

SECOND- LANGUAGE WRITING ASSESSMENT REPORT 2019



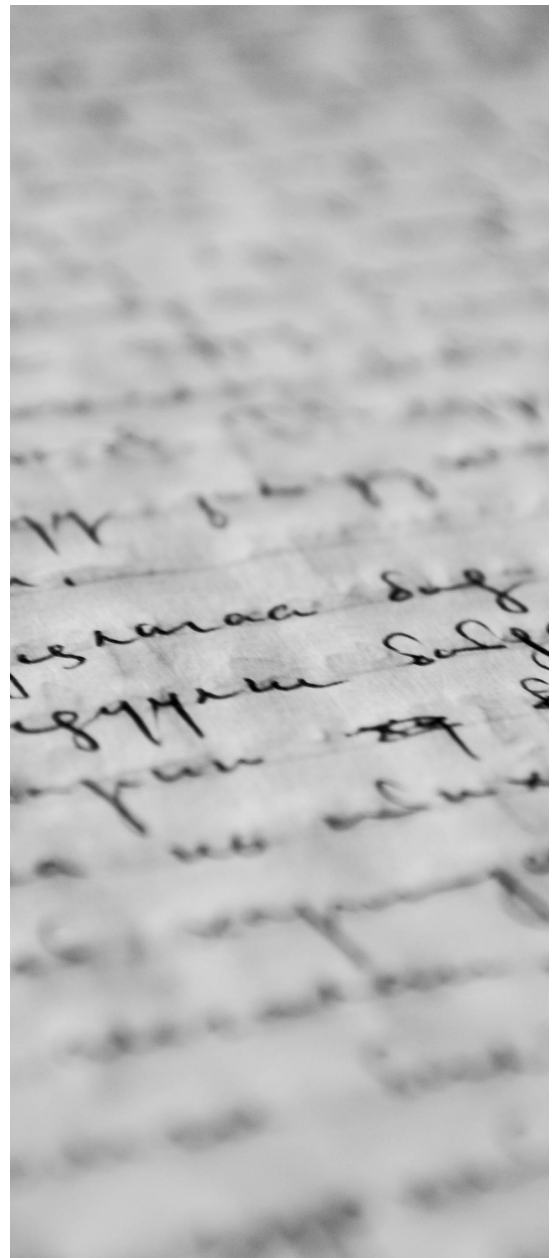
**FIRST-YEAR
WRITING**



CONTEXT & METHODS

Context

In 2007: the University of Connecticut enrolled just 39 undergraduate students that the “Common Data Set” labels as “nonresident aliens” at the Storrs campus. By Fall, 2018: the number of new, first-year students identified as “international” (holding a study visa) is now 514 at Storrs. The difference of 475 students represents a 1218% increase in just a dozen years. In 2012: the First-Year Writing (FYW) program at the Storrs campus initiated a “working group” to study how well international students fared in their writing courses with the goal of advocating on behalf of multilingual, international students whose first language was not English. The Working Group included Lisa Blansett (then Associate Director of



of FYW), Nathan Fuerst (then Director of Undergraduate Admissions), Davita Glasberg (then Associate Dean of CLAS), Fany Hannon (Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center), Wayne Locust (Director of Enrollment Management), Mansour Ndiaye (then in CLAS Advising), Angela Rola (then Director of the Asian American Cultural Center), and Dan Weiner (Vice-Provost, Global Affairs). Together, the group began work enabling the assessment and review you now read. Through this assessment they were able to effect change for multilingual international students by providing material support for student instruction and better coordination of support for international students across campus.

Before 2012: students self-selected into ENGL 1003, then called “English for Foreign Students,” a title that many found misleading, believing it was a language course. With a cohort of 182 international students matriculating that fall, the University recognized the need to offer a much higher number of course sections and to hire appropriately trained instructors specializing in second-language writing. The FYW program also began to educate the University community based on decades of research on “second language writing” in the field of Writing Studies, and aimed to guide conversations away from “language deficit” and toward a better understanding of what multilingual writers contribute to writing in English.

In 2017: administrators in First-Year Writing (FYW) at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, proposed a two-part review of the program itself and the work students produce in ENGL 1003 and ENGL 1004, the first classes most international, multilingual students take in their first year at UConn. The mandate for the review was a response to the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ (CWPA) Consultant-Evaluator report completed for the UConn FYW Writing Programs in September 2017. CWPA Consultant-Evaluators Chris Anson (North Carolina State U) and Eileen Schell (Syracuse U) reviewed the FYW program and during their 2.5 day visit, they spoke to students enrolled in ENGL 1003 and 1004, as well as instructors and administrators of those courses.

