REPORT ON SUMMER 2018 ENGLISH COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT

Submitted by
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Introduction

From June 18-22, 2018, the English Department undertook an assessment of the composition program, focusing on artifacts produced by students in ENG 201.

Staffing

We were fortunate to have all of the assessors from summer 2017 return for 2018:

- Dr. Ryan Angus
- Prof. Abby Daniel
- Prof. Mitchell Lilly
- Dr. Cody Lumpkin
- Prof. Amine Oudghiri-Otmani
- Dr. Forrest Roth
- Dr. Margaret Sullivan
- Dr. Anthony Viola

Procedure

Outcomes. During the 2017-18 academic year, the Composition Committee and the assessment team worked to create the rubric, which is included in this report. The rubric reflects changes to the ENG 201/H course outcomes that went into effect fall 2017. The impetus to change the outcomes were two-fold: one was to streamline and clarify the outcomes, and the other was to align our program outcomes with the Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (3.0): http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html. While this change prevented us from having a direct comparison to last year's assessment results, an indirect comparison is provided on pages 3-4 of the report. The outcomes will remain the same for 2018-2019, which will allow for better comparative data next year.

Sample size. The size of the random sample was increased from 15% in 2017 to 20% for 2018, with each artifact evaluated by two members of the team. This worked out to approximately 50 artifacts per assessor drawn from Blackboard Outcomes, plus an additional 8-9 hard copies per assessor provided by off-campus instructors whose students did not have ready access to Blackboard.

Timeline

The team met in the morning of Monday, June 18, to distribute the hard copy artifacts; to be sure everyone was familiar with the technology to be used for scoring; and to attend to any other final housekeeping matters. The assessors were then free to work on their own, with the understanding that the work would be complete by midnight on Wednesday, June 20. Dr. Ellison used Thursday to identify discrepancies in the scores, and the team met again on Friday to reconcile those discrepancies, discuss additional revisions to the rubric, and make recommendations for the 2018-19 year.

Scoring and Results

Scores that were in "exact" or "adjacent" agreement required no further action. Reconciliation took place if

- Scores on a given trait differed by two points (i.e., "1. Below Competency" vs. "3. Above Competency")
- A given trait received a score of 1-3 from one assessor and a "0. Cannot Evaluate" from the other

This report includes two sets of charts:

<u>2018 results</u>

For 2018 only, we produced the following charts, generated after the scores were reconciled:

- The percentages of readings that scored at each performance level for each trait
- Average scores for all traits, including and excluding scores of zero ("Cannot Evaluate")
- The assessment of the assignment guidelines ("Unclear or incomplete" vs. "Clear and Complete")
- The percentages of scores that needed to be reconciled for each trait

Comparison of 2017 and 2018

This comparison is somewhat inexact because we used different outcomes and rubrics for 2017 and 2018. The following table indicates which outcomes seemed to be most similar and were used as bases for comparison (the complete rubric for 2018 appears after the table):

2017	2018
1.1 LOGIC OF POSITION WITHIN ARGUMENT/ISSUE: Ability to position themselves within public conversations and to compose a logical argument supported by research. [Student establishes relevant context for their position through effective use of research.]	
1.2 CLARITY OF AUDIENCE, PURPOSE, AND STYLE: Ability to attend to issues of audience, purpose and rhetorical context. [Students use tone and diction suitable for topic and intended audience. The delivery of their information makes clear their overall purpose.]	**1.1 Develop rhetorical knowledge across contexts and audiences. [Artifact aligns with rhetorical situation described in assignment.]**
	1.2a Develop writing projects across multiple drafts. [Preliminary work included? Yes or No]
	1.2b Develop writing projects across multiple drafts. [Student understands and incorporates revision as part of the writing process. Select "0" if no reflection is included.]
1.3 CONTEXT OF INFORMATION: Ability to analyze the stylistic conventions and rhetorical patterns of selected texts and to recognize the different stakeholders in an argument. [Sources are used strategically through proper introduction of and response to sources in the text.]	NOTE: Traits 1.1-1.3 were folded into one outcome (1.1) in the fall 2017 revision of outcomes.
	1.3a Apply knowledge of information literacy. [Sources in context]
2.1 SOURCE INTEGRATION: Ability to work with different texts as researchers, to mine for information, and to effectively use research sources, including online sources, in their writing. [Baseline: Student integrates a minimum of 5 sources within the text of their culminating project; their sources reflect some variety in advocacy and source type; and there are clear attempts to integrate sources within their own writing.]	

