

WASC PS Chapter III

4. Curriculum: The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to support student learning through the development of challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum that allows all students the opportunity to reach SLOs. The school's curriculum reveals its mission and SLOs and connects directly to current student learning needs. The school pursues current research-based curriculum development information to keep its program relevant and effective.

Summary of Findings

After writing the details, include an executive summary highlighting the major points in the findings. Consider using italics or a text box or a different font to set off these general findings letting the reader know the bottom line up front.

Curricular mapping: Consider using the main idea from each of the indicators as guide headings. (Yes, you should write to each of the indicators.) These short, bold subheads every few paragraphs help the reader who is skimming through prose find the sections that are of interest, or to just get the main concepts. The subheads act as "mileposts" along the way for the reader.

Ensure that you tell your best and complete story within this chapter. It's important to go beyond what you do to analyzing the effectiveness of activities/programs to improve student learning. The devil's in the details, as the differentiation and

disaggregation where appropriate will provide more convincing evidence for the action plan. This is particularly true as you discuss differences and similarities within/between programs and student groups. Think about those major conclusions from Chapter 1 and the student learning data!

Review of curriculum: Any/all of the ideas shown in this sample can be combined with one another as you build your school's report.

Remember to double check those "Discussion Questions" for important topics/ideas to be pursued and included. You don't need to answer them individually, however, they point out key topics for you to consider.

Access to learning materials: Techniques you can use to be concise include:

- Lists
- Short phrases instead of full sentences
- Information related to identified learner needs

Notice how much easier the list above is to read than this paragraph. Make sure that you are not providing less information just because you are being concise.

Strengths for Curriculum

- Must come from the narrative
- Great place to honor programs/services
- Don't number as you likely don't want to imply priority
- Might these be expanded to other programs/individuals?

Key issues for Curriculum

1. Identified in the narrative and summarized here.
2. Think about how this might help improve student learning and achieve your goals. Are you on target or not?

- 3. Remember these are to be prioritized, thus numbered. Think about establishing a maximum number of these key issues so folks select the most critical areas of focus

Evidence: Several options can be used to identify evidence. One is to list relevant sources at the end (or beginning) of each subsection or standard. Use a paragraph or a list. Be as specific as is necessary to clearly identify what supports the findings.

5. Instruction: The instructional staff uses research-based instructional strategies and teaching methodologies that engage students at high levels of learning and allow them to achieve SLOs and course objectives. Faculty members are given ongoing training. [The standard continues. You must use all of each of them!]

High-level Instruction: Another technique is to use a simple paragraph format – again following those indicators. This text is “fill” justified – both left and right margins are straight the way they are in newspapers. This format is harder to read than a “ragged” right (or left justified) format. If you’re not using a proportional type the computer can create odd spacing in-between letters and words. See what happens. Look particularly at the last line of the next paragraph.

Delivery Modes and Methodologies: Too many fonts cause your good writing to look messy and create distraction for the reader. Another typeface? **Bold?** Underline? **Bold and Underline?** **CAPS, BOLD AND UNDERLINE?** *Italics?* Many editors say using bold and underline together is too harsh, maybe even shouting!

- **Nursing:** Consider program specific information as the programs really are different.
- **ESL:** Keep referring to those discussion questions for help in developing a deeper understanding of the ramifications of the standards.
- **On-line Instruction:** Even clearly identifying the variety of delivery modes and how they interplay in different courses/programs might be helpful.

- **Others:** Don’t leave any programs out; however, some might be combined. Or, separate it out by individual courses and/or student learning levels.

Activity	Department/Program
Embedding a table within the report helps to break-up text.	A way of distinguishing departments/programs or details about identified learner needs.
This scheme permits the use of standard, paragraphed text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-tables, and lists create white space. • And shorten text.
Tabled reports are always longer!	Lines or no lines? That’s a good question! See next table.

Strengths for Instruction

- Continue to identify schoolwide strategies that support student achievement of SLOs
- Or, specific strategies within a program/department
- Could come before or after the evidence

Key issues for Instruction

1. These are derived from the narrative. Nothing new here!
2. How does the evidence support your conclusions?
3. How might these inform-your future work? Is this something for the action plan?

6 . Use of Assessment: The instructional staff uses established assessment procedures to design, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses, programs, and student learning levels. [This is only PART of the standard!]

