

A2 Written Communication Assessment Report

[Dashboard link](#)

[Dashboard link to Student Survey](#)

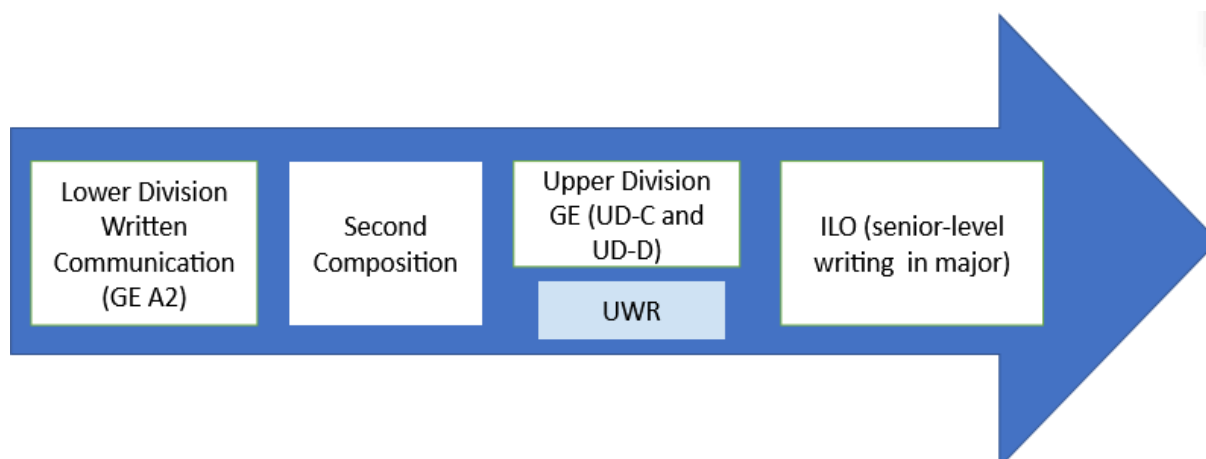
PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The overarching purpose of assessment in General Education (GE) is to enhance and improve undergraduate student learning experiences afforded by the GE program at Cal State East Bay. Looking beyond the CSU Chancellor's Office and WASC accreditation requirements which necessitate GE assessment ([EO 1100](#), Section 6.2.5), the true value of GE assessment extends from how we collaboratively make meaning of assessment results to inform improvements in GE.

GE learning outcomes are aligned to the [Institutional Learning Outcomes \(ILOs\)](#), [WASC Core Competencies](#), and [AAC&U's LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes](#), all of which express the knowledge, skills, and values CSUEB graduates are expected to attain. Collectively, CSUEB's GE learning outcomes and ILOs distinguish who we are, what we value, and how we expect students to demonstrate their learning. Thus, the assessment of GE outcomes enables our campus community to gauge how effective we are in helping our students attain these outcomes.

The General Education Long-term Assessment Plan for 2022-2027 [22-23 CAPR 39](#) (which supercedes [18-19 CAPR 2](#)) details a consistent, rigorous assessment process.

GE Area 1A [A2] Written Communication, also known as first-year composition, is part of the "Golden Four" essential skills (or core competencies) that form the foundation for GE and major programs. [Executive Order 1100](#) Section 6.2.5 (Revised May 2024) states that "Campuses shall develop an assessment plan that...organizes and analyzes the collection of evidence," among other requirements. The assessment allows for robust and meaningful assessment of GE at key "checkpoints" (also known as guidepost assessment) and is extremely valuable in informing improvements, which help move GE into a more coherent, intentional, and scaffolded program. Performing guidepost assessment of student writing allows us to gauge how well students develop autonomy and sophistication in their writing as they progress through their academic pathways. Such assessment checkpoints include first-year composition, second composition, upper-division GE, University Writing Requirement (UWR) and ILO assessment in senior-level major courses.



(Fig. 1). GE assessment of written communication is primarily focused on first-year composition (GE 1A [A2]), second composition (although not formally a part of the GE program), upper-division GE (GE 3 [UD-C] Arts and Humanities and GE 4 [UD-4] Social Sciences), and Institutional Learning Outcome assessment (which sometimes assesses both UWR and GE UD courses at the same time).

First-time freshmen at CSUEB are expected to attempt completion of GE Area A2 Written Communication during their first year ([EO 1110](#)) and are required to pass the A2 course with a minimum C-/CR by the end of their sophomore year ([EO 1100](#)). CSUEB courses currently certified for GE A1 [A2] include ENGL 101 College Writing: Stretch II, ENGL 102 Accelerated College Writing, and ENGL 104 College Writing: Stretch II (English for Speakers of Other Languages). While ENGL 103 is not a general education course, it was decided that this course would also be assessed as it is the ‘feeder’ course to ENGL 104. Which A1 [A2] course and whether or not co-requisite support is required/recommended are determined by a student’s A1 [A2] placement category which is based on the multiple measures system established by the Chancellor’s Office (EO 1110 FAQ).

