



ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Volume 5, Issue 2

December 2005

CASL Members

Melanie Burns, Chair
Rigoberto Chinchilla
Ryan Hawkins
Mary Herrington-Perry
Peggy Holmes-Layman
Debra Hopgood
Daiva Markelis
Debra Reid
Karla Sanders
Rebecca Throneburg
James Tidwell
Jie Zou

Assessment website:
www.eiu.edu/~assess

Important Dates

Speaking Across the Curriculum Workshop, "Using the University Rubric to Assess Individual and Group Presentations," **Thursday, February 23, 2006**, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the Arcola-Tuscola Room of the Martin Luther King, Jr. University Union.

The annual assessment summary forms are due to Dr. Karla Sanders by **June 15, 2006**. Forms are available on the assessment web site.

FACULTY READ ELECTRONIC WRITING PORTFOLIOS

In September 2005, twenty-three faculty and staff members attended a training at Eagle Creek Resort to learn how to assess Eastern's Electronic Writing Portfolios.

Dr. Robert O'Brien Hokanson, Associate Professor of English and Coordinator of the Communication Ability Department at Alverno College, developed and led the one and a one half-day training.

Readers volunteered from all four colleges, the School of Continuing Education, Booth Library, and the Center for Academic Support and Achievement. Dr. O'Brien Hokanson urged readers to look for patterns across the portfolios rather than focusing on each individual document submitted to the portfolios. As they learned what to look for in the

portfolios, readers examined seven aspects of writing: focus/purpose, organization, development, audience, style, mechanics, and sources. Following the training, these skills formed the basis for the first readings of the portfolios.

Readers were given access to a secure, password-protected web site and were given the month of October to read 13-14 portfolios. Portfolios were chosen at random through a software program written by two Eastern CIS majors in Spring 2005. Ten percent of the completed portfolios were read for a total of 312 portfolios encompassing 973 documents. Readings will take place annually each fall. Readers were asked to complete a reader's guide for each portfolio read and an overall

(Continued on page 2)

SAC STRIVES TO OFFER RESOURCES FOR SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

Academic year 2004-05 marked the first year that data was collected at the 1000 and 4000 levels for the speaking goal. In the previous academic year, the Speaking Across the Curriculum Subcommittee (SAC) of CASL offered several workshops, conducted by Dr. Sherry Holladay, Dr. Gail Mason, and Dr. Mary Hogg, on creating speaking assignments and using the rubric to assess group and individual presentations.

In AY 05 SAC worked to make the

speaking rubric easily understandable for faculty and students. With the help of communication studies students, examples of each speaking skill at the various levels is available on the assessment web site. Students each took a skill and demonstrated a highly competent piece of a speech, a competent example, a minimally competent snippet, and a not competent example. With the help of CATS and Dr. Mary Hogg in Communication Studies,

(Continued on page 2)

EWP CONT.

evaluation sheet covering all the portfolios they read. After portfolios had been read by individual readers, four focus groups were held so that faculty could come together and share their observations about how effective undergraduate writing is at Eastern.

The following table represents how readers rated the portfolios they read by the skills and then the overall score. See the website for an explanation of the skills and assessment levels.

Skill	Strong	Adequate	Weak
Focus/Purpose	26%	53%	21%
Organization	25%	54%	21%
Development	27%	42%	32%
Style	16%	63%	20%
Audience	20%	66%	13%
Mechanics	31%	52%	17%
Sources	30%	52%	18%
Overall	26%	53%	21%

While readers were asked to provide information on how well students met the above writing skills through a reading guide that divided each skill into three levels of effectiveness, the majority of the data gathered from the readings and

focus groups were qualitative. What follows are a small sampling of the findings:

The first submission from English 1001G or 1002G was often the strongest submission in the portfolios while the submission from the senior seminar tended to be one of the weaker submissions.

Readers also noted that students who had difficulty sustaining focus or a sense of purpose also had issues with development and those whose papers were weak in terms of organization showed little evidence of development.

Style was one of the skills that readers found most problematic across the portfolios. Many people commented that the documents lacked sophistication of style and were not written in academic prose.

The full narrative report is available at www.eiu.edu/~assess.

SPEAKING CONT.

student speeches were videotaped. Those examples are available by going to the assessment web site and clicking on “Primary Trait Analysis for Speaking Matrix for Assessment of Oral Presentations.” To view each presentation, simply click on the camera icon in each cell of the rubric.

This academic year, SAC plans to increase the number of resources on the web site and to offer a workshop for faculty looking for ways to assess the undergraduate speaking goal either at the program level or through one of the courses where data is currently being gathered.

Dr. Sherry Holladay, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, and Dr. Rodney Marshall, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies, will lead this interactive workshop. Clips of student speeches—individual and group presentations—will be used to discuss how to assess oral communication skills combined with content.

Attendees will be encouraged to use the rubric and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the examples provided.

“Using the University Rubric to Assess Individual and Group

Presentations” will be held on Thursday, February 23, 2006 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the Arcola-Tuscola Room of the MLK Union.

Faculty struggling with assessing presentations in senior seminar or seeking ways to assess effective speaking at the program or course level are encouraged to attend the workshop and seek guidance from these experts in oral communication. We ask that you RSVP to 581-6056 or kksweeney@eiu.edu so that we ensure enough materials are prepared for the workshop.