Findings	Evidence
<p>Clear Learning Outcomes Measure Success: Using a table is an acceptable format. Remember, WASC has NO required or preferred format.</p> <p>Multiple Sources: This is a Word table with most horizontal and all vertical separating lines eliminated for printing. This structure easily keeps the evidence cited “in line” with the findings.</p> <p>Data Analysis: Note the use of serif type for the body and a sans serif type for the headers. Serif type is generally considered easier to read than a non-serif type.</p> <p>Regular Reporting: This format takes more space than others. That’s neither good nor bad – just a fact.</p> <p>Use Results for Institutional Planning;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider joining concepts. This might be particularly helpful in some of the standards. 2. Remember to help the reader understand you delved deeply into the subject 3. Remember to detail what you’ve learned about identified learner needs 	<p>Source(s) of statement</p> <p>Either keep the evidence lined up with the assertion OR simply list</p> <p>Artifact/data documents which would confirm this statement</p> <p>No side borders make things lighter in feel.</p> <p>No matter what format you choose, someone won’t be happy with it.</p>

- Have as many as you need to acknowledge and honor the work of staff and stakeholders.
- Be consistent in grammatical style and punctuation.
- Make sure these things are reported in the text of your self-study! They can’t come from nowhere.

Areas for Growth for Assessment

1. Because this is a prioritized list, number the items. Make sure these things are substantiated in the text of your self-study. Create alignment among the school profile, standards narratives, and action plan. As with strengths, these should not be a surprise to the reader.
2. From the areas of growth for each standard gather those that are most important for inclusion in the action plan. Readers should be logically drawn to the conclusions reached at the school site.
3. Keep this list shorter rather than longer to prevent it from becoming a wish list.

Other considerations/ideas

- Too much of a straight narrative presentation leads to a dense, hard to read report particularity when numbers are buried within the paragraphs. One thousand four hundred thirty students doing anything; followed by 35 percent doing something else; with 456 graduates does not make for easy reading.
 - Use a table or chart to present numerical information.
 - Break the rule of starting a sentence only with numbers spelled out – use numerals.
 - Use % rather than spelling out percent.
 - Use whole numbers for percent (94% rather than 93.74%).

Strengths of Assessment

- Identify those things that most support the standard as a whole.

- When using graphs, make sure you select an appropriate format to display the data!
- Color helps graphs and tables.
- The standards can be presented either as declarative sentences or questions. Just use the format consistently.
- Should all of Chapter 3 be organized/presented in the same way? For readability, yes. Too many changes in style or organization are confusing. However, nothing prevents variations for emphasis.
- Make sure all pages are consecutively numbered for easy reference. Do this throughout the entire report or within each of the chapters (for example, III-1). Chapter pagination allows you to publish sections as they are complete rather than waiting for the entire document.
- Should the self-study be run on one or two sides of the page? This is your choice. Think about size (and weight), places for members of the Visiting Committee to take notes, readability, and publishing ease. There's no right answer. Check with your chair.
- Think about publishing: notebooks (choose the smallest possible) or bound (spiral or stapled with a spine are best). Will you add dividers? What about photographs? These are details which can be decided relatively early.
- Don't forget the preface and a good table of contents.
- Do remember that your entire report is a logical argument for the action plan. Your readers must understand this argument. Make sure it speaks to the issues and strengths identified by data and by a study of institutional practices. One trainer advises giving your self-study to a good sixth

Using a text box to set off a quote or fact might give additional impact. Or, include a picture. This is another place to vary type style. Here the type is the same font just a little smaller and italicized.

grader or your grandmother to read. If they can understand it and are drawn to the same logical conclusions, you've been clear for your other audiences.

- Generally, use strong, active voice sentences. One of the all-time worst offenders for creating unclear, wordy, indirect writing is the passive-voice construction.
 - Active:* The student wrote the report.
 - Passive:* The report was written by the student
- You can presume the reader understands common acronyms (ESL, SLO). Include a glossary of any acronyms and program names that are unique to your school/organization.
- When you are writing, it is easy to construct long sentences that become hard to read. The military standard for many years has been 17 words per sentence. Other standards allow up to 25 words per sentence. It's not that sentences can't be significantly longer or shorter than these standards—it's just that the average ought to stay somewhere within the 17- to 25-word range.
- Complicated language may make your report read like and educational journal, but it may also make it unclear or vague. Write for readability. If you don't like reading your report, neither will anyone else!
- Take a look at either APA or MLA for table formatting. Be consistent! Do use tables/graphs already completed for your institution; no need to redo things.
- Take advantage of the template on the WASC website – use as is or adapt. At minimum, all the standards text is keyed in for you! http://acswasc.org/process_postsecondary.htm