2.2 SOURCE USAGE MECHANICS: Ability to recognize how and when to use quotation, summary, and paraphrase, and how to examine the ethics of research and writing through proper citation methods. [Baseline: Student relies on a balance of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation and makes consistent attempts to follow correct citation mechanics.]	**1.3b Apply ethical citation practices. [Mechanics of citation]**
3.1 SENTENCE-LEVEL MECHANICS AND USAGE: Ability to understand the importance of grammar, mechanics, and careful proofreading in the process of effective communication. [Student presents a preliminary draft and revised draft that demonstrate attention to sentence-level improvements. Sentence-level errors may still be present in the revised draft but do not impede meaning.]	**1.4 Apply knowledge of sentence-level mechanics and usage. [Word choice, concision, sentence variety, proper and correct punctuation]**
4.1 REFLECTION: Ability to inquire into and reflect on the development of their research and writing in order to think critically and objectively about their work, internalize and clarify their own research and writing processes, and to self-assess areas in need of improvement. [Students demonstrate understanding of course outcomes and how their work does or does not meet outcomes.]	**2.1 Student demonstrates understanding of course outcomes and how their work does or does not meet outcomes.**

The following comparisons are included in this report:

- % of artifacts that scored at or above "Basic Competency"
- Average scores for the "scorable" artifacts (i.e., excluding scores of "0. Cannot evaluate")

COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

STUDENT'S CULMINATING PROJECT

1.1 Develop rhetorical knowledge across contexts and audiences. [Artifact aligns with rhetorical situation described in assignment.]

0-Cannot Evaluate	1-Below Competency	2-Basic Competency	3-Above Competency	Notes
	Writing does not fulfill context/audience requirements outlined in the assignment. Vocabulary and tone are not suitable for intended meaning and purpose.	Writing demonstrates adequate awareness of the context/audience outlined in the assignment. Vocabulary and tone are mostly suitable for intended audience and purpose.	Writing demonstrates a sophisticated awareness of the context/audience outlined in the assignment. Vocabulary and tone are effectively crafted for intended audience and purpose.	

1.2a Develop writing projects across multiple drafts. [Preliminary work included? Yes or No]

1-No, Below Competency (no preliminary work included)	2-Yes, Basic Competency (preliminary work included)	Notes

1.2b Develop writing projects across multiple drafts. [Student understands and incorporates revision as part of the writing process. Select "0" if no reflection is included.]

0-Cannot Evaluate	1-Below Competency	2-Basic Competency	3-Above Competency	Notes
	Reflection does not adequately address the student's revision strategies. There may be little or no comparison of the preliminary and final drafts.	Reflection discusses the student's revision strategies and/or compares the preliminary and final drafts. The discussion, however, may be somewhat underdeveloped.	The discussion of revision strategies and/or comparison of preliminary and final drafts is thorough and thoughtful. The student shows considerable self-awareness of their writing process.	

1.3a Apply knowledge of information literacy. [Sources in context]

0-Cannot Evaluate	1-Below Competency	2-Basic Competency	3-Above Competency	Notes
	Source information is missing or fragmented. Writing does not explain relevance of sources.	Writing communicates source material, yet does not synthesize and fully explain source relevance.	Writing organizes and synthesizes sources. Writing also communicates relevance of sources.	

1.3b Apply ethical citation practices. [Mechanics of citation]

0-Cannot Evaluate	1-Below Competency	2-Basic Competency	3-Above Competency	Notes
	Quotes, paraphrases, and summaries of sources are used inappropriately or not at all. Paper lacks Works Cited or References page.	Writing demonstrates some knowledge of proper source attribution and appropriateness to the context but minor, consistent errors may be present in source citation.	Writing demonstrates sophisticated use of source usage and correct citation in nearly every circumstance.	

1.4 Apply knowledge of sentence-level mechanics and usage. [Word choice, concision, sentence variety, proper and correct punctuation]

0-Cannot Evaluate	1-Below Competency	2-Basic Competency	3-Above Competency	Notes
	Errors are multiple and obstruct the writer's intended meaning.	Communication has only a few errors in style, mechanics, or other issues that might distract from the message.	Communication is virtually free of mechanical, stylistic or other issues that might distract from the message.	

STUDENT'S REFLECTION

2.1 Student demonstrates understanding of course outcomes and how their work does or does not meet outcomes.

0-Cannot Evaluate	1-Below Competency	2-Basic Competency	3-Above Competency	NOTES
	Understanding of course outcomes and corresponding learning seems minimal or lacks detail.	Student demonstrates an understanding of course outcomes and how their work does or] does not meet outcomes.	Student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of course outcomes and how their work does or does not meet outcomes.	

ASSIGNMENT: Use the rubric below as a checklist for information included in the assignment.

3.1 Timetable and submission guidelines

1-Unclear or incomplete	2-Clear and complete	Notes:

3.2 Goals and purpose and/or rhetorical situation

1-Unclear or incomplete	2-Clear and complete	Notes:

3.3 Information literacy and citation expectations

1-Unclear or incomplete	2-Clear and complete	Notes:

