

# Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes – COMP/LIT – Critical Thinking, Communication, Self-Reflection

1. Describe changes that have been implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes that resulted from outcome assessments carried out in the previous academic year.

The Composition and Literature SAC went through our Program Review in 2010; in response to the feedback and recommendations we received to the Program Review, the SAC initiated an assessment process that focused on student outcomes in Writing 121.

2. Identify the outcomes assessed this year, and describe the methods used.

What were the results of the assessment (i.e., what did you learn about how well students are meeting the outcomes)?

Because the Comp/Lit SAC didn't do a full Core Outcome assessment in 2009-10—and in response to our Program review recommendations--we decided for 2010-11 to create an assessment process that would allow us to assess both multiple PCC Core Outcomes *and* course/program specific outcomes simultaneously.

The plan was to begin by focusing on WR121, and to create a rubric to assess how well students in WR121 are doing what PCC says students should be able to do when they complete their course of study AND how well they are doing what the Comp/Lit program says they should be able to do when they complete WR121.

In October of 2010 a group of three instructors, one from each main campus, met to develop the assessment process. During Fall Term the group worked to decide on which outcomes to focus on for this year, and to create the rubric. Winter term we refined the rubric, and gathered samples. Spring term we read and scored the samples and presented our findings to the SAC.

## **Description of our Sample**

Our Assessment Sample consisted of 24 WR121 papers collected from six different sections of the course taught at Cascade (1), Rock Creek (1), Sylvania (2) and online (2). The papers from each section were written in response to different assignments, with the one commonality being that they all involved the use of outside sources and were at least three pages long.

## **What we assessed**

Our goal, again, was to group PCC Core outcomes together with specific WR121 outcomes, with the idea that by meeting the Writing Outcomes students would simultaneously be meeting the PCC Core outcomes. To create the outcome descriptions we looked for common language and concepts in the existing PCC Core Outcome document and in the language of our WR121 CCOG and the OWEAC WR121 outcomes. (A copy of the rubric is appended to this document)

The three outcome groups we assessed for 2010-11 were as follows

- **Critical Thinking & Problem Solving(PCC Core)/Research & Documentation(WR121)**

If a student meets the WR121 outcome of being able to “successfully support a thesis through summary, paraphrase and integrated quotation in a manner that distinguishes the writer’s voice from that of his/her sources”, then she is simultaneously demonstrating that she can “identify, evaluate and synthesize information from sources; distinguish relevant from non relevant data, fact from opinion; determine the extent of information needed; evaluate information and its sources critically; research and analyze data; interpret and use written, quantitative and visual text effectively.”

- **Communication (PCC Core)/Organization & Development (WR121)**

If a student meets the WR121 outcome of being able to “Write well-focused, logically organized, and well- transitioned essays, using introductions, discussion, and conclusions in which the relationship of ideas to the thesis and to one another is clear,” then he is simultaneously demonstrating that he can “Focus on a central purpose, determine audience and write coherent and effective prose; Apply knowledge of the writing process, and Develop and organize a text by using details, examples, data, metaphor etc.”

- **Self-Reflection (PCC Core)/Academic Discourse (WR121)**

If a student meets the WR121 outcome of being able to “Appreciate and reflect on challenging points of view writing; measuring another writer’s viewpoint against personal experience and assumptions and the experience of others, “ then simultaneously she is demonstrating that she can “Examine personal beliefs and measure them against the beliefs of others; understand self as part of a larger community; Respect the beliefs of others; and Understand the role of humor and empathy in human interactions.”

Each set of outcomes was scored on a scale from 1 to 4, using the language of the PCC core outcome proficiency levels:

- 1 – limited application of knowledge and skills
- 2 – basic application of knowledge and skills
- 3 – competent application of knowledge and skills
- 4 – effective and sophisticated application of knowledge and skills

The scoring process consisted of each of the three assessors reading and scoring every paper individually; we then met to discuss our scores, tally them and determine the average score for each outcome.

**b. Results: What did you learn?**

The results of our assessment were not terribly surprising. In all three outcomes the scores averaged between 2 (Basic Application) and 3 (Competent Application). Considering WR121 is the first college-level writing class for students and lays the foundation for further development, these results seem to be about

where they should be: students did best in communication/organization and development, which is indeed the essence of the course, and less well with the more complex skills and knowledge involved in critical thinking/research and self-reflection/academic discourse.

More specifically the average scores were as follows

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving(PCC Core)/Research & Documentation(WR121): **2.4**

Communication (PCC Core)/Organization & Development (WR121): **2.8**

Self-Reflection (PCC Core)/Academic Discourse (WR121): **2.6**

The experience also taught us about the assessment process itself; and this is perhaps as important as the results—it has laid a foundation for us to continue developing and building a systematic and ongoing assessment process.

3. Identify any changes that should, as a result of this assessment, be implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes.

*(Information provided here may be referenced, inserted into or summarized in Program Review 2.C.iii (for Core Outcomes) or 6.B.iii (for CTE Degree and Certificate outcomes)*

1. Because Critical Thinking and Problem Solving/Research and Documentation was the outcome students scored lowest in, coupled with the fact that WR121 now carries much of the burden of meeting the AAOT Information Literacy Outcome, the SAC agreed that focusing on developing Information Literacy in our writing classes would be a good goal for 2011-12. The Comp/Lit SAC has a tradition of annual in-service gatherings outside of the regularly scheduled SAC meetings, and it was agreed that Critical Thinking, Research and Information Literacy would be the focus for our in-service next year; the goal is to focus on best practices for teaching Information Literacy at the WR121 level.
2. The assessment process begun this year will continue and expand. Specifically:
  - The group will add 3 more members, for a total of 6.
  - The existing rubric will be revised and refined to better reflect our experience of using it; for example, the Communication/Organization & Development Outcome will be split into two, more precise outcomes, both of which will look at the PCC Core Outcome of Communication, but will focus on slightly different aspects of WR121's outcomes.
  - We will begin assessing literature—specifically ENG104—next year in addition to continuing to assess WR121. The goal is to continue to assess WR121 in the three areas we assessed this year (and to begin to build a bigger picture of our students' progress) while also expanding the rubric so that ENG104 will be assessed in terms of Critical Thinking, Cultural Awareness, and Social and Cultural Responsibility.
  - The eventual goal is to create a flexible “Master Rubric” that can be applied to any course in our program as a means of assessing course, program and Core Outcomes.

