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Measures of Success: The Why and How of WMU Essential Studies Assessment

Jonathan Bush

Western Michigan University, jonathan.bush@wmich.edu

Randy Ott

Western Michigan University, randy.ott@wmich.edu

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The Why and How of WMU Essential Studies Assessment



**WESTERN
MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY**

Jonathan Bush, Ph.D.
Faculty Director, WMU
Essential Studies

Randy Ott, Ph.D.
Senior Director,
Academic Collaboration

WMU Essential Studies

WES by-the-numbers – Fall 2022

Overall WES Course Portfolio

Total Courses: 388							
Level 1: 81		Level 2: 209		Level 3: 98			
CAS: 264		CoA: 1		CEHD: 22		CEAS: 23	
CFA: 27		CHHS: 24		HCOB: 15		LHC: 12	

WES Course Fall 2022 Enrollment

(Sections) Seats-filled: (648) 24,639		(Sections) SCH Produced: (648) 77,458					
Level 1: (271) 30,040		Level 2: (312) 42,466		Level 3: (65) 4,952			
CAS: (407) 47,887		CoA: (3) 693		CEHD: (64) 4,928		CEAS: (29) 2,631	
CFA: (29) 5,940		CHHS: (610) 8,335		HCOB: (51) 6,762		LHC: (5) 282	



WMU Essential Studies



Level 3: Connections



Level 2: Discovery
Exploration



Level 1: Foundations

In Fall 2022, WES courses produced **43%** of total WMU undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) (77,458/181,900).

Data analysis courtesy of Ewa Urban, Merze Tate College.

WES by-the-numbers – Spring 2023



WMU Essential Studies



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Exploration



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Overall WES Course Portfolio

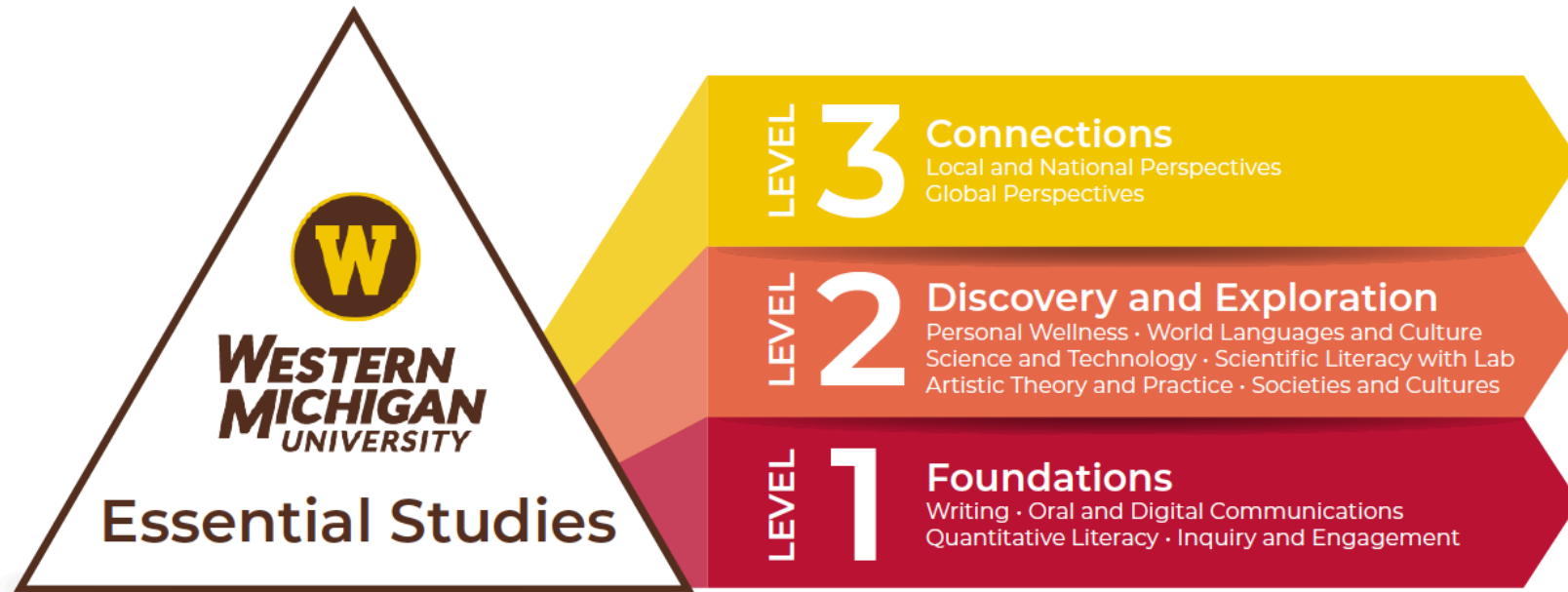
Total Courses: 390					
Level 1: 82		Level 2: 210		Level 3: 98	
CAS: 264	CoA: 2	CEHD: 23	CEAS: 23		
CFA: 27	CHHS: 24	HCOB: 15	LHC: 12		