3.4 Sentence-level expectations

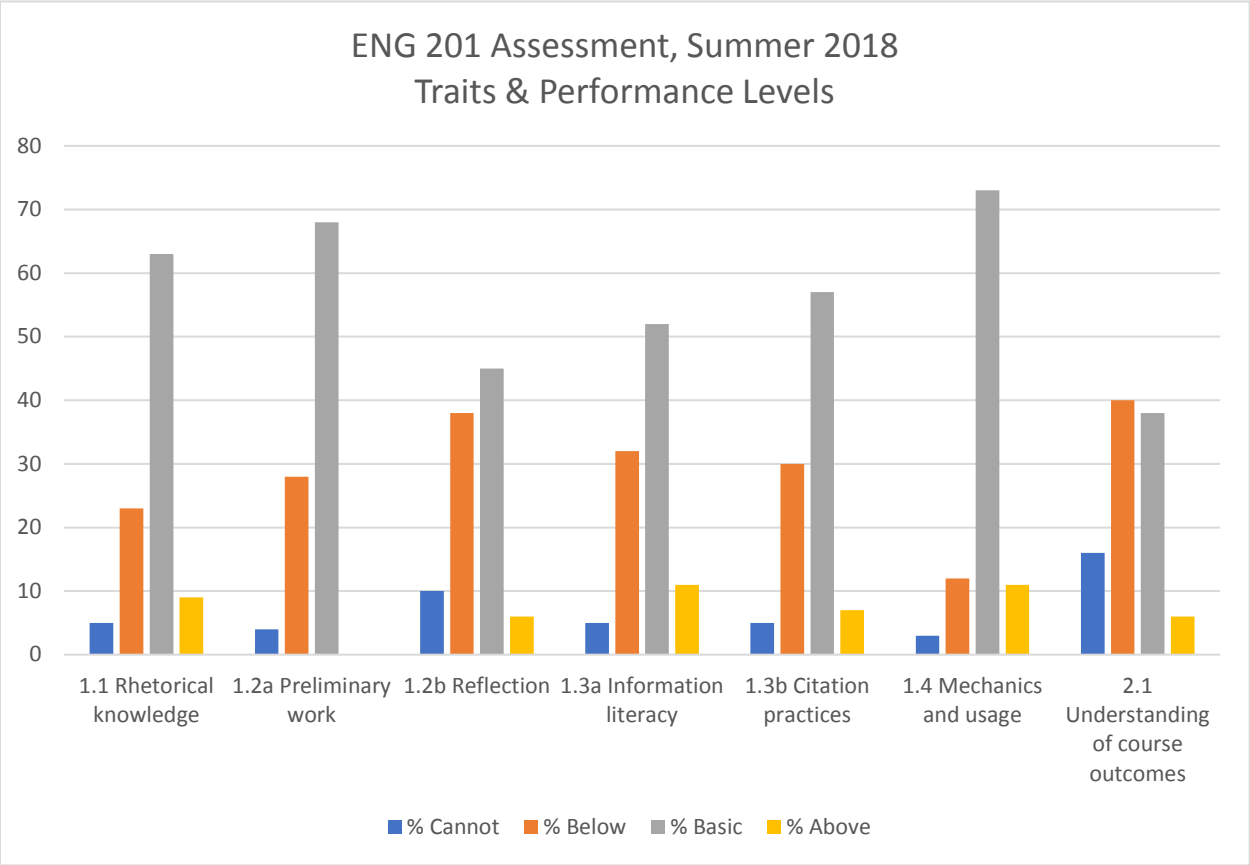
1-Unclear or incomplete	2-Clear and complete	Notes

3.5 How the writing will be graded

1-Unclear or incomplete	2-Clear and complete	Notes:

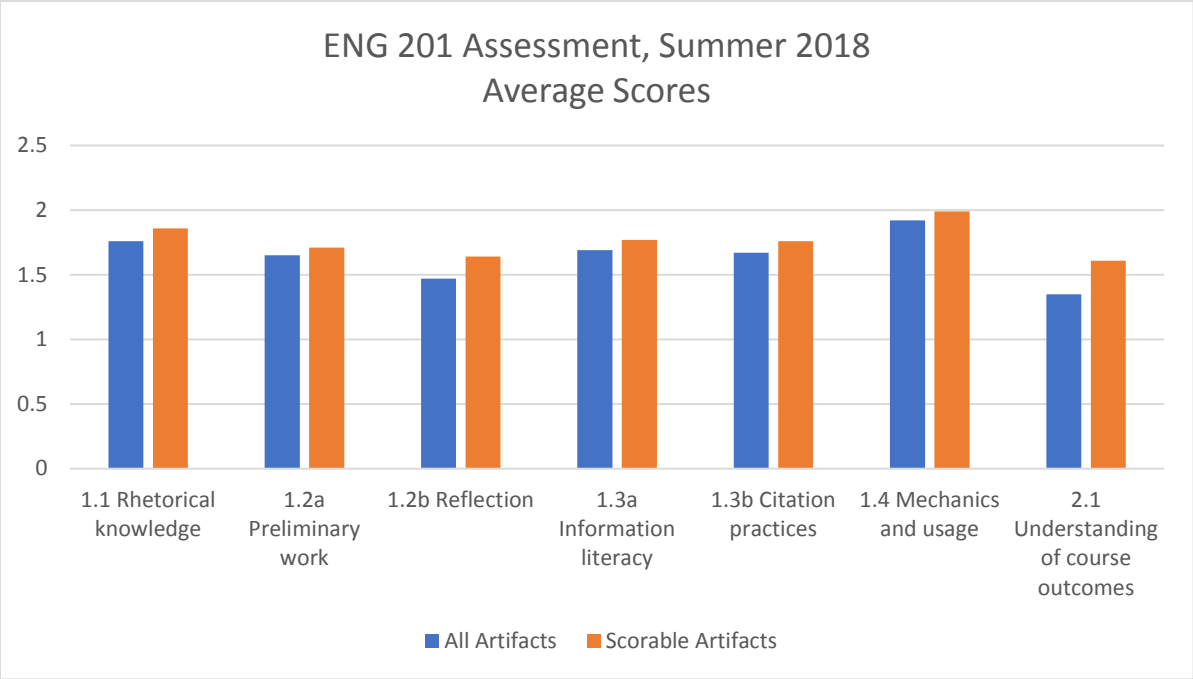
3.6 Assignment process (steps for assignment completion, approaches for success)

