

Annual Assessment Report

Program: General Education

Academic Year: 2024 - 2025

Date of Submission: November 11, 2025

Committee Chair: Dr. Telford Work

I. Response to the previous year PRC's recommendations

Item: The PRC would encourage the committee to identify benchmarks for the World History SLO moving forward, given the results of the assessment presented.	Response: The Committee requested that the History Department, under the leadership of Chair Dr. Marianne Robins, establish benchmarks for the World History SLO prior to the next assessment cycle.
Item: The PRC would like to know who will follow up on the Thinking Globally syllabi revisions given Dr. Song's departure.	Response: Dr. Felicia Song had communicated with the academic departments that were required to revise their <i>Thinking Globally</i> syllabi prior to her departure. All contacted departments agreed to make modifications.
Item:	Response:
Item:	Response:
Notes:	

II A. GE Student Learning Outcome assessment

If your department participated in the ILO or GE SLO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO or GE SLO. The ILO assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	<p>Modern/ Foreign Languages:</p> <p>Students will be able to successfully manage a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations in a foreign language. [Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects, and a limited number of activities, preferences, and immediate needs.]</p> <p>Certification Criteria include five learning outcomes. The first four are based directly on the national criteria set by the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics; 2) demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between some of the practices and perspectives of the culture studied; 3) demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language by comparing the language they study and their own; 4) use the language both within and beyond the classroom setting; 5) articulate the importance of learning another language in order to engage people unlike them in terms that affirm others as persons created in God's image.
Who is in Charge /Involved?	<p>The entire Modern Language Department was involved in this assessment: Drs. Docter & Elías (Spanish), Professor Carter (Spanish), Professor Hofmann (German), and Professor Penkethman (French). Our 2019 GE report had assessed French and Spanish student learning at the end of the first semester; this year, we assessed language students after their second semester, while also assessing two sections of Spanish 1 for comparative data.</p> <p>We again decided to assess writing competency; however, because French was taught on-line, we opted for oral proficiency in that course to reduce the possibility of cheating and with the hopes that we would get more accurate data. The following classes were assessed in Spring 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French 2 • German 2 • Spanish 2 (2 sections) • Spanish 1 (2 sections) <p>Direct assessment methods were used: In the final week of the semester, students wrote (or spoke) on prompts crafted by the department in our April meeting. Students' writing (or speaking) was then evaluated by the instructor of record using a new rubric designed by the department and based on national proficiency guidelines established by ACTFL, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Appendix A & Appendix B). Results were then compiled in a Google sheet shared with the department (Appendix C).</p>
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	<p>Benchmarks: According to ACTFL, after one semester (45 contact hours), university language students should reach the Novice-Mid level, and after one-year (or two semesters) students should place between Novice-Mid and Novice-High (though some exceptional students may reach the Intermediate-Low level).</p>

Once again, we set our benchmark higher:

- After 1 semester, 75% of students will finish at the Novice-High level (or above)
- After 2 semesters, 75% of students will finish at the Intermediate-Low level (or above)

Level assessed ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Westmont Benchmark

1 semester Novice-Mid Novice-High

2 semesters Novice-Mid to Novice High Intermediate Low

At a summer department meeting dedicated to assessment, Docter & Elías discussed the data, which are compiled below:

French 2 (6 students)

Level	Percentage	No.
Intermediate Low	0%	0
Intermediate Mid	66.67%	4
Intermediate High	33.33%	2

German 2 (12 students)

Level	Percentage	No.
Intermediate Low	16.67%	2
Intermediate Mid	41.67%	5
Intermediate High	41.67%	5

Spanish 2 (26 students)

Level	Percentage	No.
Intermediate Low	16.67%	2
Intermediate Mid	41.67%	5
Intermediate High	41.67%	5

Spanish 1 (18 students)

