

The Communication Conundrum

What, if anything should we do about it this year? AND – whose decision/recommendation is this? ELIWC? LAC?

A. Do nothing with Communication at this time	
Arguments For	Arguments Against
Some scholarship in Writing argues against the validity of generic rubrics for evaluating writing across disparate disciplines.	Kicks the can down the road.
Best practice would be to invest in considerable faculty professional development to support student work. Right now our attention (and funding) for PD are mostly focused elsewhere.	There may be value in figuring out where we are in terms of agreement about the quality of student writing.
We are already assessing 4 Gen Ed outcomes this year -- this is sufficient for accreditation expectations (as long as we address communication soon).	We have the artifacts, and it would be good to use them.
B: Use the artifacts collected for the other outcomes; score using a general Writing Rubric (WAC, or LEAP VALUE WC)	
Arguments For	Arguments Against
We have a lot of artifacts this year that approach "signature assignment" designation -- it would be interesting see what quality of evidence of outcome attainment in writing these can provide.	The artifacts we have are based on assignments that were designed to address other institutional outcomes, and were not designed to show evidence of outcome attainment in writing.
We have some experience using the AAC&U Written Communication rubric during the MSC project, and could build on that	We should not continue using a rubric that our own faculty consider to be flawed
We can focus on WR instructors to so the scoring, and even if they are not happy with the rubric, it might be very interesting for them to see what kind of writing students are producing in other courses.	

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Allison Gross (PCC WR faculty who has been involved in the both the LAC and the assessment subcommittee of the WR SAC for many years) spent her recent sabbatical researching Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). When I initially asked her about using a generic WAC rubric, she thought that was a viable approach. More recently, after her sabbatical work, she has expressed concerns about WAC assessment approaches that are divorced from disciplinary context and that involve looking at student work that was not appropriately informed by the evaluation criteria (i.e., the rubric).

On the other hand

- Many colleges and universities (as well as the MSC and VALUE projects) use the AAC&U Written Communication rubric to evaluate writing in many different disciplines.
- We at PCC have experience using this rubric to evaluate student work from many disciplines and with assignments that were not designed to align with it. While he inter-rater reliability is not stellar, we may still be able to learn something about our students' writing using this rubric
 - We have several instructors with significant experience on this rubric:
 - SW and JM have been normed by and scored for national projects on this rubric, and have conducted norming events for our internal scoring
 - We have a list of faculty who have scored on this rubric, and some data on inter-rater reliability among these scorers
 - We have WR faculty who have expressed interest in scoring this year, and can likely recruit more.
- Now that we are not in the MSC, we have the freedom to modify the rubric and how we use it.
 - We can change any language that seems ambiguous and/or needing clarification
 - We can define we mean by a score of "0" (e.g. not in the assignment could be N/A, so that "0" means "did not address")
- Optimal WAC design leads with instruction, and argues that assessment is not appropriate until the instruction is in place. But maybe it is OK to assess to see where instructional emphasis may be helpful?
- We don't have the capacity at this time (time, money, planned training, faculty bandwidth/energy) to add assignment design for writing to the work faculty are doing for the DSAC outcomes assessment.