Academic Assessment Newsletter

General Education Assessment Feature

Professor: Scott Ortolano, Ph.D.   Class: ENC1101, Composition 1

COM   CT

I have spent the vast majority of my life in Southwest Florida—reading, writing, and fishing. I grew up in Punta Gorda and am a proud graduate of Charlotte High School. After receiving my Ph.D. in literature from Florida State University, I was elated to have the opportunity to return to a region that I care so much about and to contribute to FSW's strong history of helping students achieve success in the many communities that the college serves.

In the classroom, I emphasize how studying literature, writing, and rhetoric can empower students as individuals while also deepening their connections to others. In composition courses, students do everything from compose personal narratives on multimodal composition platforms to build websites that are designed to reach and provide a home to various communities. Such projects help them understand that composition transcends the written page and can be used to effect real change. Similarly, in literature classes, students compose digital projects that deepen content knowledge and put the reading into conversation with social quandaries in the world at large. I cherish the ability to teach introductory courses in composition and literature. They allow me to interact with students during their first years at FSW, a time when they are still in the process of discovering what kind of people they want to be and what challenges they will take on during their lives. As a result, such courses offer a venue in which teachers can make a significant impact on students and inspire them to see the value of the humanities.

A Self-Portrait with Storify

This project concludes my Composition I course by capping our explorations of the interconnections among writing, narrative, the world, and the self. Just as importantly, the project lays an essential foundation for Composition II's emphasis on digital literacy. For the assignment, students create a multimodal Storify project that considers how the people they know, the places they inhabit, and the texts they engage collectively form their sense of self. Storify is a free computer program that pulls items from the general internet and social media accounts and gives students the ability to merge these digital artifacts into one single "story." Students use the program to create dynamic portraits of themselves through words, images, videos, and sounds. The digital media is interwoven with an explanatory essay that decodes the content for the reader. Students enjoy the creative freedom of this type of assignment while also gaining invaluable insight into their own lives.

Students not only find this project to be challenging and rewarding, but also useful to their future success. Many students have told me that they are using Storify to create texts for their personal enjoyment or projects in other classes. Most importantly, this assignment gives them a new skill and helps them realize the ways in which multimodal communication allows for the creation of different kinds of texts than traditional forms of composition. Furthermore, I emphasize that Storify is not a unique product but one of many free resources available to them. They just need an Internet connection and the courage to try something new (which is always a frightening prospect). One of the challenges they will face during their professional lives is staying abreast of new developments in digital composition in an age when new programs and technologies are constantly emerging.

Sample Student Project: https://storify.com/hollylynn/fictional-characters-and-a-their-not-so-fictional

FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE

Course-Level Assessment

The figure to the right comes from the fall 2015 course level assessment of MAT 1033 Intermediate Algebra. The Math department employs multiple versions of the same common final exam for MAT 1033. Multiple versions sometimes mean the same problems but with different numbers as constants. Other times the versions have questions that appear in different locations in the exam. Still others employ a variation on the positioning of distractors.

