The department met to collectively evaluate the data assessing the Communication learning standard.

Using the rubric for scoring mathematical writing that we developed in Spring 2008, we began by having each department member apply the rubric to the same writing sample (collected Fall 2007) to calibrate for interrater reliability. Using a modified Delphi technique, we obtained scores were generally in agreement, aside from minor variations attributable to subjective judgments. As a result of this exercise, we decided to modify the Exposition section of the rubric, adding a category for Spelling and Grammar.

Next, we collectively applied the rubric to two sets of writing samples, collected in January and March of 2008. Each writing sample was graded by two different department members. The results are tabulated on the following page.

Discussion and interpretation of results: We agreed that the students whose samples were collected were below the average ability of our typical students. However, we did notice that students who have taken more mathematics courses in the department tended to score higher as assessed by our writing rubric. We concluded that our upper-division courses are having a cumulative positive effect on the ability of our students to write well according to the norms of the discipline.