

## Academic Support Program Backed by Data



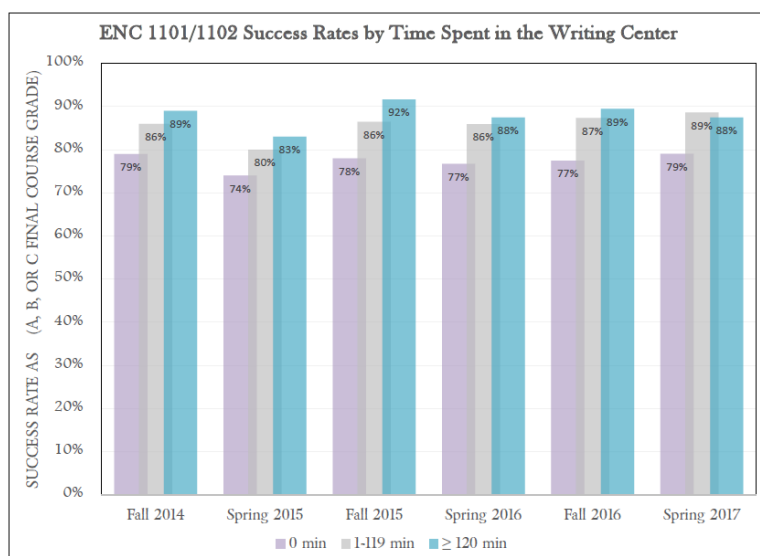
**Monica Moore**

Director Academic Support

The Academic Support Program, with building-based Centers at Florida SouthWestern State College campuses and at the Hendry Glades Center, exists to support all FSW students in achieving their academic goals. The Centers offer a variety of services for students, including face to face tutoring, writing consultations, specialized software, computer access for academic studies, informational and skill building handouts and guides, suggested web resources, and topical workshops. Additional program support for academic success is also provided to students enrolled in ground and/or online courses. This service, offered through a partnership with Tutor.com, is available 24/7 and provides students with four hours each semester of funded online support. All Academic Support Program services are designed to give students the support, tools, and assistance to be successful in their academic endeavors and are available as the following:

- Academic Support Writing Centers
- Academic Support Math Centers
- Academic Support Peer Tutoring Centers
- Academic Support Oral Communication Centers
- Academic Support Foreign Language Center
- Tutor.com 24/7 Online Tutoring

In the accompanying graphic, the benefits of the Academic Support Writing Center, over the last three academic years, are illustrated in data. In each case, it is clear that less than two hours of time spent in the writing center correlates with improved success rates of 6-10%. Spending more than two hours in one of the FSW Writing Centers showed an increase of 9-14%. The Academic Support Center continues to use these data as an impact gauge while they continually modify, strengthen, and adapt their services to the needs of FSW.



From the LAC Chair

# Assessment to Improve Student Learning



**Dr. Caroline Seefchak**  
Professor of Education  
and LAC Chair

As we start to compile and compute grades for this semester, it is a good time to review the various means by which we measure student learning in our classes. Instructional effectiveness is not defined solely on the basis of what instructors do as professors, but rather on what their students are able to do. Successful assessment can tell us that, and that clear information does not necessarily have to come from testing. There are many data sources that shed light on student learning, and research has shown that no single assessment can tell us all we need to know in planning curricula.

The best assessments are those that also serve as sources of pertinent information for instructors. Basic, short formative assessments are low-stakes and provide useful, ongoing data. Their purpose is more to improve the quality of student learning than to provide evidence for evaluating or grading students. Activities as simple as exit slips, one-minute papers, or even thumbs up/thumbs down can provide us with on-the-spot information on what our students know and what they may still need.