## WR121/CORE OUTCOME RUBRIC

	Effective and sophisticated application of knowledge and skills 4	Competent application of knowledge and skills 3	Basic application of knowledge and skills 2	Limited application of knowledge and skills 1
<b>PCC CORE OUTCOME <i>Critical Thinking and Problem Solving</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, evaluate and synthesize information from sources</li> <li>Distinguish relevant from non-relevant data, fact from opinion</li> <li>Determine the extent of information needed</li> <li>Evaluated information and its sources critically</li> <li>Research and analyze data</li> <li>Interpret and use written, quantitative and visual text effectively</li> </ul>	Judicious and precise selection of sources to support a written argument; sophisticated integration of source data and/or text into the writer's prose; well-developed awareness of how to effectively present source material for a general audience	Competent selection of sources to support a written argument; capable of integrating source data and/or text into the writer's prose; above-average awareness of how to effectively present source material for a general academic audience	Basic ability to select sources to support a written argument; basic understanding of how to integrate source data and/or text into the writer's prose; some attempt to present source material for a general academic audience.	Limited or inaccurate selection of sources to support a written argument; source data and/or text is not integrated into the writer's prose; below-average awareness of how to effectively present source material
<b>WR121 OUTCOME <i>Research and Documentation</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synthesize sources to support an assertive or argumentative thesis through summary, paraphrase, and integrated quotation in a manner that distinguishes the writer's voice from that of his/her sources</li> </ul>				
<b>PCC CORE OUTCOME <i>Communication</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on a central purpose, determine audience and write coherent and effective prose</li> <li>Apply knowledge of the writing process</li> <li>Develop and organize a text by using details, examples, data, metaphor etc.</li> </ul>	Essay is thesis-driven, focused, organized, logical, and coherent, demonstrating sophisticated ability to manipulate the elements of a written academic essay and flexible, creative, original thought.	Essay is thesis-driven, focused, organized, logical, and coherent, demonstrating competent ability to manipulate the elements of a written academic essay and flexible, above-average thinking.	Essay contains thesis and basic organization, demonstrating basic ability to manipulate the elements of a written academic essay. Ideas may not be entirely logical, flexible, creative, or original.	Essay lacks thesis or organizing principle, demonstrating below-average ability to manipulate the elements of a written academic essay. Ideas are not logical, coherent, flexible, or original.
<b>WR121 OUTCOME <i>Organization and Development</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write well-focused, logically organized, and well-transitioned essays, using introductions, discussion, and conclusions in which the relationship of ideas to the thesis and to one another is clear</li> </ul>				
<b>PCC CORE OUTCOME <i>Self-Reflection</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine personal beliefs and measure them against the beliefs of others.</li> <li>Understand self as part of a larger community</li> <li>Respect the beliefs of others</li> <li>Understand the role of humor and empathy in human interactions</li> </ul>	Extensive examination of personal beliefs and assumptions; well-developed awareness and articulation of the writer's personal experiences and position within a larger community; sophisticated engagement with the beliefs of others and their points of view Flexible and appreciative responses to challenging points of view	Competent examination of personal beliefs and assumptions; capable of understanding and articulating the writer's personal experiences and position within a larger community; engagement with the beliefs of others and their points of view. Positive response to challenging point of view	Basic examination of personal beliefs and assumptions; basic understanding and fair articulation of the writer's personal experiences and position within a larger community; appreciation for the beliefs of others and their points of view. Acknowledges importance of challenging points of view	Limited examination of personal beliefs and assumptions; below-average understanding and little articulation of the writer's personal experiences and position within a larger community; little appreciation of the beliefs of others and their points of view. Rigid and defensive responses to challenging points of view
<b>WR121 OUTCOME <i>Academic Discourse</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciate and reflect on challenging points of view through reading and writing; measure another writer's viewpoint against personal experience and assumptions and the experience of others</li> </ul>				

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*Notes*

1. The 4 levels of proficiency (top row) are taken directly from the PCC Core Outcomes Sample Indicator levels <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/core-outcomes/index.html>
2. The three WR121 outcomes are based on outcomes developed by OWEAC in response to the revised AAOT mandate that “ Writing courses must meet the specific course outcomes as identified by Oregon Writing and English Advisory Council. “ (*Oregon Community Colleges Handbook and Planning Guide, “Associate of Arts-Oregon Transfer”* <http://69.30.40.54/handbook/Handbook/ProgramsDegreesandCertificates/Definitions/AssociateDegrees/AssociateofArtsOregonTransferAAOT/tabid/166/Default.aspx>
3. The bulleted descriptions for the 3 PCC Core Outcomes were selected from the specific outcome descriptions (Critical Thinking and Problem Solving; Communication; Self-Reflection) <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/core-outcomes/index.html>. Selection was made by identifying specific descriptions that most effectively correlate to the specific writing outcomes being assessed.