WES Course Spring 2023 Enrollment

(Sections) Seats-filled: (595) 20,879		(Sections) SCH Produced: (595) 66,088			
Level 1: (206) 21,710		Level 2: (293) 36,744		Level 3: (96) 7,634	
CAS: (383) 41,727	CoA: (1) 108	CEHD: (53) 3,823	CEAS: (31) 2,685		
CFA: (24) 6,384	CHHS: (56) 5,832	HCOB: (40) 5,142	LHC: (7) 387		

In Spring 2023, WES courses produced **47%** of total WMU undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) (**73,844/157,182**).

Data analysis courtesy of Ewa Urban, Merze Tate College.



Why is there so much assessment in WES?

- **Quality/Quantity:** Nearly 50% of our undergraduate course credit comes from WES courses. Our overall student experience depends on quality course offerings.
- **Accreditation:** HLC review includes evidence of a well-organized assessment program that focuses on continual improvement.
- **Recruitment:** WES is a major student recruitment tool. We need to ensure that it lives up to the external messaging.

Let's Back Up: The History of WES & Assessment

- WMU "General Education" had been in place for over 30 years without major revisions.
- 2010: Higher Learning Commission declared the program insufficient and "completely unassessed."
- Ad-hoc Gen-Ed Committee (2011-2016): WES was developed as a new concept:
 - Student-Centered and Flexible
 - Outcome-Focused (SLO).
- **WES was designed from the beginning with assessment at its core: A "Continuous Improvement" Model.**



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WES Ongoing Assessment: What we collect

- 1. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).** Designed to assess and understand the efficacy of the WES program in meeting stated SLOs. It is also a core component of our HLC responsibilities.
 - Overall and by level and category). Also considered within individual colleges and departments.
- 2. WES Offerings and Course Information.** Designed to help colleges and departments make decisions about their WES offerings.
 - Current and trending course enrollments, Day/time distributions, Department and College WES course portfolios, and WES Course scheduling/modes of instruction.
- 3. Department/Faculty-Provided Input.** Designed to help understand departmental perspectives on current WES courses and provide insight into shaping programs and courses.
 - Initial proposals and WES cyclic reviews (via curriculog): answers to prompts, example syllabi, WES course assessment plans.



WMU Essential Studies



Level 3: Connections



Level 2: Discovery
Exploration



Level 1: Foundations



WMU Essential Studies

✓ Level 3: Connections

✓ Level 2: Discovery
Exploration

✓ Level 1: Foundations

WES Course Assessment: Three Review Moments.

- **Original Proposal or Revision:** Courses are created or revised at the department level and reviewed at the college and WES EA/CRAC (Faculty Senate) levels before entering the WMU Catalog.
- **Cyclic Review:** Following the review cycle, every course undergoes an interim 'check-up' with CRAC and submits answers and current syllabi and assessment plans.
- **4th Year Program Review:** All courses go through a comprehensive review every 4th year that results in a recommendation for continuance, revision, or removal.