The Consultant-Evaluators recommended a full assessment of the 1003 and 1004 courses, along with a review of the FYW program structure as it pertained to these particular courses and second-language writing (SLW) overall at UConn. The First-Year Writing Program had previously assessed student learning outcomes in ENGL 1003 specifically as part of several proposals to expand the program and enhance its support in 2012, 2013, and 2014. In addition to the reports on SLW instruction during those 3 years, the FYW program targeted an assessment of ENGL 1004 in 2014 to investigate the split objectives that had emerged as the course tried to meet the needs of domestic speakers of English who scored below 470 on the (old) SAT, and the somewhat different needs of those who were composing advanced academic work in English for the first time. That 2014 assessment of ENGL 1004 became the catalyst for an independent 1004 Resource Workbook (see appendices) developed to guide the instruction of the ENGL 1004 course. Overall and in summary, the First-Year Writing Program has frequently: (1) reviewed overall program goals to compare with best practices in the field of second-language writing; and (2) assessed student artifacts to determine their efficacy. Together, these multiple reports suggest considerable strengths in student outcomes while they also reveal gaps in support at UConn that other peer and aspirant institutions are able to provide. These reports and reviews have positively enabled making three APiR (Assistant Professor in Residence) hires with research and teaching expertise in second-language instruction, rhetoric and composition, and the field of second-language studies

Assessment & Review Goals

In the context of the previous assessments (see above), the 2017-19 study goals were to:

- Determine the ENGL 1003–1004 program’s strengths; then identify areas we can strengthen and evaluate current practices.
- Reveal program needs; then develop strategies to address those needs.

The FYW program administrators proposed the assessment as a means to:

- Deploy best practices in support of multilingual writers' work at UConn, especially given current and evolving budget constraints.
- Offer the rest of UConn—particularly CLAS, Global Affairs, and GEOC—a better understanding of what the ENGL 1003–1004 program is meant to achieve and how it is currently achieving its goals and student outcomes.
- Improve accessibility and equitability for all students enrolled in our second-language writing courses.

This assessment received generous support from the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC), the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), and the Department of English. A slide deck presented to the General Education Oversight Committee serves as our Executive Summary of Findings.

Brief Overview: Report Contents

The assessment of student learning objectives in ENGL 1003-1004 rated student's written materials with rubrics that were constructed to highlight the course's stated learning objectives; the assessment rubrics were also developed from field-specific research on assessments of multilingual writers. The areas of assessment included:

- Contextual understanding
- Intellectual project
- Use of texts
- Linguistic & structural features

Section 1 Brief Overview: Program Evaluation

In the first part of our two-part review, we carried out a program-level evaluation on just that part of the writing program that addresses the needs of multilingual writers.

Overall, we sought a better understanding and articulation of the Second-Language Writing (ENGL 1003-1004) program's processes, resources, and goals, in the context of the First-Year Writing program as a whole. With the primary goal of improving student instruction, learning, and writing in these courses, this programmatic review included analysis of the following elements at UConn (Storrs):

- Placement processes for students in the ENGL 1003–1004 program
- Identification of students who are allowed to take ENGL 1003
- Student writing in ENGL 1003 and 1004: particularly the alignment between programmatic learning objectives and student outcomes
- Course curricula
- Program instructional support and development: instructor resource book, teaching workshops, website information, sample syllabi, and other course materials
- Administrative processes and structures

In the program review, the reviewers sought to answer these questions:

- How are the courses for multilingual writers understood by other units/programs and departments? What are the expectations; how are those expectations shaped?
- What is the stated purpose of each of the courses designed with second-language writers in mind?
- How are instructors identified, developed, and supported?
- How are students enrolled into these courses (criteria, methods, practices)?
- How are curricula for these courses determined? Who makes these choices?
- What is the relationship of 1003 to 1004 and both of those courses to the required FYW courses (1010/1011)?

This work developed into two distinct projects, a programmatic review and a more focused review of student writing in the

ENGL 1003 and 1004. A report of our findings in regards to student writing can be found in Section 2: Assessment of Student Learning Objectives.

Section 2 Brief Overview: Assessment of Student Learning Objectives

In the assessment of student learning objectives, we focused on how students met the learning objectives for the courses, how they demonstrated their learning, and how their work evolved over the course or courses. We did not assume “linear progress”; rather, we hoped to see evidence that emergent complexity was visible as students became more familiar with and practiced as they adopted and adapted American academic English strategies and skills. The assessment did not assess individual instructors or students. Instead, we looked for trends in outcomes and relationships among artifacts that solicited student work and the projects students developed in response.

In the student-learning objective review, the reviewers sought to answer these questions:

- How well do course assessments enable students to meet the course learning objectives?
- What type of projects are students able to develop in their 1003 and 1004 courses?
- How are multilingual students strengths and weaknesses demonstrated through the artifacts they create during the course?
- How does student writing (or other forms of communication) change during the course (either 1003 or 1004)?

Section 1: Program Evaluation

The work of the Program Evaluation Group (PEG) resulted in several qualitative observations and recommendations that should be considered for the continued improvement of second language writing instruction within UConn's First Year Writing (FYW) program. They are as follows:

- Develop a clearer and more consistent articulation of the purpose of ENGL 1004, but especially 1003, will help contribute to a productive and inclusive learning experience for Second Language Writing students.
- Provide direction regarding shared instructional expectations for ENGL 1003 and 1004 in order to increase instructional consistency and set up more productive dialogues between teachers of ENGL 1003, 1004, 1010, and 1011.
- Create a set of baseline syllabi collaboratively for ENGL 1003 and 1004 to connect the courses to one another and to ENGL 1010/1011 (but especially to the "Active & Accessible" ethos and the new Writing Across Technologies [WAT] curriculum).
- Establish programmatic concretes for all courses, not just 1010 and 1011.
- Shift pedagogical workshops about second language writing instruction to multiple formats and platforms to make more widely available to instructors.
- Revise the FYW website to make messaging more coherent, to improve digital visibility for both students and instructors (and the campus generally).
- Incorporate more technologies (broadly construed) in the curriculum, instruction, and student composition of ENGL 1003 and 1004 to improve access.

