

Report for EBS Assessment Project for 2010-2011

Prepared by Don Reilly

Intended
Outcome) Goal

Summary of Plan: The English Basic Skills Department assessed SLO #6 for EBS 16/17 and EBS 23/24: “Students who successfully complete this class will be able to use organizational strategies for narration, description, illustration, comparison, and argument in paragraphs and essays.” Mastery Tests in writing from the fall 2010 semester were used for this assessment project. This test requires students to select one of three prompts and to write an essay in response to it. About 700 essays were available from the fall 2010. All of these essays were not assessed. Instead, the EBS assessment committee decided to assess the essays written in response to prompt A on the Mastery Test. This prompt was argumentative in nature. It asked students whether the “details of our public lives” should be “made public for all the world to see.” A representative sample was chosen. A total of 72 essays written in response to this prompt were identified as the cohort for this study. They were selected randomly from the larger pool of essays.

Method of Assessment: The EBS assessment committee met and developed an analytic rubric which contained eight categories, arranged vertically on the rubric, for good organization; it included characteristics like thesis statement, topic sentences, examples, etc. (see attached rubric for more details). The rubric used a four point scale, arranged horizontally, to rate each category with 4 being the highest score and 1 the lowest. Thus, there were 32 variables in this rubric. This rubric was used to assess each of the 72 essays. Two readers read each essay and used the rubric to score it. The two-reader format was chosen to increase reliability and validity of results.

Criteria for Success: 70% of students will earn a satisfactory grade as determined by the rubric.

Problems Encountered: Upon evaluating essays, readers noticed that some of the essays seemed not to be written in response to writing prompt A. They may have been mis-labeled by students or faculty. These essays were disqualified reducing the cohort of 72 to 58. When tabulating results, another problem arose: the EBS Assessment Committee did not have a plan to settle disagreements (passing vs. failing) in scores between the two initial readers. In these cases a third reader is usually chosen. A third reader was not available so these essays had to be discounted, too. A significant number of essays had to be disqualified because the scores did not agree. This is not surprising since the rubric had so many variables. Studies have shown that a rubric’s reliability and validity increase as the variables in the rubric decrease. With 32 variables, it is no wonder there was a high percentage of disagreement among scorers.

Results: Because of the problems with scorer agreement indicated above, 19 essays had to be disqualified from the cohort of 58 because the scores did not agree and because a third reader was not available to reconcile the disagreement. The final cohort was therefore 39. Of the 39 essays, 28, or 71.8%, were assessed as being organized in a satisfactory manner according to the rubric. These results satisfy the criteria for success indicated above.

Recommendations: Because of the problems indicated above, this study should be repeated with the following changes: the rubric should be simplified to improve validity and reliability; the essays in the original cohort should be checked to be sure each one answers the prompt selected; finally, a third reader should be added to the process to reconcile disagreements between scorers.

[Type text]

Rubric for Argumentative Structure. Draft 2. [Type text]

Essay Number: _____

Characteristic/Score	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective	
Writer provides an appropriate context for the argument	4	3	2	1	
Writer expresses a clear or implied thesis/main idea	4	3	2	1	
Writer uses appropriate topic sentences	4	3	2	1	
Writer maintains a focus on the thesis/main idea throughout the essay	4	3	2	1	
Writer uses specific reasons/examples to support the thesis and to build a persuasive argument	4	3	2	1	
Writers uses details to support reasons/examples	4	3	2	1	
Writer uses techniques that create a logical movement from paragraph to paragraph	4	3	2	1	
Writer uses a conclusion to bring essay to a close	4	3	2	1	
Total	X	X	X	X	

Notes:

1. Top score is 32.
2. Passing = 18 or an average of 3 in 6 of the 8 categories.

Overview

Outcome/Goal EBS full-time faculty will implement the Adjunct Mentor Program.

Assessment Period 2010-2011 Annual Goals

Description The EBS Adjunct Mentor Program consists of two endeavors. First, the creation and implementation of the EBS Hub which is contained in a WebCT shell and is designed to provide more efficient communication to EBS adjuncts. Second, full-time faculty will act as mentors to new adjuncts to help them implement new curriculum guides and to adjust to the Department's methods of assesment.

Measures

Measure 1: 70% of mentees will be staisfied with the Mentor Program

Measure 2: 70% of the mentees will correctly implement EBS exit testing policies and procedures

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