

# Wright College Academic Department/Program Assessment Project Fall 2015-16

## WHAT?

Describe the purpose of this assessment project.

The purpose of the project was to assess student competency in "purpose and audience" at the end of English 101.

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## WHY?

Describe your department/program's reasons for taking on this project and the areas of your department/program that are involved.

The department focused on this project in order to support the college's assessment efforts relative to assessing student achievement in the General Education outcomes. Additionally, this project allowed for the collection of an additional semester of data using the same instrument from fall 2014-2015, which might provide insight into its validity and broad use throughout the department's composition curriculum.

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## HOW?

Describe the participants, methods, and the timeline for this project.

**Participants:** Full and part-time faculty members teaching within the department participated in the project as project participants and/or department assessment committee members.

**Methods:** We defined "purpose and audience" using national, local and institutional guidelines. The instrument used was a rubric developed collaboratively, aligned with national, local and institutional standards for student learning achievement in college composition. Instructors of English101 were asked to use the rubric to assess end-of-term student competency in writing of a "critical essay."

**Timeline:** It began in fall 2015. The data was collected, analyzed and shared at the beginning of spring 2016.

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## WHAT WE FOUND

1. Describe the way in which your department/program will collect results. 2. Provide the results. 3. Describe how these results will be used for improvements.
1. The completed and anonymous rubrics were submitted at the end of the semester. The data from the rubrics was collected, analyzed and shared with the department-at-large.

2. Most students are performing at the competency level of “Beginning Apprentice” or above in “Purpose + Audience” (94% in fall 2015) with a majority of students performing at the level of “Advanced Apprentice” or higher (68% in fall 2015). See chart below. All numbers are percentages.

<b>Fall 2015</b>	Emerging Scholars	Advanced Apprentice	Beginning Apprentice	Novice
Process	29	39	26	6
<b>Purpose + Audience</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>
Exposition + Argument	22	38	32	8
Organization + Development	21	40	31	8
Critical Thinking	19	33	37	11
Syntax + Usage	22	45	30	3

3. From these data, we conclude that at the end of the first semester of a two-semester course sequence in first-year composition, students are at least satisfactorily, but more often than not, well to very well prepared to write with the appropriate sense of purpose and audience within the context of academic discourse.
4. Despite the promising numbers and in order to support continued (as well as sustained) improvement in the teaching of critical thinking, the department assessment committee has developed (spring 2016) and will deploy (fall 2016) the following supportive interventions:
- Recommend or develop and pilot a diagnostic essay to be given at the beginning of the semester in English 101 in order to benchmark student competency at the beginning of the semester and measure learning gains throughout the semester as well as the effectiveness any formative assessment and interventions on student learning.
  - Update rubric to include the teaching of strategies to avoid plagiarism as integral to critical thinking within the context of academic discourse;
  - Three curricular modules with texts, assignments and other assessments aligned with the critical essay rubric and designed to support student learning in all learning outcomes for English 101, including critical thinking;
  - Streamlined and adaptable formative assessment rubrics designed to enable instructors to track and communicate student development in sub-criteria associated with critical thinking and other learning outcomes for English 101 as well as reflect upon the impact of teaching choices/practices on student learning relative to the achievement of course learning outcomes; and,
  - A guiding document, which will enable the instructor cohorts that assess the critical essay in English 101 to more effectively contextualize and articulate the meaning of the data derived from departmental assessment activities.
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