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English 122 College Composition Pilot Assessment Project

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ENG 122 ASSESSMENT

Fall 2019-Spring 2020

Dr. Tara Wood and Dr. Marc C. Santos

Mini-Grant Final Report

INTRODUCTION

This presentation reports results of our assessment of the English 122 curriculum. We found that, across the 5 Colorado Department of Higher Education core competencies, students performed at a developing or competent level. Our findings suggest that we should schedule more M/W/F sections, encourage or require instructors to adopt our pilot Canvas shell, and that moves toward implementing antiracist writing assessment is positively impacting how our instructors evaluated first-year writing. Black and Latino students are underperforming their white peers by about 6-7%. This demonstrates a racial inequality that we should work to remedy. We will continue this work with our assessment of the ENG 123 curriculum scheduled for the fall of 2020 and the spring of 2021.



PURPOSE AND GOALS

The focus of our mini-grant was to measure how successfully student writing in our revised ENG 122 curriculum reflect the expectations articulated in the Colorado Department of Higher Education's (CDHE) gtPathways. Below are the CDHE's expectations:

1. **Employ Rhetorical Knowledge**
 - Exhibit a thorough understanding of audience, purpose, genre, and context that is responsive to the situation.
2. **Develop Content**
 - Create and develop ideas within the context of the situation and the assigned task(s).
3. **Apply Genre and Disciplinary Content**
 - Apply formal and informal conventions of writing, including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices, in particular forms and/or fields.
4. **Use Sources and Evidence**
 - Critically read, evaluate, apply and synthesize evidence and/or sources in support of a claim.
 - Follow an appropriate documentation system.
5. **Control Syntax and Mechanics**
 - Demonstrate proficiency with conventions, including spelling, grammar, mechanics, and word choice appropriate to the writing task.



METHODOLOGY: ARTIFACT COLLECTION

We collected a random sample of 5 essays from 20 separate sections of ENG 122. We randomly selected student 1, 3, 7, 9, and 13 from each roster (in cases where a student did not submit, the subsequent student on the roster was selected).

The third essay from the common syllabus was selected as the artifact. The third assignment is a Discourse Community Analysis project. All instructors from the 20 sections were asked to email the artifact to Dr. Santos and/or Dr. Wood.

In total we coded 95 essays were collected and coded.



METHODOLOGY: CODES AND CODING

All collected artifacts were stored and organized in a google drive folder and subsequently the following:

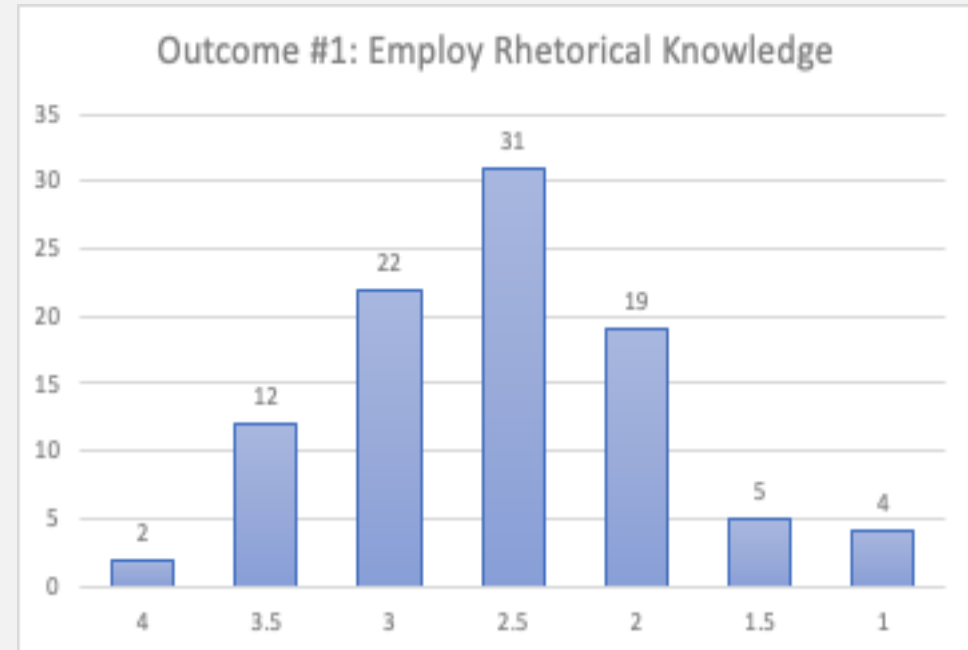
- Name
- First-Generation Status
- Gender
- Race / Ethnicity
- Canvas / Early Performance Feedback pilot
- Major / College
- MWF or TR section

We scheduled two scoring days with four contract-renewable instructors and spent the opening hour and the lunch hour of both days norming/re-calibrating readers. We used the state Gt Pathways recommended rubric and created a google form for scorers to use throughout the reading days. Each essay was read by at least two readers. In the case of a-contiguous scores, Dr. Wood and Dr. Santos read, discussed, and determined a final score.