	Level	Percentage	No.
Intermediate Low	16.67%	2	
Intermediate Mid	41.67%	5	
Intermediate High	41.67%	5	
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>			
Major Findings	<p>We were very pleased with our findings. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second semester: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o In French, German, and Spanish, 100% of our second semester students met our benchmark (Intermediate-Low) and far exceeded the national guidelines established by ACTFL (Novice-Mid to Novice-High). o In fact, 90.91% of all second-semester students placed at Intermediate-Mid or higher (a full level above our benchmark): 100% for French; 83.33% for German; and 92.31% for Spanish. • First semester: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o In Spanish 1, however, we fell slightly short: only 66.7% (two thirds) of our students met our benchmark of 75% at the Novice-High (or above) level, while 33.3% (one third) did not. o These results were also lower than those from 2019, when 81.8% of our first-semester students met the benchmark. o That said, 100% of the first-semester students still performed at or above the national average. <p>We learned several things from this assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, we were surprised by the low proficiency expectations for each language level reported by ACTFL and other studies. We have always expected more of our students, which is why our benchmarks are set higher than the national guidelines. • Second, our experience in the classroom reveals that students are entering college with lower language abilities than in the past and doing more poorly in our classes, which was revealed in the Spanish 1 findings. A good part of this may be due to the COVID pandemic, when language learning went on-line for most students, and many high school teachers gave high grades based on mere participation and completion of assignments, rather than mastery of the material. Because many students have more difficulty learning a language (due, perhaps, to poor high school preparation, learning disabilities, or poor study habits, among other things), ML professors have had to reduce the material covered in our grammar courses, as students 		

	<p>are learning/mastering the material at a slower rate. Perhaps most concerning, however, is that we oftentimes do not have time to teach the important cultural elements in our language classes, meaning that we are oftentimes failing to meet the second point outlined in the certification criteria for our GE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finally, as stated in the 2019 report, we firmly believe that one semester of language instruction does not produce students who can function as expected in the language. For example, at the Novice-Mid level, students can only “communicate with memorized words and phrases on highly predictable, everyday topics, like basic personal information.” Even achieving Novice-High or Intermediate-Low will not permit intercultural communication at a deeper level. In other words, our one-semester GE language requirement falls short: it does not provide enough instruction for students to engage in the target language in meaningful ways or to understand anything beyond very basic aspects of culture.
Closing the Loop Activities	<p>We look forward to sharing these results and more insights regarding Modern Languages at Westmont with the entire faculty as part of a broader conversation about foreign language GE requirements as they relate to the mission of Westmont College.</p>
Collaboration and Communication evidence (dates of departmental meetings, faculty present, decisions made, etc.)	
<p>The GE committee reviewed the Modern/Foreign language assessment results on the November // meeting.</p>	

or/and

II 2025 Senior Student Survey

Key Question	The GE Committee survey included
Who is in Charge/Involved?	The GE Committee and WSCA
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	N/A
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	In Spring 2025, the GE Committee, in collaboration with the WSCA, administered the GE Senior Survey. The survey questions were revised by the GE Committee, while WSCA officers promoted the survey and encouraged their peers

to participate. A total of 143 senior students participated in the survey, representing a 39% response rate; of these, 107 completed all survey questions.

Demographics

Among the respondents, 22% identified as male, 77% as female, and 1% declined to state their gender. For comparison, 63% female students graduated in May 2025.

The chart below displays the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the survey participants.

RACE/ETHNICITY	SURVEY	TOTAL GRADS
White	59%	53%
Hispanic/Latino	17%	22%
Asian	9%	7%
Two or More Races	9%	7%
Black or African American	2%	3%
Unknown	1%	6%
Non-Resident Alien	1%	3%
American/Alaskan Native	1%	0.3%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%	-

Figure 1. Survey participants' racial and ethnic background data.

Students from all academic departments and programs participated in the survey as presented in Chart 2.

