

Course Assessment Report  
Washtenaw Community College

Discipline	Course Number	Title
English as Second Language	138	ESL 138 07/07/2023-Intermediate ESL Writing
College	Division	Department
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	English & College Readiness
Faculty Preparer		Heather Zettelmaier
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		11/18/2019

**I. Review previous assessment reports submitted for this course and provide the following information.**

1. Was this course previously assessed and if so, when?

Yes

This course was assessed in Winter 2019.

2. Briefly describe the results of previous assessment report(s).

The standard of success was met during the previous assessment. 81% of the students met the standard of success.

3. Briefly describe the Action Plan/Intended Changes from the previous report(s), when and how changes were implemented.

For the previous assessment, the new rubric was used, and it was effective. The rubric used was the same one that we use as classroom instructors and blind graders. The assessment tool was revised to reflect the change in the rubric and how it is scored, "70% of the items on the rubric," rather than "7 out of 10 items on the rubric." Instructors have continued to place emphasis on the grammar items on the rubric, particularly nouns, subject/verb, and plural agreement.

**II. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome**

Outcome 1: Write a one paragraph composition which follows English organizational structure and is intelligible to an unsympathetic native speaker (i.e. a composition instructor who does not have an ESL teaching background).

- Assessment Plan

- Assessment Tool: Final in-class writing exam
- Assessment Date: Winter 2022
- Course section(s)/other population: All
- Number students to be assessed: All
- How the assessment will be scored: Departmentally-developed rubric
- Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students will achieve 70% of the items on the rubric.
- Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2023	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
27	27

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

All students were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

Two sections of ESL 138 were offered in Winter 2023. Both sections were assessed. Both were daytime sections on campus, fully in-person.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

A 13-item rubric was used to score the final in-class paragraphs of the 27 students. Items were in the areas of Organization, Development, and Language. Percent of total items fulfilled was calculated.

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this

learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: <u>Yes</u>
Nineteen out of twenty-seven students (70%) of students satisfactorily fulfilled 70% of the items on the rubric. The standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.
The average score based on the rubric was 77%, above the passing minimum score.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

These final in-class paragraphs were remarkable in that many students excelled in the area of development. Clearly, the emphasis on generating good ideas through prewriting and putting together thoughtful, organized support helped students produce strong paragraphs. Also, there seemed to be improvement in the use of verb tenses, subject/verb and plural agreement.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

The areas to improve are in grammar and language production. Some students had awkward phrasing that showed influence from their first language in areas like word order, word choice, and sentence structure. These errors are rooted in a lack of fluency, or the ability to think in English rather than translating while writing.

In this course, instructors should continue to teach writing as a way of clearly communicating unique, logical, and well-supported ideas. Prewriting and drafting are our best tools for doing this. Students who take the practice of writing process seriously improve tremendously.

In terms of language, the students who improved and succeeded in this course did so because they improved their fluency in English. Instructors should continue to introduce methods for improving fluency in writing such as free writing, extensive reading, extended conversation opportunities, and abstaining from the use of translation and editing software.

The pre-requisites and co-requisites for this course, which are grammar and reading courses, help to improve language use and fluency and should continue to be required.

### III. Course Summary and Intended Changes Based on Assessment Results

1. Based on the previous report's Intended Change(s) identified in Section I above, please discuss how effective the changes were in improving student learning.

The previous report recommended the continued use of the Final In-Class Paragraph rubric that instructors and blind graders use. This was effective for the current assessment. This rubric accurately and thoroughly reflects the course goals for organization, development, and language.

The other intended change, the use of supplemental handouts for grammar instruction in the areas of nouns, subject/verb, and plural agreement, seemed effective for this course assessment cycle. Instructors finetuned grammar tips based on student needs and areas of weakness.

2. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

Overall, ESL 138 is meeting the needs of these students and giving them a solid foundation for future academic writing. The goal of writing a strong one-paragraph essay is appropriate for the English level of the students in this course. It is challenging but attainable. Students need this course in order to enter higher level writing courses with confidence.

