Program Assessment Report

Program: Liberal Arts

Date: 6/2011

Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Expected Level of Achievement	Results of Assessment	Next Steps
• Make effective decisions with intellectual integrity to solve problems and/or achieve goals utilizing the skills of critical thinking, creative thinking, information literacy, and quantitative/symbolic reasoning.	Cornerstone Projects VALUE Rubrics: Critical thinking Five faculty participated – each submitted 6 student artifacts (2 strong, 2 competent, and 2 weak) Faculty reviewed 30 student artifacts (papers and posters based on research projects)	Expected: Critical Thinking –67% at Level 2 or higher Based on the artifacts submitted faculty expected about 67% of the artifacts to be at level 2 or higher on the rubric.	Results: Critical thinking areas 1. Explanation of issues: Level 3 –3% Level 2 – 47% Level 1 – 50% 2. Evidence Level 3 –6% Level 2 – 44% Level 1 – 50% 3. Influence of context and assumptions Level 3 –6% Level 2 – 29% Level 1 – 65% 4. Own perspective, hypothesis, or position Level 3 –9% Level 2 – 41% Level 1 – 50% 5. Conclusions, implications and consequences	Action: Date:

			Level 3 –26% Level 2 – 38% Level 1 – 35%	
• Make effective decisions with intellectual integrity to solve problems and/or achieve goals utilizing the skills of critical thinking, creative thinking, information literacy, and quantitative/symbolic reasoning.	Cornerstone Projects VALUE Rubrics – information literacy Five faculty participated – each submitted 6 student artifacts (2 strong, 2 competent, and 2 weak) Faculty reviewed 30 student artifacts (papers and posters based on research projects)	Expected: Information literacy – 67% at level 2 or higher Based on the artifacts submitted faculty expected about 67% of the artifacts to be at level 2 or higher on the rubric.	Results: 1. Evaluate information and its sources critically Level 3 –6% Level 2 – 29% Level 1 – 65% 2. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose Level 3 –6% Level 2 – 55% Level 1 – 39% 3. Access and use information ethically and legally Level 3 –6% Level 2 – 65% Level 1 – 29%	Action: Date:
• Explore and synthesize knowledge, attitudes, and skills from a variety of cultural and academic perspectives to enhance our local	Cornerstone Projects VALUE Rubrics – Integrative learning Five faculty participated – each submitted 6 student	Expected: Integrative learning – 67% at level 2 or higher. Based on the artifacts submitted faculty	Results: Integrative Learning Areas on rubric: 1. Connections to experience	Action: Date:

and global communities.	artifacts (2 strong, 2 competent, and 2 weak) Faculty reviewed 30 student artifacts (papers and posters based on research projects)	expected about 67% of the artifacts to be at level 2 or higher on the rubric.	Level 3 –47% Level 2 – 47% Level 1 – 6% 2. Connections to discipline Level 3 –0% Level 2 – 21% Level 1 – 79% 3. Transfer Level 3 –0% Level 2 – 74% Level 1 – 26% 4. Integrative Communication Level 3 –29% Level 2 – 59% Level 1 – 12% 5. Reflection and self assessment Level 3 –29% Level 2 – 50% Level 1 – 21%	

Brief Summary of the Cornerstone Assessment Day for 2012

During the academic year 2012, seven faculty from the Arts and Sciences Academic Program collected artifacts from their individual writing intensive, cornerstone designated courses. Seven disciplines were represented by faculty from Biology, English, Linguistics, Philosophy, Psychology, Physics, and the Second Language Program.

In Spring 2012, the C4ward Cornerstone Pilot Project slightly modified the Written Communication Rubrics to clarify the 1-4 scale rating. This scale was used to assess the collected artifacts for written communication, which belongs to one of the five General Education Program learning outcomes for the AA degree.

On May 18, 2012, 11faculty (4 from the Second Language Program, 2 from English, 2 from Psychology, 1 from Speech, 1 from Linguistics, and 1 from Philosophy) met to assess 47 stratified random artifacts, which were selected from three categories: high, medium, and low. The criteria for high, medium, and low were left to the faculty to decide based on their expertise in their individual disciplines.