THE PROCESS

Faculty Involvement

Like other GE areas, the Office of General Education invited a team of English faculty to revise the A1 [A2] learning outcomes and rubric (see Appendix below), develop a student survey, and finally, take part in the assessment itself. The Director of General Education and the Educational Effectiveness Council GE Representative also were involved. The revisions took place in Winter Session 2023. The [revised rubric can be found here](#).

The revised learning outcomes were sent to the General Education, Overlay, and Code subcommittee, the Curriculum and Instruction committee, the Executive Committee of the

Academic Senate, the Senate, and were then approved by the university President in Spring 2023.

In Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, faculty teaching ENGL 101 (4 sections), 102 (9 sections), 103 (3 sections), and 104 (2 sections) were asked to submit appropriate essay assignments (based on the rubric) to their Canvas course. Our Online Campus then downloaded the assignments into Google folders. The Director of General Education then randomly chose ten assignments from each section (by randomizing the student NetIDs), which gave us a total of 180 assignments. At the same time, students in these courses received a link to a student survey. The survey (new to general education assessment) asked students to evaluate their own learning experiences.

In late May, 2024, a team of four English faculty, the Director of GE, and the Educational Effectiveness Council GE Representative assessed the student assignments over two days. The process started with a norming practice. Then each assignment was assessed by two different faculty. It should be noted that this was an unfunded project and the faculty volunteered their time for this assessment. The results were sent to our Institutional Effectiveness and Research Office where the data was linked to student demographic information and a public dashboard was created. Student survey results were collected by Qualtrics and also linked to student demographic data. The following assessment results are divided by the course numbers (ENGL 101, 102, 103, and 104).

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

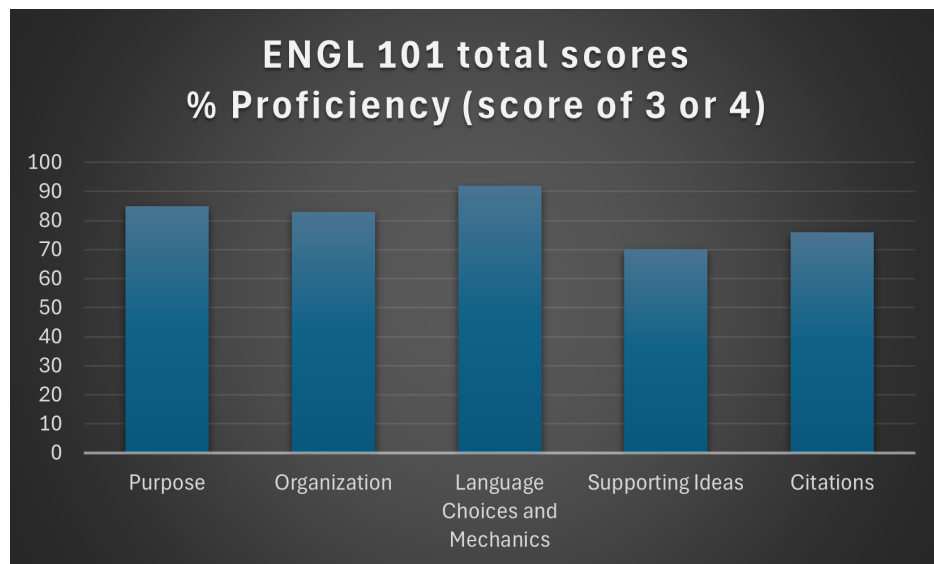
ENGL 101 Assessment Results

Interrater Reliability

Before looking at the results, it should be stated that the assessment team had great interrater reliability scores in all rubric categories. The interrater reliability shows that the six assessors gave student assignments the same scores or a difference of 1 (i.e., one assessor gave an assignment a score of 3 in one category with the second assessor gave the same assignment, in the same category, a 4) between 94% and 98% of the time:

- 94% 0 or 1 for Citations
- 95% 0 or 1 for Development of Supporting Ideas
- 97% 0 or 1 for Language Choices and Mechanics
- 96% 0 or 1 for Organization
- 98% 0 or 1 for Purpose

