Executive Summary

During this academic year, the First-year Writing Program: developed a new syllabus statement on midterm grades; continued to privilege community-building; deepened experimentation in teaching evaluating information and online content. For outcomes assessment, the director developed a rubric through small-group interviews with instructors and in consultation with the curriculum committee. Results of the assessment led to revised assignment guidelines regarding length, audience, and the need to emphasize evidence and its uses. Program objectives set in 2016-2017 were achieved.
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Enrollment and Grades, 2017-2018

English 1103 is a four-credit-hour course that satisfies HPU’s gen-ed first-year writing requirement (FYW). The English 1101 and 1102 sequence are two-credit-hour courses that “stretch” English 1103 over two semesters for non-native English speakers. All students are advised to complete the FYW requirement in either fall or spring of their first year. In 2017-2018 a total of 956 students completed FYW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Courses 2017-2018</th>
<th># Students</th>
<th>Average Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017FA0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG-1101</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG-1102</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG-1103</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018SP0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG-1102</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG-1103</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FYW Program Activities and Achievements

The FYW Program sponsors ongoing support for teaching and learning. Based on 2017-2018 assessment data and experience, the FYW Program also saw the developments below:

Develop a way to respond to excessive student absences in spring 2018.
Develop a statement about midterm grades.

Details on Each Activity:

Develop a way to respond to excessive student absences in spring 2018.
Anecdotally, we had some serious issues with attendance in spring '18, the kind that led to a lot of Fs, Ws, and disrupted classes. ENG 1103 instructors were surveyed in early summer and 60% responded. Here is a snapshot of that info:

--The respondents taught a total of 281 students and 29 of those (10%) had excessive absences.
--9 students had 4-6
--10 students had 7-9
--10 students had 10+ absences
--70% of the surveyed instructors said that the number of absences or the time required to deal with them was excessive compared to a typical semester. (10% said maybe and 20% said no).

Currently, our ENG 1103 syllabi state that we take attendance for advising reasons, that we flag after 2 absences, and that the instructor may withdraw the student after 2.

Our attendance policy was strengthened in the following ways:
● Starting fall 2018, all instructors will take attendance in Starfish.
● Unless the student and instructor are in communication about extenuating circumstances, we will flag and offer feedback on every absence after 2.
● A student will be involuntarily withdrawn after 2 warnings.

Develop a statement about midterm grades.

Because we have made minor curricular changes and absences have become a problem, I asked Andrea Kennedy in Institutional Research to determine the correlation between midterm and final grades in ENG 1103. An excerpt from her report is below:

For decision-making, you can predict the final grade for each group of students that receive a particular midterm grade with 95% confidence. These predictions are in ranges. Here is a chart so you can see the low and high ranges based on what the midterm grade was and what the predicted final grade range was. For example, every time a 3.0 was given in the dataset, the low
and high mean grades were found to occur. The low final mean grade is the most telling since you want to see if their grade would be passing or not. Here are the low and high means for final grades based on the midterm grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the midterm grade is</th>
<th>The low mean final grade is</th>
<th>The high mean final grade is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+/A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.74126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.57520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.34989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.17705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.00079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.76162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.58020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.39769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.15329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.96948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.78539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.35512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a range:

Takeaway:

**Initial Question:** Is there a relationship between midterm grades and final grades in ENG-1103? Can midterm grades predict final grades in ENG-1103?

**Answer:** Yes, midterm and final grades are highly correlated. If a student receives a particular midterm grade, it is expected that they will receive a grade in the ranges listed above based on about 46% of the contributing factors to a student's final grade being the midterm grade. With
that said, if a syllabus statement or other student support initiatives are shared with students, it is probably best to be very forward with them at the beginning of the term. This way, if a student has the appropriate supports in place (since you can't always control for other factors like their background in the subject or their experience with the professor, for example), it may help with increasing that midterm grade and therefore contribute to their higher final grade.

**New Syllabus Statement on Midterm Grades**

Based on Andrea's above analysis, the statement below will be shared on all ENG 1103 syllabi:

> Final grades are almost always within one letter of the midterm grade. This means that bringing up a low midterm grade in ENG 1103 is very difficult—a recent study of our institutional research tells us that it is vitally important to start strong: come to class prepared, ask questions, and engage any relevant support services (my office hours, the Writing Center) to help you succeed.

**Outcomes Assessment**

Formative assessment of the Composition Program was conducted in AY 2017-2018 to improve teaching and learning of the following outcomes:

- Reflect on one's writing to strategize revisions and to demonstrate awareness of one's learning.
Outcomes Assessment

Assessment Procedure

For 2017-2018 Outcomes Assessment (OA), a stratified random sample of 45 reflective essays was selected across the fall 2017 sections of English 1103. A committee of six ENG 1103 instructors finalized and applied the rubric created during the DCM process to assess the outcome “Reflect on one’s writing to strategize revisions and to demonstrate awareness of one’s learning.”

