

Assessment Project Report

Department/Program and Degree:	FOUNDATIONS WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (FW) GENERAL EDUCATION
Assessment Project Name	Audience & Purpose
Semester/Yr Data Collected	Spring 2008
Program Assessment Team:	Erica Clayton, Holly Bruland, Monica Stitt-Bergh, Marlene Lowe, Jim Henry, Kenny Harsch, Brandy McDougall
Department Chair:	N/A—General Education assessment
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Date submitted:	1/14/2009 draft

Executive Summary:

In fall 2007, a Foundations Written Communication (FW) working group created outcomes based on the Hallmarks created by the Foundations Board (a General Education Committee). In S08-F08, the Department of English, the English Language Institute (ELI), and the Assessment Office collaborated to assess one FW student learning outcome (see below). All S08 instructors of FW sections were asked to introduce students to the outcome being assessed. The S08 FW instructors asked students to a) complete a background survey and optional consent form, b) select and submit a piece of writing they believed best demonstrated their ability to meet the outcome, and c) write an in-class (30-minute), reflective essay that analyzed how their submitted piece met the outcome. Over 550 students submitted at least one of the requested pieces of evidence. Because the focus of the study was on first-year students, all non-first-year students' evidence was set aside. Students who did not submit the three requested items or did not give consent were also set aside. Then 50% were randomly selected. The final sample consisted of 208 first-year students.

The two pieces of written work were scored using rubrics created by the assessment team. About 10 scorers (graduate students and faculty members) participated in training and "norming" sessions and then scored the student work. Training and scoring took 14 hours. Two scorers independently evaluated each piece. When their scores were more than one point apart, a third reader also scored. In the event of three scores, the three scores were averaged or the outlier was discarded. Scorers agreed on the score or were one point apart in over 90% of the cases. The students' two written texts were treated as "stand-alone" texts: scorers did not read a student's reflective essay and student-selected piece together; scorers did not have the assignment directions for the student-selected piece. A student assistant entered the scores into a database. The Assessment Office ran the statistical analyses.

For reporting and discussion purposes, the assessment team mapped the scores to descriptive categories. The results showed that after FW most students are prepared for future writing situations in regards to audience and purpose. In their reflective essays, many students demonstrated metacognitive awareness [defined in Appendix B]. However, there is a lot of room for improvement. The assessment team presented the results in a Department of English colloquium on 12/4/2008. Many stakeholders were invited: English and ELI faculty, FW working group, General Education Committee, Foundations Board, and Office of Academic Affairs personnel. Approximately 45 people attended. After results were presented, participants generated classroom activities and assignments that could lead students to better achieve the outcome. The presentation and classroom activities/assignments will be posted on departmental websites and the Assessment Office website. The Director of Composition and the Director of the English Language Institute will inform FW instructors of websites so that they can use the results to improve pedagogy.

OUTCOME(S) ASSESSED:

At the end of the FW course, students can compose a text to achieve a specific purpose and respond adeptly to an identifiable audience.

1. Assessment Question(s) and/or Goal(s) of Assessment Activity

What did the program want to find out?

1a. How well can students compose a text that achieves a specific purpose and responds adeptly to an identifiable audience?

1b. What are students' metacognitive skill levels, as exhibited in their reflective essays, in regards to the concepts of purpose and audience?

2. Outcome(s) assessed	3. Method(s) to Gather Evidence	4. Method to Evaluate	5. Program Size & Sampling Technique	6. Criteria for Success	7. Results	8. Met/Not met (the criteria for success)
Audience & Purpose	Students in FW sections selected a piece of writing (e.g., essay, research paper) that they believed best demonstrated their achievement of the outcome.	Graduate assistants and faculty members scored the essays using a rubric created by members of the assessment team (see Appendix A). Benchmark/anchor essays are on file.	--Program size=1,600 students per year --Random selection, 50% of first-year students in S08 FW sections who gave consent, completed background survey, selected an essay, and wrote in-class essay. --Final sample=208 students	Not established prior to study.	See Appendix D.	74% of students fell into the “prepared” and “well prepared” categories.
Metacognitive awareness of audience & purpose	Students wrote an in-class reflective essay. All students were given the same prompt (See Appendix C).	Graduate assistants and faculty members scored the essays using a rubric created by members of the assessment team (see Appendix B). Benchmark/anchor essays are on file.	Same as above.	Not established prior to study.	See Appendix D.	48% of the students appeared to possess metacognitive awareness of audience and purpose.

9. Conclusions and Discoveries

After reading the student-selected piece of writing and the reflective essays, scorers and the assessment team felt that the FW program needed to provide more explicit instruction to students on audience and purpose. The audience for the majority of the student-selected pieces of writing appeared to be the course instructor. Students struggled in the reflective essays to connect issues of audience and purpose to their own writing.

10. Distribution and Discussion of Results

a) Who distributed the results and who received results?

Members of the assessment team presented results at an on-campus November 2008 poster session, *Strengthening Student Success: Assessment in Action*. The assessment team presented the results at a December 2008 English Department colloquium. Many stakeholders were invited: English and ELI faculty, FW working group, General Education Committee, Foundations Board, Academic Affairs personnel. Approximately 45 people attended and most were English faculty and graduate students.

b) How did the distribution take place?