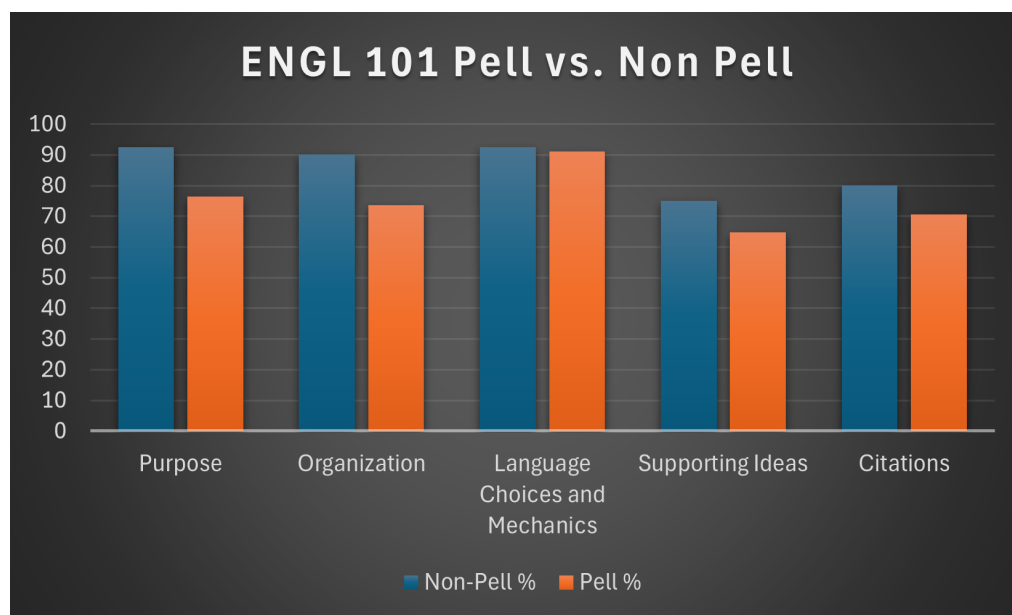
Overall Results of student performance in A2 course ENGL 101 (combined sections) revealed that proficiency (performance levels 3-4) was attained in every category except Supporting Ideas. We are looking for 75% to indicate proficiency.



The Dashboard allows us to drill down deeper into the data to look at student demographics.

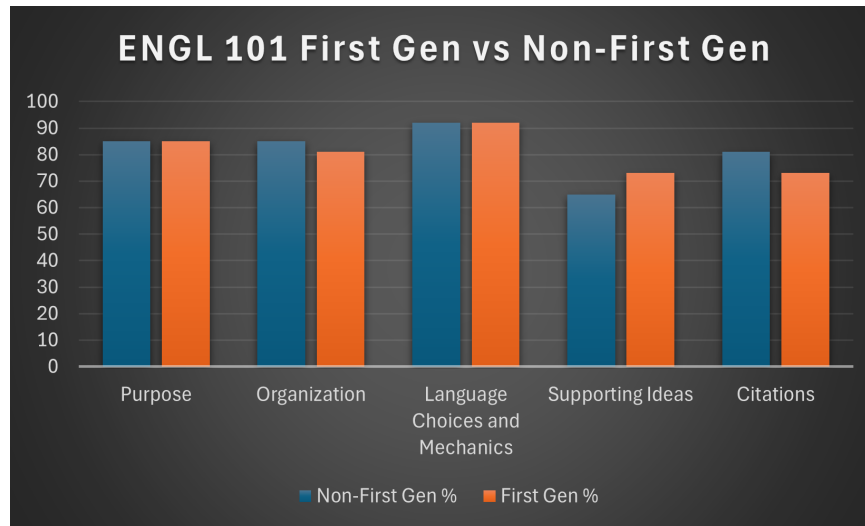
Pell vs. Non-Pell

If we compare Pell to non-Pell students, there are large differences between those who received a proficiency scores (75% and above) in ENGL 101 in all but Language Choices and Mechanics:



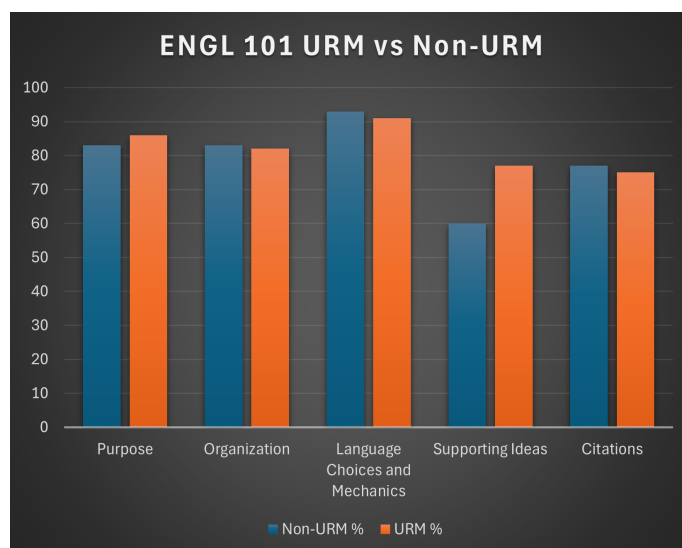
First Generation vs. non-First Generation

There were some differences between the First Generation and non-First Generation proficiency scores in Supporting Ideas, where First Gen students scored slightly higher and Citations, and First Gen students scored slightly lower.



