

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

University Writing Program, English 111x, 211x, and 213x

General Studies/CLA

2015-2016

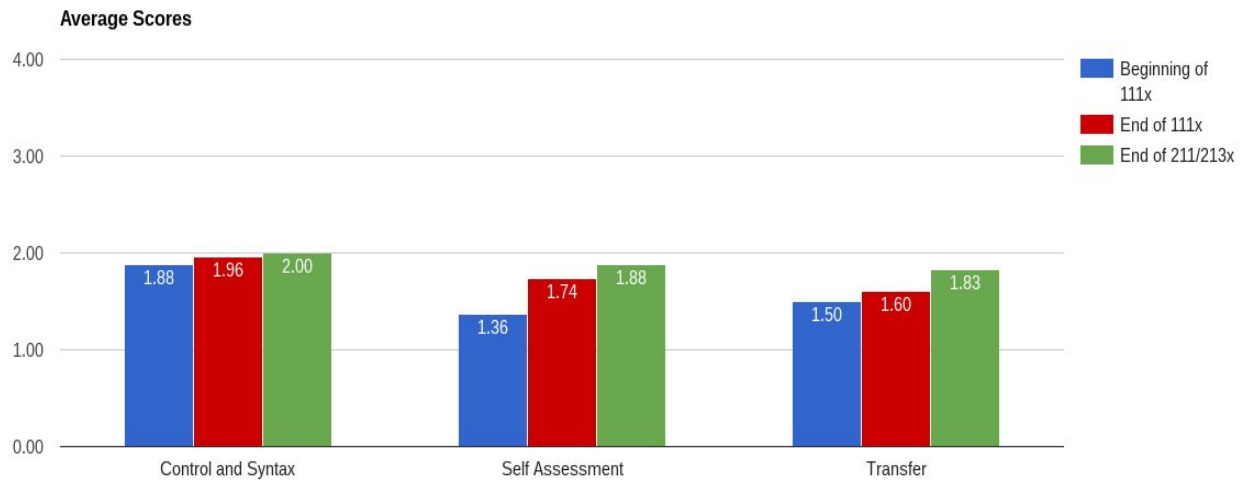
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1. Assessment information collected

SUMMARY: Overall, every criteria on which we assessed student essays improves over the two course sequence of general education writing classes. Students generally come into our classes having some ability in each of the criteria, so they are not blank slates. The changes in scores from the beginning of 111x to the end of 111x and the changes that happen during the 200 level course are measurable and consistent.

English 111x, 211x, and 213x classes taught at UAF in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 participated in assessment. The assessment consisted of one essay collected from each student at the beginning of English 111x, one essay at the end of 111x, and one essay at the end of English 211x or English 213x. This process was designed to track student progress across the writing courses. We randomly selected 100 essays as a representative sample, 50 from 111x and 50 from the 200 level. After calibrating the criteria with sample essays, five multidisciplinary faculty assessed approximately 40 essays each. We chose to assess the essays for Control of Syntax and Mechanics, Self-Assessment, and Transfer. Our prompts require critical thinking skills, which we value as a program. The rubric that we used can be found [here](#).

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above



Overall Results: On average, student writing shows improvement in all categories. Students begin English 111x with higher scores in control of syntax and mechanics than in the other categories, and Self-assessment shows the greatest improvement. By the time students finish 211x or 213x, they are much closer to the 2 milestone than when they begin. And the picture with transfer is similar though less drastic. Students steadily improve over the course of these classes, and are much closer to the 2 milestone.

Control of Syntax and Mechanics: The education that students receive before they arrive has prepared them for the English 111x course in terms of control of mechanics and syntax, and they continue to improve in this competency.

Self-Assessment: Our department's emphasis on students' awareness of the choices they make as writers is paying off. About 75% of students entering English 111x are at the benchmark or lower. However, students make a huge leap in their self-assessment, especially over the course of English 111x. By the time they finish the course, 92% of our students score above the benchmark score of 1. This is in line with our program curriculum, which values this kind of self-reflection and awareness of one's choices as a writer. Additionally, scores continue to rise during 211/213x. By the end of the courses, virtually all of our students score at or above the benchmark and about 60% of students score at or above the second milestone.

Transfer: Students show steady improvement between the beginning of 111x and the end of the 200 level courses. When they begin 111x, less than 30% of students reach

the first milestone. By the end of 111x almost 50% of students are reaching the first milestone, and at the end of 211/213x, 60% of students reach that milestone. And it is significant that the 0 scores are all but eliminated by the end of the 200 level courses. This is a measurable improvement over last year and one that we hope to continue to work on. Unfortunately, we also saw a jump in N/A scores (responses that simply didn't address the prompt) in the 200 level essays.

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

It is clear that students are improving their writing skills over the course of the core writing classes. And though it is improving, transfer continues to be our lowest scoring criteria. The increase in N/A scores for Transfer has led us to the conclusion that, as we continue to emphasize critical thinking and analysis in our courses, the prompt itself may need to be reassessed. In order to improve the prompt we will:

- Collaborate on new language for the Assessment prompt
 - including feedback from our assessors especially regarding Transfer
- Make the purpose of the prompt more transparent to teachers and students
 - including more detailed and clearer instructions for teachers
 - prompt handouts for students may include a brief description of assessment and our gratitude for their participation
- Improve the process of collecting and randomly selecting essays

4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting

All University Writing Program changes will be addressed by the Composition Committee of the English Department. The assessment committee included the following faculty.

Sarah Stanley, Chair

August Johnson, Write Alaska Research Assistant

Brianna Frentzko, Write Alaska Research Assistant

Natalie Taylor, Adjunct faculty

Elle Fournier, first-year graduate teacher

Chris Miles, Adjunct faculty

Desiree Simons-Johnston, Assistant Professor of Developmental English

Zoe Jones, Term Assistant Professor of Art History