Poster session, powerpoint presentation, and question and answer. The presentation will later be posted on the Dept. of English and Assessment Office's websites.

c) How and when did the discussion of the results take place?

At the colloquium, participants interacted in small groups and then summarized their discussion for the larger group.

11. Use of Results/Program Modifications

The assessment team summarized colloquium participants' comments and suggestions and created a document of activities/assignments (see Appendix E). The document will be distributed via the Internet and by the Directors of Composition and English Language Institute. FW instructors will be encouraged to use the activities/assignments and to suggest different ones.

12. Assessment Modifications

Do changes in the assessment methodology need to be made?

SLO, Hallmark, and curriculum alignment. The alignment among the SLO, Hallmark, and curriculum could have been better.

Hallmark: The FW course introduces students to different forms of college-level writing, including, but not limited to, academic discourse, and guides them in writing for different purposes and audiences.

SLO: Students can compose a text to achieve a specific purpose and respond adeptly to an identifiable audience.

The Hallmark states that in FW courses students gain experience writing to multiple audiences and for varied purposes while the SLO focuses on a single text and its audience and purpose. To better reflect the Hallmark, the SLO could be modified so it reflects writing to several, varied audiences and for different purposes. In turn, to meet the outcome, instructors would need to ask students to generate texts appropriate to the SLO. When the revised SLO is assessed, students would be evaluated, in part, on their rhetorical flexibility in writing to different audiences and for different purposes.

In the current study, the assessment team determined that the student-selected writing samples did not clearly identify an audience other than the course instructor. Thus, the team inferred the audience as a *critical, informed reader* who looked for generic traits of academic writing. The assessment team created the evaluation rubric with that audience in mind.

Sampling. In the future, sampling will be easier because FW sections will be limited to first-year students. Currently, non-first-year students can also enroll. Because the assessment team plans to publish results, a large sample was needed for this study. In the future, a smaller sample may be possible if publication in a peer-reviewed journal is not a goal.

Advance planning and communication. The assessment team realized that changes, however small, in the assessment procedures can cause problems. Procedures, instructions, and rubrics should be available in advance of the study and not changed after the study has started.

Common prompt: student-selected piece. The lack of a common prompt for the student-selected piece of writing made reliable scoring more difficult because content and genre varied widely. However, because FW instructors have had the freedom to design their curriculum so long as it meets the basic hallmarks and outcomes, it may be unrealistic to require all FW instructors to give the same assignment.

Common prompt: reflective essay. The directions for the reflective essay should be simplified and shortened.

13. **Other Important Information**

Money to pay graduate students to score texts, buy food and supplies, photocopy, was provided by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Collaboration with other offices also made this project possible: Mānoa Writing Program personnel sorted essays, entered essay information, and assisted with gathering student data; Admissions & Records staff provided student tracking data.

APPENDIX A: RUBRIC TO EVALUATE THE STUDENT-SELECTED PIECE

	“Logos-based” Essay	Short Story/Narrative
Score	A. CONTENT: the message and meaning conveyed by/created through the text	
4	<p>The content is complex and sophisticated, going beyond commonplace knowledge and showing awareness of nuances. It suggests engagement with and deep understanding of the main point and overall topic.</p> <p>Claims and evidence are credible to an informed and critical reader. If the text refers to secondary sources, the text demonstrates a clear awareness of the relationship of these sources to the main point.</p>	<p>The narrative goes beyond the obvious or predictable. Ideas are fresh and creative. Text shows evidence of risk-taking, whether in content and/or storyline.</p> <p>The content of the storyline is credible to an informed and critical reader. It offers the reader a human connection. The narrative’s setting and characters are fully described and developed.</p> <p>Insight—an understanding of human behavior and a knack for picking out what is significant—is an indicator of high level performance, though not required for a “4” score in this category.</p>
3	<p>Some content may be complex and sophisticated. The text suggests an understanding of the main point and overall topic.</p> <p>The thesis/main point is supported by claims and credible evidence, though perhaps in a straightforward, mechanical way. If the text refers to secondary sources, the text demonstrates awareness that there should be some relationship between the argument of these sources and the text’s main point.</p>	<p>Some of the narrative may go beyond the obvious or predictable. It offers the reader a human connection. If the text shows evidence of risk-taking (whether in content and/or storyline), it may not always be successful.</p> <p>The content of the storyline is credible to an informed and critical reader. The narrative’s setting and characters are described and developed, though perhaps in a straightforward and mechanical way</p>
2	<p>The content may be commonplace or a superficial discussion of the main point and overall topic.</p> <p>Claims and evidence may not be credible to an informed and critical reader. If the text refers to secondary sources, the relationship between these sources and the text is not always clear.</p>	<p>The narrative’s setting and characters are described and developed but in a simplistic manner OR not consistently described and developed.</p> <p>The narrative or elements within the narrative may seem cliché or superficial, vague or needlessly abstract.</p>
1	<p>Some evidence may not be credible to an informed and critical reader and/or there is insufficient evidence provided.</p>	<p>Details in the narrative may not seem credible to an informed and critical reader. The narrative’s setting and character(s) are poorly described and developed.</p>

General guiding statements about the scores

4=outstanding, suggesting the student is prepared to excel in future writing and writing-intensive courses

