

Accreditation Concerns &  
Assessment Support Committee Report  
September 6, 2015  
Submitted by  
Seri I. Luangphinit  
Chair and ALO

IIINTERIM REPORT (SPRING 2017)

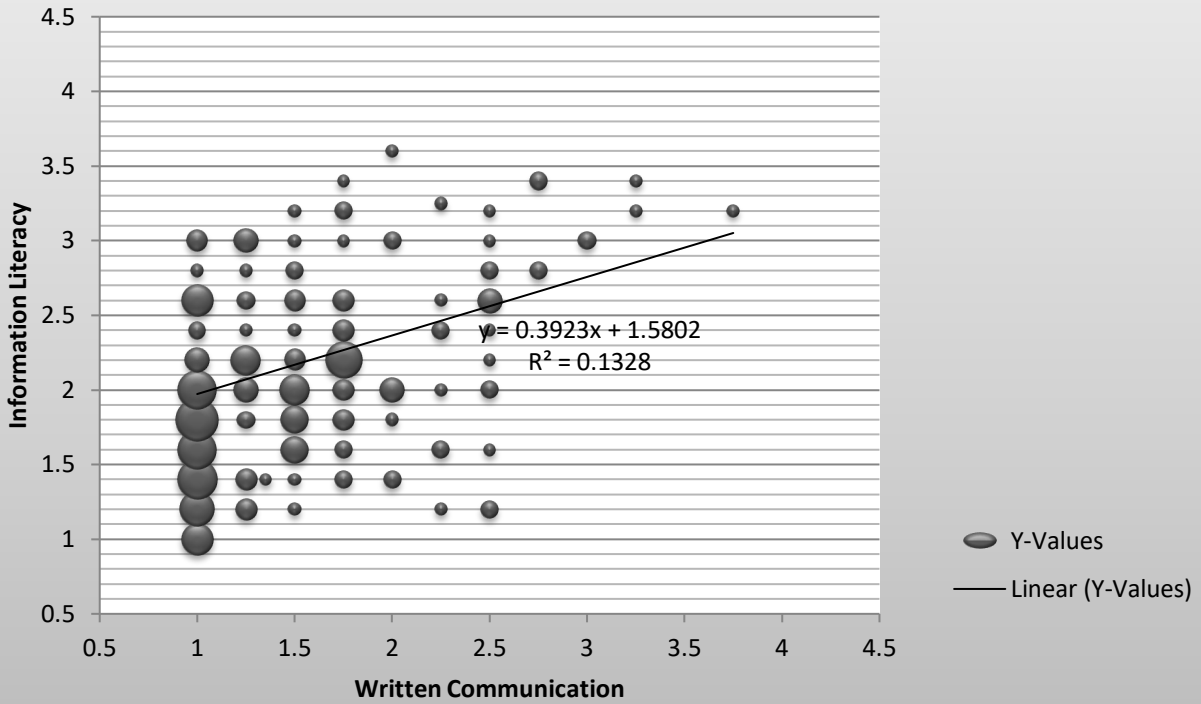
The ALO met with Chancellor Straney and Vice Chancellor Platz in August to discuss the configuration of the Accreditation Planning Committee. Given the emphases in the [WASC Action Letter of March 6, 2015](#), the following constitutes the membership for the Committee:

- Donald Straney, Chancellor
- Matthew Platz, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Marcia Sakai, Vice Chancellor for Administrative Affairs
- Gail Makuakane-Lundin, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Seri I. Luangphinit, Accreditation Liaison Officer & Chair of Assessment Support
- Susan Brown, Associate Dean—CAS
- Mitchell Anderson, Chair of Program Review
- Yumiko Ohara, Chair of General Education
- Kurt D. Dela Cruz, Advising Center (lead assessment in Student Affairs)
- Kelli Okumura, IR
- Paula Zeszortarski, Assessment Coordinator—CoP (also Assessment Support Committee liaison with the Graduate Council)
- Karla Hayashi, Director of Kilohana (WI Assessment)
- Zach Street, Interim Director of Admissions
- Thom Curtiss, Chair of ALEX Advisory Council
- Jan Ray, Development Liaison, Academic Affairs (DL)
- Mary-Louise Haraguchi, Library (Information Literacy)

