Diagnostic Writing Exam: Data Summary Report
Writing 10 (Spring 2007)
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Pre-Test, January 2007

Total WRI 10 students:	187
Exams Submitted:	185
Exams Read:	69 (38% of submitted exams)
Third Reads:	28 (60% accuracy)
Passes:	32 (46% pass)

Post-Test, May 2007

Total WRI 10 students:	187
Exams Submitted:	153[1]
Exams Read:	64 (42% of submitted exams)
Third Reads:	30 (51% accuracy)[2]
Passes:	36 (56% pass)

Comparable Student Codes

Total Received Exams:	35
Increase:	13 (37%)
Decrease:	7 (20%)
Same:	15 (43%)

Notes on increases: Most often, increases included a 2 step difference. This difference was commonly between a significant pass or fail, a 3-5 or a 2-4 being characteristic of the most common increases in scores. More than half of the improvements are two levels of change (7 exams of 13 total). The other 6 exams indicate one level of change.

Notes on decreases: Qualitative data about student work with decreased score note that the post-test lacks a level of care, citing "lack of effort" (10MM19) and "well-argued, and "gets" the prompt, but doesn't fully appreciate it" (10CB19). This suggests that the end of semester diagnostic includes fewer incentives for student success. Recommendations during discussion included program-wide inclusion of the diagnostics in student portfolios, possibly with self-assessment to add depth to our analysis of samples. To generate further student investment in diagnostic writing, other possibilities include greater student participation in the assessment process, e.g. generating a rubric (Duke & Sanchez 1994), or prompts connected to WRI 1 and WRI 10 course content (White 1998).

Notes on same: No change means the average score remained the same. In most cases, readers' split scores reflected in an increase, but the third read score was equivalent to the pre-test score. For example, a writing sample could have been ranked 3 / 1 with 3 as the third read and 3 / 4 with 3 as the third read. This suggests some significant improvements, though the consensus is ultimately the same score. Absolute same scores were 5 of the 15. Split increases were 8 of the 15, and split decreases were 2 of the 15. With split values of increase, decrease and no change added the above numbers, the numbers would change in the following ways: Increase (60%), Decrease (26%), and Same (14%).

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[1] Variance in submitted exams may involve a missing section or significant student absences on diagnostic exam day.
[2] Post-test norming sessions included conversations about scoring guide in lieu of writing samples, which may have contributed to split scores.

Summary Chart of Pass Versus Fail Features

Categories	Three Scores	Four Scores	Split Scores
Paragraphing & Structure	-- lacks coherent structure -- rambles, circular logic -- awkward transitions	-- paragraphs are unified in thought and structure -- clear topic sentences	-- repetition -- ambition -- generalities
Focus & Development	-- lacks examples -- superficial treatment of prompt -- does not respond to prompt -- lacks depth	-- evidence of understanding of prompt -- focused and specific engagement with text and arguments	-- lacks coherent structure -- loses momentum -- gains momentum
Reading Comprehension & Summary	-- could summarize argument more fully -- incomplete understanding of prompt & reading -- all summary, no argument	-- appropriate examples -- sufficient examples -- balance between summary and argument	-- responds to text illogically -- too speculative
Logic & Argument	-- responds illogically to text & prompt -- broad claims -- simplistic reasoning	-- strong reasoning -- acceptable reasoning -- extra effort to shape argument and grow ideas	-- creative but unsubstantiated claims -- unclear thesis -- argument needs structure -- misunderstood text
Grammar & Mechanics	-- frequent minor errors	-- precise word choice -- sentence variety -- definite or evident voice	-- simplistic style -- ESL -- simplistic sentence structures

Note: No one feature amounts of a three, four or split score. This chart represents a pattern of phrases used to characterize dominant aspects of samples. Since the diagnostic is a blend of these features, these descriptions are meant to articulate what the differences between borderline samples represent.

Beyond AWPE Scoring Guide Features

Pre-Test

- "some interesting examples but weak language skills (10CJ18A)
- "solid argument but based on a misperception?" (10HD19A, 10TK01A)
- Generalities (10BP19A, 10FK18A)
- Development issues (10JU18A, 10CT18A)
- ESL issues (10MV19A, 10SP18A, 10CJA)

Post-Test

- Effect of time limits (10JG17)
- Generalities (10CB09, 10BD07)
- "sense of fun" and inventiveness (10SV20)
- "flashes of higher-level thinking" (10LM18, 10CM19)
- Audience issues (10CB06)
- Lack of effort (10MM19, 10CB19, 10JD07)

Summary: Holistic scoring language, like any assessment measure, will have limited means of identifying the quality of students' reading, writing and critical thinking skills. As a program, we could design a richer holistic rubric and revise the diagnostic prompt to (1.) improve placement accuracy, (2.) remain conscious of writing characteristics to share with students, and (3.) identify holistic contradictions, or dominant writing characteristics that are simultaneously weak and strong. Holistic contradictions, e.g. interesting thinking but weak language skills, are characteristic of some English Learner papers according to these diagnostic readings and outside research (Hamp-Lyons 1995; Lee 2006). Additional holistic conflicts in several WRI 10 samples include logical arguments based on a misreading of original text. Summer sessions of WRI 1 and WRI 10 will experiment with process-oriented diagnostic writing to explore and address these questions. To supplement the one draft timed writing method, students will be given extended time plan and discuss ideas related to a prompt. The goal will be to offer students methods for applying the writing process to product-oriented writing situations. For student samples of effective pre-writing in existing post-test diagnostics, see attached appendix (10EB07, 10SV20). The objectives to this approach include fostering better skill preparation for the timed-writing experience and connecting process-oriented classroom pedagogy to timed-writing situations.

Works Cited

Duke, C. & R. Sanchez. (Apr. 1994) Giving students control over writing assessment. *The English Journal*. 83.4: 47-53.

Hamp-Lyons, L. (Winter, 1995) Rating Nonnative writing: The trouble with holistic scoring. *TESOL Quarterly*. 29.4: 759-762.

Lee, Y. (2006) The process-oriented ESL writing assessment: Promises and challenges. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 15: 307-330.

White, E. (1998) Teaching and Assessing Writing: Recent advances in understanding, evaluating, and improving student performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Biographic Exam

10EB07 ✓

(2)

Jon Hamilton says that there is more to language than just a vocabulary and grammar. Because of this, computers are bad communicators. Jon then says that to communicate on a high level, a theory of mind is required. This is the ability to understand what is going on inside someone else's head. I believe that all of this is true.

Brain as complex computer
Human communication - learned over many years
- Partly learned from observing/interacting w/ world
To be good requires theory of mind

Once we have a computer w/ the developed theory of mind, won't it be able to effectively read minds

When robots begin communicating, won't they begin to understand outside world more and so
And they are alives, eventually rebelling

10SV20 ② ③

I. Intro

A. Summarize Hamilton's position

1. artificial intelligence - language range

2. evaluate merits of argument

B. My thoughts on my own sense of successful communication

- Having the ability to be cognitively conscious and empathetic allows me to communicate successfully

- wanting to make friends

II. Body

1. Key elements of human communication

- empathy - ability to connect

- same language / language use - use language

2. Will robots eventually be able to achieve human thinking strategies

- Hitchcock - Bowden Betty

- Yes, anything is possible (i.e. Cat-bots, dogs...)