PEG's qualitative evaluation found the state of second language writing instruction and administration at UConn to be very strong. The program has a clear and genuine focus on making college composition accessible, comfortable, and beneficial for multilingual writers whose home language is not American English, or who want to expand their repertoire of academic Englishes. Many of PEG's conclusions are interrelated because they are symptomatic of an opportunity to build on the program's mission and core values by improving transparency, communications, focus, and access. A second guiding theme throughout PEG's evaluation is the opportunity to establish more concrete expectations regarding several aspects of second language writing instruction. Specifically, this second section of the report addresses the purpose of and distinctions between the first courses offered (ENGL 1003 and 1004) to multilingual students. The report also examines the need for increasing programmatic guidance and support for individual instruction and a more holistic, evidence-based approach to working with multilingual writers. Data collected from a survey of instructors and others across the program and in the university community reveal a series of related ambiguities with the stated purpose of each course (ENGL 1003 and 1004), their relationship to each other, and their relationship to other FYW courses (ENGL 1010 and 1011). All interviewed parties agreed that ENGL 1003 and 1004 serve an important function that contributes positively to students' educations, but many respondents conflated the the two courses in the way they imagine those courses and articulate their pruposes. The first qualitative "takeaway" from the survey results points toward the need for a clearer articulation the differences and connections between 1003 and 1004. PEG found that the latter course (1004) is more clearly explained on programmatic materials, more explicitly defined in its learning objectives and its relationship to the program a whole. ENGL 1004

has a longer history than ENGL 1003 in UConn-FYW, and it shows clear evidence of its long development borne out of research in the field of rhetoric and composition as well as through classroom practice. An assessment of summer ENGL 1004 courses in 2014 became the catalyst for creating a Resource Book for ENGL 1004 that is intended to introduce instructors to the course, including an evidence-based rationale for the course's curriculum and pedagogy, as well as guidance on developing a course, examples of the structure instructors might use to craft their own assignment sequences. The results of the survey reflected confusion about ENGL 1003 in particular because while respondents from across the university were able to articulate the purpose of ENGL 1004 and its relationship to ENGL 1010 and 1011, those who responded about ENGL 1003 provided largely ambiguous or inconsistent responses, particularly in what 1003 is meant to do and how the course maps onto the program as a whole. This confusion seems to be rooted in a lack of understanding, projections about what a course named "Writing for Non-Native Speakers" might do, and a need for more visibility for the course and/or for "writing in American academic English" when multilingual students fill the classroom. Justifications for ENGL 1003's existence provided by survey respondents were varied and dependent upon the points of view and pedagogies of each individual. For many, especially instructors of ENGL 1010 and 1011, the understanding of ENGL 1003 reflects a fundamental envisioning of the course catalog as a numerical sequence rather than in terms of the course's curricular and pedagogical relationships between courses, and attendant assumption that multilingual students weren't "ready" for ENGL 1010 or 1011 if they had not first had ENGL 1003. A clearer articulation of each course's goals and the course's relationships to one another and to the program is much needed. Overcoming discrepancies in the assumed purpose of ENGL 1003 that was demonstrated by instructors of ENGL 1010 and 1011--as well as

by campus administrators outside of FYW--will give the FYW program an opportunity to encourage community reflection on relationships among courses and to ensure a coherent program and messaging for the sake of providing students with the most beneficial instruction and experience possible. Providing a clearer articulation of the purposes of each and both ENGL 1003 and 1004 may prevent unreasonable expectations from being placed on students by instructors of ENGL 1010 and 1011. For example, instructors of ENGL 1010 and 1011 who don't have a clear understanding of the other courses (ENGL 1003 and 1004) may expect students to have mastered certain skills after taking ENGL 1003 and 1004. Instructors responses reflected this possibility: "1003/1004 provide basic instruction in writing and rhetoric, while 1010/1011 are more for students who have mastered the basics to become more advanced in their writing and analysis of text" ("Perspectives" 23). That some assume there is a need for mastery from multilingual students (but not an attendant assumption of mastery for domestic students) suggests the program needs to better convey how language-learning develops and how students' home rhetorical knowledge (prior knowledge) can be of some use in making a transfer to working in American academic English. Most importantly, instructors can learn that all students in FYW courses, regardless of their home language, will be learning to work with more nuanced rhetorical forms and more complex ideas--and to communicate in more varied genres and forms than they have in high school. Thinking of the course sequence as a linear and hierarchical progression where students master specific skills at each stage can become problematic because instructors of ENGL 1010 and 1011 may not dedicate proper attention and sensitivity to the learning and access needs of international students and other SLWs in their classes. They may also not acknowledge--implicitly or explicitly--that students from other