1-Unclear or incomplete	2-Clear and complete	Notes:

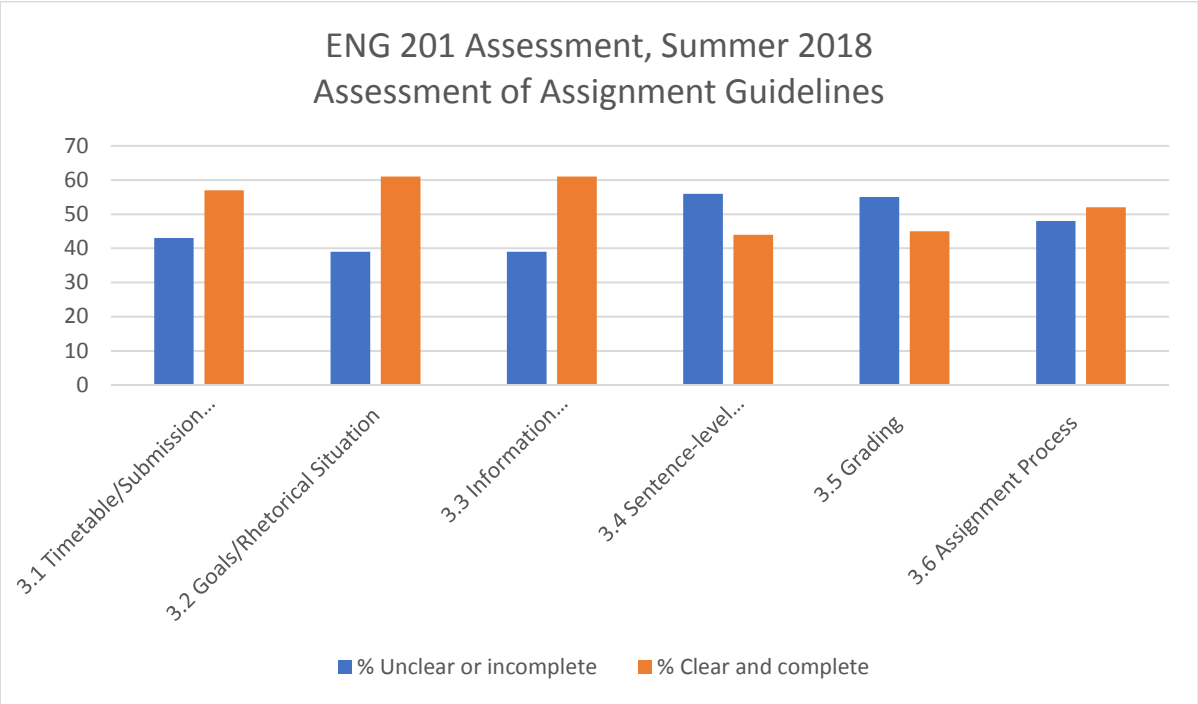


Since ENG 201 is a freshmen-level course, we expect students to develop a *basic*-level knowledge of course outcomes. Here is how the numbers above translate into percentage of *basic* knowledge for each of our ENG 201 outcomes.