3=strong, suggesting the student would perform reasonably well in future writing and writing-intensive courses

2=only partially upholds reader expectations for first-year college-level writing, suggesting the student might struggle somewhat in future writing and writing-intensive courses but has enough aptitude as a writer to succeed given diligent effort, practice, and outside support

1=does not meet reader expectations for first-year college-level writing, suggesting the student lacks the writing skills to succeed in future writing and writing-intensive courses

Score	B. ORGANIZATION: the sequence of ideas, both micro (paragraph level) and macro (text level), and the transitions between ideas	
4	A thesis statement or main point is clear, well focused, and maintained throughout. The organization enhances the reader's understanding. The text is logical and well-sequenced, with unified paragraphs and graceful transitions.	The text is well sequenced, easy to follow, and engages the reader's interest. The arrangement of ideas enhances the reader's understanding of the overall narrative. There are unified paragraphs and graceful transitions. The text may show evidence of successful risk-taking in the structure/form.
3	A thesis statement or main point is clear, well focused, and maintained throughout. There is an effective introduction, body, and conclusion with focused and orderly paragraphs. Transitions are signaled. The text spends an appropriate amount of time on details.	The introduction, body, and conclusion/resolution are effectively organized and for the most part engage the reader's interest. The sequence supports the central theme/message. There are orderly paragraphs and transitions are signaled. The text spends an appropriate amount of time on details.
2	A thesis statement or main point exists and is carried through the entire text but may be done so in a general, topical manner that does not advance a specific thesis/main point. The text has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. There is little effort at smooth transitions. The text may spend too much time on details that do not matter or move ahead too quickly. The reader may have to infer how ideas are connected.	The narrative has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. There is little effort at smooth transitions, so the narrative seems choppy or disjointed at times. The text may spend too much time on details that do not matter or move ahead too quickly. The reader may have to infer how ideas are connected.
1	A thesis statement or main point may exist, but it is not carried through the text OR is carried through at a very general level. The organization attempts to meet the needs of the reader and may succeed at a basic level; however a more effective structure is expected. A logical sequence may not be discernable. A section may seem out of place or not needed. There is little effort at transition statements. Connections between ideas are unclear.	The narrative structure attempts to meet the needs of the reader and may succeed at a basic level; however, the storyline is confusing or disjointed without a clear purpose for being so. A section may seem out of place or not needed. There is little effort at transitions. The reader may have to infer how ideas are connected.
Score	C. LANGUAGE & STYLE: the tone, level of discourse, phrasing/rhythm	
4	The text skillfully upholds a reader's expectations for first-year college-level discourse in terms of vocabulary and tone. Words chosen enhance meaning and clarify the reader's understanding. The tone enhances the purpose. Purposeful and varied sentence structure and length enhance the text's meaning and purpose.	The narrative displays a skillful (first-year college-level) use of language: imagery, description, poeticisms, figurative language, metaphor, etc. The words chosen enhance meaning and clarify the reader's understanding. The tone enhances the purpose. The writing has cadence; the writing suggests that the writer has thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning.
3	The text meets the reader's expectations for first-year college-level discourse in terms of vocabulary and tone. The tone is appropriate for the purpose. Words chosen are adequate and correct. Sentence structure and length are varied.	The narrative displays adequate (first-year college-level) use of language: imagery, description, poeticisms, figurative language, metaphor, etc. The words chosen are correct and adequate. The tone suits the purpose. The writing suggests that the writer thought about the sound of the words as well as the meaning, but perhaps not consistently throughout the text.
2	The text may occasionally fall short of the reader's expectations for first-year college-level discourse in terms of vocabulary and tone. Words chosen are functional and may be repeated. Tone may be inappropriate at times.	The narrative may occasionally fall short of the reader's expectations for adequate (first-year college-level) language use: imagery, description, poeticisms, figurative language, metaphor, etc. The words chosen are functional and may be repetitive. Tone may be inappropriate at times.

1	The text does not meet the reader’s expectations for first-year college-level discourse in terms of vocabulary and tone. Limited vocabulary or misused words detract and may impair understanding. Tone may be inappropriate.	The narrative does not meet the reader’s expectations for adequate (first-year college-level) language use: imagery, description, poeticisms, figurative language, metaphor, etc. Limited vocabulary or misused words detract and may impair overall understanding of the story. The tone may be inappropriate.
Score	D. MECHANICS: grammar, punctuation, citation	
4	The text meets a reader’s expectations for first-year college-level writing in the areas of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and citation rules. Intentional departures from conventions are signaled in the text. One or two sentences may demonstrate mechanical or structural difficulties, but not in a manner which distracts from the meaning of the text.	The narrative meets a reader’s expectations for first-year college-level writing in the areas of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and citation rules. Intentional departures from conventions are signaled in the text. One or two sentences may demonstrate mechanical or structural difficulties, but not in a manner which distracts from the meaning of the text.
3	The text meets a reader’s expectations for first-year college writing in the areas of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and citation rules. Intentional departures from conventions may not always be signaled in the text. Some sentences may demonstrate mechanical or structural difficulties, but usually not in a manner which distracts from the meaning of the text.	The narrative meets a reader’s expectations for first-year college writing in the areas of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and citation rules. Intentional departures from conventions may not always be signaled in the text. Some sentences may demonstrate mechanical or structural difficulties, but usually not in a manner which distracts from the meaning of the text.
2	The text falls short of reader’s expectations for first-year college writing in the areas of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and citation rules. Departures from conventions are not signaled. Sentences with mechanical or structural difficulties are confusing.	The narrative falls short of reader’s expectations for first-year college writing in the areas of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and citation rules. Departures from conventions are not signaled. Sentences with mechanical or structural difficulties are confusing.
1	The text does not meet reader’s expectations for first-year college writing. Some problems with mechanics leave the reader wondering. Errors are frequent. Departures from conventions are not signaled.	The narrative does not meet reader’s expectations for first-year college writing. Some problems with mechanics leave the reader wondering or inferring what the writer means. Errors are frequent. Departures from conventions are not signaled.