Major	##	Survey%	Total Grads %
Kinesiology	21	13%	10%

Economics & Business	17	10%	17%
Psychology	15	9%	10%
Biology	12	7%	6%
Political Science	11	7%	5%
History	8	5%	3%
Communication Studies	7	4%	6%
English	7	4%	4%
Liberal Studies	7	4%	3%
Data Analytics	6	4%	2%
Spanish	6	4%	1%
Nursing	5	3%	4%
Religious Studies	5	3%	3%
Sociology	5	3%	4%
Chemistry	4	2%	5%
Environmental Studies	4	2%	1%
Mathematics	4	2%	3%
Art	3	2%	3%
Education*	3	2%	-
Engineering	3	2%	3%
Philosophy	3	2%	2%
Computer Science	2	1%	2%
Music	2	1%	2%
Social Science	2	1%	1%
Biochemistry	1	1%	-
Theatre Arts	1	1%	1%

*Responses indicating "Teaching Credential" were counted as Education majors.

Figure 2.

If we look at divisional representation, it would appear that the Natural and Behavioral Sciences were slightly overrepresented, while humanities were fairly represented in the survey.

Characteristics	Survey Percentage	Class percentage
Humanities	21%	21%
Social Sciences*	35%	33%
NBS	48%	44%
Transfer students	11%	16.9%

*Environmental Studies was classified as part of the Social Science division

Figure 3.

Based on the major and divisional representation, it is possible to conclude that the responding sample reasonably represents the graduating class as a whole.

Major Findings

The survey did not gauge students' overall satisfaction in the GE; it was geared toward identifying specific strengths and weaknesses.

The survey results indicate that 90.2% of respondents would select a liberal arts college if given the opportunity to attend college again. While many students appreciated their liberal arts education for providing "a well-rounded understanding of different disciplines and how they connect," several noted that some General Education (GE) courses were repetitive and that many GE requirements felt "not related to [their] major." Nonetheless, when asked whether GE courses prepared them well for their major studies, the majority of students responded positively (see Fig. 4).

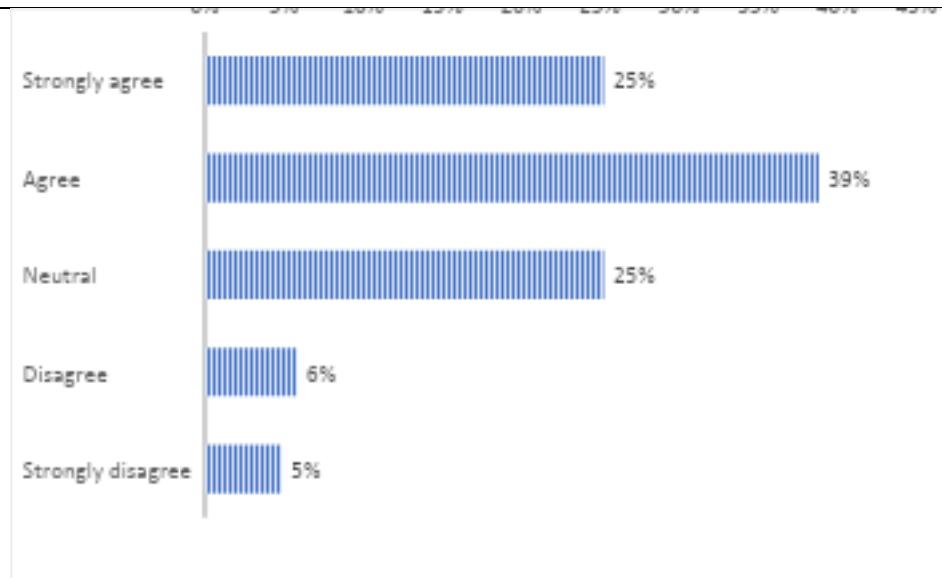


Fig. 4. Student responses to the questions, “In our catalog, we say that the skills and competencies you acquire in the General Education program will support your major studies. Was that your experience?”

When asked whether they would choose a Christian liberal arts college again, 22.4% of respondents answered “no.” Whites constitute 66% of students who would not choose a Christian Liberal Arts College, Hispanics – 19%, Asians – 13% and African-Americans – 3%; female students represent 84% in this category. 22% of these students graduated from the Department of Political Studies, and 8% each from the following departments, Biology, Chemistry and Sociology. While some expressed appreciation for the opportunity to study in a faith-centered environment, others felt that the Christian dimension of Westmont’s education could be more inclusive. Some respondents also noted that the college would benefit from engaging more openly with diverse perspectives to better reflect the complexities of our world. It is worth noting that many of these respondents did not have the opportunity to take the JRD courses, as they were not required by the time they enrolled at Westmont.