For MAT 1033, four versions of the common assessment are employed, and the mean scores for the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) defined within those assessments are shown in the figure represented by dark teal, light teal, dark purple, and light purple. Shown on the bottom as a red bar graph is the range of achievement of the four exam versions. A figure like this allows the Math department to not only measure achievement by SLO across the exam versions, but also to ensure that each exam version is fairly and effectively measuring the SLO compared to the other versions. Of the 20 SLOs measured (#4, #13, and #19 are not mapped in the assessment), 15 exhibit mean score ranges across the four exam versions of less than 10%. This is the department's first attempt at such an assessment tactic, and so a figure like this helps them assess the multiple exam versions and highlights the extensive processes required when attempting multiple versions of assessment as well as show what is necessary when attempting multiple assessment versions. To view course-level studies, visit http://www.fsw.edu/facultystaff/assessment/history.
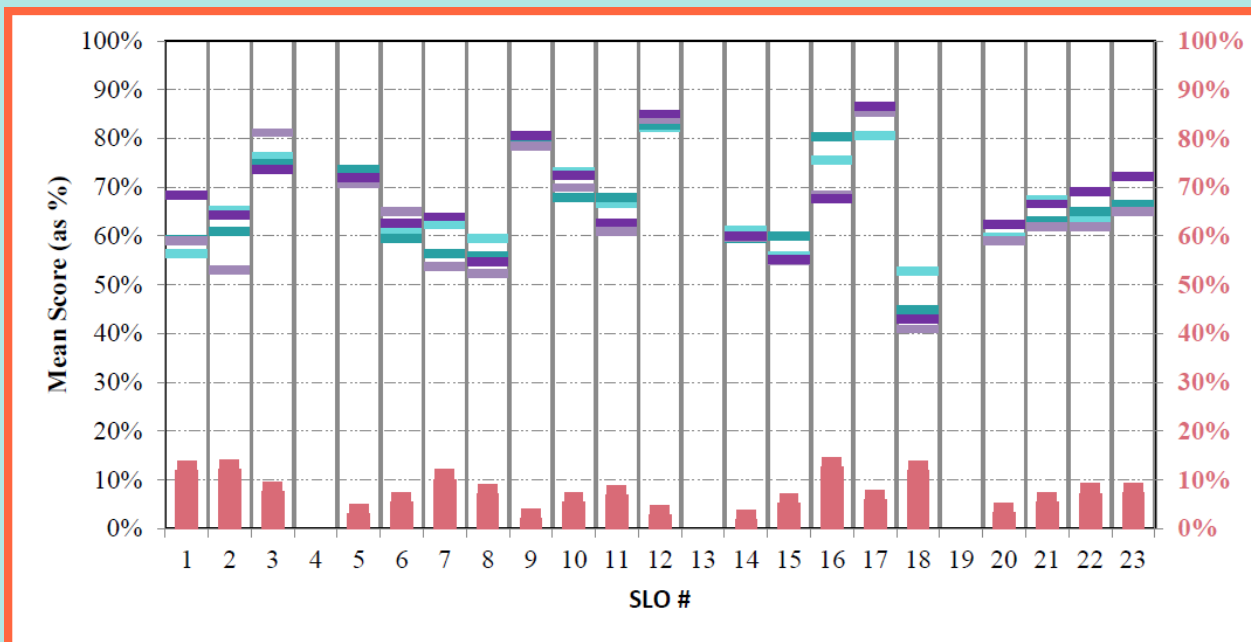
LAC Member Profile

Richard Worch earned a Doctorate in Public Administration from Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, a Masters in Criminal Justice from the University of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD, and has spent 42 years in the profession of law enforcement serving as the elected Sheriff of Charlotte County, FL, from 1988 to 2000.

During his tenure as Sheriff, he served on several gubernatorial commissions and taskforces, including the Florida Assault Weapons Commission. It was also during his tenure that he served as both a commissioner and Chairman of the Florida Commission for Law Enforcement Accreditation. Richard still maintains his certification as a Florida certified law enforcement officer and is currently active in this field.

Richard was an adjunct faculty member at FSW from 1980 until 2010. In 2010, he became a full time faculty member for the Public Safety Administration program and is presently the Department Coordinator of Law and Public Safety.

Richard enjoys international travel, has lived in Russia, and has given lectures to Russian Federation Law Enforcement Personnel on policing in America and America's perspective on International Terrorism. In addition, he possesses an interest in international management, international governmental relations, and international comparative government.

General Education Program Revision Suggested Timeline

Spring 2016
- The Office of Academic Assessment provides instructions and training to faculty in the process of revising syllabi
    - January 6 Duty Day Workshop
    - Professional Development Sessions – *Meeting of the Minds*
        - A minimum of one session for each of the eight competencies spread out over the Spring term
        - Participants will focus on sharing, revising, and building assignments related to a given competency
    - By May 1, faculty will have drafted their selections for integral and supplemental competencies for all course syllabi

Summer 2016
- A representative group from the Learning Assessment Committee (LAC) creates a map from all courses to the eight competencies and collaborates with faculty to develop rubrics for assessing the competencies

Fall 2016
- The Office of Academic Assessment shares the rubrics with faculty during opening duty days
- Faculty finalize the process of revising syllabi and submitting them to the Curriculum Committee for review
- The Learning Assessment Committee continues to offer professional development activities to faculty on a variety of topics related to the changes in the General Education Program including innovative teaching methods and developing signature assignments to provide quality assessments of the competencies selected

Spring 2017
- New syllabi go live
- The Office of Academic Assessment in collaboration with LAC collects artifacts for a pilot assessment of two to three of the primary competencies

Fall 2017
- The Office of Academic Assessment provides support for assessment of two to three of the remaining competencies

Spring 2018
- The Office of Academic Assessment provides support for assessment of the final two or three competencies
- The Office of Academic Assessment in collaboration with LAC creates a two-year schedule for assessing two competencies each semester beginning Fall 2018

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