**Wichita State University English 101 Assessment Breakdown and Evaluation Academic Year 2009/2010**

**Submitted by Darren DeFrain, Director of the Writing Program**

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**OBJECTIVES:** The goal of this assessment was to help determine student perception of course goals effectiveness, faculty effectiveness, and overall curriculum effectiveness as well as the students’ practical application of essay-writing skills (the emphasis of English 101).

The anonymous survey, also included, asks students a series of questions regarding their satisfaction with the way their class met prescribed course goals, the specific effectiveness of their instructor, and the curriculum’s effectiveness in helping them to learn appropriate writing skills. Each question asked students to rate their answers on a three point scale reflecting dissatisfaction, satisfaction, or exceeding expectations. There was also room for additional commentary at the end of the survey. This survey was conducted near the end of the semester.

The expectations for the survey were that the course goals, instructor, and curriculum would average out at least meeting student perceptions for success. In all sections of the survey an average score of > or = 2 on any response would indicate overall satisfaction with those goals. The individualized statistics, including the numbers of valid responses, numbers of missing responses, mean, median, and standard deviation are all included on the frequencies sheets attached to this report.

This assessment also considers the practical application of students essay writing abilities by comparing scores of diagnostic essays done at the start of the semester with the students’ exam examination grade (following the exact same guidelines as the diagnostic but with different essay prompts). Both of the essays (diagnostic and exit exam) were graded on the same 5 point scale using the English 101 grading rubric. These scores and the grading rubric are also included with the supplementary materials of this report.

**OUTCOMES:** While we offer fewer sections of English 101 in the spring, many of our students who take English 101 in the spring are coming out of either English 011 (or its equivalent) or are retaking English 101. We might anticipate a negative shift in results as more of these students could be expected to struggle in their English 101 courses. However, there again appears to be a slight improvement over the fall assessment where curriculum dissatisfaction scored at a slightly higher-than-anticipated level. The spring assessment again this year shows that all levels of student perceptions are within the acceptable ranges of expectations and most approach ‘exceeding’ expectations. Of special note, most of these courses were taught by our first year Graduate Teaching Assistants (or GTAs). Most of these GTAs have had little-to-no teaching experience when they start here in the fall, so some of the increase in overall satisfaction, I believe, also points to our GTAs improved teaching abilities from the first semester to the next. Of note: A resounding number of respondents (167 or 79.9%) marked their GTA’s “knowledge of materials” as a perfect score of 3.

The fall 2009 average exit examination grade was 2.93 (equivalent to a strong C grade by our standards, the equivalency scale is also included in the supplementary materials). This grade was just slightly lower than those of our adjunct instructors (3.23) and considerably lower than those of our concurrent faculty (3.83). Neither difference is considered significant because of the lower numbers in both of the latter groups. The fall course grade was a 2.19 for courses taught by GTAs (down markedly from the previous year), 3.10 for instructors (roughly equivalent to the previous year’s 3.02), and 3.29 (up considerably from 2.7 the previous year) for concurrent faculty. The average grade of 2.49 is consistent with the exit exam grade equivalent of a C and is within range of the prior year’s 2.62. The diagnostic average for GTA courses was 2.40, demonstrating good progress over the semester. Adjunct instructor diagnostics averaged 3.1, showing less improvement but consistency with the other scores above. Concurrents did not provide date even after repeated attempts to solicit cooperation.

The spring 2009 average course grade for GTA courses was 1.9, for adjunct-taught courses the average was markedly higher at 3.0. There were, however, only 21 students combined in the spring 101 sections. For concurrent teachers the average grade was 2.84. The concurrent grade was again noticeably higher than the on-campus sections, however the differential was better than in years past. The average diagnostic score for GTAs was 2.26. Concurrents again failed to report their diagnostic scores as requested. The adjunct average was 2.97 with limited reporting. GTA exit exams scores averaged 2.53, inconsistent with the average grade of 1.9 but consistent with the 2.26 diagnostic. The exit exam scores are especially significant as they are graded by the course instructor and another instructor and then averaged for the final grade. All of these scores are included with the supplementary materials.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** While the spring surveys indicate an improved overall satisfaction with our English 101 curriculum I think we will need to continue this assessment for the foreseeable future. We have made some significant changes to our curriculum the last two years with changing text books. We have maintained the same modes-based progression, though, and it will be interesting to see if the relatively low grades last spring for GTA sections were an aberration. The data we collect this year will be especially useful in this regard to see how well the texts and assignments are working with our students.

We will continue to require that GTAs, adjunct instructors, and concurrent instructors all submit data for these assessments. We continue to see a lack of responsiveness from concurrents, though, and I recommend we implement some sort of punitive response as this assessment is crucial to our continued development.

Concerns with the higher grades given to concurrent students will also be continuously monitored. Concurrent teachers typically have students who are more motivated and are upper quartile or 2nd quartile students vs. the wide array of abilities we see in the campus classes, so this may allow for some elevation of scores in those courses. Regardless, everyone teaching English 101 for WSU will be made aware of these results and will be encouraged to dialogue with the Composition Committee about concerns, recommendations, and supportive comments. It should be noted that there may be some effect of WSU’s change to the plus/minus grading scale on next year’s results.

**Supplementary Material Index**

**A WSU English 101 Exit Survey**

**B Frequencies for Fall 2009 Exit Exam**

**C Frequencies for Spring 2010 Exit Exam**

**D Fall 2009 Exit Exam and Final Grade Data**

**E Spring 2010 Exit Exam and Final Grade Data**

**F Exit Exam Grade Equivalency Memo**

**G 6 Trait Grading Rubric**