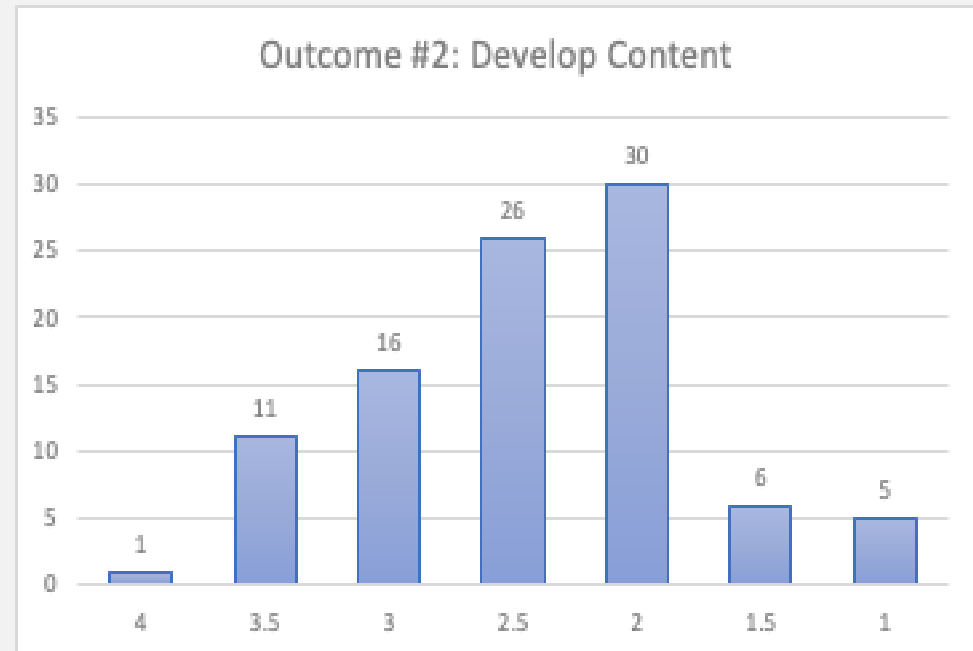
OUTCOME 1: EMPLOY RHETORICAL KNOWLEDGE

The mean score for Outcome 1 was a 2.56. The mode was a 2.5. 38% of papers earned a competent (3) or higher. 29% of papers earned a developing (2) or lower.



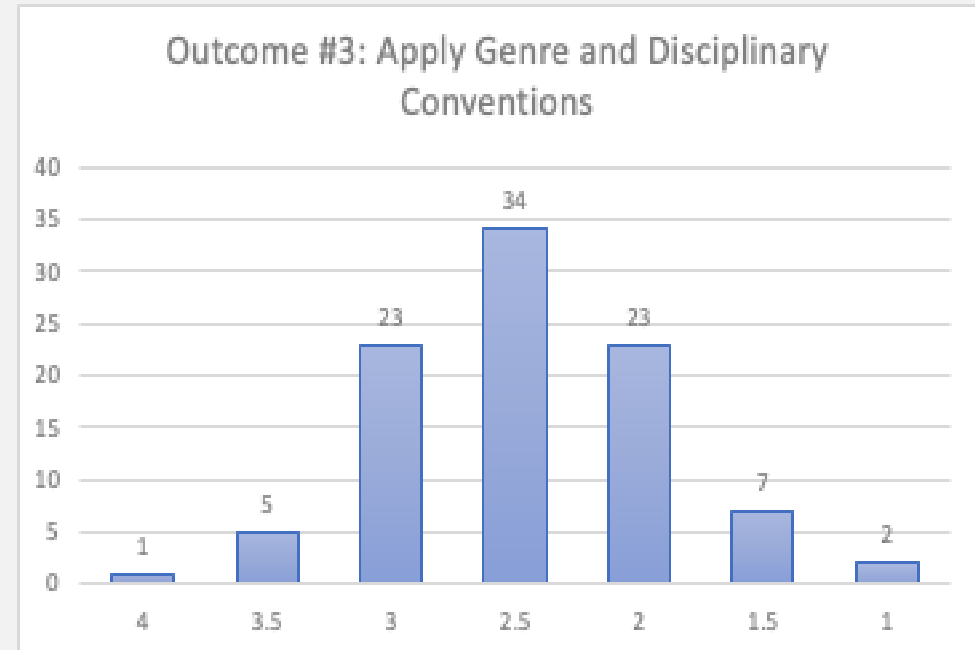
OUTCOME 2: DEVELOP CONTENT

The mean score for Outcome 2 was a 2.42. The mode was a 2. 29% of papers earned a competent (3) or higher. 43% of papers earned a developing (2) or lower; the majority of these (30 out of 41) were developing (2).



