

Revised procedures for assessment paper collection

Monday, September 26, 2011

Dear colleagues,

As many of you know, Onondaga Community College has recently made a commitment to ongoing and sustained assessment of degree programs, general education requirements, and course-level learning outcomes. In order to demonstrate students' learning both to our accrediting agencies (specifically Middle States) and SUNY, OCC will be collecting program wide data from a variety of sources. The college has been building up to this over the last few years. The goal of this project is to determine, independent of student grades, to what extent our students and graduates can do the things we say they will be able to do when taking our courses.

This most directly affects us in terms of ENG 103 and ENG 104. OCC uses these two courses, taken by almost all students here, to satisfy to SUNY GEN ED requirements, Basic Communication (Written) and Humanities. The Learning Outcomes for these courses are also used to measure other program and college goals. In the past, we have asked faculty to participate by submitting student papers, making them anonymous, and then scoring them against a SUNY/OCC rubric. The idea is that we can take a sample of student writing to determine what students are doing in our program generally.

The overall assessment will stay the same except for one very important change in the collection procedure. In order to ensure a valid statistical sample, comply with our college wide and accrediting mandates, and save time, money, and resources, **we will now be collecting a random sampling of 20% of the 103 classes and 20% of the 104 classes. Since this is random, we can reduce costs even more by randomly selecting 20% of the students in each selected section. We will collect papers in this manner EVERY semester.** We may not, however, assess all student writing every semester. Instructors whose sections are selected will be given class rosters in random order and should collect samples from the first 5 students on the roster. If a given student has dropped the course or failed to turn in an assignment, faculty should simply move to the next person on the list.

The Provost has said in no uncertain terms that participation in assessment activities is not an option. She considers it to be an expectation of working here for both full time and part time faculty members. A union representative said that this is a valid position. If a faculty member feels that he or she cannot or will not participate if selected, then that faculty member needs to communicate this to me, the department chair, and Provost McColgin. The collection procedure, approved at a department meeting on Sep. 21, is below. I am also including a document which will explain the assessment procedure in more detail.

This procedure does not have to be onerous or labor intensive. If done correctly, it can help us a faculty better serve our students. Please contact me if I can answer any questions or help clarify anything.

Sincerely,

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Wednesday, September 21, 2011

English Discipline meeting

Paper Collection Procedure for Assessment

- The Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research (IPAR) will randomly select 20% of sections of a given class, including full and part time faculty.
- IPAR will generate randomized course lists for instructors teaching the selected sections.
- Those individuals whose sections are selected will be required to supply 20% of one full set of papers for one assignment that meets the requirements of the assessment (for example, papers from the first 4-6 students on the randomized course list of an early draft and the submission draft of a paper for 103 and a paper dealing with literary analysis in 104) by a date determined by the WPC.
- If a faculty member decides for any reason that he or she cannot or will not participate in the assessment, it is up to that individual to communicate this to the WPC, the chair, and to the Provost. In this instance, the Provost's office will have to be made aware of the situation.
- Because this is not about surveillance but rather a true assessment of what is going on in terms of student learning, we will maintain as much anonymity as possible. Only IPAR, the WPC, the Department Chair, and the selected faculty members need know who was selected. Papers will be made anonymous when the actual reading and scoring is done.

Assessment – what is it, why do we do it, and how we will participate in it.

Dear English Faculty,

What?

Every term we will collect students papers in order to assess our Writing Program. Essentially, we will be looking at the work done by students in our Eng 103 and 104 sections and trying to determine if we as a group are helping students to meet our stated learning outcomes. At some point in the future, we will also evaluate the learning done in our Eng 099 classes, but we will hold off on that for now.

Why?

SUNY, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (our accrediting body), and Onondaga Community College have determined that all programs and even individual classes will have to be assessed on some level. Data, in our case sample papers, will be collected and assessed according to a set standard. The idea is to measure what our students as a whole are actually getting from our courses and whether or not they are meeting the learning goals we have set for them. What is important here is not simply generating a report to satisfy some bureaucratic requirement, but rather for us as a body and a program to see where we can improve, make those program wide changes, and return to our classrooms with a better sense of how our students are learning so we can teach better. This process will be repeated every term.

The data we collect will help us as a Writing Program (anyone teaching Eng 099, 103, and 104 is part of this program whether you know it or not) improve but will also be used by the college to help demonstrate student learning to SUNY, Middle States, other kinds of specific accrediting bodies (like ABET for our engineering programs, NCATE for our teacher education programs, etc.). For example, students who take Eng 103 satisfy their Basic Communication general education requirement for SUNY. Students who take Eng 104 can use that class to satisfy the Humanities general education requirement for SUNY (it is recommended that students take 7 out of 10 within their freshman and sophomore years). Assessing these classes helps us make the case that our Eng 103 and 104 successfully meet these requirements.

How?

If you have not yet had a chance to do so, please take a look at our Writing Program Mission and Goals statement. There is a stack of them in the black filing/supply cabinets across from Mary Putnam's desk. This document was approved by the department in Spring of 2009. When a student has completed all of the required classes in our program (099 for some, 103, and 104), what should they be able to do? We said that by the end of the sequence, they should be able to demonstrate competence or mastery in

- Rhetorical Knowledge
- Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing
- Processes
- Knowledge of Conventions
- Composing in Electronic Environments

And this is exactly what our assessment of papers generated in Eng 103 and 104 is meant to measure. Students should be able to demonstrate competence or mastery in each of these categories in their writing. The writing will be assessed according to SUNY approved rubrics. Each of these larger categories will be keyed to the appropriate rubric. These rubrics, for Basic Communication and Humanities, are also available in the department.

Paper Collection

What will we be collecting?

Teaching **Eng 103**?

What we are asking for:

To satisfy the SUNY, Middle States, and Onondaga Community College communications requirements, please collect an early draft of a paper and the submission draft of the same paper. **The topic or type of essay collected may vary by instructor, but it should have a main idea and a beginning, middle, and end.** The papers should be at least five hundred words (the Writing Program Coordinator [WPC] will make these anonymous).

Teaching **Eng 104**?

What we are asking for:

To satisfy the SUNY, Middle States, and Onondaga Community College humanities requirements, please collect a **critical analysis of a piece of literature** from your students. The papers should be at least five hundred words in length (the WPC will make these anonymous).