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Furthermore, 100- and 200-numbered "college" courses without prerequisites also admit students who place below English 18, which actually has a minimum placement score.

In addition to considering the perplexing situation of pre-college-level courses with prerequisites versus "college" courses without prerequisites, I reflected on Mai’s question regarding what pre-college-level students can take.

If we offer students without college-level literacy courses that are actually at the college level, we risk setting these students up for failure.

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Alternatively, if students without college-level literacy are able to regularly complete courses that are numbered 100 and 200, then the college has a problem with the way it specifies course level.

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This constrains students’ ability to acquire key competencies needed for upper-level coursework or, if they exit with a two-year degree, necessary to meet the demands of a competitive professional environment and the challenges of participating as well-informed citizens in our increasingly complex world.

Regardless of whether students are paying for such "college" courses out-of-pocket or with limited financial-aid dollars, they are not getting what they think they are paying for.
Course-Number Policies: 100-Numbered Courses Require College-Level Literacy

Following our meeting, I also reflected on Sam’s question regarding the role of faculty and whether we have the right to tell one another what the level of a course is.

Related to the GE process, ACCJC requirements specify that General Education courses be "consistent with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education." The college has an obligation to clearly identify course level, both for our students' sakes and to meet accreditation standards.

According to our own policies, identifying course level is not an individual faculty decision.

The UH system and our college have policies that require that course level be identified through accurate course numbering.

The system policy on Student Transfer and Inter-campus Articulation, E5.209, states that courses numbered 100 and above are at the baccalaureate level.

Our own policy on course numbering, HAW 5.252, specifies that 100-numbered courses require college-level literacy and pace.

The College's Obligation: College-Level GE Courses

As faculty on the ad hoc GEC, we have the responsibility to make sure that the courses we consider meet these requirements so that we designate only courses that have college-level rigor. In the past, ACCJC has cited us for including pre-college-level courses as fulfilling GE requirements.

Open-Door Institutions: College-Level Requires College Placement or Commensurate Developmental Coursework

In terms of maintaining college-level rigor in 100-numbered courses, our 4-year sister institutions have entry SAT / ACT literacy and math requirements to ensure entering students have reached college-level proficiency.

As an open-door institution, on the other hand, HawCC has placement tests to identify which students have the entry literacy skills for college-level coursework and which students require additional literacy development in pre-college-level courses.

Again, as an open-door institution, the only means the college has to ensure that 100- and 200-numbered courses are actually college level is by specifying college-level placement scores or the commensurate prerequisite developmental coursework.

The UH System addresses this requirement through directives to ensure that UHCC placement testing requirements are aligned with UH Manoa entry requirements. Our own Placement Testing policy, HAW 5.501, clearly states this through its placement test requirement and the exceptions allowed, which specify the SAT / ACT English scores set by UH Manoa. Our Academic Senate just recently updated this policy to include UH Manoa SAT / ACT math scores.

Without such specifications, 100- and 200-numbered courses do not necessarily meet the college's policy requirements, the system's policy requirements, or ACCJC's General Education requirements -- and we end up in paradoxical situations where pre-college-level courses have higher prerequisites than "college" courses that count toward a degree.

The Role of the Ad Hoc GEC: Designating College-Level GE Courses

For this reason, it is extremely troubling to me that we have been designating courses with no placement requirements or commensurate developmental prerequisites as meeting college-level GE learning outcomes.

Moving forward, to fulfill our own policies and accreditation requirements -- and, most importantly, to serve our students' needs -- I sincerely hope that the courses we designate as General Education have the necessary placement requirements to ensure that they are actually college level.
I thank everyone for having the time and patience to consider my input!

Others have mentioned that the committee's review process has gone through changes.

For myself, I know that my awareness of the issues and implications of our work has grown since I have joined the group.

This is due to the depth and breadth of our discussions, and I thank all for increasing my own understanding of our efforts.

Best regards,
Jeanne

From: Ellen Okuma <okuma@hawaii.edu>
To: Jeanne Ryan <jeannelouiseryan@yahoo.com>
Cc: Annie Brown <annie@hawaii.edu>; Denise D'Haenens-Luker <luker@hawaii.edu>; Donala Kawa'auhau <donala@hawaii.edu>; Francis-Dean Uchima <uchima@hawaii.edu>; Jeanne Ryan <jlryan@hawaii.edu>; Lucy Jones <lucyj@hawaii.edu>; Mai Wong <maw@hawaii.edu>; Robyn Gartner <robyng@hawaii.edu>; Samuel Giordanengo <samuelg@hawaii.edu>; Kenoalani Dela Cruz <noa@hawaii.edu>; Orlo Steele <orlo@hawaii.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2014 2:11 PM
Subject: Re: Example of pre-college literacy skills

Aloha Jeanne,

Mahalo for sharing this important information with GEC. The example is a good reality check about the lack of basic skills some of our students have while they are enrolled at HawCC in remedial/developmental courses.

Ellen

On Fri, Apr 25, 2014 at 12:31 PM, Jeanne Ryan <jeannelouiseryan@yahoo.com> wrote:

Aloha ad hoc GEC!