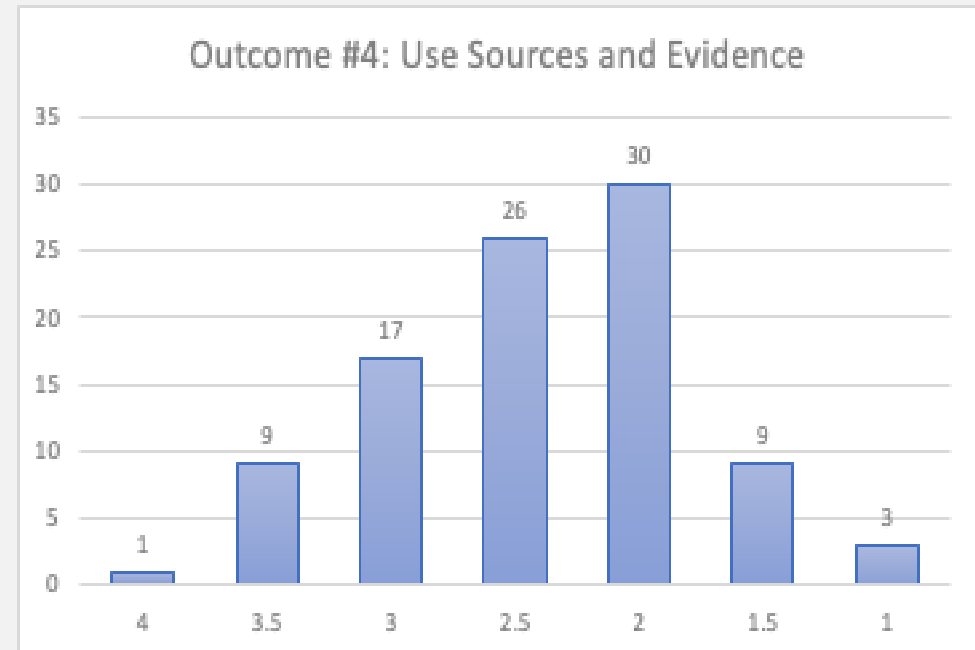
OUTCOME 3: APPLY GENRE/DISCIPLINARY CONVENTIONS

The mean score for Outcome 3 was a 2.46. The mode was a 2.5. 31% of papers earned a competent (3) or higher. 34% of papers earned a developing (2) or lower.



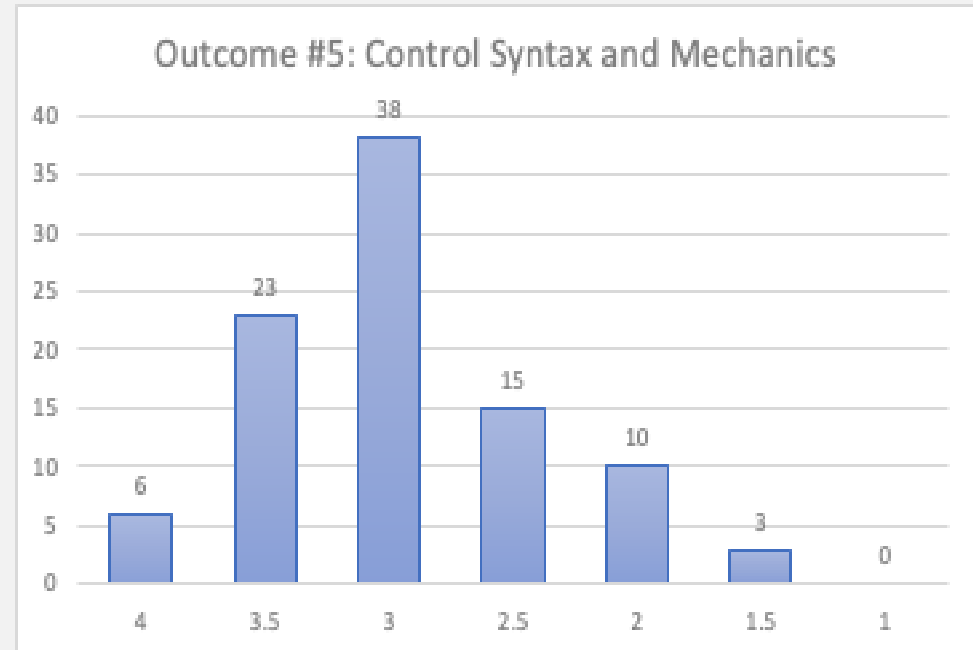
OUTCOME 4: USE SOURCES AND EVIDENCE

The mean score for Outcome 4 was a 2.5. The mode was a 2. 29% of papers earned a competent (3) or higher. 44% of papers earned a developing (2) or lower, the majority of these (30 out of 42) were developing (2).



OUTCOME 5: CONTROL SYNTAX AND MECHANICS

The mean score for Outcome 5 was a 3. The mode was a 3. 71% of papers earned a competent (3) or higher. 14% of papers earned a developing (2) or lower.



GENERAL IMPRESSION SCORES

In addition to scoring the 5 CDHE Outcomes, we asked instructors to provide a wholistic evaluation of each essay on a 1-5 scale. We then compared their wholistic General Impression score to an average of their 5 CDHE Outcome scores

By general impression, 45% of essays were scored competent or better and 55% of essays were scored developing or worse. The mode was developing (42 of 95 scores). However, by the expected average, 52% of essays were competent or better and 48% of essays were developing or worse. The mode was competent (47). Instructors had a general tendency to score essays holistically lower than they scored their composite parts.

