

GES1: Write to communicate and clarify learning

CAPSTONE COURSES

Semester: FALL 2013

REPORT DATE: 1/8/2014

Writing in capstone courses is assessed based on the student's final presentation using the Standard Writing Rubric used by Kean University. Student work samples vary by course and subject.

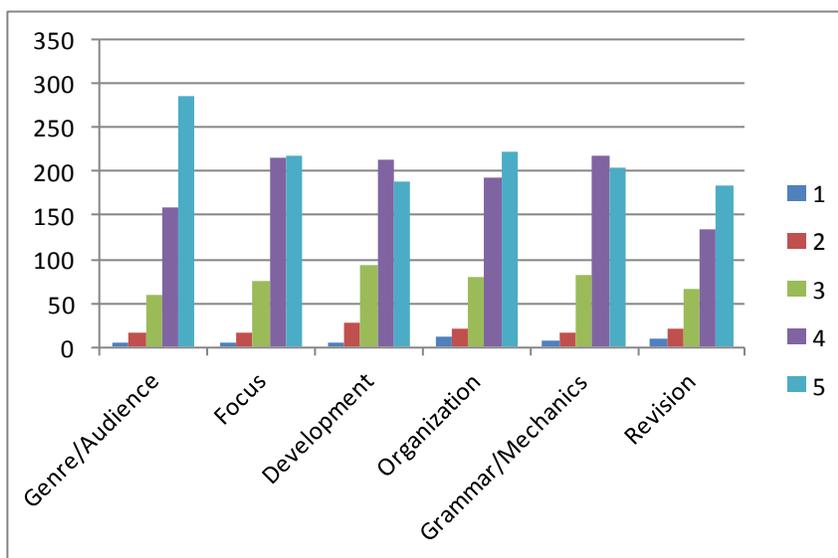
Number of Students: 527

Number of Sections: 38

Mean scores overall:

Genre/ audience	4.3
Focus	4.2
Development	4.1
Organization	4.1
Grammar/ mechanics	4.1
Revision	4.0

Distribution of Scores

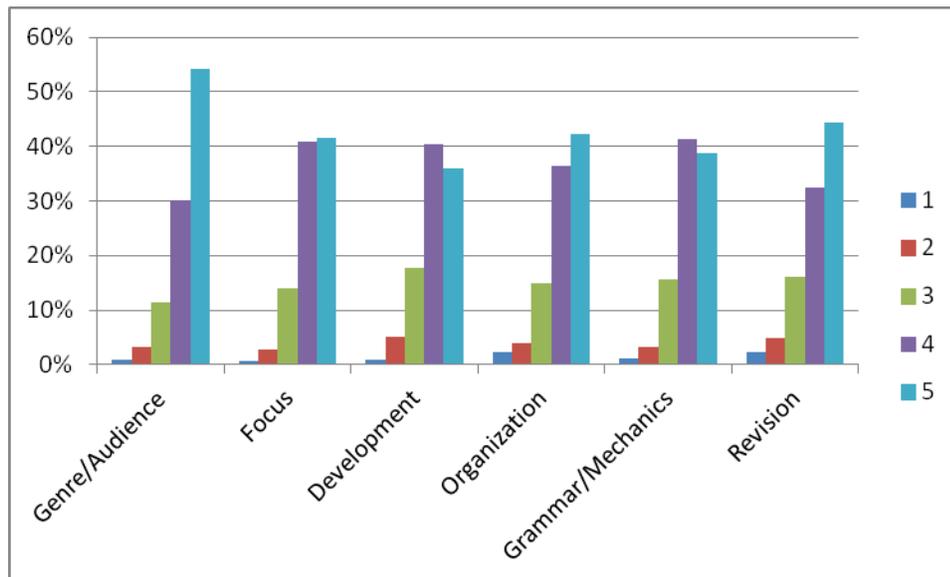


Frequency by score

	Genre/Audience	Focus	Development	Organization	Grammar/Mechanics	Revision
1	5	4	5	12	6	10
2	17	15	27	21	17	20
3	60	74	93	79	82	67
4	159	215	213	192	218	135
5	286	219	189	223	204	185
Total	527	527	527	527	527	417

Percentages by Score

	Genre/Audience	Focus	Development	Organization	Grammar/Mechanics	Revision
1	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
2	3%	3%	5%	4%	3%	5%
3	11%	14%	18%	15%	16%	16%
4	30%	41%	40%	36%	41%	32%
5	54%	42%	36%	42%	39%	44%