APPENDIX B: RUBRIC TO EVALUATE THE IN-CLASS REFLECTIVE PIECES

Student Learning Outcome: “Students who successfully complete a Foundations Writing (FW) course will be able to compose a text that seeks to achieve a specific purpose and responds adeptly to an identifiable audience.”

Goal of reflective piece assessment: To assess students’ metacognition¹ vis-à-vis the act of writing, particularly their ability to discuss and analyze the concepts of purpose and audience within a 30-minute, in-class writing situation.

Score	Holistic Description
4	<p>The author depicts the piece’s purpose and/or audience with specificity/complexity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In detail, the author discusses an intended outcome(s) for the piece (i.e., what he/she wants the audience to understand, feel, or do) and/or assumptions he/she has made about the audience (such as its prior knowledge, expectations, biases, or preferred styles of writing). The author <i>may</i> also reflect on the relationship/fit between the audience and purpose. • Referring to specific moments in the piece as evidence, the author analyzes <i>how</i> the piece furthers a specific purpose and/or addresses an identifiable audience. The author’s analysis of his/her own writing demonstrates rhetorical and metacognitive awareness.
3	<p>The author depicts the piece’s purpose and/or audience with some degree of specificity/complexity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some detail, the author discusses an intended outcome(s) for the piece (i.e., what he/she wants the audience to understand, feel, or do) and/or assumptions he/she has made about the audience (such as its prior knowledge, expectations, biases, preferred styles of writing). • Referring more generally to the piece as evidence, the author analyzes <i>how</i> the piece furthers a specific purpose and/or addresses an identifiable audience. References to the selected piece may be somewhat awkward and mechanical, but they do demonstrate evidence of analysis.
2	<p>The author depicts the piece’s purpose and/or audience in a fairly superficial and under-developed manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a generic manner, the author states an intended outcome(s) for the piece (i.e., what he/she wants that audience to understand, feel, or do) and/or an assumption(s) he/she has made about the audience (such as its prior knowledge, expectations, biases, preferred styles of writing). • The author attempts to make some connection(s) between the selected piece and the concept of purpose or audience.
1	<p>The author depicts the piece’s purpose and/or audience in a superficial and cursory manner or not at all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The author may discuss his/her writing process or his/her reasons for selecting the piece, but he/she may not state intended outcomes for the piece (i.e., what he/she wants the audience to understand, feel, or do) or assumptions he/she has made about the audience (such as the audience’s prior knowledge, expectations, biases, preferred styles of writing). -OR- • The author fails to connect the selected piece with the concept of purpose or audience. -OR- • The author’s response is off-topic and does not respond to the prompt.

¹ “Metacognition refers to one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes or anything related to them, e.g., the learning-relevant properties of information or data. For example, I am engaging in metacognition if I notice that I am having more trouble learning A than B; if it strikes me that I should double check C before accepting it as fact.” [Flavell, J. H. (1976). “Metacognitive aspects of problem solving.” p. 232, In *The nature of intelligence*. (pp. 231-236). L. B. Resnick (Ed.), Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.]

APPENDIX C: IN-CLASS REFLECTIVE ESSAY PROMPT/INSTRUCTIONS

UH ID Number: _____

REQUIRED IN-CLASS ESSAY PROMPT

Foundations in Writing (FW) Assessment: Spring 2008

UH Mānoa Department of English

To be administered to students in class on the day they submit their writing samples for the Foundations in Writing Assessment.

Directions to Students: Before you proceed, please get out your typed writing sample and place it on your desk. Check to be sure that your 8-digit UH ID number is written on the upper right hand corner of every page of your writing sample. Keep your writing sample on your desk as you compose this reflective in-class essay, referring back to it for specific examples. Please write in pen. You will have 30 minutes to compose your reflective essay.

Essay Prompt: Write a reflective essay about *how* your writing sample demonstrates successful achievement of the following student learning outcome: “Students who successfully complete a Foundations Writing (FW) course will be able to compose a text that seeks to achieve a specific purpose and responds adeptly to an identifiable audience.”

Some Optional Questions To Get You Started: If you need help getting started, please consult the questions below. Use them as launching point for what to write about and *not* as an absolute outline of required topics.

Purpose: What specific purpose(s) were you hoping to achieve through this piece? Can you point out specific places in your writing that are intended to achieve your purpose(s)? What do you want your audience to understand, feel, and/or do?