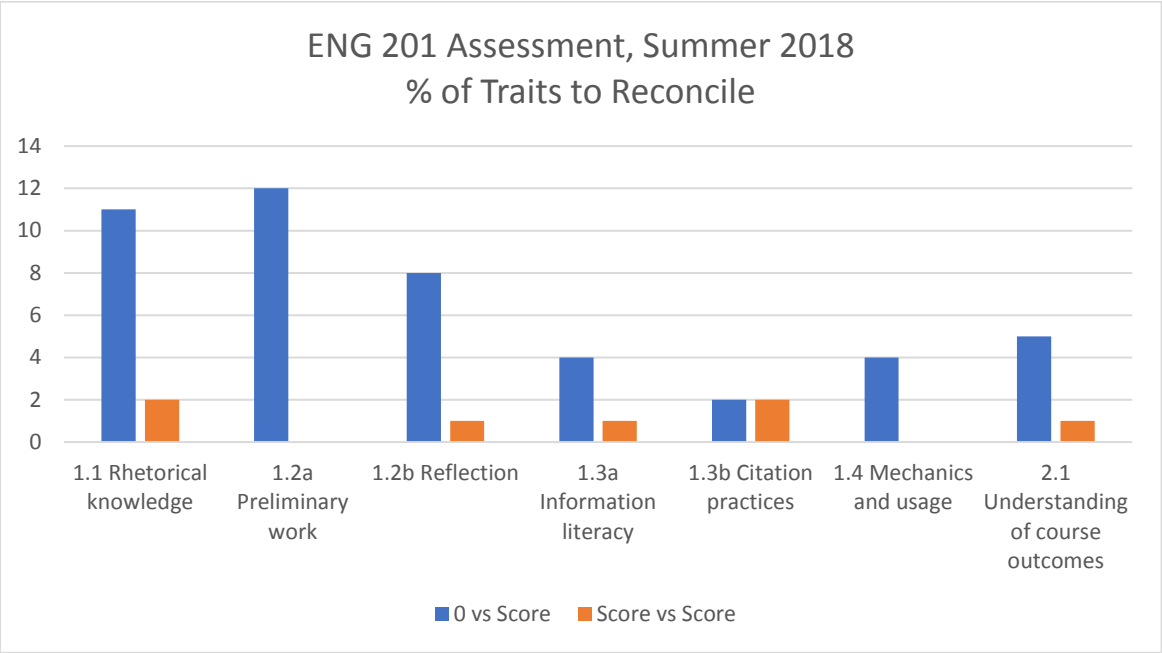
Average Percentage of *Basic* Knowledge by Outcome	
1.1 Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge across contexts and audiences	**63%**
1.2a-1.2b Develop writing projects through multiple drafts (average of 1.2a and 1.2b)	**56.5%**
1.3a-1.3b Apply knowledge of information literacy and ethical citation practices (average of 1.3a and 1.3b)	**54.5%**
1.4 Apply knowledge of sentence level mechanics and usage	**73%**