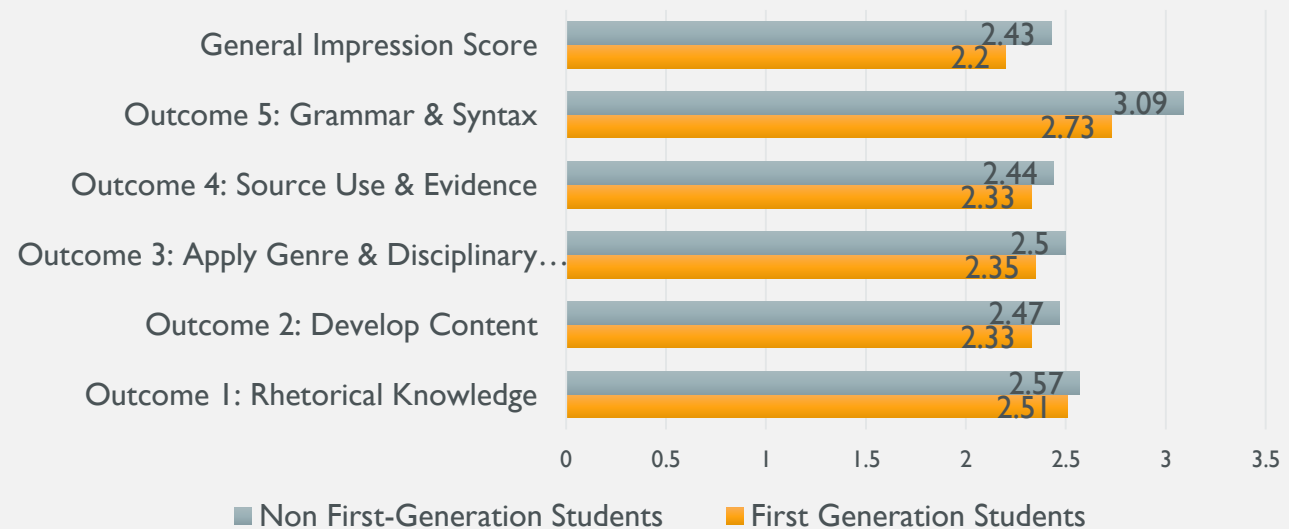
We hope to correct this discrepancy in future orientation and norming sessions.



FIRST-GENERATION VS. NON-FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT ANALYSIS

As we expected and in-line with previous research, first-generation students under-performed in comparison to non-first-generation students.

First Gen Vs. Non First Gen Performance

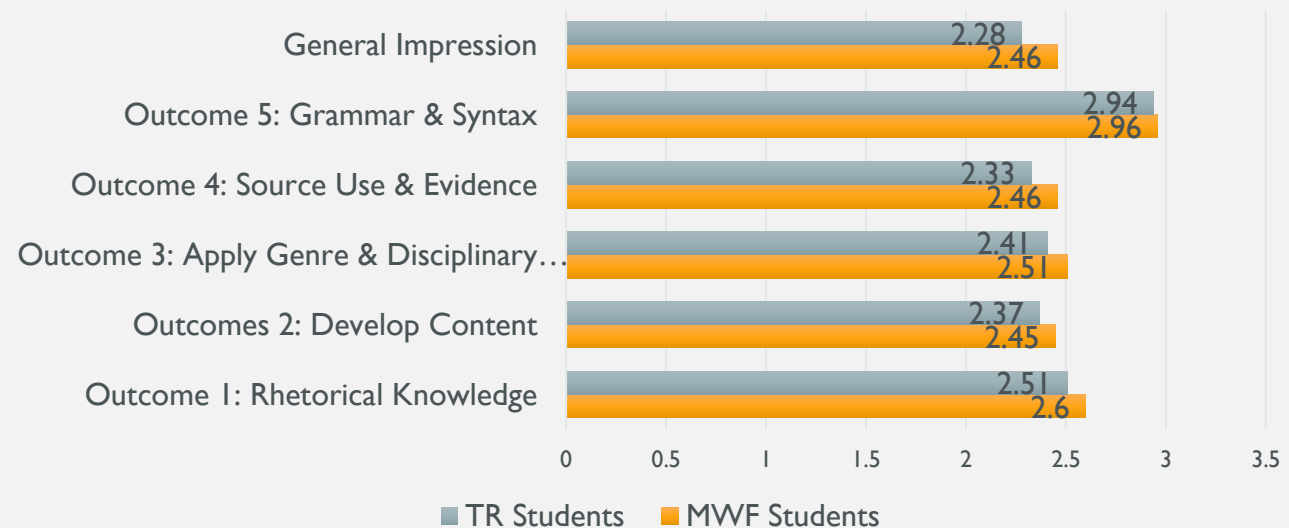


MWF VS TR SCHEDULING ANALYSIS

Students taking ENG 122 three days per week outperform students who take ENG 122 only two days per week.