Audience: Who is your intended audience or audiences? What assumptions have you made about your audience? (i.e. their prior knowledge, expectations, biases, preferred styles of writing. . .) In what specific ways have you attempted to respond to your audience within your selected writing sample?

Genre and Voice: Construct your responses **in essay form**: no bullet points or lists, please. We encourage you to write in the first person (using “I”).

Where to Write: Please use the back side of this direction sheet for any pre-writing. Begin your essay on the next sheet of paper. Be sure to write your UH ID number on the upper right hand corner of each sheet of paper that you use.

At the end of the 30 minutes, please staple the following materials together in this order and hand them to your instructor:

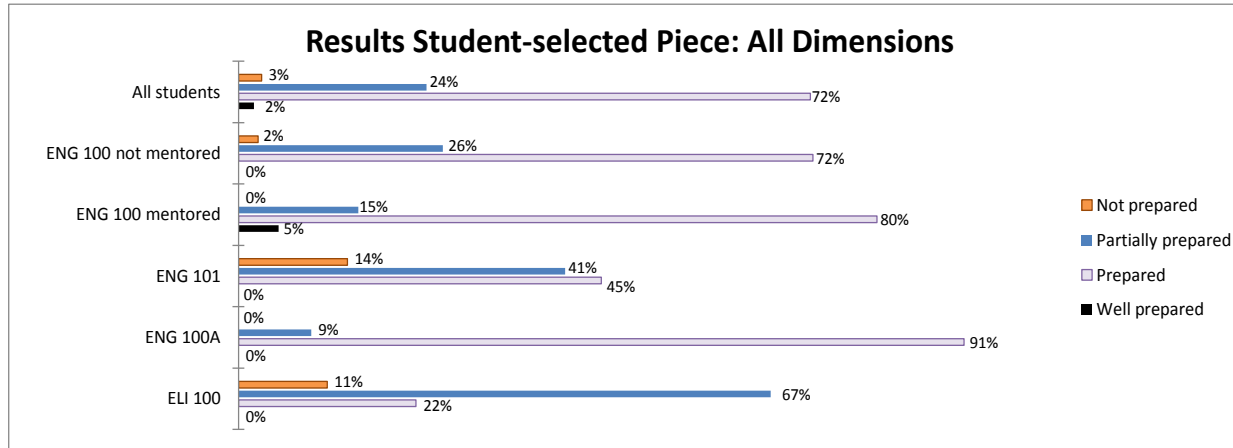
- _____ 1st) this sheet of paper with the essay prompt;
- _____ 2nd) your reflective in-class essay;
- _____ 3rd) your selected, typed writing sample.

Mahalo for participating in this assessment!