I am sending through an example of the pre-college literacy skills typical of our developmental reading students.

The example is student performance on a recent Vocabulary and Reading Analysis Quiz I gave to my English 20R students.

Preparation for the quiz included the following:

1. Student reading and selection of vocabulary terms from our assigned reading, "Water Pressure" (by Fen Montaigne in the September 2011 issue of National Geographic). From student submissions, I compiled a class set of vocabulary, based on relevance to the reading and academic applicability.

2. A vocabulary sheet requiring students to identify definitions and use the words in context

3. Vocabulary flash cards
4. Multiple assignments requiring use of the vocabulary in context related to the reading

5. An in-class prequiz, reviewing the words and their definitions as they would appear on the quiz, as well as providing examples of use in context related to the reading. Prequiz materials are posted on Laulima for students to use as an aid in preparation.

This student example is typical of the level of 20R, which, roughly speaking, correlates with 6th-8th grade reading ability.

The student in question is a first-year student who has matriculated into HawCC directly from a local high school.

The student is passing the class, and, at the time of her mid-semester self-assessment was carrying a B/C grade.

In terms of the Part 1 results, this student's example is representative of the results at the 20R level if students do not fully engage in ongoing study of the vocabulary terms.

In terms of this particular student, her Vocabulary and Reading Analysis quiz grades have varied widely depending on preparation, with a high grade of 95 and a low grade of 52.

Again, in terms of proficient performance, the numerous scaffolds the class provides are essential for students to be able to pass these quizzes, provided students also study.

In terms of her Part 2 answer, this student's work reflects pre-college level writing.

Best regards,
Jeanne
Aloha Jeanne,

Mahalo for providing us more information to think about as we continue on with the GE designation process. As a follow-up to your most recent email and Robyn's statement she made last week about UH Manoa requiring a student to take ENG 100 during his/her first year, I wanted to provide a citation for UH Manoa's writing requirement. Here's the source:

**Writing Requirements for UHM Students** ([http://manoa.hawaii.edu/mwp/students](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/mwp/students))

**FOUNDATIONS: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (FW)**

**UHM APPROVED COURSES-FW**

Credit for one of these courses is required for graduation: English (ENG) 100, ENG 100A, ENG 101+ENG 101L, ENG 190, or English Language Institute (ELI) 100.

**Requirement**

All UHM students, except those assigned to ELI 073, must complete the ENG 100 (or 100A), ENG 190, or ELI 100 requirement within their first two semesters at the University. Those assigned to ELI 073 must complete the course the semester after placement and their 100-level course the following semester.

In addition, questions from the ACCJC Guide to Evaluating Institutions regarding GE remind us that we need to evaluate potential GE courses with a critical eye for making sure the standards of college-level rigor will be maintained. Institutions preparing their self-studies and visiting teams often use these questions. Here are some that relate to GE (from page 21 of the Guide):

- What criteria does the college use to assure that the required skill level meets collegiate standards? Is there a consistent process for assuring that expected skill levels are included in course outlines?
- How well are students able to apply these skills to subsequent coursework, employment, or other endeavors?

Because GEC members have raised questions about some of the courses being proposed for Areas of Knowledge, ACCJC's Guide addresses this as well. The ACCJC Guide (p.20) has questions focused on determining student understanding of areas of knowledge and whether basic content and methodology are included in GE courses. Here are a couple of the questions:

- What process is used to ensure that general education courses include this content and methodology?
- Do student learning outcomes for general education courses require students to understand the basic content and methodology in the major areas of knowledge? Is there a consistent process for assuring that the content and methodology are included in course outlines?

Mahalo to ALL of you for using the Rubric to carefully consider the consequences of designating courses for GE.
know we all want our GE curriculum to lay the foundation our students need to continue their higher education journey or to be productive members of our community.

See you tomorrow at 2:30!
Ellen
I have forwarded a recent email to the ad hoc GEC in which I discuss those concerns.

A previous email in the chain includes background information regarding the attached literacy sample.

My thanks go to all for your time at this busy point of the semester!

Best regards,
Jeanne

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Jeanne Ryan <jeannelouiseryan@yahoo.com>
To: Ellen Okuma <okuma@hawaii.edu>
Cc: Annie Brown <annie@hawaii.edu>; Denise D'Haenens-Luker <luker@hawaii.edu>; Donala Kawa'auhau <donala@hawaii.edu>; Francis-Dean Uchima <uchima@hawaii.edu>; Jeanne Ryan <jlryan@hawaii.edu>; Lucy Jones <lucyj@hawaii.edu>; Mai Wong <maiw@hawaii.edu>; Robyn Gartner <robyng@hawaii.edu>; Samuel Giordanengo <samuelg@hawaii.edu>; Kenoalani Dela Cruz <noa@hawaii.edu>; Orlo Steele <orlo@hawaii.edu>
Sent: Thursday, May 1, 2014 5:54 PM
Subject: Concern about GE Course Level Re: Example of pre-college literacy skills

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