

**Spring 2018**  
**Core Curriculum Assessment Report**

of

**Skills 3 – Information Technology**

from the

**Communication - Written**

Core Curricular Area



submitted by

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on behalf of the

**Communication - Written**  
**Core Area Assessment Committee**

## Methods

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### **How was student work (artifacts) collected for assessment?**

Our instructors gather links to student portfolios and then share them with the composition director via Google Forms. For concurrent composition, we ask instructors from high schools to send us a zip file containing a final, research-based essay that aligns with our program outcomes. This past assessment cycle, we gathered 350 portfolios from RHET 1311, and 169 portfolios from RHET 1312. We gathered roughly 200 papers from concurrent sections.

### **What type of artifacts were collected?**

We collect student portfolios. Each portfolio contains the student's major assignments for the semester, along with a reflection essay about their process. Many of the concurrent teachers are reluctant or unable to have students build portfolios, so we collect research-based papers from them for assessment.

### **How were the artifacts sampled for assessment?**

We use systematic random sampling, marking every third portfolio or concurrent paper for assessment until reaching a sample size of roughly 15-20 percent.

### **How were the artifacts scored?**

We recruit 7-10 volunteers from faculty to score portfolios for a small honorarium. We meet for an entire day, beginning with a calibration session. During calibration, we review 2-3 sample portfolios using the composition program rubric and scoring guide. We discuss our criteria and expectations, and compare scores. After that, we score all Composition I portfolios. Then we proceed to Composition II and concurrent.

### **How was reliability in scoring determined and ensured?**

Each artifact now receives two scores on a scale from 0 to 5. The composition director resolves disagreeing scores in two situations: if the raters disagree by more than one point, or if they

disagree over whether a portfolio demonstrates proficiency. For example, a portfolio might receive a score of 3 from one rater, but a score of 5 by the second. In that case, the composition director reviews the portfolio and issues the final score.

## Reflection

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### What was learned from the assessment results?

A high number of portfolios received a score of 0 or 1 for no other reason than we could not access their portfolio. Students are not adjusting the sharing settings on their documents and folders before inserting them into their Google sites portfolios. We have normally excluded such portfolios as outliers. However, assessing electronic literacy prompted us to include those results. In short: students are performing as expected in terms of their writing itself. However, they are having problems when it comes to building their digital portfolio websites and navigating Google Docs.

## Continuous Improvement

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### **What changes will be made based upon the assessment results?**

We are re-training our instructors on Google Sites and Google Docs, and designing program-wide instructions on how to manage these technologies. By standardizing instructional content on these issues, we hope more students will learn how to navigate them. One simple way to avoid the sharing settings problem is for the students to create a single folder for their composition work, and then share it with UALR. Once done, everything they compose in that folder will automatically be shared with the institution. The composition director has already drafted instructions on Google Drive with screenshots to illustrate effective practices here, and will be sharing them with teachers and students. We will also ensure that students remain aware of the public nature of their work for composition, so they avoid sharing sensitive personal information.

## Feedback

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### **What changes are recommended for Core assessment?**

This institution needs to move into a more regular assessment cycle. Assessing different outcomes every semester isn't helpful or sustainable. Trying to do so erodes resources and limits sample sizes. It also distracts program directors and faculty from implementation. Ultimately, you wind up with piecemeal reports rather than comprehensive portrait of program effectiveness.

It is possible to design a rubric that assesses artifacts for multiple outcomes during a single round of assessment. That way, better data can be gathered. It also allows for richer reports, and more time for implementation between assessments.

Our practices are based on a long tradition of scholarship and shared knowledge on writing assessment. Assessing every 1-2 years would be more sensible and sustainable. We wish the college would embrace this model.

## **Comments**

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**Other comments?**

**END OF REPORT**