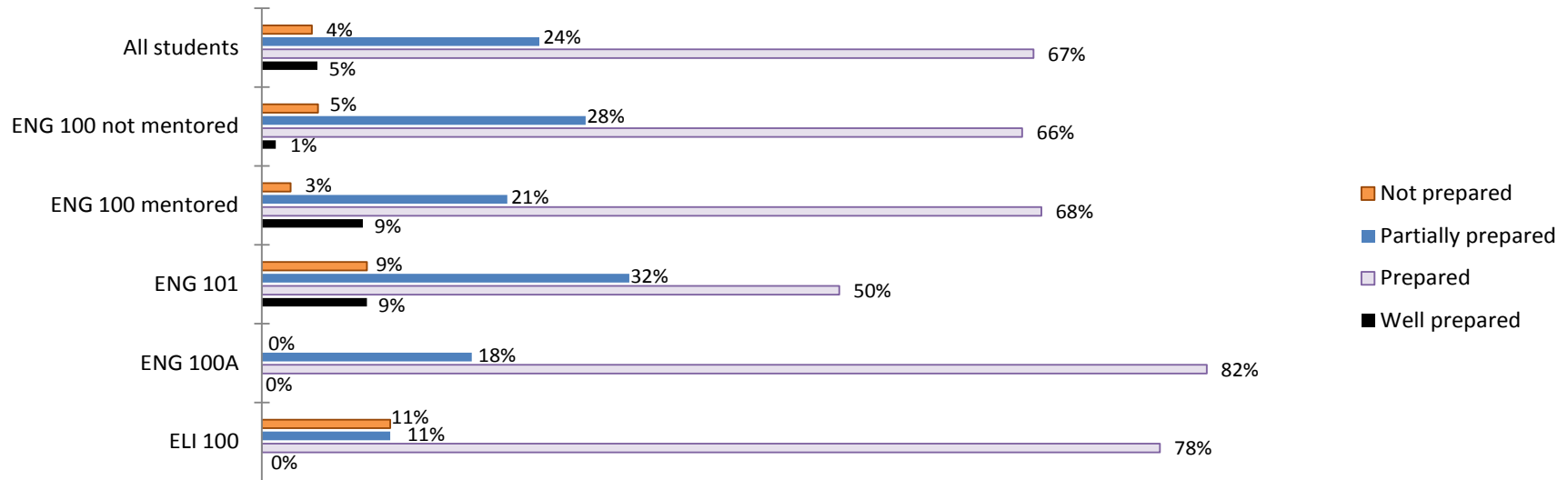
APPENDIX D: RESULTS

RESULTS: STUDENT-SELECTED PIECE

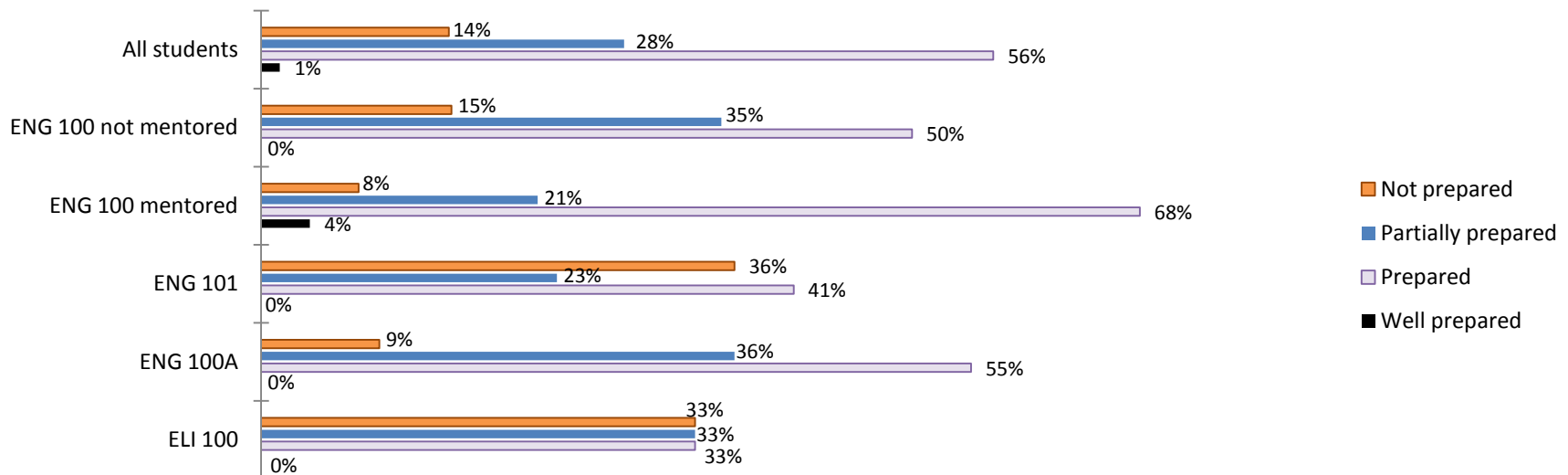
Dimension: Content and Organization weighted 60%; Language & Style and Mechanics weighted 40%.



