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ASSESSING THE WRITING OF ESL STUDENTS IN  
A WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM  
PROGRAM

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The presentation described a study of the place of English as a second language (ESL) students in a writing across the curriculum program. Using placement tests, the University of Hawaii at Manoa assigns incoming freshmen to one of six composition courses: accelerated composition, regular composition, regular composition with required laboratory, remedial composition, regular ESL composition, or preparatory ESL composition. The five hour Manoa Writing Placement Test (MWPT) requires students to write on two topics and revise each essay later in the day. At least two raters per topic assess each student's work for a minimum of four raters per student. The data for this study were based on the MWPT administered for an entire academic year to all incoming freshmen, i.e., both native speakers of English and ESL students. We require ESL students to sit the 3-hour English Language Institute Placement Test (ELIPT), which has two subtests each for ESL listening, reading, and writing skills.

The results were described in terms of cultural tendency, dispersion, and reliability for each of the groups of students on the MWPT, the ELIPT and all subscores for each. As would be expected, the position of the ESL students is clearly low in the overall distribution of MWPT scores.