

Assessment Phase Four, Part Two: Plan for Holistic Scoring Workshop to Determine Criteria for Student Writing Competence

In order to meet the new general education synthesis requirement, each degree program will need to articulate standards of writing competence and methods for determining those standards. A holistic scoring workshop, which engages faculty from across the disciplines in a widely-used and validated procedure for measuring writing competence, will be held Fall 2001 to work on both of these objectives. Besides helping the participants to hone their own standards of student writing competence, the workshop can provide a model that participants may use with their colleagues as they work toward determining departmental standards for student writing. This workshop will serve as a pilot which, if successful, might be modified and repeated as curriculum development continues.

Plan of Action:

Faculty who regularly teach writing-intensive courses in their departments as well as composition faculty who teach each of the four versions of English 302-Advanced Writing in the Disciplines will be invited to a day-long session. We hope to have as participants at least one person from each of the approximately 25 undergraduate departments offering writing-intensive courses.

The workshop will entail faculty coming together to read and evaluate sample student papers and to hold a structured discussion of the criteria for evaluation. In the first half of the workshop, we will use holistic scoring methodology, the standard for the Educational Testing Service and other testing organizations and already used each year by the English Department in helping to acquaint new faculty with our departmental standards.

Re: Proposal for Holistic Scoring Session for Assessment of Writing

In the second half of the workshop, faculty will meet in groups to discuss the outcome of the scoring session and its implications for their own evaluation of student writing as well as for their departmental development of standards. We also intend for the groups to articulate a set of common values for good student writing and, based on these values, to develop a set of criteria for written competence. Our goal is that faculty will leave the session with concrete ideas for applying workshop methods and outcomes in their own departments as they work towards implementing the synthesis requirement.

Outcomes: The workshop will model a process that departments can use to develop their criteria for student writing competence toward meeting the synthesis requirement. Participants will produce a list of criteria for good student writing that cut across departments as well as others which are characteristic only of certain disciplines. Departments will be able to use both lists in developing their standards.