In response to the question, “Are there any General Education areas that should be added?” 52% of respondents answered “no.” Among the few suggested additions, the most frequently mentioned was an Ethnic Studies/Diversity area—unsurprising given that most seniors graduated without completing the JRD requirement, which only took effect in Fall 2024.

A majority of respondents expressed a desire for fewer GE requirements, but students do not agree on which ones to cut. The most common suggestions for which courses to cut are the four (4) Physical Education (PE) requirements for all students or exempting varsity athletes from completing them. Fifteen percent of respondents indicated that they do not consider the PE requirement essential (see Fig. 5). These findings align with the results of the 2023 Student PE Survey.

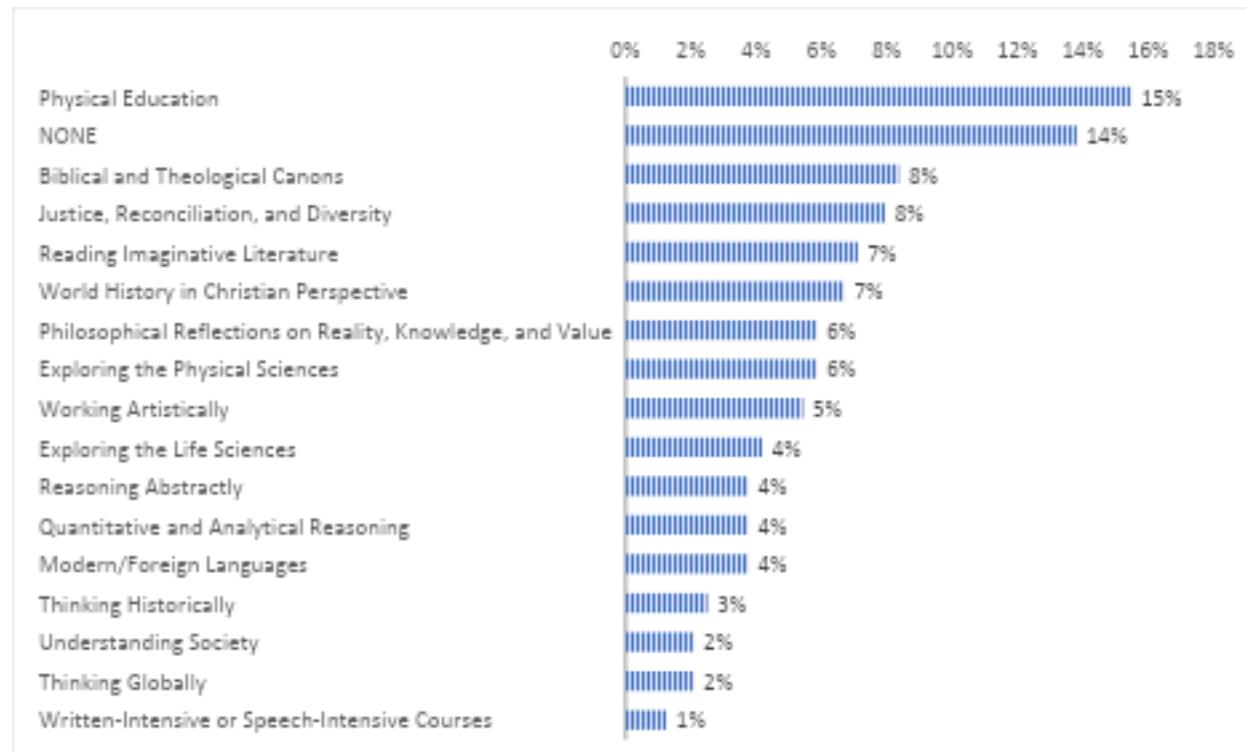


Fig. 5. Student responses to the question “Are there any General Education areas that should be dropped?”

