Delivering Assessment Data Online: The USCA Writing Portfolio

Presentation to USC System Institutional Planning, Research, and Assessment Professionals

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History of Writing Portfolio

• Early 1990s Discussion of repercussions of removal of remedial courses from curriculum → how will we make sure our students can write well?

• 1994-95 Development of portfolio concept and implementation.

• 1995-96 Committee vetting and faculty approval as graduation requirement.

• 1996-97 First portfolios collected for students entering under the Fall 1996 Bulletin.

• 1996-2003 Data collection (paper rating sheets & filing cabinets).

• 2003-2004 Development of web-based data delivery system.

• 2004-2005 Web interface launched.

Conceptual Design

- Graduation Requirement (stakes are attached)
- Process-oriented (skill applied over time)
- Goal-oriented (6 goals for writing competency)
  - **Clarity of Purpose:** Students will demonstrate the ability to establish a clear purpose (thesis or announced intent) and an appropriate awareness of audience (reader).
  - **Quality of Thought:** Students will demonstrate a level of rational thought that recognizes and examines complexity of ideas and is supported by credible and logical evidence.
  - **Organization of Content:** Students will demonstrate effective unity, coherence, and general arrangement of content, all in the appropriate support of purpose.
  - **Use of Sources:** Students will demonstrate correct and effective use of sources with clear attribution and accurate documentation.
  - **Language and Style:** Students will demonstrate the ability to make stylistic choices in vocabulary, diction, and syntax.
  - **Grammar and Mechanics:** Students will demonstrate competence in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

Logistics of Writing Portfolio

- 3 graded papers, previously submitted for a course and 1 reflective essay.
- Submitted after 60 hours have been earned.
- Portfolios collected once during Fall, Spring, and Summer terms.
- 2 graders (paid by nominal fee assessed at Bookstore); readers get about $3 per portfolio.
- Ties broken by 3rd reader.
- Readers assess student competency for each of the six goals on a scale of 1 to 5.
- Minimum aggregate score of 3 (out of 5) to pass.
- Students who do not pass may resubmit or take AEGL 201 Writing in the University.

Goals of Web Interface

• Transform data from collection of individual scores to meaningful information (including statistical analysis) that can be used for program improvement.

• Deliver information to faculty and staff to identify relative strengths and weaknesses of various groups of students.

• Provide better methods for data collection (under development).

• Expand faculty investment in both improving students' writing skills and developing assessment systems.

All Majors Report

All Majors Report

English Portfolio Score Report for All Majors
Term(s): Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Summer 2004, Fall 2004

	Clarity of Purpose	Quality of thought	Use of sources	Organization of Content	Language and Style	Grammar and Mechanics	Aggregate
Below 2.0	0	0	16	1	1	9	3
2.0-2.49	12	11	41	6	25	29	19
2.5-2.99	19	22	69	24	40	47	60
3.0-3.49	262	227	267	249	295	333	362
3.5-3.99	211	214	149	225	178	163	158
4.0-4.49	129	138	99	137	100	73	61
4.5-5.0	45	66	34	36	39	24	15
Total	678	678	675	678	678	678	678
Mean	3.42	3.49	3.18	3.42	3.3	3.19	3.33
Std. Dev.	0.54	0.57	0.68	0.51	0.57	0.57	0.49
Std. Error	0.021	0.022	0.026	0.02	0.022	0.022	0.019

Return to Report Generator

Sociology Majors Report

English Portfolio Score Report for Sociology Majors
Term(s): Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Summer 2004, Fall 2004

	Clarity of Purpose	Quality of thought	Use of sources	Organization of Content	Language and Style	Grammar and Mechanics	Aggregate
Below 2.0	0	0	4	0	0	3	1
2.0-2.49	1	1	6	1	5	1	3
2.5-2.99	4	2	5	3	3	4	8
3.0-3.49	16	16	9	14	18	15	19
3.5-3.99	9	11	7	11	4	9	1
4.0-4.49	3	3	2	4	3	2	2
4.5-5.0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Total	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Mean	3.18	3.24	2.74	3.25	3	2.96	3.06
Std. Dev.	0.5	0.47	0.86	0.5	0.59	0.66	0.48
Std. Error	0.085	0.081	0.147	0.086	0.102	0.113	0.083

Return to Report Generator

Business Majors Report

English Portfolio Score Report for Business Majors
Term(s): Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Summer 2004, Fall 2004

	Clarity of Purpose	Quality of thought	Use of sources	Organization of Content	Language and Style	Grammar and Mechanics	Aggregate
Below 2.0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
2.0-2.49	3	3	18	1	9	15	7
2.5-2.99	8	2	30	10	13	15	19
3.0-3.49	98	86	91	96	105	114	128
3.5-3.99	66	77	41	65	56	52	50
4.0-4.49	37	42	31	42	27	21	14
4.5-5.0	7	9	5	5	9	1	1
Total	219	219	218	219	219	219	219
Mean	3.34	3.42	3.11	3.35	3.24	3.11	3.26
Std. Dev.	0.48	0.47	0.61	0.47	0.53	0.5	0.41
Std. Error	0.032	0.032	0.042	0.032	0.036	0.034	0.028