Something surprising was that the results had many extremes. Many students had excellent scores, and several were well below 50%. Nine students had perfect or almost perfect scores (92 or 100%). Four students had below 50%. Based on instructor testimony (myself and one other), I can attest that those who excelled implemented effective strategies to improve their writing and practiced hard all semester. Their methods, with the guidance of the instructor, worked! There was tremendous improvement in these students' writing. In both sections, however, there were students who were plagued by a few obviously faulty behaviors: lack of attendance, use of translation or AI technology, lack of English conversation practice, and lack of extensive reading. They did not heed instructor advice or use the resources that the instructor made available to them. There were students who were sure that there was no way to study or prepare for the final in-class writing and told themselves, "I'll just show up and write."

Seasoned writing instructors know that teaching and practicing the writing process is a time-tested method of helping students become writers, critical thinkers, and communicators. Despite the recent developments in translation software and AI writing assistance, students still need to know how to pre-write (brainstorm and plan), draft (write fluently), and revise (evaluate their own work) in order to become successful writers in college.

3. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

This information will be shared with Departmental Faculty during Fall 2023 in-service.

- 4.

Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Other: Coaching for Independent, Fluent Writing	ESL 138 instructors should introduce best practices in improving writing fluency early in the course. Classes should discuss the reasons for avoiding translation and AI technology, as use of this assistance will impede their progress in writing. Other, more reliable strategies that improve fluency and performance should be taught. These include extensive reading, conversation practice, responding to instructor feedback, focused and individualized grammar study, and free writing. These strategies should be taught from the beginning of the semester through the final week.	Resources for writers have been changing rapidly in recent years. Outside of ESL writing courses, students are receiving the message that they can use all kinds of assistance to produce clean writing. This Intended Change is meant to address the rise of the "I-don't-have-to-write-it-by-myself" mentality. In fact, ESL 138 students need to exit the course with not only writing skills but also the awareness that there is intrinsic value in learning to write independently: correct language use (without assistance), development and communication of good ideas, and a	2023

		critical eye on their work.	
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5. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

6.
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### III. Attached Files

[138 Wi23 Data and Rubric](#)

**Faculty/Preparer:** Heather Zettelmaier **Date:** 08/25/2023  
**Department Chair:** Carrie Krantz **Date:** 09/06/2023  
**Dean:** Victor Vega **Date:** 09/11/2023  
**Assessment Committee Chair:** Jessica Hale **Date:** 02/14/2024

Course Assessment Report  
Washtenaw Community College

Discipline	Course Number	Title
English as Second Language	138	ESL 138 06/05/2019-Intermediate ESL Writing
Division	Department	Faculty Preparer
Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences	English & College Readiness	Heather Zettelmaier
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

**I. Review previous assessment reports submitted for this course and provide the following information.**

1. Was this course previously assessed and if so, when?

Yes

This course was assessed in Winter 2014 under its previous number, ENG 037 and 038

2. Briefly describe the results of previous assessment report(s).

63% of the students met the standard of success at that time. The standard of success was not met. There was a proposed change to the rubric to include subject/verb and plural agreement. Language was the reason most students didn't meet the standard of success.

Previous assessments were conducted using an old rubric with 10 items. The disconnect between the criteria and objectives instructors were using and this old rubric was noted in previous reports. Since the 2014 assessment, a new, standard, faculty-developed rubric has been used to score final student essays. This rubric is more thorough and accurate than the old one, so it was used for the current assessment cycle.

The new rubric has been in use by all ESL faculty for the last several years.

3. Briefly describe the Action Plan/Intended Changes from the previous report(s), when and how changes were implemented.

The ESL faculty agreed to add subject/verb and plural agreement to the rubric. Also, the ESL 138 final in-class paragraph rubric was used for this assessment cycle.

## II. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome

Outcome 1: Write a one paragraph composition which follows English organizational structure and is intelligible to an unsympathetic native speaker (i.e. a composition instructor who does not have an ESL teaching background).

- Assessment Plan
  - Assessment Tool: final in-class writing exam
  - Assessment Date: Winter 2017
  - Course section(s)/other population: all
  - Number students to be assessed: all
  - How the assessment will be scored: departmentally-developed rubric
  - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 70% of students will achieve 7 out of 10 items on the rubric.
  - Who will score and analyze the data: departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
	2019	

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
34	31

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

Of the 34 students registered, 3 students stopped attending before the final in-class writing. All other students were assessed.