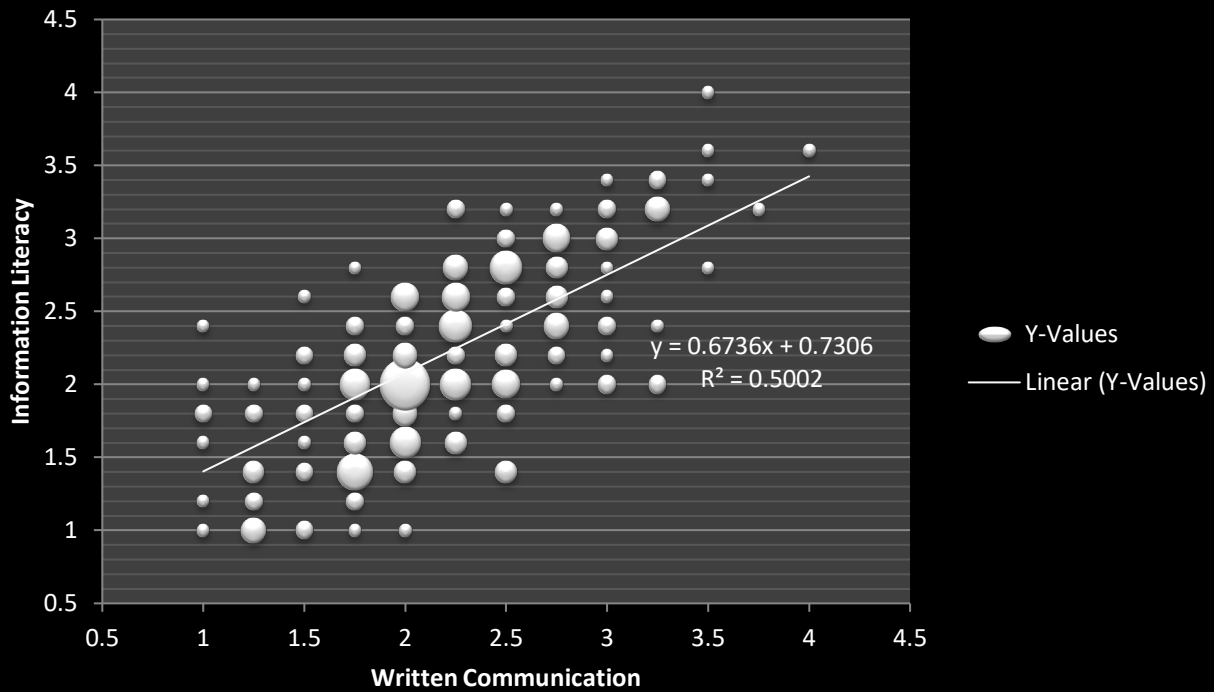
FOLLOW-UP TO ENG 100 ASSESSMENT—WRITTEN COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Using Writing Placement Exams (WPE) and final papers for ENG 100 from AY 2007-2008, the Assessment Committee mapped incoming freshman skills against exiting performance in ENG 100. The two 4-point rubrics utilized were [Information Literacy](#) and [Written Communication](#). The readings for 184 sets (WPE and Final Papers) were undertaken in a number of venues, including: (1) 2012 P-20 Writing Symposium, where over 73 teachers from the DOE, HAWCC, and UHH met to review new Common Core State Standards and UHH's GE Learning Outcomes and Rubrics, and (2) several meetings of the Assessment Support Committee. All artifacts were blind read twice, with outliers eliminated by a third reader. For Information Literacy, the reliabilities between the two blind readers were .78 ( $p = .001$ ) for the WPE papers and .62 ( $p = .001$ ) for the ENG 100 papers. For Written Communication, the reliability for the ENG 100 papers was .63 ( $p < .001$ ) and .04 ( $p = .84$ ) for the WPE papers. Sets were plugged into scatter plots to assess the correlation between the two skills:

### WPE Final Results - All Students



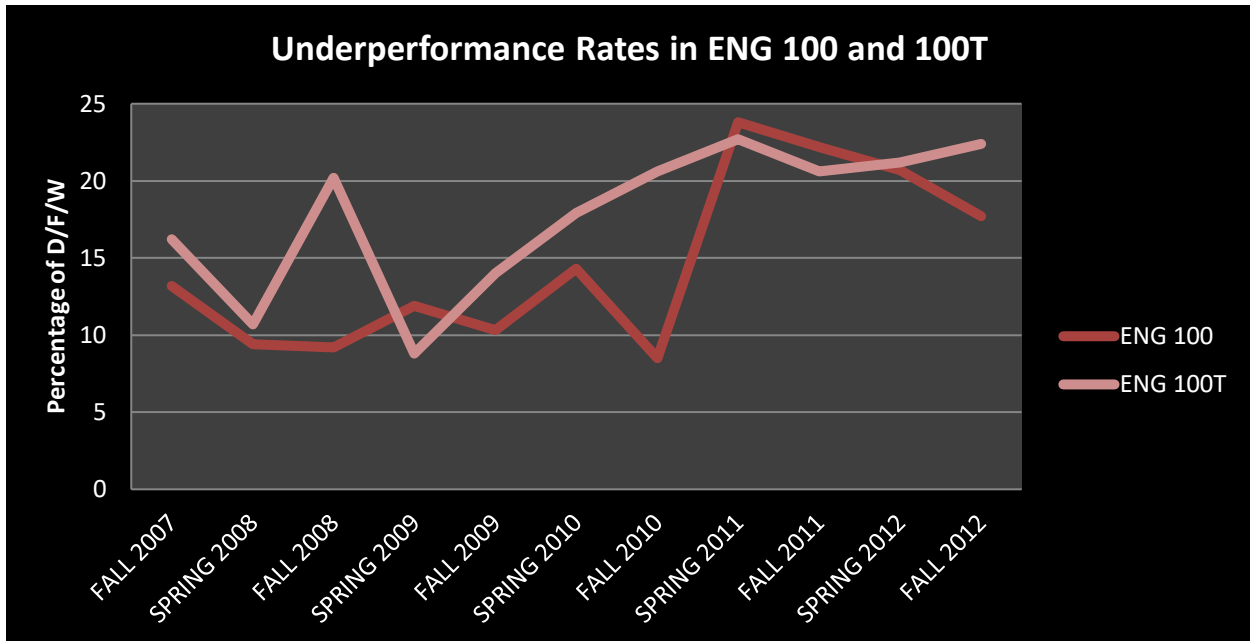
### ENG 100 Final Results - All Students