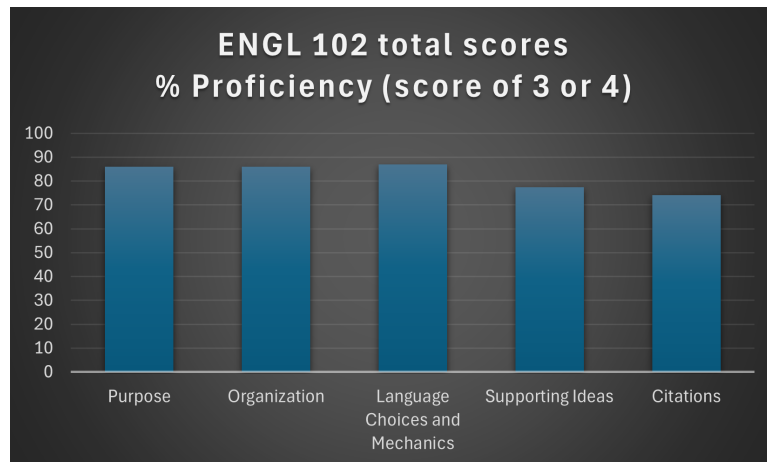
Under-represented Minority students vs non-Under-represented Minority students

If we compare Under-represented Minority students (URM), there are similar proficiency scores (75% and above) in ENGL 101 in all but Supporting Ideas. Note that URM students scored higher in Purpose and Supporting Ideas than non-URM students.



ENGL 102 Assessment Results

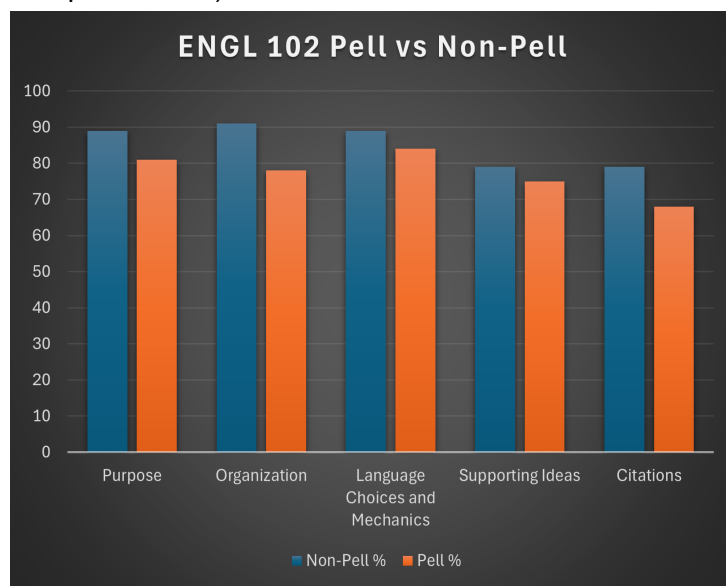
Overall Results of student performance in A2 course ENGL 102 (combined sections) revealed that proficiency (performance levels 3-4) was attained in all categories except Citations (which was on the border–74%):



The Dashboard allows us to drill down deeper into the data to look at student demographics.