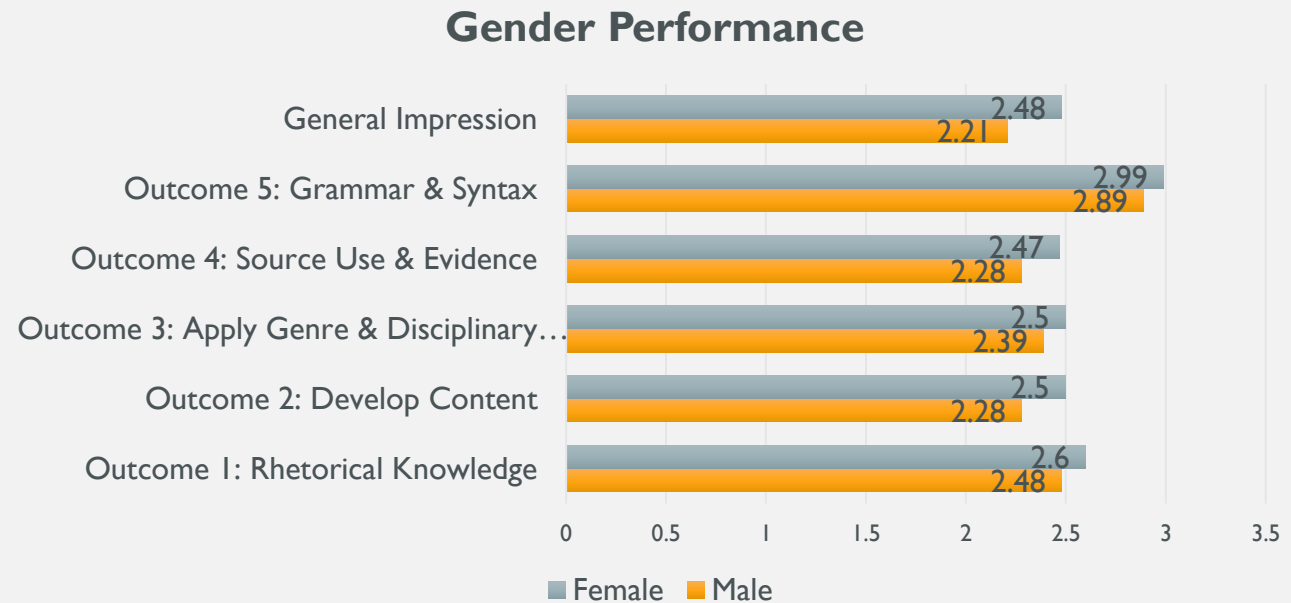
This should influence future scheduling.

MWF Students vs. TR Students



GENDER ANALYSIS

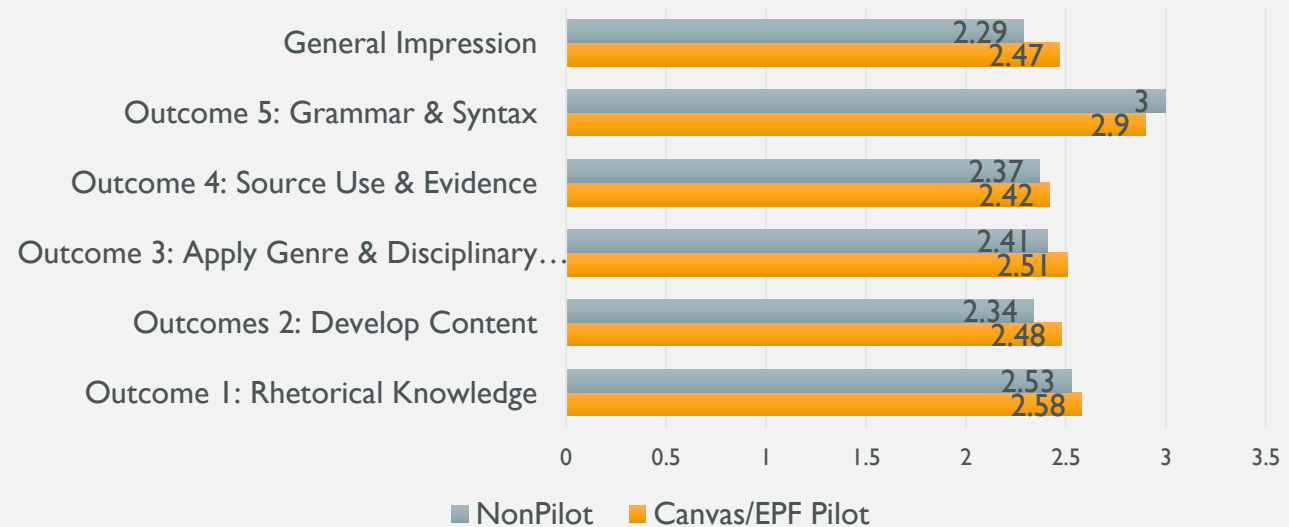
Students who identify as female outperform students who identify as male on all outcomes.



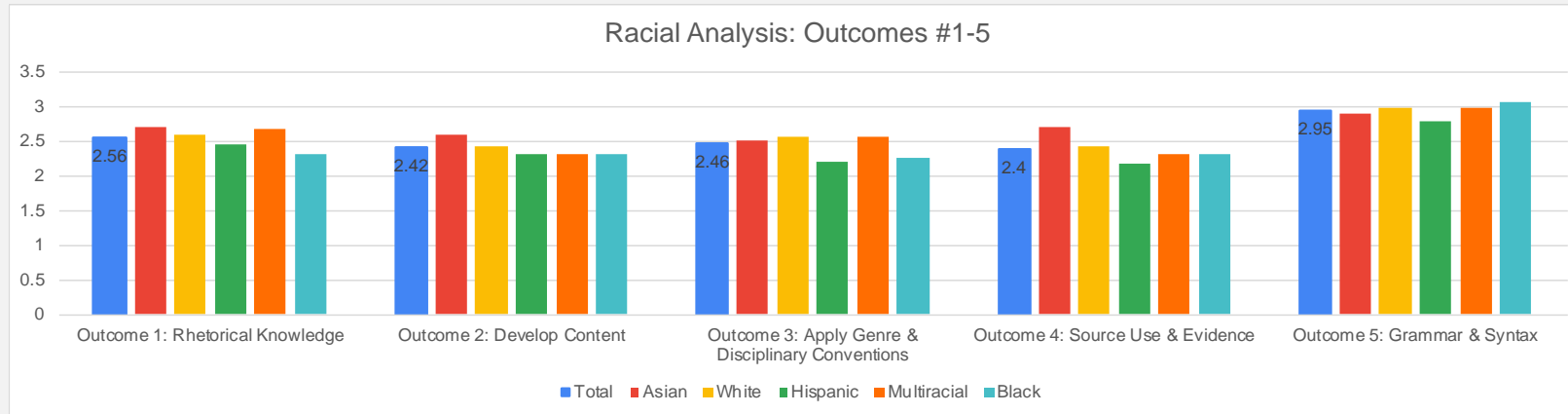
CANVAS/EPF PILOT VS NON-PILOT STUDENTS

Students enrolled in Canvas/EPF sections outperformed students in non-pilot sections on all outcomes except outcome 5: grammar and syntax.