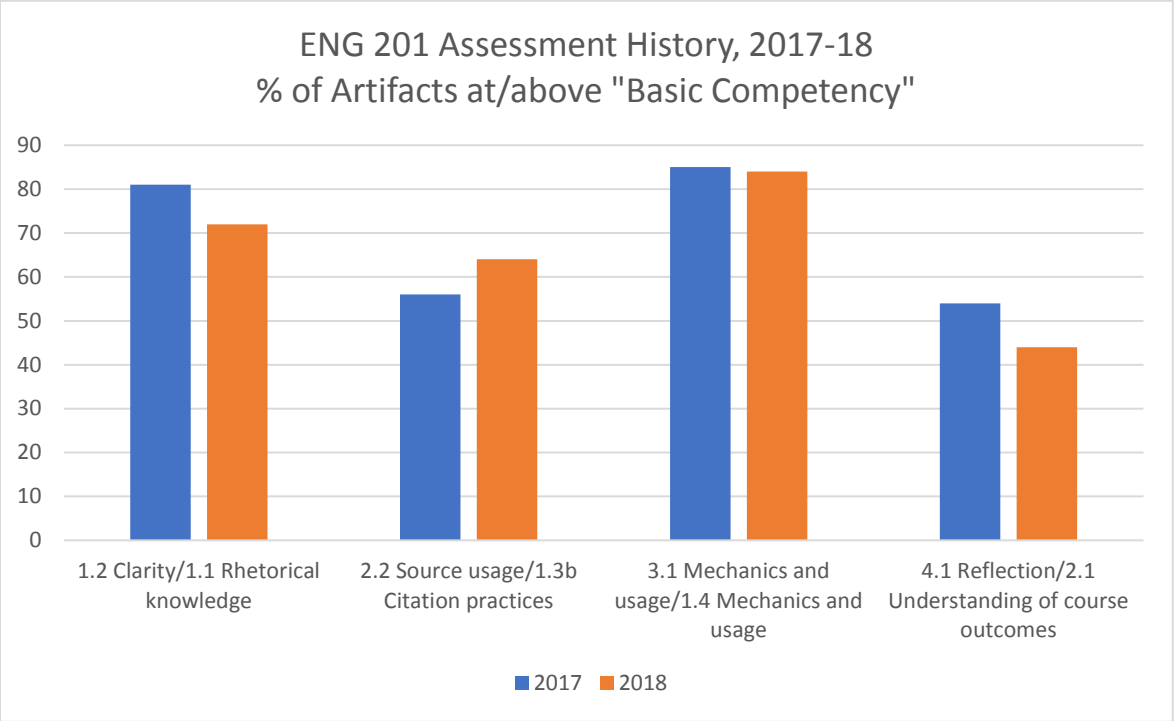


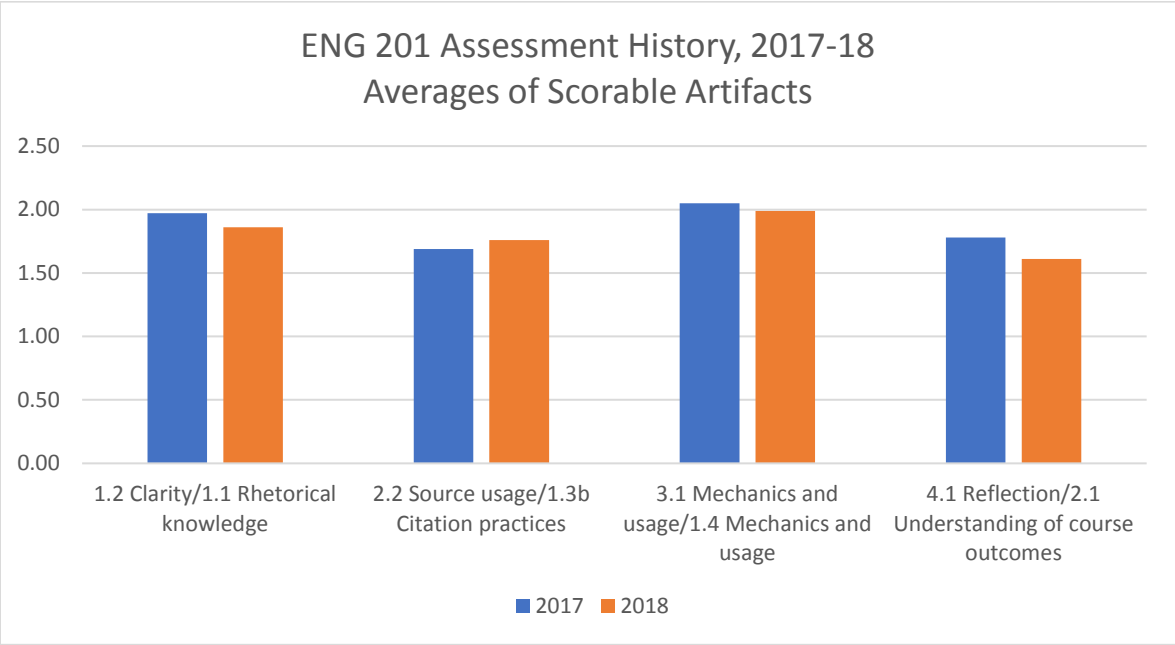
Numerical Representation by Outcome for Scorable Artifacts (2.0 is Basic Knowledge)	
1.1 Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge across contexts and audiences	**1.86**
1.2a-1.2b Develop writing projects through multiple drafts (average of 1.2a and 1.2b)	**1.68**
1.3a-1.3b Apply knowledge of information literacy and ethical citation practices (average of 1.3a and 1.3b)	**1.77**
1.4 Apply knowledge of sentence level mechanics and usage	**1.99**



Percentage of *Clear and Complete* Information within Collected Assignments	
3.1 Timetable/submission guidelines	**57%**
3.2 Assignment goals and rhetorical situation	**61%**
3.3 Information literacy and citation expectations	**61%**
3.4 Sentence-level expectations	**44%**
3.5 Grading/assessment expectations	**45%**
3.6 Assignment process	**52%**


ENG 201 Assessment, Summer 2018
% of Traits to Reconcile
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
1.1 Rhetorical knowledge
1.2a Preliminary work
1.2b Reflection
1.3a Information literacy
1.3b Citation practices
1.4 Mechanics and usage
2.1 Understanding of course outcomes
0 vs Score
Score vs Score


ENG 201 Assessment History, 2017-18
% of Artifacts at/above "Basic Competency"
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1.2 Clarity/1.1 Rhetorical knowledge
2.2 Source usage/1.3b Citation practices
3.1 Mechanics and usage/1.4 Mechanics and usage
4.1 Reflection/2.1 Understanding of course outcomes
2017
2018



ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Summer 2018 marked the second year we have completed a more comprehensive assessment of the Composition Program through our evaluation of ENG 201 student artifacts, including the instructor assignment, a preliminary or "rough" draft of the final paper, the final paper, and a student reflection. As previously noted, the learning outcomes were revised based on last year's assessment, so we will not have true comparative data until next year's assessment.

A. Instructor Assignments

Faculty have a good amount of flexibility in helping students achieve the course outcomes for ENG 201. The position of the program is that teachers are more effective when they can craft their materials in ways that suit their interests and expertise, especially when there are faculty from all sub-disciplines of English teaching in the composition program, and because there are seven themes for ENG 201, which may influence course content. Rather than dictate assignment guidelines, instructors were provided with an assignment template at our fall teaching workshop and via email (see p. 18). The assignment template was informed by the results of last year's assessment and were aimed at highlighting some of the information that seemed absent from instructor assignments.

Our evaluation of assignments revealed some remaining gaps in instructors' articulation of expectations, particularly in the areas of grading and sentence-level expectations. In our discussions of these gaps, we concluded that assignment instructions are often provided through multiple documents (the course schedule, the syllabus, an additional handout, for example), so it is possible that students do have the pertinent information but not necessarily in one document. In addition, instructors may expect students to intuit certain expectations based on course instruction (sentence-level correctness expected of college writers, for instance). Nevertheless, the Composition Program will continue to provide support materials for assignment (re)design, and we are developing an Adobe Acrobat template for assignments that may take the guesswork out of assignment design.

