context of and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Sources and Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Average (WCS)	Context of and Purpose for Writing	Content Development	Genre and Disciplinary Conventions	Sources and Evidence	Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Average (WCE)
Average (all students)			3.10	3.04	3.02	2.83	3.40	3.10	2.67	2.24	2.59	1.80	2.20	2.30
Average (Pre-BA)			3.15	2.95	2.95	3.05	3.15	3.10	2.85	2.38	2.77	1.77	2.54	2.46
Average (BA)			2.86	3.00	3.00	2.57	3.43	2.97	2.75	2.25	2.75	1.88	2.38	2.40
Average (MA)			3.17	3.08	3.17	2.75	3.67	3.17	2.63	2.21	2.58	1.96	2.08	2.29
Average (AuD)			4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.60	2.25	20.00	1.75	0.75	1.50	1.65

Analysis

- Overall scores improved by .42 on the 4 pt scale (1.88 to 2.30)
- All subgroups of students assessed improved except AuD.
- Emphasis on writing in all classes and graduate colloquium may account for improved scores
- Overall, students remain below desired target

What's next?

- All new applicants to UG major will be writing an essay to be used for evaluation using rubric
- Students to be assessed annually for purposes of tracking progress
- Formulating questions that can be used for UG as well as G is challenging—we are reconsidering options

Questions remaining

- Should the essay question be more content specific?
- Is there value in subscribing to an online writing program for students' independent use?
- What other intervention strategies would enhance student performance?
- How to individualize