Fitness for Life and other PE courses were also more often cited in response to the question, “Which GE required courses, if any, stand out in your mind as not worth your time? Why?” Representative comments include:

- *“Fitness for Life. I felt like I was doing a lot of busy work, and having the run as our test seemed like an inadequate assessment of health. I think it would have been more helpful to just incorporate some of this material into the other PE courses that involve actual exercise.”*

- *“Fitness for Life — this felt like a repeat of high school health class and covered common health knowledge.”*
- *“PE — most westmont [sic.] students are active anyway.”*

Additionally, “Fitness for Life” was volunteered about one-eighth of the time in response to the question, “Were there any GE courses too easy for college-level? Please be as specific as possible.”

Nevertheless, only around one in seven respondents suggested the PE area for elimination. The next most commonly cited areas were only suggested by one in twelve. While the average senior wants a smaller GE, there is no clear direction on which requirements to reduce.

Because the college decoupled Writing- and Speech-Intensive courses to create two distinct GE areas—Written Communication and Oral Communication—and because the Oral Communication ILO assessment is scheduled for the 2025–26 academic year, the GE Committee included questions related to this core competency. 96% of respondents reported feeling confident in their oral communication skills. Students identified a wide range of experiences that contributed to their development in this area, including in-class presentations, discussions, acting, and leadership opportunities. According to the survey, courses that support the development of oral presentation skills are distributed broadly across both the GE curriculum and major programs. Additionally, 84% of respondents indicated that they received feedback on their oral communication skills from professors, coaches, internship supervisors, and mentors.

A majority of students also felt that their writing-intensive courses prepared them well for academic and professional writing. Specifically, 31% reported that these courses equipped them to write “extremely well” and 42% said “well,” which is commendable (Fig. 4).

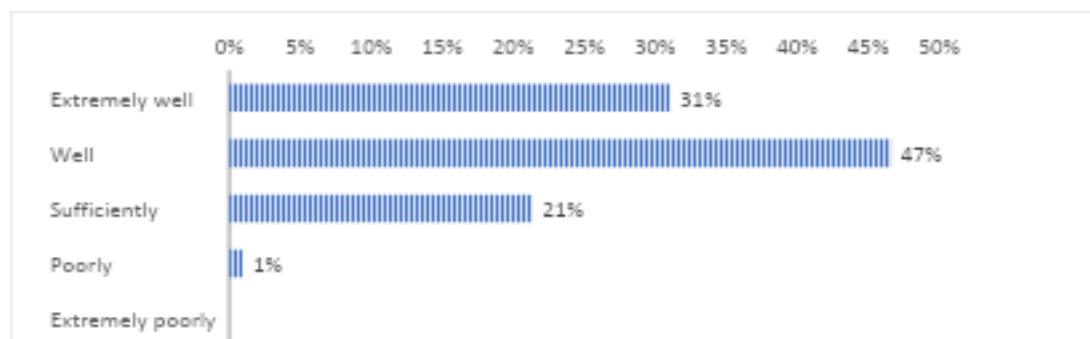


Figure 4. Student responses to the questions, “Have the writing-intensive courses equipped you with the ability to write well?”

In response to the question, “Were there any GE courses too easy for college-level?”, twenty-two percent of respondents reported that some General Education courses were too easy, with Fitness for Life, PE, English, and English Composition mentioned more frequently than other courses.

Among the required courses that students most frequently deemed not worth their time, Fitness for Life, PE courses, and RS courses were mentioned more often than other GE courses. Several respondents noted that Fitness for Life felt like a high school health class, citing its “unhelpful” content. Overall, many respondents expressed a desire for fewer required GE courses.

Among the “unreasonably difficult” courses, Common Context courses—Old Testament, New Testament, Doctrine, World History, and Philosophical Reflections—were mentioned more frequently than those in other GE areas. Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the time commitment required to engage meaningfully with the material, the volume of content they were expected to retain, inconsistencies across course sections taught by different professors, and the difficulty of exams and assessments. However, some students acknowledged that, despite the rigor, they learned a great deal from these courses.