The assessment began with a review of the rubrics followed by a calibration process. Each faculty was asked to assess the same three artifacts for all five domains of the Written Communication Rubrics: (a) Context and purpose for writing, (b) Content development, (c) Genre and/or disciplinary conventions (e.g., using professional jargon), (d) Sources and evidence, and (e) Control of syntax and mechanics. Each of the selected three artifacts was seven-pages long and all three represented one of the three categories mentioned (i.e., high, medium, and low). The average time to complete the assessment of all three artifacts was 20 minutes with a range between13 to 28 minutes. The data were then collected and analyzed on the spot, showing some agreement but much variance as well (see Table 1). About 30 minutes were spent on clarifying the scale and then, we formed 5 groups of 2 raters, each group responsible for one of the five domains. Since two faculty from different groups had to leave earlier, the eleventh faculty stepped in to replace those two faculty.

In a three-hour period, 23 artifacts were rated for "context of and purpose for writing," 26 for "content development," 19 for "genre and/or disciplinary conventions," 43 for "sources and evidence," and 34 for "control of syntax and mechanics." Assessment of all artifacts was not possible given time constraints and complexities in assessing some of the domains.

Overall the faculty found the experience challenging and enriching. Most importantly, the rating process gave new insights into the feasibility and validity of using "universal" criteria for different disciplines.

Rater Calibration

The Written Communication Rubric (WCR) includes five domains to assess students' artifacts: (a) Context and purpose for writing (b) Content development, (c) Genre and/or disciplinary conventions (e.g., using professional jargon), (d) Sources and evidence, and (e) Control of syntax and mechanics.

Before using the WCR for all artifacts, the eleven faculty presents each assessed the same three artifacts for all five domains. The findings are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Raters' Calibration

	Context		Content		Genre		Sources		Syntax	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Artifact #1	1.6	0.5	1.45	0.69	1.3	0.48	N/A	0	1.18	0.4
Artifact #2	2.8	0.75	2.63	0.8	2.27	0.79	2.36	0.8	2.723	0.47
Artifact #3	2.1	0.54	2.1	0.7	2.55	0.69	2.18	0.6	1.55	0.69

Overall, raters were clearly able to differentiate the low level artifact from the medium and high artifact but the variance between the medium and the high artifact was more challenging. The standard deviations indicate that raters were least in agreement in assessing Artifact #2, which was originally selected as a medium level artifact, but ended up with a rating on written communication above the "high" artifact. However, we should keep in mind that the artifacts were initially evaluated by the instructor on criteria within their field, criteria that include other measures beyond written communication. In other words, good written communication skills is not a proxy for accuracy within a particular discipline.

Finally, inter-rater reliability were the highest for sources (SD=0.47) followed by syntax (SD=0.52), context (SD=0.6), genre (SD= 0.65) and content (SD=0.73. Indeed, raters felt that assessing genre and/or disciplinary convention and content was the hardest since they were asked to assess artifacts that were outside of their field of study. The findings do confirm their sentiment. (Note that the inter-rater reliability rating for sources may have been artificially high because artifact #1 had no sources, which greatly helped raters' agreements.)

After completing the calibration process, which included a conversation about raters' divergent rating and agreement on how to use the WRC, faculty were divided into 5 groups of two raters, each responsible for one domain. Unfortunately, some domains (e.g., context and content) are more time-consuming to assess than other domains (e.g., sources and evidence) and therefore not all artifacts were rated on all domains. The findings are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Ratings of students' artifacts

	Context	Content	Genre	Sources	Syntax
N	N=23	N=26	N=34	N=43	N=34
Means	2.39	2.54	2.26	2.53	2.56
Standard Deviation	1.03	0.9	0.87	0.83	0.82

As can been seen in Table 2, the results from the ratings of selected students' artifacts suggest that, on average, Kapiʻolani Community College students have written communication skills above the 2.0 level, which is the level at which a student at the end of two-year college is expected to operate. However, the data should be interpreted with caution since the artifacts were selected to represent a low, medium, and high level of performance and this preliminary study was not meant to be representative of KCC's student body. The aim of this preliminary study was to evaluate the usefulness and feasibility of the WCR developed by KCC's faculty to assess students' writing level.

In addition to providing an initial assessment of the usefulness of the rubric, this assessment also provides information about which area of writing students fared the best. Based on the artifacts reviewed it appears that students would benefit most from further learning about the importance of contextualizing their writing and further learning the disciplinary conventions of their fields.