The Four-Year Review Cycle: Cyclic Review

- Ongoing WES courses are assessed on a 4-year repeating cycle. This is the "**continuous improvement**" model.

Y1 (2021-22)	Y2 (22-23)	Y3 (23-24)	Y4 (24-25) Program Review
Writing	Local/National	Global Perspectives	Program review team will include a subcommittee: members of Executive Advisory, CRAC, UG Studies Council
Societies and Culture	Science/Tech with lab	Artistic Theory & Practice	
World Languages/Cultures	Science/Tech	Personal Wellness	
Oral/Digital	Inquiry/Engagement	Quantitative Reasoning	

- Sustainability and D/I SLO's reviewed during the regular review

- All WES courses submit one interim "cyclic review" during the cycle. Submission is **not** work-intensive: Example syllabi, assessment plan (same or revised), reflections on the course.
- Short process:** Originator/chair and CRAC.
- The cyclic is **not meant to be directly evaluative**. It is a 'check-up' and a reminder that provides information that leads into the comprehensive 4th year program review.





WMU Essential Studies

✓ Level 3: Connections

✓ Level 2: Discovery
Exploration

✓ Level 1: Foundations

NOTE: SLO performance is NOT considered in relation to specific courses. It is ONLY used to provide information to inform recommendations for program shaping and improvement.

WES Course Assessment: 4th Year Review

- All WES Assessment leads to the comprehensive **4th year review** of all current WES courses. Lead by WES EA and CRAC.
- AY 2024-2025 review will shape WES for the following 4-year cycle.
- Each WES course will be considered in relation to the following:
 - Course offering information (Is the course being offered regularly?)
 - Cyclic Review materials (Is the department adequately administering and monitoring the course?)
 - Ongoing Elearning Assessment submissions (Are instructors completing ongoing assessments in accordance with the assessment plan?).
- Results in a recommendation for each course:
 - Continue Course in WES
 - Revise or Move WES Course (category/SLOs/Levels)
 - Remove course from WES.



WMU Essential Studies

✓ Level 3: Connections

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NOTE: SLO performance is NOT considered in relation to specific courses. It is ONLY used to provide information to inform recommendations for program shaping and improvement.

WES Program Assessment: 4th Year Review

- The review will also encompass **two additional elements** focused on ongoing and future effort to grow and revise WES programming.
- **WES Program Shaping; questions including the following:**
 - Do we have the right categories and levels?
 - Do we have the right SLOs?
 - Do we need additional SLOs?
 - Do we have the right rubrics?
 - Do we have the right mix of courses in each category/level?
 - Do we have gaps where we want to encourage new courses?
- **WES SLO Trends; questions including the following:**
 - Where do students perform well?
 - Where are there gaps or needs?
 - What SLOs are utilized/under-utilized by students?
 - How do our students progress through levels/areas/SLOs?

WES Assessment: Instructor Role



WMU Essential Studies



Level 3: Connections



Level 2: Discovery
Exploration



Level 1: Foundations

- Instructors are accountable for ensuring that WES courses include the identified SLOs.
- Every section of a WES course includes an **Elearning** assessment (not tied to grades) that needs to be completed and submitted.
- SLO data is used to create an overall image of how WMU students are learning and growing through the program. **It is never used to assess teaching or in any personnel decisions.**

Faculty are also tasked by their department chair to complete the WES cyclic review. **(One per WES course, regardless of section #s).**