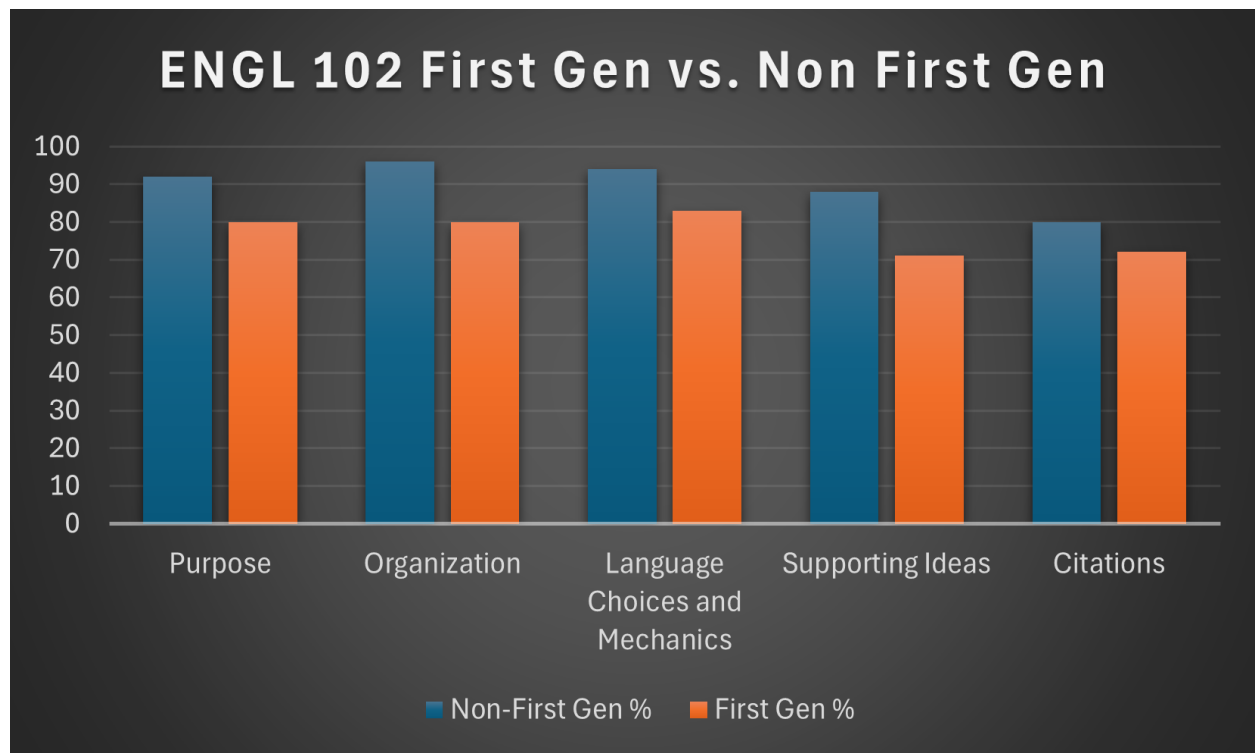
Pell vs. Non-Pell

If we compare Pell to non-Pell students, we can see that there are differences in proficiency scoring in all categories with Pell students receiving lower scores in all categories (but it should be noted that despite the lower scores, Pell students received proficiency in all categories except Citations).



First Generation vs. non-First Generation

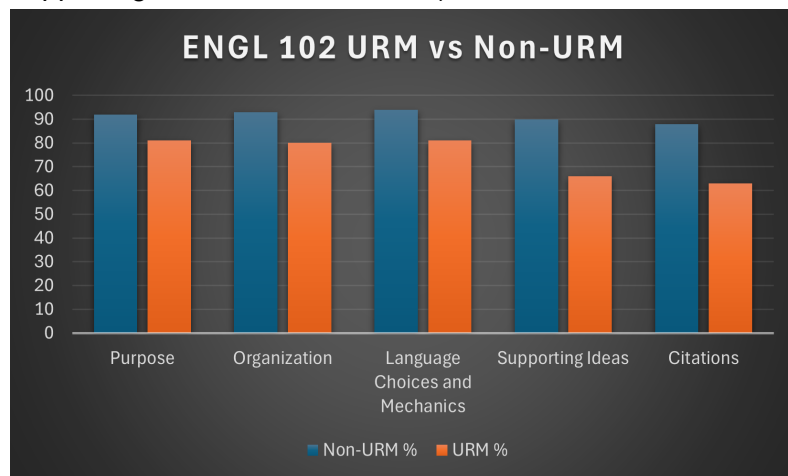
If we compare First Gen to non-First Gen students, we can see that First Gen students received lower scores in all categories. Non-First Gen students received scores of 3 or 4 (proficient) in all categories while First Generation students had proficiency scores in three out of the five categories (Purpose, Organization, and Language Choices/Mechanics).



Under-represented Minority students vs non-Under-represented Minority students

If we compare URM students to non-URM students, we can see that URM students received lower scores in all categories. The biggest differences between the two groups can be found in

Supporting Ideas and in Citations).