Canvas/EPF Pilot Students vs NonPilot Students



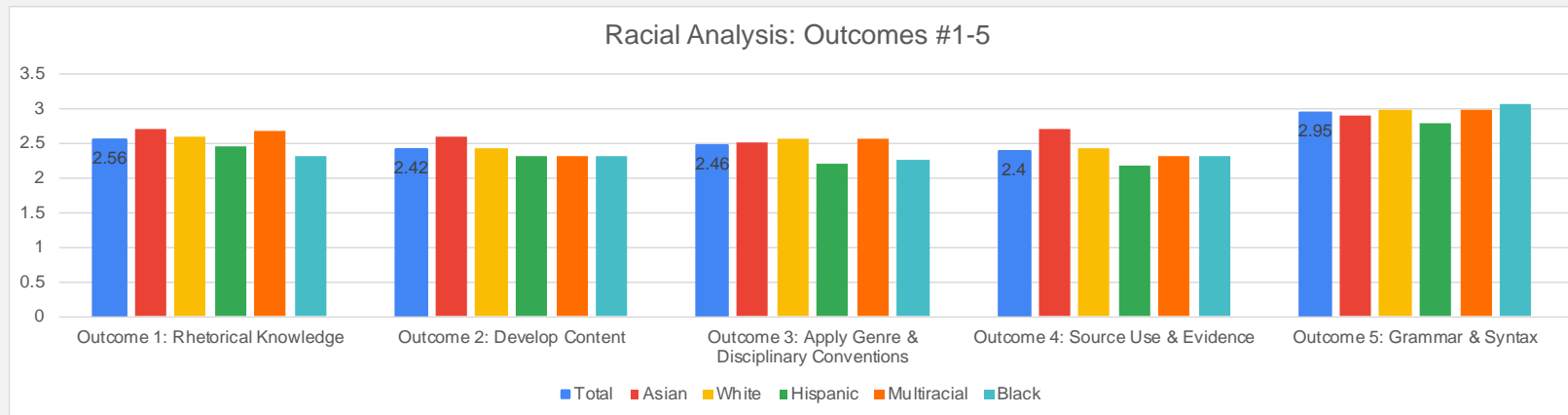
OUTCOME I: RACIAL ANALYSIS



For Outcome #1: Rhetorical Knowledge, the baseline was a 2.56. Asian (2.7) and Multiracial (2.67) performed above this baseline. White (2.59) students performed marginally above this baseline. Hispanic (2.45) and Black (2.33) students performed below this baseline.



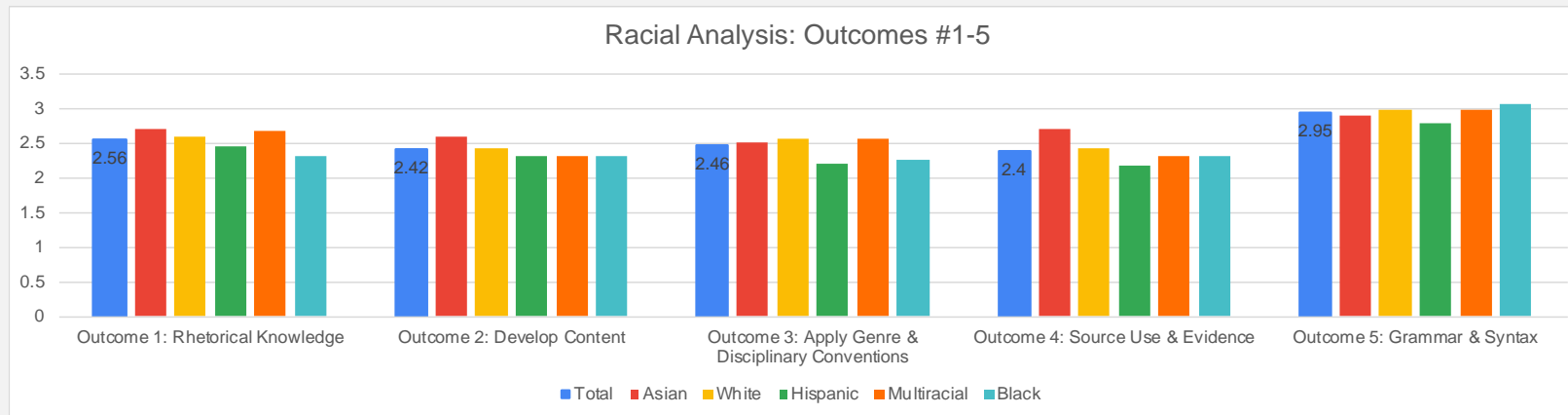
OUTCOME 2: RACIAL ANALYSIS



For Outcome #2: Develop Content, the baseline was a 2.42. Asian (2.6) students were the only demographic to perform above this baseline. White students (2.42) performed equal to the baseline. Hispanic, Multiracial, and Black students all performed below the baseline (all scored a 2.33).