composition traditions are assets to our classrooms. If it is assumed that SLWs who have taken ENGL 1003 and/or 1004 in the past have already acquired the set of masteries needed to succeed in ENGL 1010 or 1011, an instructor of the latter two courses runs the risk overgeneralizing the experience and needs of students in the class. It is crucial for instructors to learn more about composing and writing in a new language, and to see the possibilities for what multilingual students bring to classrooms when the instructor includes them in the work of the class and helps all students develop transferable ways of thinking and doing. This report argues that a clearer and more consistent articulation of the purpose ENGL 1003, in particular, but both ENGL 1003 and 1004 overall, will help contribute to a productive and inclusive learning experience for Second Language Writing students, as well as to a programmatic environment where instructors have a clear sense of each part of the program and feel supported and confident in the execution of their position within it. In addition to more accessible website advertisement of each course, there are a few steps that can be taken to clarify the expectations for each course and work to increase the consistency of instruction across the First Year Writing program. Increasing instructional consistency and drawing more institutional concretes will solidify the inclusive and multicultural mission of a model program for FYW instruction of second language writers as international and multinational student populations continue to ENGL 1003 and 1004 present valuable learning experiences for second language writers prior to their taking of ENGL 1010, 1011, and the myriad of other college courses in which they will be asked to compose in English. Having these courses is fundamental to the FYW program's philosophy as well as the university's wider mission to be an inclusive institution where international students can feel welcome, thrive, and contribute positively to a diverse intellectual community. Because of the inevitable variation and

wide range of individual instructor approaches to these courses, however, steps should be taken to provide direction regarding certain shared instructional expectations for ENGL 1003 and 1004 in order to increase instructional consistency and set up more productive dialogues between teachers of these courses and teachers of ENGL 1010 and 1011. The first such step that should be taken is the publishing and circulation of a set of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for both ENGL 1003 and 1004. Program administration has a clear sense of what specifically these courses should accomplish, and getting those expectations into a shared standardized set of SLOs is an important step in solidifying the consistency of instruction across the many sections of ENGL 1003 and 1004 taught by a wide range of instructors. Another potential step towards increasing the equitability of second language writing instruction is the creation of a set of baseline syllabi for ENGL 1003 and 1004. On the FYW website, the program presents itself as sensitive to the needs of Second Language Writers when it comes to “relative (un)familiarity with American culture compared to the rest of the class,” “lack of shared memories with their American peers,” “perceived and actual difficulty reading course materials,” “lexicon,” “a tendency to be clustered,” and “less familiarity with academic terms.” Whether potential baseline syllabi are made a requirement or are simply recommended, the presence of a set of baseline syllabi that accomplish the program’s goals of inclusion and effective support for international students would demonstrate to the instructors of these classes what the program expects to be accomplished and in what way. Building on the correlation discussed in the following report (Assessment of Student Learning Objectives) between assignment prompts and student success, potential baseline syllabi for ENGL 1003 and 1004 could be composed around inquiries that are appropriately accessible for second language

writers. Texts and assignment prompts could not only be tailored in a culturally sensitive way, but in a way that fosters student-driven composition that can be accomplished without the additional barriers of texts and assignment prompts that depend on exclusive American cultural knowledge and experience. Instructors (of 1003/1004, but also of 1010/1011) who responded to our survey expressed a desire for more support in creating assignment prompts for multilingual writers. Whether or not instructors are required to use them, the baseline syllabi would serve as a strong example of assignment sequences and course inquiries that are appropriately and equitably accessible. A particularly important step towards maximizing the tremendous potential of second language writing instruction at UConn involves the establishment of a handful of programmatic concretes. By imposing strategic concretes on instructors of ENGL 1003 and 1004, FYW administration will be able to facilitate equitable learning opportunities for multilingual writers who enter these courses with such a wide range of experiences, literacies, and sets of cultural knowledge. The most important such programmatic concretes that this report recommends regards the instructor's handling of grammar in the writing of multilingual students. In her contribution to the debate around grammar grading and grammar correction in L2 composition, Dana Ferris argues that "grammar grading can discourage grammar learning by encouraging avoidance strategies--students may avoid using structures that they are not already comfortable with in order not to be graded down for errors, effectively reducing opportunities for learning" (155). While some individual instructors may currently choose to grade heavily on grammar in their sections of ENGL 1003 and 1004, it would be in the interest of the program's stated goal of equitable learning opportunities if a specific policy was put in place by program administration. As Ferris points out, "[e]ven if grammar is not graded, grammar learning can be facilitated in other ways," including the combination of "grammar feedback for second-

language writers along with metalinguistic commentary” that she calls for (155). Instructors can comment on grammar, provide feedback individually, and decide to what extent they address grammar in the classroom without actually punishing students for making grammatical mistakes. The report also encourages administrators to implement additional concretes that will help guide instructors of ENGL 1003 and 1004 as they seek to fulfill the program’s mission. Possible additional concretes may include policies on: cold-calling, technology use in the classroom, grading practices, and plagiarism consequences. Establishing concrete policies should go hand-in-hand with constant professional development opportunities in order to put instructors in the best position to succeed for their students. Survey respondents indicated a desire for professional development workshops and other support specifically addressing the instruction of second language writers. The FYW program has, in fact, offered such pedagogical workshops and made workshop materials available to instructors who are unable to attend. There are steps, however, that could be taken to increase accessibility to these workshops for the extensive network of instructors spread out across several campuses and even more high schools across Connecticut. This report recommends shifting pedagogical workshops about second language writing instruction to digital platforms. If advertised adequately to instructors across the program, having digital workshops that can become ongoing online conversations would make the conversations more accessible because overlapping schedules and distance from the Storrs campus will not prevent instructors from being able to attend. Further, digital workshops will present the opportunity for instructors of different courses and across the different educational spaces of the wider UConn community to have an ongoing dialogue about multilingual writing instruction which would be beneficial for the professional

development of the instructors themselves, but especially for the second language writers in their courses. These digital workshops themselves would become a resourceful archive for the program and will allow instructors to share strategies, lessons, and more.