Religious Studies (RS) GE courses prompted a wide range of responses. While some students reported strongly positive experiences, others were highly critical. These courses were frequently cited as among the most difficult GE offerings—particularly those perceived as tailored primarily for RS majors—yet they were also mentioned among students’ favorite courses outside their major. This mix of perspectives suggests that RS courses merit further discussion.

More broadly, the concern that GE courses—especially those in the Common Context area—are excessively time-consuming emerged as a recurring theme. A campus-wide discussion about student and faculty expectations for both GE and major courses at Westmont might be a timely and constructive step forward.

The question, ‘Which GE required courses, if any, stand out in your mind as particularly valuable? What was good about them?’ elicited many insightful responses. Religious Studies (RS) GE courses were most frequently mentioned as particularly meaningful. Students noted that these courses helped them deepen or strengthen their faith, provided new perspectives on Christianity, and fostered a closer relationship with God.

World History and Philosophical Reflections were also frequently cited as valuable. Students credited these courses with helping them “develop a well-balanced view of the world” and encouraging them to “think about modern issues

and the best way to respond to them.” Several respondents emphasized that their liberal arts education would not have felt complete without these classes.

Thinking Globally courses were considered especially valuable for encouraging a broader perspective—an important contribution “at a school that can tend to become insular culturally and socioeconomically.” Similarly, Understanding Society courses were described as “formative and crucial” for expanding students’ worldviews and educating them on racial, political, and gender differences.

Interestingly, Justice, Reconciliation, and Diversity (JRD) courses—despite being a recent addition to the GE curriculum—were highlighted as especially valuable, even though some students expressed criticism about their inclusion in the program. As mentioned earlier, not all seniors had the opportunity to take a JRD course before graduating, but those who did often spoke highly of the experience. One student explained that such courses are important because “the majority of students at Westmont lack an understanding of the lives of those who do not possess the same privilege as their own, as well as an understanding of how they possess their own privilege.” Another respondent appreciated witnessing their “more sheltered friends learn about systemic issues and think about them,” describing the experience as “great.” Yet another student noted that “Westmont students desperately need the justice and reconciliation class” to prepare them “for a world that is not primarily white.” These results are consistent with the Spring 2025 JRD Student Survey results.

In response to the question, “What changes would you suggest to improve the General Education program at Westmont?” a common desire was for a simpler, smaller, more flexible GE. Notable qualitative responses included

- fewer GE requirements (with varying suggestions);
- a more flexible GE;
- less demanding or time-consuming courses;
- more consistent levels of difficulty among inquiries, courses, or sections;
- more basic (less pre-major) content;
- fewer or no PE courses.

Recommendations	<p>Following the presentation of the 2025 Senior Student Survey results, the GE Committee initiated semi-structured faculty roundtable discussions and collected notes from each group. The discussion summaries suggested the following next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate faculty on the GE's mission and structure, especially new faculty at the end of their first year before getting first advisees; • Add /integrate the GE in the Admissions web pages, and help advisors and admissions educate students and prospective students. • Evaluate the impact of GE requirements on transfer students. • Encourage students to take written communication courses earlier. • Pay attention to our growing population of non-Christian students especially regarding Common Contexts RS courses. • Advocate for a committee member to be invited into Wayfinding, especially at the end of first year or beginning of the second. • Consider paired courses that combine GE areas. <p>None of these steps addresses students' desire for a simpler, smaller, and more flexible GE program.</p>
Collaboration and Communication evidence (dates of departmental meetings, faculty present, decisions made, etc.) The GE Committee discussed the survey results at the committee meetings, received input from two academic departments and presented the survey findings at the October 2 Faculty Forum for round-table discussions and input-collection.	

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	
Who was involved in implementation?	

What was decided or addressed?	
How were the recommendations implemented?	
Collaboration and Communication evidence (dates of departmental meetings, faculty present, decisions made, etc.)	

IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

Project	
Who is in Charge /Involved?	
Major Findings	
Action	
Collaboration and Communication evidence (dates of departmental meetings, faculty present, decisions made, etc.)	

V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

--	--	--

VI. Appendices

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents (optional)