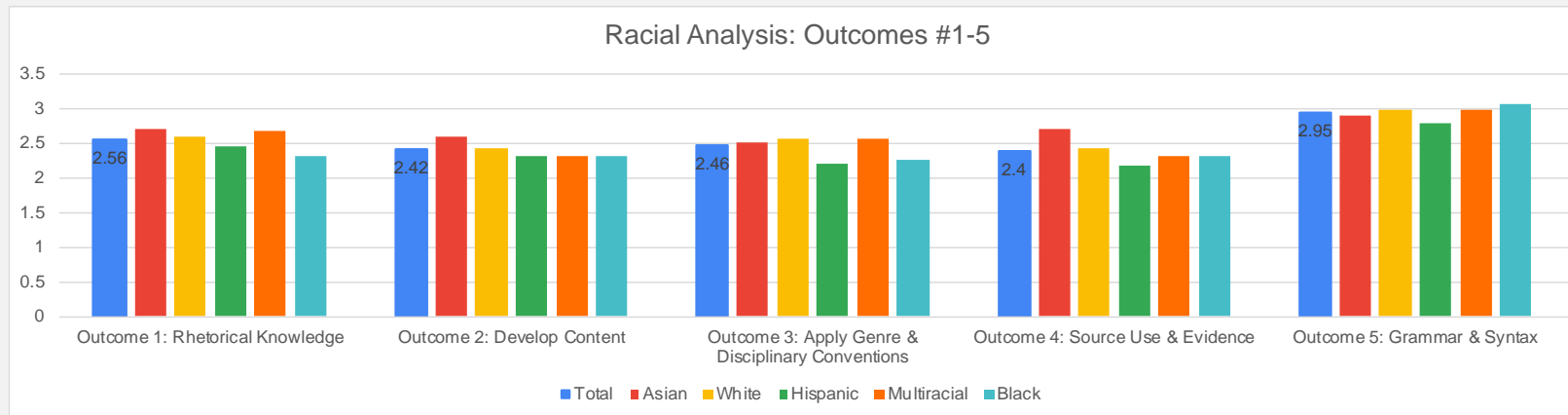
OUTCOME 3: RACIAL ANALYSIS



For Outcome #3, Apply Genre and Disciplinary Conventions, the baseline was a 2.56. Multiracial (2.58) and White (2.56) students performed above this baseline. Asian (2.5) students performed marginally above this baseline. Hispanic (2.21) and Black (2.25) students performed below the baseline. As we note below in our discussion, this is one of the largest demographic discrepancies in the study.



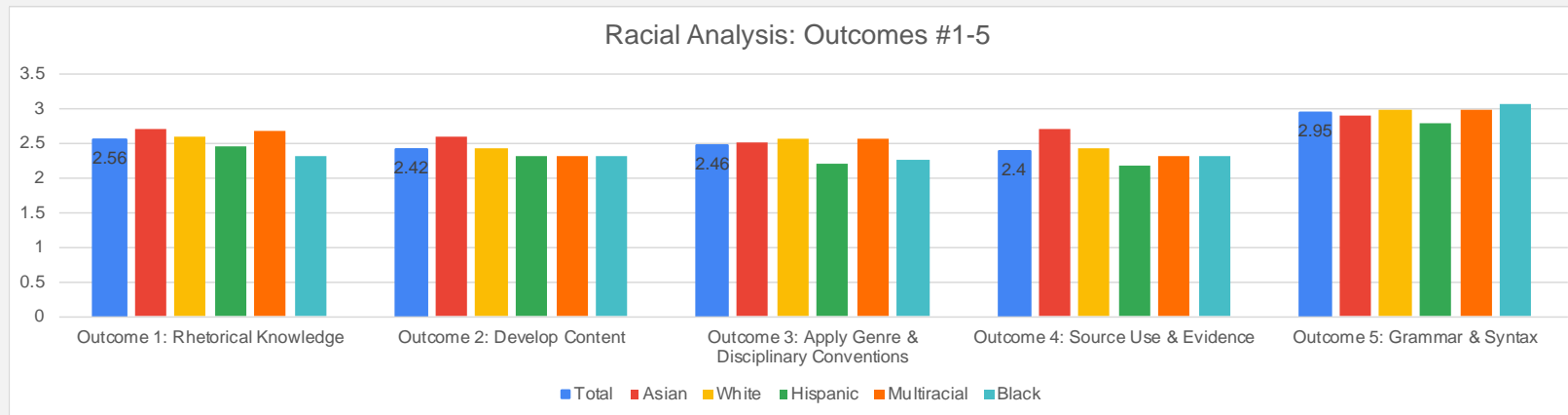
OUTCOME 4: RACIAL ANALYSIS



For Outcome #4, Source Use and Evidence, the baseline was a 2.4. Asian (2.7) students outperformed this baseline. White (2.43) students performed marginally above this baseline. Hispanic (2.19), Multiracial (2.33), and Black (2.33) students performed below this baseline.