The data was also disaggregated for discrete populations:

1. Big Island Students: [WPE](#) & [ENG 100 Final](#)
2. Non-Big Island Hawai'i Residents: [WPE](#) & [ENG 100 Final](#)
3. All Non-Resident Students: [WPE](#) & [ENG 100 Final](#)
4. Transferring Students (to the mainland): [WPE](#) & [ENG 100 Final](#)

Rates of underperformance (D or below) were also calculated:



The data collected also included information on students' overall academic performance since exit from ENG 100. This was compiled and submitted as a report to the Faculty Congress and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (see [Assessment Chair's Report](#) ).

The following issues were identified by this larger, comprehensive assessment:

- The most pressing problem for the student representatives on the Committee (who are now student teaching at DOE institutions) is **the inability of students to recognize the difference between "opinion" and "evidence,"** that students believe that if someone says something in public then it qualifies as "fact." This problem is already evident in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade; one student representative commented: "My ninth graders are completely unable to formulate their own ideas (except for a very limited amount of things) especially when they are asked to bring in outside information";
- One of the teachers of ENG 100 likewise noted: "**Language issues remain a main problem.** If the WPE shows **trouble in syntax, grammar, and similar sentence-level skills,** the final ENG 100 paper also has those problems, plus the added burden of unskillful synthesis of information, lack

of information literacy, and ineffective communication.” This spawned a concurrent discussion among the Committee members over the possibility that **deficiencies in reading skills** might also be exacerbating the problem. A library member of the Committee noted: “Some students actually appear unable to understand the writing prompts in the WPE.” On a hunch, two faculty Committee members conducted reading diagnostics in two 400-level English classes; results showed that over 50% of both classes could not properly paraphrase the chosen paragraph (from the textbook), with many including ideas/concepts that were not embedded in the sample reading. The suspicion is that if Juniors and Seniors are exhibiting these problems, then it stands to reason that many in Freshman Composition may have similar problems;

- In processing (anonymizing) papers for reading, the Committee noted students from the same high schools shared the same topics on their papers despite being in different sections of ENG 100T. This suggested that freshmen may be recycling papers from their high school English classes, a suspicion confirmed when a sample ENG 100 paper used at a P-20 meeting in Honolulu in Spring of 2012 was recognized by a teacher from Kaua’i, who identified the student and the paper as having been done as a requirement for his class despite the fact that the student’s name and title of paper had been redacted from the copy.
- The problem of disengagement is one that the English Department will have to seriously address if progress is to be made on incentivizing students to do better writing. Given the increasingly negative perceptions accompanying students into college, we may need to ask ourselves how to make the preparation for and the actual experience of college writing more meaningful to students. Writing faculty (at both the secondary and tertiary levels) may have to reconsider the required use of the conventions set by the Modern Language Association (MLA), which is not a standard used after students move on to other college courses. Additionally, the preference for argument-driven writing by the MLA, is not appropriate in STEM or certain Social Sciences disciplines;
- Even though students didn't consistently improve their scores from the WPE to the final ENG 100 paper, some Committee members noted the difference in writing tasks should be factored in their favor. One instructor writes: “Even if the ENG 100 research paper is at an ‘emerging’ rather than ‘competent’ level, the sample papers from my batch at least showed improvement in comprehension of what is academic writing. That is not the same as to say that any of the papers demonstrated mastery. Perhaps it is more realistic to expect students to master or at least be ‘competent’ writers of academic papers at the end of four years, rather than at the end of ENG 100? In my experience of teaching ENG 100 and 100T, most students acquire some basic, albeit fuzzy understanding of how to build up an argumentative thesis, how to do research, and how to cite sources. **If these skills are not reinforced in subsequent courses, whatever was learned in ENG 100 disappears.**”

The following actions were proposed:

- The above findings were reported to the English Department, which met and decided to attach higher stakes to the final assignment with the following policy – any student who does not submit the final research paper will not be eligible for a passing grade in ENG 100;

- The reading tests will also provide us with information on how to better align instruction between high school and college writing courses. At the moment, the English Department at Kea’au High School has indicated a willingness to help facilitate curriculum alignment. UH Hilo has submitted a grant to the P-20 for partial funding of this initiative, which is being built around collaborations with the intent of addressing student “disengagement” with writing.