During the fall semester, all FYW instructors participated in small-group discussions about what they valued about two samples of student reflection. The compiled discussion minutes were used to develop a glossary of terms that could be used for assessment.

Six instructors served on the OA Committee: Holly Middleton, Lynne Murray, Melissa Richard, Allison Walker, Jessica Higgins, and Moira Marquis. Holly Middleton chaired the committee and the department work study prepared materials for assessment by removing identifying information, assigning codes, and organizing essays for readers.

In order to finalize the glossary and rubric, committee members met several times via Google Hangout to discuss their readings of sample student work. They conducted the actual assessment in June 2018. Student essays were divided into three packets and each packet was assigned two readers on the OA committee. Readers were asked to assess each assignment in the following way:

1. Assign a Reflection score of 1-6.
2. Choose the criterion from the glossary that most informed your decision on the Reflection score.

What do Scores Mean?

6: exceeds expectations for college writing for this outcome
5: clearly meets expectations for college writing for this outcome
4: barely meets expectations for college writing for this outcome
3: partially/almost meets expectations for college writing for this outcome
2: clearly does not meet expectations for college writing for this outcome
1: cannot be evaluated for this outcome

In both cases, the higher the score the stronger the performance. It is important to note, however, that the difference between 3 and 4 marked the distinction between work that was deemed successful/unsuccessful, competent/not competent, or passing/failing.

Once a reader made a decision regarding whether an essay had--ultimately--succeeded or failed on the outcome, they assigned a criterion from the glossary that most informed their judgment. Assigned criteria are value-neutral and always explain the reason for a judgment of success or failure. (See Appendix for complete criteria glossary).

In this way, the data can identify our program strengths and weaknesses so they can be targeted for improvement.

Individual Criteria

To best determine the criteria that are driving these decisions, we look at the scores as a totality. Out of the 71 total decisions:

- Scores of 1-3: 42% (n = 38/90)
- Scores of 4-6: 58% (n = 52/90)

The most common criteria assigned scores of 1-3:

- Analysis 37%
- Evidence 13%
- Demonstrative 13%
- Genre 13%

The most common criteria assigned scores of 4-6:

- Awareness 25%
- Growth 19%
- Possibility 15%
- Demonstrative 14%

These results will be shared with instructors to shape pedagogy and rubrics for teaching reflective writing.
Two groups of essays were reviewed for patterns: those assigned 4-6 by both raters and those assigned 1-3 by both raters.

- All 1-3 essays were 1-2 pages long.
- All 4-6 essays were <3 pages long.
- No letters received 4-6 scores, even though they are commonly assigned.

Assignment Guidelines

- All formal reflective assignments should be essays of a minimum of 750 words (3 pages) or a substantial essay in a video or audio format.
- Students need practice selecting, using, and analyzing evidence.
- The problem with letters was brevity and audience—they often read as advice or tips for success. Strong reflective essays often demonstrated the most depth when the audience seemed to be the writer.
1-3 Reflection Score Criteria

- Analysis: 36.8%
- Genre: 13.2%
- Growth: 2.6%
- Mindset: 7.9%
- Possibility: 2.6%
- Awareness: 5.3%
- Demonstrative: 13.2%

4-6 Reflection Score Criteria

- Analysis: 9.6%
- Growth: 19.2%
- Mindset: 5.8%
- Possibility: 15.4%
- Awareness: 25.0%
- Demonstrative: 13.5%
- Evidence: 7.7%
Achieving 2017-2018 Objectives

- Conduct dynamic criteria mapping to develop rubric for “reflection.”
  ○ This objective was achieved.
- Continue and develop strategies for community-building.
  ○ This work continued.
- Experiment with and share strategies for evaluating information and fake news.
  ○ This objective was achieved through development of a 4th-hour sequence for information literacy based on Web Literacy for Student Fact-checkers. This helped lay groundwork for OA for AY 2018-2019.
- Elicit feedback from instructors on Student Spotlight.
  ○ The FYW Committee voted to eliminate SS in favor of sharing teachable essays through a signed standard release.

Conclusions and Recommendations for 2018-2019

- Design method for assessing “evaluating information.”
- Create 4th-hour sequence on web literacy that can be shared.
- Offer workshops on teaching primary research and meaningful writing projects.
- Administer HPU Census on Student Writing.
- Develop Instructor handbook.