Fourth Wave Writing Assessment: Implications and Implementations

Christopher Sean Harris
Faculty Director, Writing Across the Curriculum
Four Waves of Writing Assessment

- **First Wave: 1950-1970**
  Indirect measures of writing proficiency such as objective tests.

- **Second Wave: 1970-1986**
  Direct measures of student writing via timed writing exams.

- **Third Wave: 1986-?**
  Direct, holistic scoring of a collection of work, such as a portfolio containing both revised texts and drafts of texts.

- **Fourth Wave: 2010?**
  Brian Huot argues for direct writing assessment that delivers feedback to students; involves students; and synthesizes grading, assessment, and feedback.

**Kathleen Blake Yancy**, "Looking Back as We Look Forward: Historicizing Writing Assessment as a Rhetorical Act." 1999.

**Brian Huot**, (Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning. 2002.
Cal State LA Stretch Composition Pilot
2010-2013

- **Portfolio-Based**
  Students submitted portfolios containing a cover letter, multiple essays, and essay drafts

- **Trend-based**
  Assessment scores focused on discrete categories of writing such as development, research, focus, and style conventions

- **Student-based**
  Students participated in writing assessment

- **Growth-based**
  Students received assessment feedback and were asked to write reflections on that feedback

- **Grade-based**
  Assessment scores figured in the course grades
The Rubric

- **Scores**
  Challenging (5) - Advanced (4) – Meeting (3) – Approaching (2) – Developing (1)
  Correlates to a four-point scale.

- **Categories**
  Analysis (Content) – R&D (Use of Information) – Organization – Tone/Voice/Style (added in 2012) - Conventions
Assessment Results for all Students, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Avg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>13.29</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results 2

Stretch Assessment Average Scores per Category, AY 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Avg Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Engl 101</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Validity.1

Grader Average Difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Winter 2011</th>
<th>Summer Grader 2011</th>
<th>Summer Grader 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grader Average Difference</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A difference of 4 is considered a conflicting score and should later be reevaluated.
Contact Us

Christopher Sean Harris
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES
5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90032

Phone
323.343.5542

Email
charris3@calstatela.edu

Web
calstatela.edu