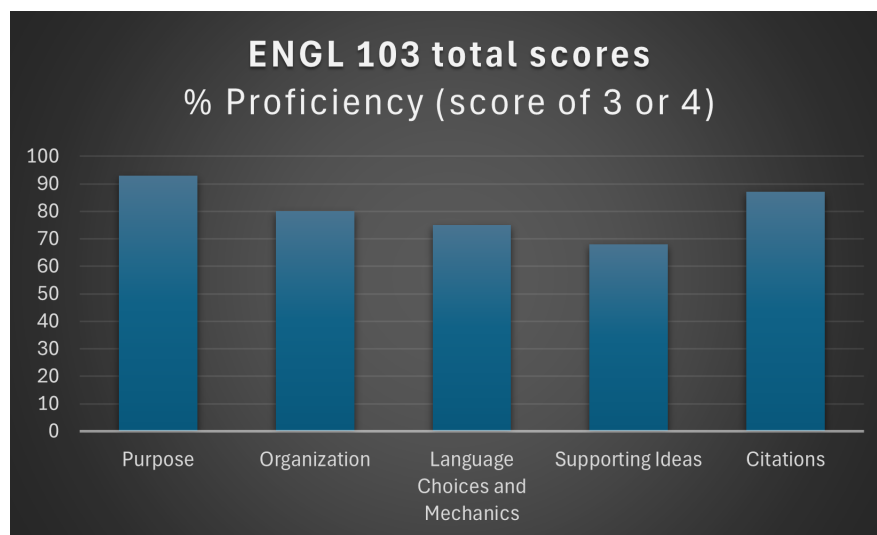


ENGL 103 Assessment Results

As mentioned ENGL 103 is not a GE course but it was assessed as it is a feeder course for ENGL 104. ENGL 103 assignments were collected in Fall 2023, while ENGL 104 assignments were collected in Spring 2024. It is presumed that many students who took ENGL 103 in the Fall were in ENGL 104 in Spring.

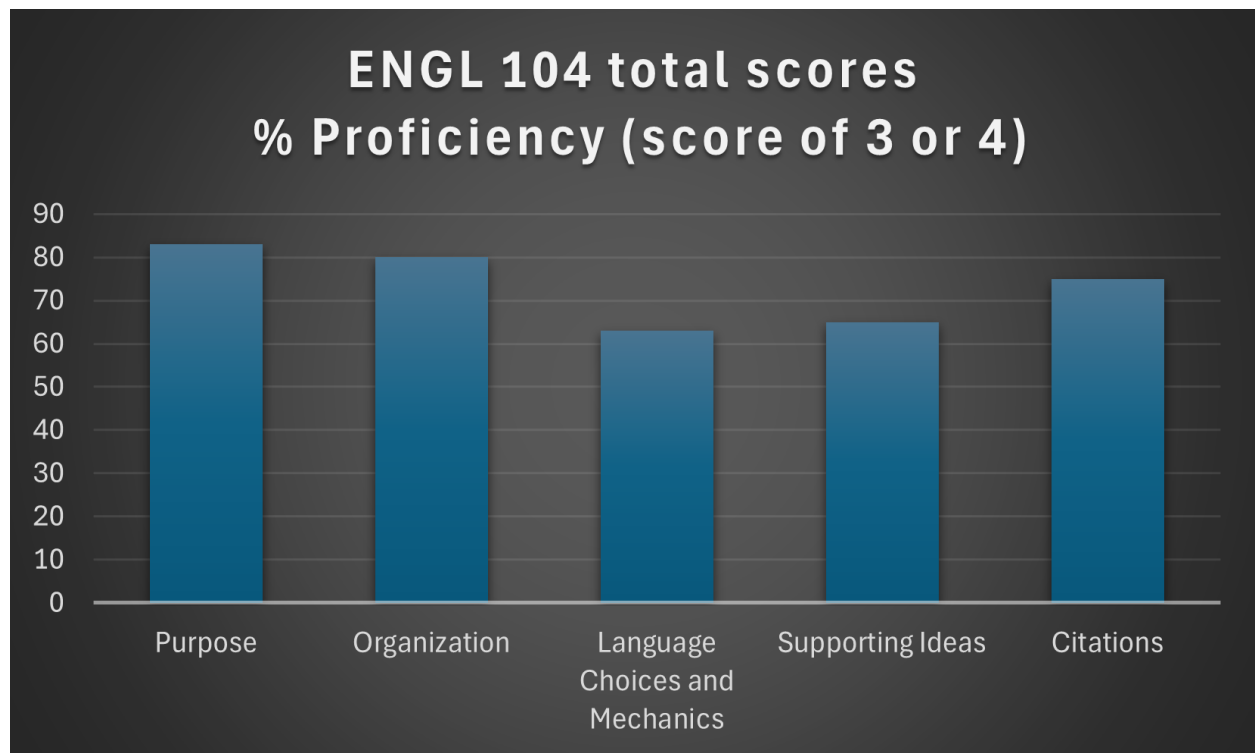
Overall results of student performance in ENGL 103 (combined sections)

Revealed that proficiency (performance levels 3-4) was attained in all categories except in Supporting Ideas:



ENGL 104 Assessment Results

Results of student performance in A2 course ENGL 104 (combined sections) revealed that proficiency (performance levels 3-4) was attained by students in three of the five categories—Purpose, Organization, and Citations (but not Language Choices/Mechanics and Supporting Ideas):



Student Survey Results

GE Assessment is now including the student voice and how they feel they achieved their learning outcomes. Surveys were sent to all students taking A2 courses where assignments were pulled and we requested that instructors send the link through Canvas or any other method that would encourage students to fill out the survey. They were asked to rate (on a Likert scale) the following statements:

Q1: I learned to write effectively in English in this course.

