

The Writing Program
at
The University of North Florida

Five Step
Assessment Cycle



Five Step Assessment Cycle

- Students demonstrate what they can do when they arrive
- Students evaluate their own learning as they go
- We adjust our efforts in response to what they say
- Students demonstrate what they can do when they complete our program
- We adjust our efforts in response to what they do



The cycle involves both direct and indirect assessment

- Direct Assessment = Demonstration in timed essay exams, students demonstrate their skills
- Indirect Assessment = Testimony in on-line learning surveys, students testify to their progress



The cycle assesses both student learning and program strength

- Individual essay exams demonstrate student progress
- Individual learning surveys reveal student perceptions
- Combined results direct the program's continual refinement

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Step One:

The Program Assessment Test

A timed essay exam administered to every incoming freshman, the PAT requires students

- to read a brief text presenting both sides of a debatable issue
- to take a stand with regard to that issue
- to write a reasoned argument in support of that stand



The Program Assessment Test

- provides a benchmark assessment of student skills
- focuses on critical thinking, textual analysis, and reasoned argument—the skills our program is designed to teach

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Step Two: The On-line Learning Survey

A set of questions every student is asked to answer on-line at the end of each course in the writing sequence, the OLS asks students to assess their progress with regard to the development of particular skills in reading, thinking, speaking, and writing.



Students on the OLS identify changes in their ability to

- analyze arguments
- assume and defend a position on a given topic
- support an argument with evidence
- locate, evaluate, and make productive use of information from research sources



Students on the OLS identify changes in their ability to

- employ critical reading strategies
- understand complex texts
- write coherently, analytically, and convincingly
- speak precisely and effectively

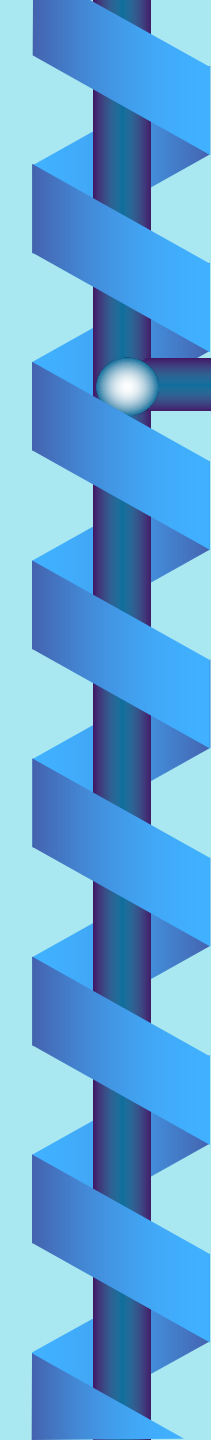
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Step Three: Working Monthly Meetings

- Program teachers analyze student responses on the On-Line Learning Survey--and develop focused teaching strategies in response.
- Students' assessments of their own learning direct our efforts to improve instruction.

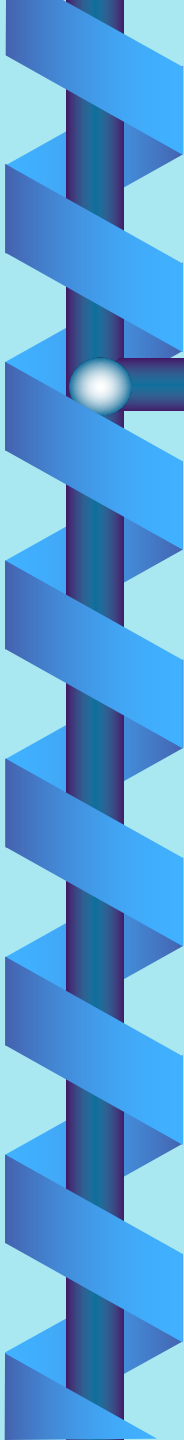
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Step Four: End of Sequence Exam

Each student completing the three-course writing sequence takes a timed essay exam in the same format as the test he took before he began.

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The EoS exam provides a third learning assessment

The Program Assessment Test

- direct assessment
- each student's demonstration of skills on arrival

The On-Line Learning Survey

- Indirect assessment
- Each student's testimony of what he has learned

The End of Sequence Exam

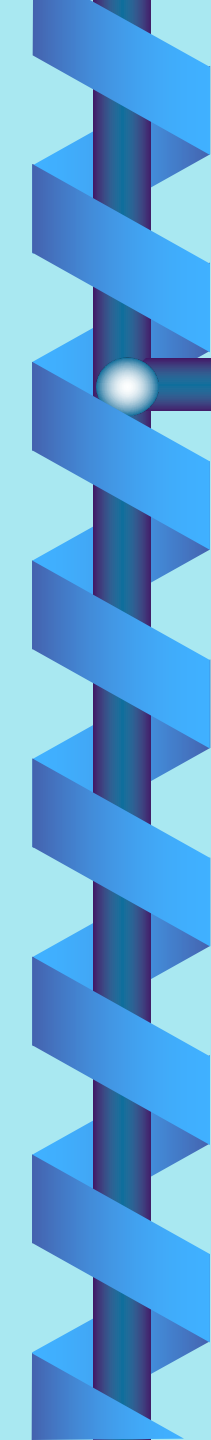
- Direct assessment
- Each student's demonstration of what he has learned



Step Five: Learning from the EoS Exam

Regular analysis of the EoS will teach us

- how far our students' self-assessments on the OLS are warranted
- what progress individual students have made with regard to achieving specific learning outcomes



Regular analysis of the End of Sequence Exam will also teach us

- how successful our program is overall in meeting its goals for student learning
- where we need to improve or refine our efforts

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The Five Step Assessment Cycle

- Program Assessment Test = Direct Assessment
- On-line Learning Survey = Indirect Assessment
- Working Meetings for
for Teachers = Analysis & Response
- End of Sequence Exam = Direct Assessment
- Learning from the EoS = Analysis & Response

We learn what our students are learning.

We make use of what we learn.

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