Return to Report Generator

Advanced Report Features

Advanced Report: Race & Gender

English Portfolio Report
Average English Portfolio Scores, Average SAT Verbal Score, Average High School % Rank, Average SAT Verbal Score
for All Students
by Race, Gender
Term(s): Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Summer 2004, Fall 2004

Race	Gender	# of Students	Average Clarity of Purpose Score	Average Quality of Thought Score	Average Use of Sources Score	Average Organization of Content Score	Average Language and Style Score	Average Grammar and Mechanics Score	Average Aggregate Score	Average SAT Verbal Score	Average High School % Rank	Average Cumulative Collegiate GPA
White (Non-Hispanic)	F	339	3.5	3.58	3.29	3.49	3.37	3.27	3.42	501	25	3.19
	M	170	3.45	3.52	3.2	3.45	3.31	3.19	3.35	520	36	2.99
American Indian/Alaskan Native	F	1	4	4.5	4	4.5	4.5	4	4.25	550	19	2.86
Black/African-American	F	111	3.14	3.15	2.92	3.14	3.05	2.95	3.06	423	27	2.68
	M	25	3.18	3.16	2.66	3.3	3.2	2.98	3.08	451	47	2.86
Asian/Pacific Islander	F	3	4.17	4.5	4.17	4	4	3.5	4.05			3.79
	M	1	4	4	4	4	4	3.5	3.92	550	3	3.98
Hispanic	F	2	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.5	3.25	2.75	3.2	410	7	3.31
	M	4	3.38	3.6	3.1	3.5	2.88	2.88	3.22	500		2.74
Race Not Reported	F	16	3.62	3.69	3.19	3.62	3.47	3.38	3.49	473	17	3.49
	M	6	3.42	3.33	3	3.25	3.25	3.17	3.24	500	47	2.96

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Advanced Report: Engl 101 Grade

English Portfolio Report
Average English Portfolio Scores, Average SAT Score, Average High School % Rank, Average SAT Score
for All Students
by AEGL 101 Grade
Term(s): Fall 2003, Spring 2004, Summer 2004, Fall 2004

AEGL 101 Grade	# of Students	Average Clarity of Purpose Score	Average Quality of Thought Score	Average Use of Sources Score	Average Organization of Content Score	Average Language and Style Score	Average Grammar and Mechanics Score	Average Aggregate Score	Average SAT Score	Average High School % Rank	Average Cumulative Collegiate GPA
A	58	3.71	3.68	3.47	3.6	3.5	3.39	3.56	1020	22	3.42
B+	47	3.41	3.52	3.31	3.4	3.28	3.26	3.36	996	22	3.13
B	107	3.4	3.45	3.08	3.42	3.27	3.14	3.29	960	31	2.89
C+	26	3.37	3.46	3.21	3.33	3.27	3.21	3.31	931	40	2.6
C	56	3.21	3.23	3.04	3.21	3.03	2.87	3.1	944	36	2.62
D+	2	3	3	2.25	3	3	2.75	2.83	960	56	2.4
F	13	3.62	3.62	3.19	3.46	3.5	3.19	3.43	1186	18	3.33
Unknown	369	3.42	3.5	3.18	3.44	3.32	3.21	3.34	998	27	3.12

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System Specifications

- Windows Server 2003 backend with IIS6 and MS SQL Server 2003

- Interface implemented with Active Server Pages using VBScript

Database Sources and Design

• Data Sources: E02AIKN, ADMSINFO, and Excel files provided by English Department (in future, Departments will have online data entry)

• Raw datasets are run through Perl scripts to 'de-mainframe' and select only pertinent data, then imported into database

• Reports are generated from two main tables, one for storing portfolio scores, another for storing demographics and performance variables

Security Overview

- Server is protected by university and local firewalls, server software is kept up to date

- Users must authenticate to USCA domain

- Transactions are encrypted by 128-bit SSL

- Local database table keeps track of who has access to what data

- Online scripts are written with input checking to guard against buffer overflows and SQL injection

Future Plans

- Design administrative piece to revise goals and objectives.
  - Add, deactivate, transform, and map goals and objectives.
  - Add more general education competencies.
  - Encourage units to adopt system for assessment of majors.
- Conduct additional institutional studies.
  - Performance by race, gender, and other variables.
  - Graduation rate studies.
- Promote use of system for program review.
  - Present uses to various faculty groups.
  - Document use of data for curricular adjustments.
- Presentations at upcoming conferences:
  - SCAIR & SAIR (October 2005)
  - SACS (December 2005)

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