

Writing Assessment

On April 16, 2009, in accordance with on-going program assessment, IELI faculty evaluated the final papers of all level 4 students who had passed Writing 4 upon completion of the Fall Semester 2008. The assessment focused on whether faculty raters agreed that students who had exited the writing program had in fact met the exit criteria for writing.

Procedures

Faculty analyzed 19 final papers from the two sections of Writing 4 that had been offered during Fall 2008.

Seven faculty members were available for the assessment. Each paper was rated independently by at least two faculty members. Papers were rated on eight criteria as listed in Table 2. Each student received a score of 2, 1, or 0 for each of the eight criteria in accordance with the scale indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Rating scale for goal achievement

Rating	Explanation
2	Both faculty members agreed that the paper showed evidence that the student met the goal.
1	The two faculty members disagreed as to whether or not the goal was met.
0	Both faculty members agreed that the goal was not met.

Results

Table 2 shows how many of the 19 students were judged to have met each of the eight criteria. For example, all nineteen papers were rated at “2” on the first criterion: Gather information and develop ideas for writing. No papers received a rating of “1,” and none received a rating of “0” on this particular criterion.

Table 2: Number of papers at each rating on each criterion

Criteria	2	1	0
1. Gather information and develop ideas for writing.	19	0	0
1. Write adequately developed, documented paragraphs.	14	4	1

1. Paraphrase and summarize the ideas of others, without plagiarizing	14	3	2
1. Acknowledge sources through in-text citations and reference lists.	13	3	3
1. Type and format writings using a word processor.	19	0	0
1. Send and receive emails with attachments.	19	0	0
1. Use on-line databases and/ or Internet to find appropriate source material	16	3	0
1. Evaluate sources of information for relevance and quality.	16	2	1

Table 3. Percentage of students judged by both raters as having met each of the eight criteria

Criteria	%
1. Gather information and develop ideas for writing.	100
1. Write adequately developed, documented paragraphs.	74
1. Paraphrase and summarize the ideas of others, without plagiarizing	74
1. Acknowledge sources through in-text citations and reference lists.	68
1. Type and format writings using a word processor.	100
1. Send and receive emails with attachments.	100
1. Use on-line databases and/ or Internet to find appropriate source material	84
1. Evaluate sources of information for relevance and quality.	84

Conclusion

In general, the ratings indicate that each course objective was met by an overwhelming majority of level 4 students who exited the program. The weakest skill would seem to be in the ability to acknowledge sources through the use of in-text citations and reference lists, but these are skills that we anticipate would undergo further development throughout a student's undergraduate career. The same goes for other aspects of documented writing, e.g., criteria 2 and 3.