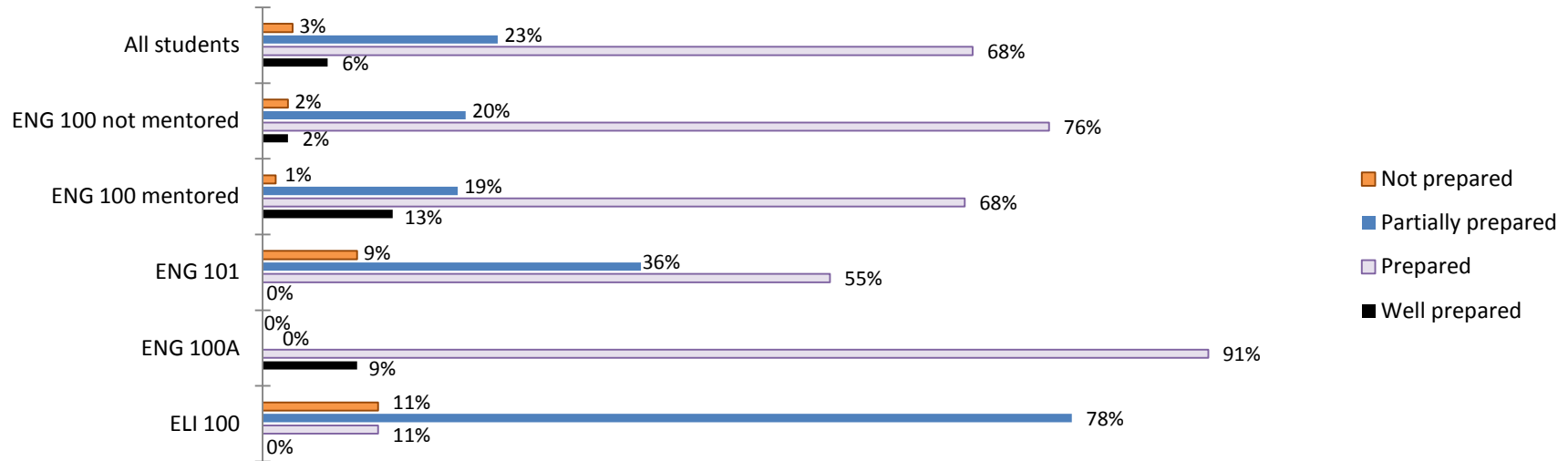
Results: Content



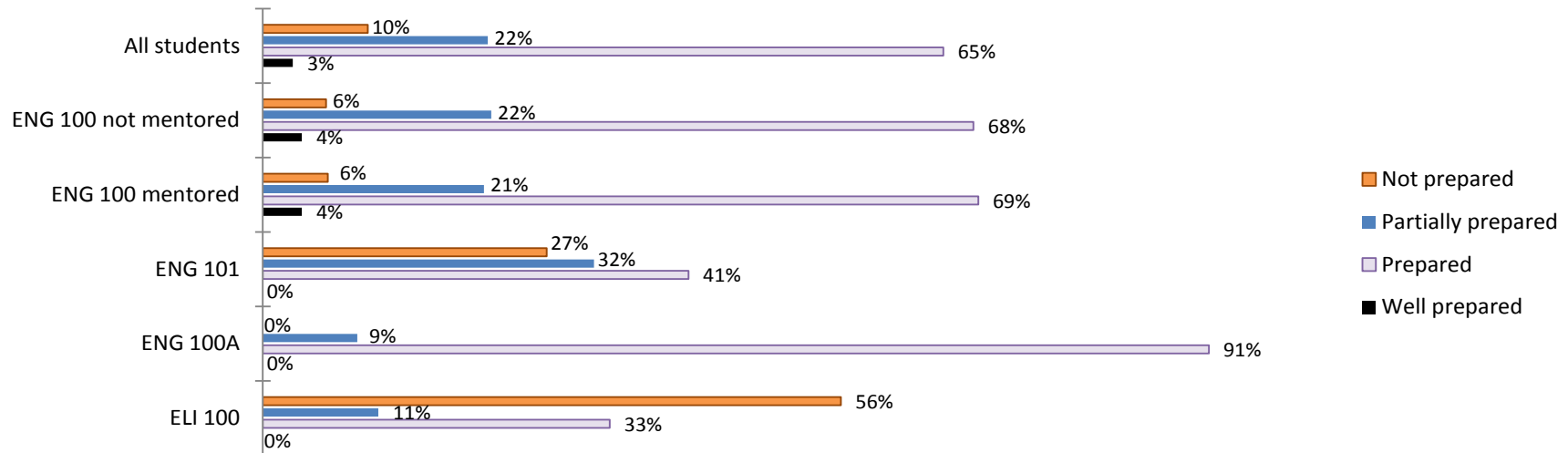
Results: Organization



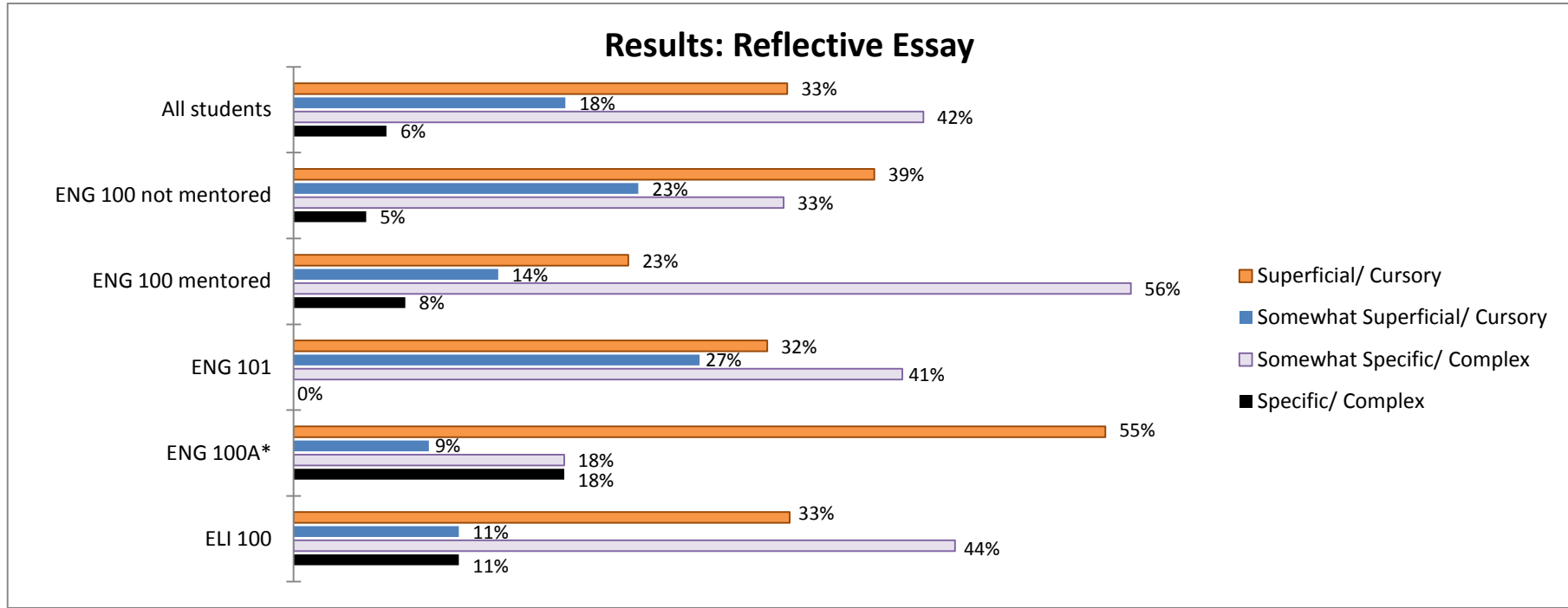
Results: Language & Style



Results: Mechanics



RESULTS: IN-CLASS REFLECTIVE ESSAY



* A change in data collection methods late in the assessment process may have led to ENG 100A students scoring lower on the reflective essay.