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

Two sections of ESL 138 were offered in Winter 2019. Both sections were assessed.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

A 13-item rubric was used to score the 31 one-paragraph essays used as exit tests for all ESL 138 students. Items were in the areas of Organization, Development, and Language. Percent of total items fulfilled was calculated.

Rather than use the rubric from previous assessments, which was only used once every three years, the new standard faculty-developed rubric was used for this assessment.

The new rubric has more than 10 items, so a percent of the fulfilled items was calculated rather than listing a number out of 10. (See Action Plan, Intended Change.)

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

Twenty-five out of thirty-one (81%) of students satisfactorily fulfilled 70% of the items on the rubric. The standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

The average score based on the rubric was 80.2%, also well above a minimum passing score.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

Student writing was strong in the areas of organization and development. In particular, paragraphs were an appropriate length, 8-12 sentences. Overall, they contained a well-formulated, succinct topic sentence. The majority also contained correctly formed transitions and a single conclusion sentence. Since the previous assessments, there has been improvement in verb usage and sentence boundaries.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

Areas of weakness continue to be subject/verb and plural agreement. Handling nouns (article use and agreement) should continue to be an emphasis in ESL 138. The current rubric is working well to standardize the course from instructor to

instructor and semester to semester. It's a useful tool to set goals and give detailed feedback to students.

This group of students also showed a significant amount of critical thinking and detailed development of ideas. This indicates that the instructors are encouraging pre-writing and planning. This practice should also be continued, for at this level, students should have the competence to express some higher-level thinking.

### III. Course Summary and Intended Changes Based on Assessment Results

1. Based on the previous report's Intended Change(s) identified in Section I above, please discuss how effective the changes were in improving student learning.

The intended change to add agreement to the rubric was a worthwhile one and shows the course's intention to address this major area of language. However, students continued to struggle in this area.

2. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

Based on this assessment report, students are indeed benefiting from this course's curriculum and growing as academic writers. The building block of essay writing and argument, an organized, well-developed paragraph, is an essential piece of every student writer's repertoire. Since the entire focus of this course is paragraph writing, students leave ESL 138 with a solid foundation on which to build future academic writing.

It was surprising that some students who failed the final in-class writing for the course actually got over 70% of the rubric items in this assessment. In addition, some students who passed the final in-class writing for the course did not fulfill 70% of the rubric items for this assessment. This phenomenon is logical, however. When the final in-class essay is blind-graded during the semester, if one area (organization, development, or language) is Unsatisfactory, the whole essay is deemed Unsatisfactory. However, for this assessment, each item on the rubric is treated equally, and results are calculated from the total number of items from the rubric. In other words, blind-grading during the semester is done more holistically and less mathematically. This difference seems appropriate, and the methods in place for each use of the rubric should continue.

3. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

This information will be shared with Departmental Faculty during Fall 2019 in-service.

4.

Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Outcome Language	The current outcome language is, "70% of students will achieve 7 out of 10 items on the rubric." The language should be changed to "70% of students will achieve 70% of the items on the rubric."	The new rubric, which will bring continuity to the course and the three-year assessments, has more than 10 items. Thus, this language is more accurate for the Assessment Tool.	2022
Course Materials (e.g. textbooks, handouts, on-line ancillaries)	Handouts based on student errors; grammar exercises focusing on nouns, subject/verb, and plural agreement.	This area continues to be problematic for 138 students. Although the concepts are simple, students struggle to attend to them in their own written work.	2022

5. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

6.
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### III. Attached Files

[Assessment Data and Rubric](#)  
[Old Assessment Rubric](#)

<b>Faculty/Preparer:</b>	Heather Zettelmaier	<b>Date:</b> 08/15/2019
<b>Department Chair:</b>	Carrie Krantz	<b>Date:</b> 08/18/2019
<b>Dean:</b>	Scott Britten	<b>Date:</b> 09/24/2019
<b>Assessment Committee Chair:</b>	Shawn Deron	<b>Date:</b> 11/15/2019