OUTCOME 5: RACIAL ANALYSIS



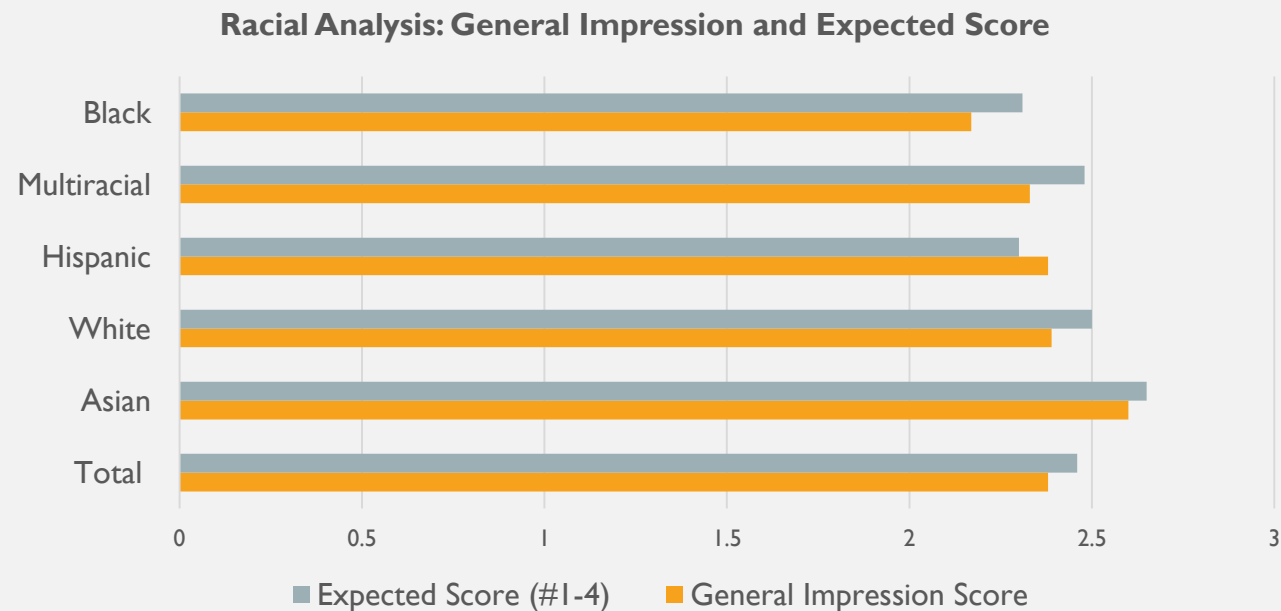
For Outcome #5, Control Grammar and Syntax, the baseline was a 2.95. Black (3.08) and Multiracial (3.0) students performed above this baseline. White (2.99) students performed marginally above this baseline. Asian (2.9) and Hispanic (2.79) performed below this baseline.



RACIAL ANALYSIS: GENERAL IMPRESSION VS. EXPECTED SCORE

Because we hypothesized this effect might be amplified for non-SAE, we eliminated outcome 5 from our expected score analysis.

Eliminating outcome 5, the baseline expectations for outcomes #1-4 is a 2.46. Asian students are performing 6.3% over that baseline expectation. White students are performing 1.6% over that baseline expectation. Black students are performing 6.1% under that expectation. Hispanic students are performing 6.7% under that expectation.



DISCUSSION: GENERAL RESULTS

Overall, this study shows that the vast majority of students in ENG 122 fall somewhere between developing and competent across all outcomes. Students struggled most with Outcome #4: Using Sources and Evidence; although this is not too surprising, since that outcome is the focus of ENG 123 and does not receive as much attention in ENG 122.

Black and Latino students are underperforming their white peers by about 6-7%. This demonstrates a racial inequality that we should work to remedy.



DISCUSSION: CONTROL SYNTAX/MECHANICS AND ANTI-RACIST WRITING ASSESSMENT

Students performed strongest on Outcome #5: Control Syntax and Mechanics.

We should acknowledge that, in line with contemporary research on antiracist writing assessment and social justice pedagogy, our evaluators are encouraged to overlook surface level errors when assessing student writing.

This commitment can be seen in the assessment rubric distributed to evaluators, which identified developing (2) as errors that impacted clarity or coherence, or an *abundance* of minor usage errors.

Social justice and/as writing assessment calls for us to actively work against traditional, racist practices that impose Standard Academic English as a baseline competency for quality writing.



DISCUSSION: DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

While we are limited by our sample size, our findings show that non-first generation, female students, enrolled in ENG 122 sections using the Canvas master shell and meeting three days a week *generally* outperform other students with various other identifiable markers (e.g. first-generation).

Asian and white students outperformed Hispanic and Black students; this was especially significant regarding Outcome #3, Applying Genre and Disciplinary conventions, where Hispanic and Black students are underperforming their White peers by more than 10%.

Again, while our sample size is small, these results echo other assessment projects (Arum and Roksa 2011; Inoue 2015). These results could indicate that greater support structures are needed for students with particular risk indicators. However, this support requires a strategy that offers support but does not assume all students in a particular marker are, in fact, “at risk.”



FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Above, we noted a general trend that general impression values tended to lag behind expected scores (based on the average score a paper received on outcomes #1-5). This tendency should be addressed in future orientations and grade-norming sessions for upcoming assessment projects, such as the ENG 123 assessment study planned for fall 2020-spring 2021.