

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in the State University System

University: University of North Florida	Program: Lower Division Writing Program			
Assessment Instruments and Procedures	Discipline Knowledge and Skills	Communication Skills	Critical Thinking Skills	Comments
<p><u>Program Assessment Test:</u> Every incoming freshman takes a timed essay exam which requires him to read a brief text presenting a debatable issue, to take a stand with regard to that issue, and to write a reasoned argument in support of that stand.</p>	X	X	X	The Program Assessment Test is designed to provide a benchmark assessment of student skills in textual analysis, critical thinking, and reasoned argument, the skills our program is designed to teach.
<p><u>On-line Learning Survey:</u> At the end of each course in the (3-course) writing sequence, each student completes an on-line learning survey which asks him to assess his progress with regard to the development of particular skills in reading, thinking, speaking, and writing. Questions direct him to identify changes in his ability to grapple with complex texts, for example, and in his ability to find, evaluate, and make use of material from research sources.</p>	X	X	X	Survey questions are framed in light of the writing program's goals (the development of skills in textual analysis, critical thinking, and reasoned argument, both spoken and written)—and in light of the outcomes identified by UNF's General Education Council for the lower division program overall.
<p><u>Working Monthly Meetings for Teachers:</u> Student responses to the on-line learning survey are analyzed every term, and the results are communicated to program teachers in monthly working meetings. We use the students' reports of their own progress with regard to specific skills continually to adjust the program's efforts. Where we discover any significant hesitation in the students' progress, we develop new assignments or approaches in deliberate response.</p>	X	X	X	Learning survey results verify the program's strengths, with regard to addressing particular outcomes in learning, and provide an ongoing guide for program improvement.

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<p><u>End of Sequence Exam:</u> Each student completing the (3-course) writing sequence takes an End of Sequence Exam—a timed essay exam different in topic but identical in format to the one he took before beginning the program. Again he is asked to analyze a debatable issue presented in a brief text, to take a stand with regard to that issue, and to write a reasoned argument in defense of that stand.</p>	X	X	X	<p>This test serves to demonstrate the degree to which our students' self-assessments on the on-line learning survey are warranted. It provides evidence both of individual student progress and of the program's success overall, with regard to achieving specific learning outcomes. Regular analysis of student performance on the initial Program Assessment Exam in comparison with performance this final essay exam provides us with an index of our success and a guide for continual progress.</p>