Q2: I learned about the role of effective communication in everyday life in this course.

Q3: I explained principles of effective writing in an author's text (form, content, context, and style) in this course.

Q4: I demonstrated principles of effective writing in my work (form, content, context, and style) in this course.

Q5: I advocated for a cause or idea in writing in this course.

Q6: I practiced discovery, critical evaluation, and reporting of information in this course.

[Here is the link](#) to the results dashboard. We had 114 students complete the survey. The questions/statements were designed using the learning outcomes for A2. The data was collected and combined from Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.

Overall, most of the students stated that they achieved the learning outcomes for their courses. For example, Question 1: I learned to write effectively in English in this course, 88% of the students in ENGL 101 and 102 gave an answer of Agree (46%) or Strongly Agree (42%). 96% of students in ENGL 103 (not an A2 class but was included in assessment) answered either Agree (29%) or Strongly Agree (67%), while 100% of the students who responded in ENGL 104 stated they achieved this learning outcome.

Faculty are strongly advised to look through the student results dashboard as there is information about our URM, Pell, and First Generation students. We also collected qualitative data by asking two questions: 1: "Based on your experience with this writing class, describe what effective writing means to you;" and 2: "Please describe assignments, activities, and/or instructor input in this course that promoted your learning about written communication."

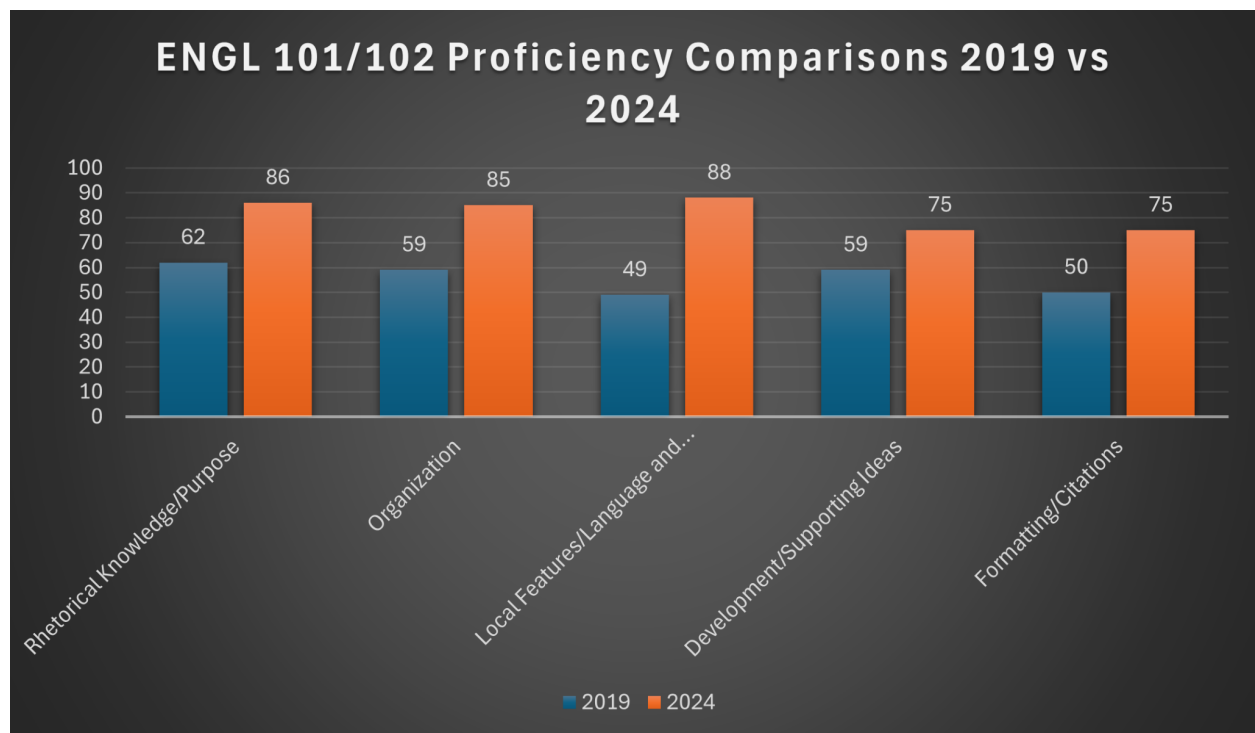
Selected Assessment Comments from faculty assessors

- I want to make communal calibrating/norming a practice. The calibration session was immensely helpful.
- I read thoughtful student work, and I was impressed by our first-year writers.
- The instructions on the assignments are excellent and really helped with assessing.
- I read some excellent student work, and felt that the instructions for the assignments were very thorough.
- The majority of assignments from yesterday and today were impressive and they aligned with the rubric. I remain impressed by the thoughtful and engaged work I read.