Analysis

550 senior students enrolled in 39 capstone course sections were assessed against the 5-level Written Communications Rubric designed by the School of General Studies. Students were assessed on six dimensions: Genre/Audience, Focus, Development, Organization, Grammar/Mechanics, and Revision. It is expected that students will reach level 4 or higher at this stage in their college career. The results indicate that the strengths of seniors at Kean are Genre/Audience (Using conventions in a skillful way, 84% at level 4-5) and Focus (Explicit, nuanced, complex stance, 83% at level 4-5) while they are slightly lower on Development, Organization and Revision (76%-78% at level 4-5). All six dimensions are significantly correlated ($P < .001$), which suggest that students need to be introduced to written practice that comprehensively improve their written communication skills. There are still 15%-24% of the seniors who failed to meet the expectations (level 4), thus suggesting that improvement in teaching and instruction is needed to address the common issues of these students who need help more than others in writing. Teachers need to refine the teaching strategies to help students to

form structures in their writing that impart wholeness and skill. Additionally, students should be given instructions on how to correct mistakes and improve their writing by revision.

Discussion/Action/Closing the Loop:

Norming the Standard Writing Rubric at the capstone level among faculty within individual majors and across departments would obviously be helpful in establishing a framework for scoring as well as teaching these concepts. As well, discussing and norming across levels (ENG 103X, GE202X, CAPSTONE) can only improve teaching and student learning. But even without horizontal norming, we should consider these results given the significant correlation across the six dimensions for an important percentage of our seniors. We are offering them to the Director of the Academic Writing Center, asking her to create a strategy for additional writing support for our seniors, special support to Capstones who are assessing Composition and perhaps ‘Composition for the Major’ programming. A list of suggestions – potentially a Manual for Teaching Composition in the Capstone – should be forthcoming. Finally, we need to examine this SLO at the junior level too – the fourth point – to see where the skill ‘gap’ is occurring.

GE Writing Rubric (Descriptors for Rubric: Condensed)

	5	4	3	2	1	0
Genre/Audience	Uses conventions in skillful way	Uses conventions in a somewhat skillful way	Uses conventions in formulaic way	Does not follow conventions consistently	Fails to follow most or any conventions	Not applicable
Focus	Explicit, nuanced, complex stance	Explicit and nuanced, but not complex, stance	Stance defined in general terms	Vague stance	No clear stance	Not applicable
Development	All ideas developed with specific, relevant information	Most ideas developed with specific, relevant information. Reader raise few questions	Ideas not developed consistently. Supported with vague generalization or inappropriate examples	Most ideas not developed or supported with inappropriate examples	Ideas stated, not developed	Not applicable
Organization	Structure imparts feeling of wholeness and skill	Structure imparts a feeling of wholeness but not skill	Structure breaks down in some places, though solid overall	Structure feels rough or unclear	Structure clear or confusing	Not applicable
Grammar/Mechanics	Few or no errors exist; those present have no effect on reading	Errors obvious but not distracting	Errors begin with interfere with reading	Several distracting errors or multiple patterns of error	Numerous errors make understanding text difficult or impossible	Not applicable

Revision	Almost all revisions make draft stronger	Most revisions make draft stronger.	Some revisions strengthen, but some weaken draft	Few revisions, with little effect on quality	Very few revisions; may make final worse	No evidence of revision
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Appendix Capstone Courses for S1 Written Communication Assessment

Course	Number of Students with valid results
MATH 4890 1	21
BIO 4970 1	21
BIO 4970 2	18
BIO 4970 4	14
COMM 4962 1	15
COMM 4962 2	16
COMM 4962 3	14
COMM 4962 5	14
DSN 4000 2	15
ENG 4800 1	11
ENG 4817 1	12
FA 4800 1	15
HIST 4990 01 02	24
HIST 4990 K1	14
MATH 4890 2	22
MGS 4999 3	17
MGS 4999 6	16
MGS 4999 K1	24
NURS 4900 1	10
NURS 4900 A2	10
NURS 4900 A3	13
PA 4000 1	18
PED 4610 K1	13
PSY 4940 1	6
PSY 4940 10	10
PSY 4940 11	11
PSY 4940 13	8
PSY 4940 2	9
PSY 4940 4	7
PSY 4940 6	9
PSY 4940 7	10
PSY 4940 8	12
PSY 4940 9	13
PSY 4940 K1	11

SOC 4600 1	14
SOC 4600 2	15
SPAN 4700 1	17
SPED 4200 K1	8
Grand Total	527