B. Students' Culminating Artifacts

Table from p.9

Numerical Representation by Outcome for Scorable Artifacts (2.0 is Basic Knowledge)	
1.1 Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge across contexts and audiences	**1.86**
1.2a-1.2b Develop writing projects through multiple drafts (average of 1.2a and 1.2b)	**1.68**
1.3a-1.3b Apply knowledge of information literacy and ethical citation practices (average of 1.3a and 1.3b)	**1.77**
1.4 Apply knowledge of sentence level mechanics and usage	**1.99**

Artifacts revealed remaining weaknesses in areas of citation and process work (particularly reflection and revision). In the area of source citation, including using sources in context and citation mechanics, there are slight improvements since 2017, but we will continue to address this issue as a program, since effective and correct research-based writing is central to writing in all disciplines. One answer may be to create a shared sense of "sources in context" and to dictate particular parameters for source collection and integration.

The weaknesses in revision efforts have to do both with trying to capture students' revision efforts and in teaching students the difference between revision and editing. As student reflections indicated, students struggle with articulating their writing and revision processes and very few students could do proper comparisons of their two drafts. Numbers for 1.2a-1.2b are also low because students often did not submit a preliminary draft and/or a reflection, so we work on emphasizing the importance of those documents.

As with revision, capturing rhetorical knowledge within an artifact divorced from the context (at least somewhat) is difficult, but students are largely demonstrating work consistent with academic writing expectations. When the instructor assignment was not available, assessors relied on their professional expertise to determine if a student's choice of voice, style, and rhetorical appeals was appropriate for freshmen-level research-based writing.

Contrary to the narrative about student writing, the writing we assessed had good control of grammar mechanics and usage, a testament, we would argue, to the instructor feedback they receive on their writing and the revision requirements often built in to larger assignments.

REVISIONS TO OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

As mentioned, we will maintain the same outcomes for ENG 201, and while there may be some tweaks to the rubric, what and how we assess will be largely the same in AY 2018-2019. We will focus on providing more support materials to instructors, specifically an assignment template and a student submission template. We will also ask instructors to provide the assignment when they set the alignments rather than asking students to cut and paste the assignment into their own documents. Last, we will provide the rubric to instructors so they can better understand how students' artifacts are assessed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to look more closely at the work we are doing in the Composition Program. Please let us know if you have questions.

APPENDIX A: REVISED OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH 201 and 201H—AY 2017-2018

Coordinator's Note:

ENG 201 is a second-semester composition course that builds on the research, writing, and critical thinking skills students acquire in ENG 101/P. To help foster students' development in those areas, there are seven course themes from which students can choose: *Arts in Culture; Business and Consumer Culture; Community and Identity; Education and Literacy; Health, Mind, and Body; Popular Culture and Mass Media; and Science, Environment, and Technology*

(see https://mucompositionprogram.com/welcome/eng-201/for more information).

These themes reflect some of the disciplinary conversations students might encounter in their majors and are meant to engage students in areas of research that suit their particular interests. Students are not required, however, to select the theme that most aligns with their major and may enroll in any section.

Context has been added to help instructors interpret the outcomes and to align our outcomes more closely with the Council of Writing Program Administrators' "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition": http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html.

Writing Requirements: Students will produce at least three (3) polished formal writing projects, one of which will be a longer, sustained research project reflective of the course theme. In addition, students will produce shorter writing pieces leading or connected to their formal writing projects. By the end of the semester, students will have produced a minimum of twenty-five (25) typed, double-spaced pages, including drafts.

Building on the foundations of ENG 101, students in ENG 201/H will continue to:

1. **Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge across contexts and audiences.**
   - Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure (WPA Outcomes, "Rhetorical Knowledge").
   - Learn how to invoke common expectations between writers and readers and how these expectations vary by genre and discipline (WPA Outcomes, "Knowledge of Conventions").
   - Understand why conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary across genres (WPA Outcomes, "Rhetorical Knowledge").

2. **Develop writing projects through multiple drafts.**
   - Use composing processes and tools to discover and reconsider ideas (WPA Outcomes, "Processes").
   - Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress (WPA Outcomes, "Processes").
   - Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work (WPA Outcomes, "Processes").

3. **Apply knowledge of information literacy and ethical citation practices.**
   - Think critically about the materials they use—whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials—and to separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations (WPA Outcomes, "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing").

- Apply citation conventions systematically in their own work (WPA Outcomes, "Knowledge of Conventions").
- Consider the kinds of questions, problems, and evidence that define writing in different disciplines (WPA Outcomes, "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing").
- Consider the methods and technologies commonly used for research and communication across disciplines (WPA Outcomes, "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing").

4. Apply knowledge of sentence-level mechanics and usage.

- Demonstrate knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising (WPA Outcomes, "Knowledge of Conventions").
- Consider the reasons behind conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and citation systems across disciplines (WPA Outcomes, "Knowledge of Conventions").

COMPOSITION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, AY 2017-2018

What Will the Process Look Like?

- Instructors will invite students who take ENG 201/H in AY 2017-2018 to participate in the composition program's assessment by submitting work completed in their 201/H courses.
- Assessment of student artifacts for AY 2017-2018 will take place summer 2018 rather than during the department's assessment days.
- Approximately 8-10 people will be selected through an application process to participate in composition program assessment in summer 2018. Assessors will be provided a stipend for their work, and it will take approximately one week to complete assessment.
- We are collecting multiple artifacts as we did in AY 2016-2017 (more details below).
- Artifact collection will still take place via Blackboard Outcomes in MUOnline.