Demonstrate effective and appropriate written communication abilities. (WCL)	Exemplary 4 points	Proficient 3 points	Developing 2 points	Beginning 1 point	Criterion Score
Context and Purpose for Writing (WCL1) Student skillfully devotes careful attention to and consideration of audience, context, and purpose. Add Feedback	Devotes thorough and careful attention to audience, context and purpose in the work; Approaches audience, purpose, and context with exceptional care and sophistication	Devotes careful attention to context, audience, and purpose in most of the written work; devotes careful consideration to audience, context, and purpose.	Devotes some attention to context, audience, and purpose; lacks careful consideration and awareness of audience, context, and purpose in most of the work.	Devotes minimal attention to context, audience, and purpose; lacks consideration of audience, purpose, and context.	/ 4

WES Assessment: Departmental Role



WMU Essential Studies

✓ Level 3: Connections

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Exploration

✓ Level 1: Foundations

- **Academic Departments and chairs** are accountable for the following tasks:
- Maintaining accurate assessment plans and making them available to instructors.
- Ensuring that all faculty understand course-specific SLOs and address them adequately in their courses and complete their semester Elearning assessment.
- Submitting Cyclic Reviews during the appropriate academic year.
- Submitting New and revised WES courses for CRAC review as needed.

Chairs should assign faculty members to complete cyclic reviews (**One per WES course, regardless of section #s**).



The (not-so) Big Finish: WES Resources

- **Student Resources:** <https://wmich.edu/essentialstudies>
 - Making WES Work for You (Video): <https://wmich.edu/essentialstudies/customize>
- **Faculty Resources:**
 - WES Model (with links to categories and SLOs) <https://wmich.edu/facultysenate/wmuessentialstudies-interactivemodel>
 - Faculty Senate Guide to WMU Essential Studies <https://wmich.edu/facultysenate/wmuessentialstudies>
 - Rubrics: <https://wmich.edu/facultysenate/wmuessentialstudies/wesrubrics>
 - Assessment Procedures <https://wmich.edu/facultysenate/wmuessentialstudies/wesassessment>
 - Tutorials (Elearning - Small/Large Course options): <https://wmich.edu/facultysenate/wmuessentialstudies/wmuessentialstudies-interactive-tutorials>
 - **And now – questions and comments.**

Department Chair's Guide to WES

Academic departments have an important place in the governance, leadership, administration, assessment, and management of WMU Essential Studies (WES). This guide describes including key roles, processes, and expectations for department chairs and faculty members.

The WES Student Experience

Regarding the traditional general education, WMU Essential Studies designed to help you make more connections among courses and benefit from multi-logged courses.

Level 1: Connections (2 courses) In this level, you will complete two courses that are the foundation of your WMU Essential Studies program. They are designed within your perspective, engage in local, national, or global issues, and further develop the core skills introduced in levels 1 and 2.

Level 2: Exploration and Discovery (8 courses) The six courses you select in level 2 will promote your intellectual growth and personal responsibility. These courses may be taken at any point in your program, although WMU recommends taking them after level 1 courses.

Level 3: Foundations (4 courses) Typically introductory or first-year courses, the four areas in this level build the essential skills you will need for success in college, careers, and life after graduation.

Level 4: Diversity and Inclusion Requirement (1 course) You'll not only learn from diversity and inclusion impacts, affect yourself and others, you will engage in meaningful interactions and understand the historical influences that impact today's world.

Level 5: Sustainability Requirement (1 course) By analyzing the actions of community that promote or disrupt the well-being of the human and natural worlds over time, space, and culture, you will discover the interconnectedness of the human and natural worlds and the concept of sustainability.

Students progress through Levels 1, 2, and 3. Typically 30-32 CR.

Level 1 Categories

- Writing
- Oral and Digital Literacy
- Quantitative Literacy
- Inquiry and Engagement

Level 2 Categories

- Personal Wellness
- World Language and Culture
- Artistic Theory and Practice
- Scientific Literacy with a Lab
- Science and Technology
- Societies and Culture

Level 3 Categories

- Local & National Perspectives
- Global Perspectives

Some WMU programs (typically high-credit and/or outside accredited) limit WES choices.

Jonathan Bush
jonathan.bush@wmich.edu

Randy Ott
randy.ott@wmich.edu