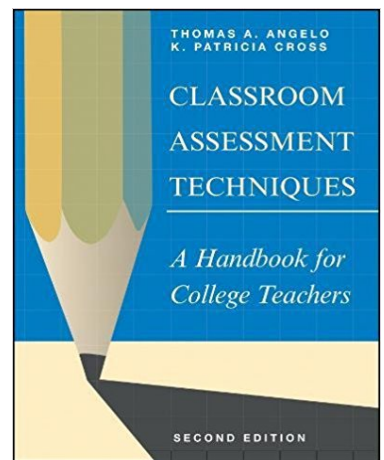
Assessments are just the beginning of learning. Professors use the data from simple classroom assessments to plan viable alternatives to instruction, presenting information in new ways and engaging students in different learning experiences (Gusky, 2003).

In this issue of *DataVersed*, we feature a tried and true source of formative assessments. *Classroom Assessment Techniques* by Angelo and Cross (1999) has been the inspiration for assessments for student learning for nearly two decades. Please see the new column, “Books of the LAC,” for a comprehensive look at many useful classroom assessments.

## Books of the LAC

# Classroom Assessment Techniques by Angelo and Cross (1999)

*Classroom Assessment Techniques* by Angelo and Cross (1999) has been the definitive source for college teachers seeking ways to understand the quality of the teaching and learning in their classrooms. A variety and range of activities, applicable to dozens of different disciplines, can help us to “close the feedback loop,” with acknowledging and responding to students very quickly and with ease. Angelo and Cross emphasize a feedback loop as the instructor using simple assessments each class to ascertain student learning – the first part of the loop. Faculty feedback to students completes the loop. As this approach becomes part of each class session and is integrated into the learning environment, the communications loop, “connecting faculty to students – and teaching to learning – becomes efficient and more effective” (Angelo & Cross, 1999).



Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) are generally simple, non-graded, in-class activities designed to give you and your students useful feedback on the teaching and learning process. The standard references on CATs is *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, 2nd edition, by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross (Jossey-Bass, 1993). This book includes a variety of CATs and is indexed in several useful ways. Results from the use of CATs in college classrooms can help with revising and fine-tuning teaching in ways to meet the needs of all students. The Angelo & Cross book contains fifty CATs; below are several examples.



# Classroom Assessment Techniques by Angelo and Cross (1999)

Continued from page 2

## **The Minute Paper**

Toward the end of a class meeting, ask students to take a few minutes to write on a half sheet of paper the answers to two questions: “What is the most important point you learned today?” and “What point is least clear to you?” This will help you understand what your students comprehended, what they believe is the focus of the lesson, and what you need to review. Just knowing that the writing will be for a minute – or two or three – makes this quick assessment less daunting to students.

## **Directed Paraphrasing**

At any point during a lecture or discussion, ask students to paraphrase something they have just learned, as directed to a specific individual or a specific audience. This will help you assess their comprehension and application of concepts.

## **Application Cards**

During the last five or ten minutes of class, have students to write on cards one practical application of an important concept or principle you have just taught. You can use these to assess students’ learning, and you can share a variety of applications with the class at a later date.

## **Defining Features Matrix**

This is a quick assessment to help you to determine if students are understanding different concepts that may have similarities. Prepare and copy a handout that has a matrix containing three columns and several rows. At the top of each of the first two columns, list two distinct concepts that have potentially confusing similarities (e.g. Bach versus Mozart, or tornado versus hurricane). In the matrix’s third column, list, in not order, the important characteristics of both concepts. Ask students to use the matrix to identify which characteristics belong to each of the two concepts.

## **Student-Generated Test Questions**

Instead of asking questions to students, give students class time to generate test questions – and answers -- for exams. This will allow students to analyze what they have learned and give you feedback on their areas of focus and how they understand the material. You might choose to use some of these questions in your tests.

## **The Muddiest Point**

This very simple technique helps to assess when students are having difficulty. Near the end of class, ask students to take a few minutes to answer the following question on a half sheet of paper or index card: “What was the muddiest point for you in the class/lecture/film/discussion/assignment?” “Muddiest,” refers to that which is muddy or unclear.

If these classroom assessment techniques spark your interest, look for professional development in the form of an upcoming interactive workshop, to be held in the TLC.