What Artifacts Will Students Have to Submit?

In order to get a more comprehensive picture of student work as it applies to ENG 201's learning outcomes, students must submit the following artifacts:

1. **Assignment for the course's culminating artifact.**
   Instructors who teach ENG 201/H in AY 2017-2018 should assign a writing project that requires students to demonstrate their knowledge of all ENG 201 outcomes. One copy of the assignment text should be provided to students without instructor and course information so that students can upload that information with their artifact.

2. **Preliminary draft of culminating artifact**
   Students must include a preliminary draft of their culminating assignment, and the draft should not contain any identifying information. Students will use the draft to reflect on revision choices between first to final draft.

3. **Final draft of culminating artifact**
   Students must include the final draft of their culminating assignment. Their culminating project should invite them to exercise their knowledge of all ENG 201/H outcomes.

4. **Reflection (1-2 pages) on how work meets course outcomes**
   The composition program will provide a common prompt to help guide students' reflections. The reflection is important for helping assessors characterize students' awareness and meta-knowledge of course learning outcomes as they apply to students' own writing. The reflection should be included in every ENG 201 course as part of the culminating assignment.

How Will Artifacts Be Submitted?

1. Instructors must create an assignment module for the culminating assignment in MUOnline and "align" the ENG 201/H outcomes with the assignment. *Further handouts and workshops will be provided to assist with this requirement.*
2. Students should combine the four (4) artifacts above into a single Word document or PDF and upload their work to the corresponding assignment module. The work students submit for assessment will not interfere with instructors' grading in MUOnline, and the same document may be independently graded by instructors as well as used for program assessment purposes.

ENG 201/H--Student Reflection for Composition Program Assessment

Students enrolled in ENG 201 should complete a 1-2 page, double-spaced reflection on their learning within the framework of the course objectives. Instructors should provide this assignment to students and direct them to turn in this reflection with their ENG 201 culminating assignment.

Dear ENG 201 Student,

Please complete this 1-2 page, double-spaced reflection as part of the Composition Program's efforts to assess student learning in our composition sequence. You should follow the following prompt when crafting your reflection:

A. **Review the ENG 201 course objectives, which were provided to you in the course syllabus at the start of the semester.**

> **By the end of English 201, students will:**
>
> 1. Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge across contexts and audiences.
> 2. Develop writing projects through multiple drafts.
> 3. Apply knowledge of information literacy and ethical citation practices.
> 4. Apply knowledge of sentence-level mechanics and usage.

B. **Reflection Consideration Part #1: Describe how your culminating artifact fulfills the learning objectives of the course. How does your work reflect the culminating abilities outlined above?** For example, in your description, point to specific writing in your culminating artifact that demonstrates your application of rhetorical choices and knowledge (1), revision strategies (2), information literacy and ethical citation practices (3), and attention to sentence-level mechanics and usage (4). In your reflection, you may compare the work of your initial draft to your final draft, as both documents should be included in your assignment upload.

C. **<u>Reflection Consideration Part #2</u>: Describe the overall strengths and weaknesses of your culminating artifact in light of the course objectives. What did you do particularly well and what aspects of the learning objectives remain challenging for you?**

Assignment Template for ENG 201/H Culminating Project

Timetable and Submission Guidelines (Learning Outcome 2)

- Are drafts expected? Peer review? Conferences? Include the various tasks and due dates on which students' success depends.
- How should students submit their work? On paper? Electronically? In a portfolio?

Goals/Purpose

- How does the assignment fit in with the larger course goals?
- What practices and skills do you want students to engage in?
- What, *exactly*, do you want students to accomplish in their papers?

Rhetorical Context (Learning Outcome 1)

- What is the rhetorical situation of the assignment?
- What audience are students trying to reach with their writing?
- What role should students assume as writers?
- What stance do you expect the students to assume in relation to their audience?
- How should students craft their language for this audience?
- What is the genre? What are the constraints and allowances of this genre? What should the paper look like to meet genre conventions?
- Will outside texts, informational and otherwise, play a role in how the text is crafted?

Information Literacy and Citation Conventions (Learning Outcome 3)

- What standards will students use to select and critically analyze the sources used in their culminating artifact?
- How will students compose their texts using evidence from sources?
- What citation conventions should students use in their culminating artifact?

NOTE: It is advisable that instructors require students to incorporate a variety of credible texts in their culminating artifacts. As with last year, the use of 5-8 sources, at a minimum, seems to be a satisfactory standard.

Usage Conventions (Learning Outcome 4)

- What grammar and usage conventions do you expect from students?
- How are required usage conventions appropriate for the assignment's rhetorical situation?

Assessment

- How does this assignment factor into students' course grade?
- How will this text be graded? Is there a rubric? Does the rubric mirror the language of the assignment?

Process (Learning Outcome 2)

- How should students proceed in fulfilling the assignment goals? Are there particular strategies that might be useful?
- What are the necessary steps for successfully completing the assignment?