International students and other multilingual writers are a brightspot and strength of the UConn student body, as is second language writing instruction of the FYW program.

This report recommends meaningful revisions to the FYW website to improve digital visibility and prioritization of second language writers and instruction in the program. Such revisions are important for the comfort and confidence of international students, whom scholars have noted are at risk of feeling alienated in English-only educational spaces and communities. Revising the website will also help clarify current ambiguity in the way people across the university conceive of the relationship between ENGL 1003 and 1004, as well as between those courses and ENGL 1010/1011. This report recommends further reflection and strategizing about the website revision process, but there are a few particular things that could be done to start. The “student voices” section (under the “for students” tab) is an excellent and appropriately-named platform that, upon expansion, would be a great way to increase visibility of international students and other second language learners within the FYW community. Featuring the experiences of these students, in their own voices, would give other and potential language learning students a sense of comfort about their ability to be heard by the community. This report recommends featuring the stories of students, in this section as well as across the website, in English as well as their first languages. By including untranslated Chinese, if not also Arabic and Spanish, in various informational and resourceful portions of the website, the program will demonstrate its recognition that L1s are learning resources and cannot be separated from English language acquisition. The

generation of L1 website materials may even be made into a project for students of ENGL 1003 and 1004 so that their voices can literally constitute the program's ability to support and benefit other multilingual students. In addition to expanding the "student voices" section and possibly featuring video explanations of various resource and information website pages in students' first languages, the FYW website could be expanded to improve general access to SLW-specific resources. A potential new page under the "for students" tab of the FYW home page could feature introductions and bios for the various faculty and staff members that international and multilingual writers should be aware of and know how to access. The same page could also include other student-identified relevant resources. For example, instructions written in Chinese for accessing campus resources like the Writing Center would help limit the number of barriers that ESL students face when seeking support. The instructor-facing view of the FYW website could better support the teaching of multilingual students with a few small revisions and additions. In the "Supplemental Materials" page (accessible through the "For Instructors" tab on the home page), there could be an additional page with resources specifically for the instruction (in any course) of multilingual writers. This page could include any programmatic concretes that the program may impose, as well as explanations for those concrete policies, examples of successful assignment prompts, examples of instructor feedback on L2 compositions, and potentially examples of student work that features both their L1 and L2 as part of the meaning making process. This report also recommends the curation of a formal bibliography of relevant scholarship on second language writing instruction, much of which already exists in various platforms and simply needs to be collected and published. This bibliography could be given its own page under the "For Instructors" tab and should be advertised to all instructors in the program as a place to look for suggested pedagogical reading.

This report strongly recommends adding some clear articulations of the purposes of ENGL 1003 and 1004, as well as the differences between those two courses and their relationship with ENGL 1010 and 1011, in an easily-accessible way from the home page so that people from around the university and beyond will be able to find them with a quick visit to the FYW website. When these course descriptions are revised for improved accessibility, it is suggested that the program consider distributing them to relevant campus offices, including academic advising, Global Affairs, GEOC, and CLAS. There could also be minor rhetorical moves in other sections of the website, including the “Overview” page under the “For Instructors” tab. While this report recognizes that ENGL 1010 and 1011 will always make up a majority of the courses offered by FYW, the rhetoric of this page and others emphasizes the importance of those courses and seems to minimize the presence and importance of 1004, 1003, and 1010S. Bringing multilingual writing instruction closer to the rhetorical forefront of the program’s various sites of meta commentary would help multilingual people in the community feel recognized and comfortable as well as remind students and teachers of 1010 and 1011 that English language learning takes place in their courses too. Finally, but certainly not of least importance, a major step toward providing equitable learning opportunities for ESL/SLW students can be accomplished by incorporating more technology into the curriculum, instruction, and student composition of ENGL 1003 and 1004. The FYW program is already making major moves with the Writing Across Technology Initiative (WAT) to encourage more multimodal composition, expand students’ meaning making capabilities, and foster digital literacies. The WAT initiative is particularly well-suited for helping the SLW instruction portion of the program reach its goals of best serving international students and other multilingual writers because of the ways it destabilizes the boundaries of classroom learning, harnesses more literacies, and improves opportunities to circulate and contribute to digital knowledge communities.

The WAT initiative can be deployed in ENGL 1003 and 1004 not only with student learning objectives revision, assignment prompt design, and potential baseline syllabi, but also by strongly encouraging, if not imposing, a policy that allows students to use technology in the classroom. International students within the program have said that accessing technology during class is important for them to feel comfortable and confident in learning environments dominated by English, their L2. It is important for individual instructors to remember that banning technology in the classroom prevents English language learners from looking up words or cultural references they don't understand that may be used casually by classmates or the instructor. Crafting assignment prompts that are not heavily dependent upon a specific set of cultural experiences and shared memories is an important step in making learning equitable for all students, but allowing instructors to ban technology in the classroom prevents that equity from being maintained in the actual events in the classroom. Rather than viewing technology as a distraction and roadblock to learning, instructors should be encouraged to work with their students to develop heuristics for responsible technology use in the classroom and to harness the affordances of all available devices to maximize learning opportunities.