The full write up of this project, including analysis of the surveys, demographic information, and corresponding NSSE data, can be found on pages 39-55 of [Essay Two](#) of UHH’s Institutional Reaccreditation Self-Study.

### READING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Based on suspicions raised by the AY 2007-2008 writing assessment, the Department decided to undertake a reading assessment to gauge Lexile scores (which are approximations of grade-level reading comprehension skills). The following bands represent scores in conjunction with grade-level proficiency:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11-CCR
100-299	300-499	500-599	600-699	700-799	800-849	850-899	900-999	1000-1024	1025-1049	1050-1300

Sample texts from a number of Departments show the range of readings that are employed here at the University:

Course	Lexile score
ENG 100	850
PSY 100	850
ENG 205	1150
BUS 111	1230
CHEM 124	1230
ANTH 100	1270
ACCT 201	1320
PHIL 100	1330
POLS 101	1340
SOC 100	1430
HIST 151	1440
KES 206	1520

Total Reader used 1200 as the likely cut-off score for the necessary level of reading comprehension needed to successfully complete the course. The reading test by Total Reader was chosen for its user-friendliness and administered to all students enrolled in ENG 100 or 100T. The results are as follows:

Semester	Total Number of Students	Number of Students Reading in the 1200s	Number of Students Reading Below 1200	Number of Students Reading Below 1000	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Fall 2013	249	65 (26%)	55 (22%)	21 (8%)	1600 (8)	810
Spring 2014	189	35 (18%)	57 (30%)	22 (11%)	1600 (11)	660
Fall 2014	221	45 (20%)	93 (42%)	27 (12%)	1600 (2)	880
Spring 2015	187	39 (20%)	105 (56%)	69 (36%)	1600 (3)	732

The data suggests that a substantial percentage of the ENG 100 (T) population is likely to experience difficulty in reading at the collegiate level. As the Department has only just received the data in July 2015, the full body of faculty has not had a chance to review the information nor discuss the results.

Because the Lexile text is a “general” non-specific (multiple choice) instrument that can only gauge general reading ability, the Assessment Committee has developed a reading rubric that was test-piloted in an ENG 100T course:

Level 4 Advanced	Student clearly understands the passage and can make insightful and nuanced inferences as to content of the reading. The summary is coherent and renders the information in a highly articulate manner.
Level 3: Competent	Student demonstrates a basic understanding of the passages and is able to articulate the key issues in his/her own words in a comprehensible manner.
Level 2: Emerging	Student appears somewhat unsure about the passages and cannot fully articulate the ideas presented. The student appears to be simply reiterating key terms and exhibits some difficulty comprehending the issues. Cannot easily paraphrase in his/her own words.
Level 1: Beginning	The student appears unable to comprehend the paragraphs and cannot elucidate the key ideas or issues. The summary includes ideas or information that is not stated by the reading.

The rubric was used in conjunction with the next two readings:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2015/08/21/433257863/fact-check-is-refinancing-student-debt-really-good-policy> (Lexile: 1220—12<sup>th</sup> grade)

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-different-solution-to-student-debt/2015/08/20/d2e140b8-37bb-11e5-9d0f-7865a67390ee\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-different-solution-to-student-debt/2015/08/20/d2e140b8-37bb-11e5-9d0f-7865a67390ee_story.html) (Lexile: 1490—college ready)

Results: ENG 100T SECTION 5

Student	Reading 1 LEXILE 1220			Reading 2 LEXILE 1490		
	Reader 1	Reader 2	AVG	Reader 1	Reader 2	AVG
001	1	1	1	1	2	1.5
002	2	2	2	2	2	2
003	2	1	1.5	2	1	1.5
004	2	1	1.5	1	1	1
005	2	1	1.5	2	2	2
006	2	1	1.5	1	1	1
007	1	1	1	1	1	1
008	1	1	1	1	1	1
009	1	1	1	1	1	1
010	1	1	1	1	1	1
011	1	1	1	1	1	1
012	1	2	1.5	1	2	1.5
013	1	1	1	1	1	1
			1.26			1.3

The recommendation going forward is to continue reading assessment at all 100-level courses, especially those in courses that utilize texts at higher Lexile levels than our average incoming freshman body.