



ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Volume 8, Issue 2

March 2009

CASL Members & Areas of Representation

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College of Education &
Professional Studies

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Stacey Knight-Davis, Booth
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Lucia Schroeder, Council on
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Lisa Taylor, Council on Graduate
Studies

Tim Taylor, Writing Across the
Curriculum Committee

Rebecca Throneburg, chair,
Provost's Appointee

Jie Zou, College of Sciences

<http://www.eiu.edu/~assess>

PROVOST'S ACHIEVEMENT IN ASSESSMENT AWARDS GIVEN

Each year the college deans may nominate up to three departments for consideration of the Provost's Achievement in Assessment Awards. Three awards are given annually to the graduate and undergraduate programs displaying excellent assessment plans and practices.

Plaques for this year's awards were given at the Council of Deans meeting on February 17. The following departments were recognized: first place with a \$2500 prize was awarded to the undergraduate program in Special Education. The second place winner with an award of \$1500 went to the graduate program in Counseling and Student Development. The graduate program in Clinical

Psychology was awarded the third place prize of \$1000.

Dr. Kathlene Shank, chair of the Special Education department, notes that "assessment is part of our culture. We use assessments to assess candidate performance specific to professional standards and for purposes of program improvement."

The second place recipient is also from the College of Education and Professional Studies. Counseling and Student Development has recently revised its curriculum and assessment plan to align with University and professional organization standards.

Dr. Richard Roberts, chair, attributes his department's success to

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EWP DATA AVAILABLE

This fall marked the fourth reading of completed Electronic Writing Portfolios. Readers from across the University read 198 portfolios, which represents 10% of the completed portfolios from AY08.

Only 24% of portfolios were considered strong this year while 27% fell into this classification in 2007. Style remained consistent with 18% deemed strong for both 2007 and 2008.

Identified strengths included a strong focus and strong use of sources; the percentage of portfolios deemed strong in both categories rose by 5%. Style remained consistent with 18% deemed strong for both 2007 and 2008.

Several categories saw fewer portfolios rated as strong compared to 2007 ratings; skills identified as weaknesses include organization, development, sense of audience, and mechanics.

Readers were asked to indicate ways to use these data to improve student writing. They suggested that they and their colleagues could make changes to assignments to help students hone the writing skills they need, "Perhaps less comprehensive papers could help with the development of ideas," suggested one reader. Another offered this comment, "A major weakness that I

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AWARDS CONT.

“All faculty members are involved in assessment and understand its positive impact on the program. On a recent national exam for counseling, our students exceeded the mean scores in every core content areas compared to three national norm groups. We think assessment keeps us continually focused on program improvement which in turn leads to student improvement.”

Clinical psychology also involves all graduate faculty as well as agency supervisors and graduate students in its assessment program. Dr. Anupama Sharma commented that “Assessment information is broadly shared with students and with agency supervisors and their feedback has helped us to implement changes.” Danny Harvey at CATS has aided the department in placing its assessment program completely on-line.

Two of this year’s award recipients are graduate programs. Dr. Robert Augustine, Dean of the Graduate School, connects quality programs displayed through assessment to attracting good students. “The quality of a graduate program is the critical factor for attracting the best candidates and securing their admission. Graduate faculty at Eastern recognize that an effective assessment plan is key to achieving that quality.”



Pictured from left to right: Dean Robert Augustine, Graduate School; Dean Mary Anne Hanner, College of Sciences; Dr. John Mace and Dr. Anupama Sharma, Department of Psychology; Dean Diane Jackman, College of Education and Professional Studies, and Dr. Richard Roberts, Department of Counseling and Student Development.

Date Reminder: Annual assessment summaries are due to CASA June 15, 2009

EWP CONT.

found in the portfolios is the inability to form personal opinions, to elaborate and justify them. The students were good at summarizing other people’s opinions (obtained from other sources) but unable to develop their own.”

Several readers called for the need to focus faculty members’ attention on asking students to write for an audience, particularly in real world settings they will encounter at work.

Some readers indicated that we need to teach students what they need to know to be good writers and not assume that they learned all about mechanics before coming to college. “We professors need to realize that this generation is generally not taught grammar in elementary/high school, so this is now part of our job. We also need to remember that teaching ‘content’ must include teaching

effective ways to use the content in argument. Far too many of the essays I read in this set of portfolios were descriptive (summaries, book reports, etc.), which provide no evidence of students’ ability to incorporate information into their knowledge base, form an opinion based on that information, and argue that opinion effectively,” explained one reader.

If you are interested in viewing comparative data from the four years of readings and reading more faculty reader comments, you will find the full report on-line.

In addition to the portfolio readings, Fall 2008 marked the first time submissions were made electronically to the EWP through an on-line system developed by Danny Harvey from CATS.

A total of 2,258 submissions were made by 1,922 students. Of those 2,258 submissions, 651 (29%) received a rating of 4 (superior); 802 (36%) received a rating of 3.5 (superior/satisfactory); 664 (29%) received a score of 3 (satisfactory); 67 (3%) were given a 2.5 (satisfactory/needs improvement); 64 (3%) were rated as a 2 (needs improvement); 8 (<1%) were given a 1.5 (needs improvement/unsatisfactory), and 2 (<1%) were rated as a 1 (unsatisfactory).

The suggested EWP rubric may be found on the assessment web site as well as the full submissions report from 2008. Departments have been sent reports on their majors, and students with scores at a 2 or lower have been given resources to aid in improving their writing skills.