The program does in fact generally encourage such an approach to technology, but because it is of particular importance to English language learners, it is worthwhile to consider the implementation of a specific policy for instructors of ENGL 1003 and 1004. Implementing the WAT initiative in the curriculum design, support structures, and programmatic policies for ENGL 1003 and 1004 will help students access

classroom activities and discussions, feel comfortable in an L2 environment, and be able to participate in class (either by contributing to collaborative documents or looking things up and gathering their thoughts before speaking aloud). Significant research published examining the possibilities and limitations of incorporating multiple modes of meaning making into our First-Year Writing Classrooms. While all of these things make the presence of technology in the classroom a necessity for standard-level access, there is more at stake because it is impossible to ignore the unique affordances and learning opportunities presented by the WAT initiative for second language writers. Stephanie West-Puckett asks WPAs and writing instructors to consider how writing across technology allows us to “reimagine learning in a participatory culture,” access the “hidden curriculum” of students’ digital lives, and embrace the “participatory literacies” that students have been developing for years before entering our classrooms (West-Puckett 129). One of the most excellent aspects of the WAT initiative is the recognition of the importance of (multimodal) composition in a digitally-mediated participatory culture and the corresponding importance of helping students develop digital literacies, critical reading skills, and rhetorical awareness of their circulation opportunities. Taking steps to ensure that students of ENGL 1003 and 1004 are composing with technology not only in the classroom, but within the “hidden curriculum” of the digital culture in which they already participate, FYW can ensure that their program missions are realized for the benefit of all students.

Section 2: Assessment of Student Learning Objectives

METHODS

The work of the Student Learning Objective Group (SLOG) resulted in several recommendations regarding the development of instructional materials and the evaluation of student work in composition courses populated primarily by second language writers. These recommendations are supported by both quantitative observations and scholarship in the field. Instructor concerns about the possible use of data from the assessment were addressed through email and two “Open Forum for the 1003-1004 Assessment” sessions held on March 6 and March 20, 2018. The primary concerns about instructor anonymity were addressed, and we detailed the measures we had taken that exceeded current standards in human subject research. Instructors were satisfied with--and gratified by--these extraordinary measures. Given the volume of student artifacts submitted, the SLOG team determined that the project could only support scoring the first and last available complete assignments in each 1003 and 1004 course for which we received materials. First, the four SLOG team members met in order to randomly select anchors. They read two 1003 student essays and their instructor prompts, scored them, and then discussed preliminary scores using the 1003 rubric, ultimately coming to a consensus. The SLOG team also read two 1004 student essays and their instructor prompts and discussed preliminary scores using the 1004 rubric. They came to a consensus on these essays as well. At a meeting on May 25th,

2018, the 4-person SLOG group divided into two teams, and the 2-person members of each team communicated with each other throughout the rating process to allow for consistent norming. Each team communicated with each other throughout the rating process and discussed any discrepancies in reference to the rubric. The discrepancies were generally confined to one or two points. The 4 team members (working in paired groups) assessed materials from selected sections of English 1003 and English 1004, reading first and last student essays and their instructor prompts from a total of 12 sections of English 1003-1004 at UConn. After reading the student samples and course materials, the four raters decided on four areas of focus:

- What percentage of students scored higher on their final essay than they did on their first essay?
- What is the relationship between the prompt score and student essay score? Is there a significant correlation between the two?
- Is there a significant difference between students who dropped and/or didn't turn in essays between 1003 and 1004 courses?
- Is there a significant difference (improvement?) in essay scores between 1003 and 1004 courses?

The tables and descriptions below attempt to address these 4 questions with some certainty and clarity as well as to give a sense of how we arrived at our conclusions.

NUMBERS OF STUDENTS REPORTING FROM 1003 AND 1004

During the period of assessment, ENGL1003 courses had between 11 and 15 students per section. ENGL 1004 courses had between 13 and 17 students during the assessment period.

Section	Sample #1	Sample #2	Anomalies
115	12	12	2 withdrawn; 1 no submissions
242	14	14	1 no submissions
263	10	11	1 more for sample #2
266	14	14	
387	15	14	1 no submission, sample #2
522	17	16	1 no submission, sample #2
574	17	16	1 no submission, sample #2
686	17	17	
731	12	11	1 no submission, sample #1; 2 no submissions, sample #2
799	15	14	1 no submission, sample #2
966	17	16	1 no submission, sample #2
995	17	17	

Submissions and anomalies per section. Blue cells = 1003, and yellow cells = 1004

The figure above shows the number of submissions per section and per sample, as well as the anomalies that affect the numbers reported. Note that the numbers in the sample columns do not include students who did not submit because they are represented in the anomalies column. Therefore, since the pattern of no submissions seems to span 1003 and 1004 courses sampled, the higher enrollment numbers represented for 1004 can be reliable.

CHANGE IN STUDENT SCORES FROM FIRST TO LAST SUBMITTED ASSIGNMENT

A total of 178 students submitted assignments in 1003 and 1004; 66 students submitted assignments in 1003 and 112 submitted work in 1004. The progress of 8 of the 178 students could not be accounted for as one of the two assignments was not available to be rated.