Ideas for Teaching Audience and Purpose in Foundations Written Communication Courses (ENG 100 and ELI 100)

These ideas grew out of the December 4, 2008 colloquium that presented the results of the spring 2008 assessment of one student learning outcome:

Students can compose a text that seeks to achieve a specific purpose and responds to an identifiable audience.

Our thanks go out to those who participated and shared their stories and suggestions.

Assignments and Activities

1. Identify/Characterize the audience and purpose.

- A. **Pre-write for audience.** Ask students as part of their pre-writing activities to state their intended audience and to describe the primary characteristics of that audience. Remind them to keep their intended audience's characteristics in mind as they compose and revise their written text.
- B. **Pre-write for purpose.** As part of pre-writing activities, ask students to describe their purpose—what do they want the audience to understand, feel, and/or do? This activity can help students move beyond “writing for the grade.”
- C. **Use groups to develop "rules of thumb."** Ask small groups of students to analyze a particular audience and then develop “rules of thumb” that a writer should follow when addressing that audience.
- D. **Assign writing for which you are *not* the primary audience.** Include at least one writing assignment for which the intended audience is not the course instructor.

2. Analyze texts to explore issues related to audience and purpose.

- A. **Compare three arguments.** Ask students to analyze the characteristics of three arguments that were written for three different audiences. Analysis could include the following: types of evidence, types of appeals, word choice, tone, format. Students then draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the arguments based on their analyses.
- B. **Use YouTube or film clips.** Ask students to analyze and compare the rhetorical situations found in YouTube clips or film clips. Structuring the assignment so students analyze and compare clips with similar content but different intended audiences and/or purposes may be most effective.
- C. **Analyze a student's "constructed" audience.** After students complete their creative piece, discuss what audience is “constructed” by the piece. In addition, engage students with questions such as these: How might audience X react? How might audience Y react? Why?

3. Take multiple perspectives.

- A. **Use peers as the intended audience.** Feedback from an audience—even a peer audience—can lead the writer to make effective changes in content, organization, language.
- B. **Use role playing.** Ask students to play a role as they respond to a peer’s writing. For example, if the general audience is the people of O’ahu, ask each student to respond to the writer from a different point of view: ethnic group on O’ahu, geographical location on O’ahu, age group, gender, occupation, socio-economic class, etc. As they role play, students explain the audience characteristics that lead to their response.
- C. **Have students write on the same topic for progressively sophisticated audiences.** Students choose a single topic and write multiple texts that address various audiences and/or purposes. Each text “ups the ante” by addressing a more sophisticated audience. For example, the audience could move from non-specialists to specialists and the purpose could move from presenting information to presenting a synthesis or well-reasoned argument.
- D. **Have students write texts that achieve the same purpose but are written for different audiences.** Example: Students write two texts that explain a complex concept; one text is written to middle school students, the other to peer scholars. By selecting a non-specialist and a specialist audience, students practice interpreting specialist knowledge for non-specialists
- E. **Have students write texts aimed at the same audience but achieve a different purpose.** Example: Students write to their professor: one text is an email thank you for attending a department party and the other is an email request for a letter of recommendation.

Tips/Good Practices

- A. **Encourage rhetorical thinking.** Design assignments that encourage rhetorical thought:
 - a. Build tools or procedures into the assignment that require students to address issues of audience and purpose.
 - b. Avoid ambiguous assignments. [See pp. 83-96 in John Bean’s *Engaging Ideas*]
- B. **Prompt identifying with the intended readers.** Help students get into the reader’s shoes. Role playing can be an effective activity, promoting understanding of audience characteristics.
- C. **Stress audiences other than yourself.** Help students overcome the idea that the audience is the teacher.

- D. **Determine students' incoming levels.** Recognize students' entering knowledge and skill related to their awareness of audience and purpose. Start where the students are in terms of skill and expertise. (Collect some "diagnostic" writing during the first week.)
- E. **Stoke engagement.** Boost student motivation and encourage engagement, by
- i. Allowing students to choose their audience and purpose.
 - ii. Creating assignments that are “real world” or meaningful to students.
 - iii. Helping students have a personal stake in the writing. Example: use a strong emotion such as hatred to inspire purpose, and in the revising stages attend to audience concerns.
- F. **Create a supporting environment.** A safe, comfortable classroom environment supports a discussion of different audience characteristics, role playing, and sensitive purposes. Faculty members capable of using humor may use it to relieve tense situations. For classroom environment strategies, see the [Center for Teaching Excellence's publications](#) [website] such as [A Climate of Respect: A Handbook for Teaching at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa](#) [PDF].
- G. **Use performative moments.** Live performance to an audience by the writer helps make the notion of audience real, concrete.
- H. **Stress decision making while writing.** Help students understand that writers have choices and that audience and purpose shape writers' decisions.
- I. **Help students see the reasons for assignments.** Create meaningful assignments and help student realize assignments are more than “just for the grade.”
- J. **Have students answer “why” questions.** For example: Why should the audience care about my text? Why is one word choice better or worse than another given my purpose and audience?