## LAC Welcomes Early Childhood Education Professor



**Dr. Julia Kroeker**

Professor of Early Childhood  
Education

Dr. Julia Kroeker, Professor of Early Childhood Education, has joined the Learning Assessment Committee this year as Assessment Coordinator from the School of Education. She has nine years of experience teaching preschool and kindergarten in Omaha, Nebraska. Dr. Kroeker completed her Ph.D. in early childhood education from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Her dissertation was entitled, "Indoor and Outdoor Play in Preschool Programs: A Mixed Methods Study." While at the University of Nebraska, Dr. Kroeker also earned a certificate in Mixed Methods research. She earned a Master of Science degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Nebraska-Omaha and a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education with an early childhood endorsement from Hastings College in Nebraska. She has presented research at national and international conferences, including the North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE) and The Association for the Study of Play (TASP). She hopes to share her passion for teaching and learning with her students, as well as her excitement for play in early childhood education.

## Did You Know?

Each semester, the Office of Academic Assessment, through the Learning Assessment Committee, publishes *Did You Know?*, which contains interesting and informative data and statistics from around the College. Material in *Did You Know* is not only intriguing and entertaining – it may also inspire projects that might involve research or data collection in your department or division.

Look for *Did You Know*, to be published later this month. It will be delivered directly to your email box!



## LAC Professional Development

The Learning Assessment Committee, along with the College's Teaching and Learning Center, has produced self-paced online courses for those who want to learn more about assessment.

**Assessment Workshop** is an online course affectionately referred to as "Assessment 101." It provides pertinent information on why and how we assess students and programs at Florida SouthWestern State College. The course begins at the macro level, looking at state and federal requirements, moves to the program level at the College, and then focuses on course level assessments.



**Rubrics 101: Understanding, Designing, and Implementing Rubrics** provides a basic introduction to rubrics. Various types of rubrics and six steps for creating a quality rubric are introduced. Faculty will develop a rubric for an assignment and consider how a rubric can be used to enhance teaching and improve the consistency and efficiency of grading. The course will also include opportunities for faculty to reflect on how rubrics can help them to better communicate and share performance expectations with students. Instructions for building rubrics in Canvas will also be provided.

# Welcome New LAC Committee Members

This spring semester, the Learning Assessment Committee is pleased with addition of three new members, each of who serves as assessment coordinator in his or her departments or divisions. Welcome to Professor Andrew Blitz, Computer Science; Professor Leroy Bugger, Accounting; and Dr. Mary Conwell, Paralegal Studies. Below is a listing of all LAC committee members and their roles on the committee.

Get to know the LAC representatives in your department or division!

FSW LEARNING ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE SPRING 2018		Dr. Caroline Seefchak, LAC Committee Chair	
Marty Ambrose	English General Member, former Chair	Dr. Lisa McGarity	Science General Member
Patricia Arcidiacono	Health Professions General Member	Barb Miley	Coordinator, Accountability & Effectiveness
Andrew Blitz	Computer Science Assessment Coordinator	Colleen Moore	Health Professions Assessment Coordinator
Leroy Bugger	Accounting Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Shawn Moore	English Assessment Coordinator
Dr. Marius Coman	Science Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Kristi Moran	Mathematics Assessment Coordinator
Jane Charles	Library Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Katie Paschall	Speech/Foreign Language Assessment Coordinator
Dr. John Connell	Speech/Foreign Language General Member	Jennifer Patterson	Business & Tech General Member
Dr. Mary Conwell	Paralegal Studies Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Elijah Pritchett	Humanities/Fine Arts Assessment Coordinator
Dr. Eileen DeLuca	Associate VPAA, Academic Affairs	Dr. Eric Seelau	Social Sciences Assessment Coordinator
Thomas Donaldson	Social Sciences General Member	William Stoudt	Mathematics General Member
Dr. Erik Fay	Science General Member	Allison Studer	Academic Assessment Analyst
Dr. Julia Kroeker	Education Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Amy Trogan	English General Member, former Chair
Margaret Kruger	Health Professions General Member	Dr. Joseph van Gaalen	Director, Academic Assessment & Effectiveness
Fernando Mayoral	Speech/Foreign Language Assessment Coordinator	Dr. Richard Worch	Business & Tech Assessment Coordinator