On average, in 1003 and 1004 student scores improved 50% of the time. In 1003, student scores improved 47% of the time while in 1004 student scores improved 52% of the time. While 1003 students were slightly less likely to improve their scores than 1004 students, improvement in student score was overwhelmingly the most common outcome in both courses. A decrease in student scores was the second most likely outcome, with 26% of students in 1003 and 29% in 1004 seeing a decrease from their first and last assignment score. Finally, a portion of students did not see a

Change in Scores from First to Last Assignment		
1003	Number	Percentage
Score Decreased	17	26%
Score Did Not Change	15	23%
Score Improved	31	47%
Other	3	0.05%
1004	Number	Percentage
Score Decreased	32	29%
Score Did Not Change	17	15%
Score Improved	58	52%
Other	5	0.05%
Combined	Number	Percentage
Score Decreased	49	28%
Score Did Not Change	32	18%
Score Improved	89	50%
Other	8	0.05%

change in their score from first to last assignment. This was a more likely outcome in 1003, as 23% of students' scores remained constant compared to just 15% in 1004.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT SCORE AND PROMPT SCORE

Relationship Between Prompt Average and Class Averages		
	Instructor Prompt Average	Class Average
1003		
First Assignment	3	10.5
Last Assignment	3.4	11.3
1004		
First Assignment	3.7	10.2
Last Assignment	4.1	11.9

On average, instructor prompts in 1003 scored slightly lower than instructor prompts in 1004. In both 1003 and 1004, instructor prompt scores improved between the first and last assignments rated. On average, student essay scores also improved in both 1003 and 1004 from the first to the last assignment. From this examination, it is unclear whether there is a direct relationship between the improvement in instructor prompt averages and student writing class averages in 1003 and 1004.

Prompt Score Distribution in 1003 and 1004			
Score	3	4	5
1003			
First Assignment	5	0	0
Last Assignment	3	2	0
Total	8	2	0
1004			
First Assignment	2	5	0
Last Assignment	2	2	3
Total	4	7	3

Relationship between Prompt Scores and Class Averages			
Prompt Score	3	4	5
1003	10.9	10.8	-
1004	11.8	13.3	13.3
Overall	11.2	12.7	13.3

There is a slight correlation overall between instructor prompt score and student writing class average. On average, the higher the score given to the instructor prompt for a given class, the higher the average student writing score for the class. Prompts that were clear in their instructions, defined the goals of the assignment, and provided students with detailed directions for their writing scored more highly than those that were less clear or less direct. The quality of prompts may have influenced the overall trend where more highly rated instructor prompts resulted in higher

average student writing scores. Yet when disaggregating into 1003 and 1004, the correlation weakens. There is some slight correlation between instructor prompt score and student writing class average in 1004, where classes with higher prompt scores had higher class averages. Yet in 1003, classes with a higher prompt score saw a lower class average, contradicting the overall trend and the trend in 1004.

Given the smaller number of 1003 courses in the sample studied compared to 1004, it is impossible to say whether or not the slight trend of stronger prompts producing better scores would have increased if 1003 and 1004 were equally represented in the sample, or if there had been more data points to consider. Overall, there are some slight indications that stronger prompts produced better scores.

CHANGE IN RESULTS BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND SAMPLES IN 1003 AND 1004

Section	Sample #1	Sample #2	Increase	Decrease
115	10.42	11.5	1.08	
242	10.43	13.71	3.28	
263	10.4	9.9		0.5
266	11.21	10.05		1.16
387	10.07	11.14	1.07	
522	10.24	11.38	1.14	
574	13	12.06		0.94
686	14.35	14.59	0.24	
731	12.67	12.9	0.23	
799	12.93	15.64	2.71	
966	14.18	14		0.18
995	10.18	11.88	1.7	

Average scores per section.

As seen above, student writing sample scores generally increased between writing samples #1 and #2, though English 1004 tended to increase more regularly. If we round the numbers to the nearest whole point, they show that two sections of 1003 improved by one point, as did one section of 1004. One section of 1004 improved by two points, and two sections of each 1003 and 1004 improved by three points. Again, rounding to the nearest point one section from 1003 and three sections from 1004 show no change at all.

CONCLUSION

The data obtained from this assessment is able to definitively answer some questions, while others remain only partially answered. Fifty percent of all students' scores improved between the first and last writing sample, but when broken down into 1003 and 1004, 47% of scores increased in 1003, and 52% of scores increased in 1004. There is a slight correlation between instructor prompt score and student essay score indicating that higher-rated instructor prompts result in higher student essay scores, but that correlation, much like the increase in student writing sample scores, does not apply when the data is disaggregated. There is not a significant difference in student participation between 1003 and 1004, though one section from 1003 saw two student withdrawals while no student withdrew from the 1004 sections sampled, and students who did not submit one of the two writing samples tended to submit their first and not their last one.

Across 1003 and 1004, student writing improved regularly, with slightly higher improvements in 1004, but those improvements--in aggregate--were at best three out of twenty points, with most improvements one out of twenty points. It is encouraging that no scores decreased by more than one out of twenty points, but our data also shows that four out of the twelve sections sampled showed no change at all. The data gathered was thoroughly coded to protect the anonymity of both students and instructors, so it was not possible to evaluate these courses individually or qualitatively. We do not know why students left their courses or did not submit writing samples, and we did not have any context when evaluating assignment prompts, so we are only able to make quantitative claims. For example, while our data shows a slight correlation between instructor prompt score and student writing sample score, other factors-- such as the topic and scope of question the prompt