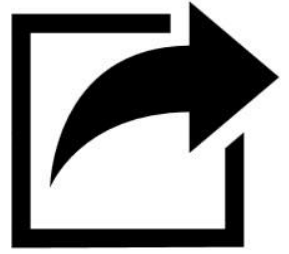
- I definitely noticed the ways in which the structure and requirements of assignments impacted the nature and quality of writing and thinking in the students' texts.
- What stands out to me today is how effectively students implemented pathos appeal, particularly showing empathy and compassion when they have personal connections with their audiences.

Comparison with the Previous Assessment of A2 (2019)

In 2019 20 assignments from ENGL 101 and 20 assignments from ENGL 102 were assessed. That particular assessment showed that proficiency (performance levels 3-4) was attained by 64% of the assessed student population in the dimension of Attitude and Approach; 62% in Rhetorical Knowledge; 59% in Organization and Development; 50% in Academic Conventions; and 49% in Language, Style, Voice, and Mechanics. As noted above, the A2 assessment in 2024 had 180 assignments, the rubric was revised in 2023, and some categories are not a direct one-to-one match, but the 2024 results show large increases in the number of ENGL 101 and 102 students who are now achieving proficiency.



CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT/CLOSING THE LOOP and NEXT ACTION STEPS



The following questions are part of the continuous improvement/closing the loop activity for departments to fill out and return to the Office of General Education (kevin.kaatz@csueastbay.edu and nancy.white@csueastbay.edu) by the end of the Fall semester, 2025. The questions will help guide a specific action plan to improve student success for both A2 (now 1A).

- How are these data consistent with your experience as a department/instructor?
- Results show that there is a difference in proficiency between Pell and non-Pell students who took the A2 course (101 and 102). What specific actions will the department take to address the discrepancy?
- Results show that there is a difference in proficiency between First Gen/non First Gen, Pell/non-Pell, and URM/non-URM in ENGL 102. What specific actions will the department take to address these discrepancies?
- Overall, what steps do you think could be taken to improve student success?

Appendix

CSUEB GENERAL EDUCATION

AREA A2 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION) RUBRIC

Description: Proficiency in written communication in English at the A2 level (first-year composition) is demonstrated through development of a central idea appropriate to the assignment and/or audience, organization, development of supporting ideas, use of language choices/mechanics, and citations.

Framing Language: This rubric is used to assess a major essay assignment, which was aligned to each of the rubric dimensions.

Development: A draft of the A2 rubric was first developed by faculty in the Department of English in May 2018 and used for a pilot assessment of A2 in May 2019. Revisions to the rubric were made in June 2019 by English faculty who served as assessors on the pilot project. Further revisions were made to the rubric by faculty in the Department of English in January 2023 in preparation for the AY 2023-24 assessment of A2.

PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS BY LEVEL				
DIMENSION	4	3	2	1
Purpose Central idea(s) developed based on the assignment and/or audience.	Central idea(s) appropriate to the assignment and/or audience.	Central idea(s) generally appropriate to the assignment and/or audience.	Central idea(s) somewhat appropriate to the assignment and/or audience.	Central idea(s) lacking or not appropriate to the assignment and/or audience.
Organization Organizes and develops writing around controlling idea(s) using appropriate connections that help to progress a coherent train of thought.	Organization is clear.	Organization is mostly clear.	Organization is somewhat clear.	Organization is unclear and/or lacking.
Development of supporting ideas Uses evidence and explanations to develop the central idea(s).	Presents evidence and explanations to clearly develop the central idea(s).	Presents evidence and/or explanations to generally develop the central idea(s).	Presents evidence and/or explanations to minimally develop the central idea(s).	Does not present evidence or explanations to develop the central idea(s).
Language Choices and Mechanics Conveys meaning using language conventions (e.g. word choice, sentence structure, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/or grammar)	Uses appropriate language that is purpose-driven and audience aware, with varied sentence structure. Errors, if any, do not interfere with meaning.	Uses appropriate language with some variation in sentence structure. Minimal errors are present, but do not interfere with meaning.	Uses somewhat appropriate language with limited variation in sentence structure. Errors sometimes interfere with meaning.	Uses inappropriate language. Errors detract from the meaning.
Citations Documentation of all sources (e.g. in-text citations, footnotes, endnotes, and/or bibliography).	Correctly cites included source(s).	Generally cites included source(s) with minimal errors.	Gaps or multiple errors in the citation of source(s).	Does not cite and/or inappropriately cites source(s).

