

Summary of 2019 assessment of our Written Communication ILO:
Westmont graduates will write effectively in various contexts.

Who is in Charge /Involved?

Faculty from all three academic divisions, including Sarah Skripsky (Lead Assessment Specialist) and Theresa Covich (adjunct English faculty). See the full list of participating courses in the [CUPA Assessment Report](#).

[Direct Assessment Methods](#)

Scoring writing samples from students in Capstone/senior courses (n=164) from all three academic divisions using a normed Written Comm. ILO Rubric with 5 criteria, adapted from the 2011-2012 assessment. Additional details are listed in the CUPA Assessment Report. Quantitative results are as follows:

Disaggregated Data Table: Written Communication ILO Assessment, 2019

Criteria	Total Possible Score	ALL Average (n=164)	Females (n=95)	Males (n=65)	"White" Students (n=102)	"Students of Color" (n=55)
Rhetorical Awareness	5	3.262	3.337	3.195	3.343	3.173
Rhetorical Sensitivity and Mobility	5	3.091	3.132	3.036	3.152	3.000
Content/Message	5	3.326	3.358	3.283	3.441	3.136
Form/Organization	5	3.256	3.258	3.254	3.319	3.145
Style: Grammar, Syntax, Punctuation	5	3.235	3.300	3.145	3.304	3.109

Criteria	Total Possible Score	ALL Average (n=164)	no ENG2/104 (n=99)	ENG2 completers (n=47)	ENG2 and/or 104 completers (n=65)
Rhetorical Awareness	5	3.262	3.227	3.266	3.315
Rhetorical Sensitivity and Mobility	5	3.091	3.076	3.032	3.115
Content/Message	5	3.326	3.318	3.245	3.338
Form/Organization	5	3.256	3.303	3.106	3.185
Style: Grammar, Syntax, Punctuation	5	3.235	3.308	3.025	3.123

Demographic notes:

The disaggregated data sets for "White" students (n=102) and "Students of Color" (n=55) exclude 7 students in the total sample for whom we lack identifying data.

The category "Students of Color" includes students identifying as American/Alaskan Native, Asian or Asian American, Black or African American, and/or Hispanic/Latinx.

[Indirect Assessment Methods](#)

Qualitative feedback from participating faculty and staff, primarily those Mayterm 2019 workshop participants contributing to Written Comm. ILO assessment. Qualitative feedback is summarized here:

- **Students would benefit from more audience-specific writing practice.** John Bean's *Engaging Ideas* includes related "RAFT+TIP" criteria for assignment design; **faculty would benefit from using these criteria** in (re)designing writing assignments.
- **Students would benefit from more training on how to be public intellectuals**, combining audience sensitivity with effective argumentation and style.
 - In particular, we would do well to encourage students to write more often for (1) church audiences [including Christians who are not immersed in academic discourse] and (2) public audiences who are not necessarily Christian [while writers may retain and "translate" Christian commitments]. *Such assignments contribute to our CUPA ILO as well as the Written Comm. ILO.*

<p>Major Findings</p>	<p>Satisfactory performance (averaging scores of least 3 out of 5 possible on all 5 criteria) from participating students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative data analysis suggests a relative weakness in the “rhetorical sensitivity and mobility” of participants, a weakness consistent with our previous Written Comm. ILO assessment. <i>See “closing the loop” recommendations below.</i> • Disaggregated data sets include female vs. male participants, participants identifying with various ethnic identities, and students who completed ENG 002 and/or ENG 104 prior to participating in the Written Comm. ILO assessment.¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On average, female participants scored higher than male participants. ○ On average, students identifying as “white” scored higher than participants who identified primarily with other ethnicities. <i>Anecdotally, a significant number of Westmont’s “students of color”—especially Latinx students—are first-generation students. These demographics merit more study before we can accurately recommend “closing the loop” activities.</i> ○ Students who completed ENG 002 prior to the Written Comm. ILO assessment <i>largely</i> closed the “achievement gaps” typical of the incoming students required to take ENG 002 (in comparison with those “test out” of ENG 002 due to previous coursework and/or high test scores).
<p>Closing the Loop Activities</p>	<p><u>General recommendation:</u> Our writing-intensive GE courses would benefit from more strategic planning and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As recommended in the previous Written Comm. ILO Assessment report, assign a faculty member to serve as a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) director: to identify gaps or problems in our current map of writing-intensive GE courses, and to support faculty (re)designing writing-intensive assignments. • Alternatively or in addition, hire a WAC consultant to assist with related initiatives: teaching faculty development workshops on assignment design, on responding effectively to student writing, etc.

1. At the May 2019 workshop, we reviewed initial disaggregated data sets by department and discussed potential implications for teaching and curriculum design with faculty representing many of those departments. To honor a condition of participation for some departments, however, we are not publishing disaggregated data by department in the Written Comm. ILO report. Department chairs may contact Manuela Long to request raw data or basic analysis relevant to their departments.

To support students' development in the **rhetorical dimensions** of our Written Comm. ILO:

1. **Continue to use ENG 002 as an introduction to “rhetorical awareness” and “rhetorical sensitivity and mobility.”** However, we should **revisit ENG 002 placement and enrollment practices** in order to support students' development and potentially reduce faculty workloads in other writing-intensive courses.
 - **Revisit placement methods for ENG 002.** Directed Self-Placement (DSP) has shown multiple benefits at other institutions. For example, *reducing reliance on standardized testing* empowers the student (increasing engagement in the selected course) and contributes to anti-racist practices.
 - **Require ENG 002 for junior status.** Some of the students who would most benefit from ENG 002 delay taking it due to anxiety or other factors/priorities. In the meantime, students who delay ENG 002 are dependent on other courses and faculty to help them build a foundational understanding of college-level writing and rhetoric.
2. In addition to ENG 002, **identify other courses that are well suited to support students' rhetorical development** (e.g., first-year seminars, introductory courses in COM / HIS / PHI / POL / PSY / SOC / etc., and advanced writing-intensive courses such as ENG 104 and the Capstone/senior courses participating in this assessment).
 - a. Create a **Curriculum Map** and/or a **writing portfolio requirement** to support students' rhetorical development across semesters. **Could require for junior status? Useful for randomized assessment every 6 years?*
 - b. **Review course caps in Writing-Intensive GE courses** to ensure that faculty can provide sufficient response to drafts. In cases where caps are greater than 20, **imbedded writing tutors** (Writing Associates) can assist faculty and students.
 - c. **Support faculty with appropriate teaching resources** (ideally, in partnership with a WAC director or consultant). To increase students' rhetorical development, especially in “rhetorical sensitivity and mobility,” faculty would do well to provide more “authentic tasks” with audience-specific writing guidelines, whether targeting audiences in their disciplines, public or church audiences, or others. Our Christian liberal arts graduates can be more effective when they are equipped not only to contribute to particular disciplines or guilds but also to contemporary culture(s) as “public intellectuals”—sometimes even as “prophetic voices” in their workplaces, churches, and more.