posed, class conversations, conferences with instructors, and scaffolding of assignments-- are not included in our collected materials. We also did not examine whether the prompt indeed posed a question or whether it directed students to compose a particular piece of writing or re-articulate a prompt-defined argument. These additional factors may have contributed more to support students in their writing than the instructors' writing assignment prompts alone. Again, the anonymity of study participants is as important as the study itself, so these limitations are necessary for our study, but future assessment may take into account other anonymous materials (or materials that could be made anonymous) such as Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) scores and written responses. Additionally, a future assessment would focus less on improvement from the first to last assignment, and more on how students are meeting the learning objectives for 1003 and 1004. Furthermore, the assessment could not review multimodal projects because of privacy concerns instructors expressed, particularly with video productions. A primary concern of instructors before we began the assessment was their privacy, and we were not able to ensure that the assessment teams would be completely unable to identify students and link those students to particular instructors if their videos included their names in the credits. Thus the team could focus only on written documents. This gap in the assessment is significant, particularly given all the research and analysis done recently that demonstrates what multimodal compositions allow multilingual students to do. Cf. Fraiberg, Steve. "Composition 2.0: Toward a Multilingual and Multimodal Framework." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 100–26. Wang, Xiqiao. "Tracing Connections and Disconnects: Reading, Writing, and Digital Literacies across Contexts." *College Composition and Communication* Vol. 70, no. 4 (June 2019). pp. 560-589.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop coherent philosophies for the purpose and goals of second-language writing courses.
 - Develop a clear research-driven approach to working with multilingual students.
 - Build a culture in which multilingual writers are valued rather than cast as deficient.
 - Define program goals and proposed outcomes to be published on website.
 - Revise course descriptions of ENGL 1003 and 1004, articulate (and circulate) more clearly the purpose of ENGL 1003, articulate (and circulate) relationship between ENGL 1003/1004 and ENGL 1010/1011.
 - Further develop inclusive and accessible curriculum.
 - Expand WAT initiative to second-language writing instruction portions of FYW program, in line with current research demonstrating how productive such work is for multilingual students (see two recommendations in “Conclusion” of Student Learning Objective assessment report, above).
 - Revise and expand website to increase program visibility and to provide access for international students and other multilingual writers.
- Align pedagogies and practices both internally and in tune with current field research findings and practices. Clearly articulate these to instructors to improve consistency among instructors and courses.
 - Revise and circulate sets of clearly articulated Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for both ENGL 1003 and 1004.
 - Capitalize on multilingual writers’ prior knowledge of writing and rhetoric in their home language; springboard from that knowledge to American academic writing.

- Develop course materials that do not rely heavily on American cultural knowledge.
- Emphasize relationship between instructor direction and student outcome.
- Consider the creation of baseline syllabi for ENGL 1003 and 1004 that can serve as models of appropriate inquiry and assignment architectures.
- Generate policy regarding the instruction, feedback, and grading of grammar, especially in the context of the most recent research on multilingual students in writing courses, transfer, and comparative rhetoric. We are not advocating for one approach over another, but feel it is important to explore, pilot, research best practices in content and delivery, revise other approaches to fit our needs, and to create a coherent program within the First-Year Writing curriculum.
- Design administrative practices that are fair and equitable.
 - Conduct further research on placement, curriculum, and pedagogies attuned to multilingual writers.
 - Research alternate coursework models beyond a three-course series.
 - Implement policy on technology use in the classroom for sections of ENGL 1003 and 1004.
 - Consider creation of other programmatic concretes to improve consistency in individual instruction across the program.
 - Develop more composition courses that can be allied to courses in a variety of disciplines (writing intensive courses linked to “content” courses).
 - Reach out across the disciplines, particularly to W courses (well-coordinated program-level outreach).

- Provide more and varied opportunities for instructional development.
 - Find ways to incentive participation to counter low attendance evident at prior events.
 - Develop instructors' understanding and application of student learning objectives through graduate coursework (multiple workshops offered but many were reportedly under-attended despite efforts).
 - Offer advanced and graduate-level coursework in the field of second-language studies (train instructors).
 - Improve accessibility and breadth of pedagogical support workshops by shifting to digital platforms. Revise and expand

Raw data and statistical analysis--summarized in this report-- is available is available in "Perspectives 1003 and 1004 from FYW and the Campus Community," prepared by Sara Ailshire
URL: <http://s.uconn.edu/perspectives>

REPORT NOTES

The Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and the Program Evaluation were supported by the General Education Oversight Committee (GEOC) and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

This report has been prepared by the team of graduate instructors and adjunct faculty who were appointed through an application and review process; they were selected based on their experience with teaching, with assessment, and with data analysis. All had taught multilingual students in various classes in their home departments, but were not currently teaching ENGL 1003 or ENGL 1004. The graduate instructors' backgrounds range from sociology (with training in assessment protocols and data analysis), to linguistics, to Languages, Cultures, and Literatures as well as to rhetoric and composition and English literary studies. None had explicit training in the field of second-language writing as a subfield of writing studies; one had training in the broad field of rhetoric and composition; another has a Ph.D. in linguistics and has published on multilingual students in American colleges. The varied areas of expertise and experience have informed the research for and the production of this report.

The report has been reviewed by the Director and Co-Director of First-Year Writing, but the work of the instructors and faculty retained to do the assessment and review was not redirected or revised. The group's processes were ethical, fair, accurate, and consistent, in line with current assessment norms. As such this work served as significant development --learning--for those who participated.

This report is for instructional and development use only, and is not to be published in a public forum given the rules and restrictions for such in-house assessments that examine artifacts produced by students and instructors.