

Two specific aspects of the General Education Assessment Report for Basic Communications: Writing demonstrates an innovation that merits use by other departments, particularly as we focus on retention and completion.

The first innovative assessment practice relates to the fail/withdrawal (F/W) rate in ENG 101. Out of the 475 students initially enrolled in the sections of ENG 101 selected for assessment, only 54% of them completed the writing assignment used for the assessment. While it's important to know if these students met the learning expectations for the course, it is also useful to consider the 222 students who failed or withdrew from the course and did not complete the assessment assignment. Amy and Catharine created an F/W Survey for the faculty to determine, in the opinion of each faculty member, why students failed or withdrew from ENG 101.

The second innovative practice was to gain an understanding of student cognition. Catharine and Amy created a revisions exercise and related survey for students to complete. The revisions exercise asked students to label all the revisions they had made to their rough draft and classify these revisions as being related to Content, Organization, or Sentence Level. The revisions survey asked them to rate the significance and/or quantity of the revisions they made and self-identify their attitude toward revision.

Both of these innovations added analysis and a research-focus to better understand why students are not successful in ENG 101, which is a more important and difficult question to answer than how many students are successful. Based on the results of these two surveys, the English Department will continue to develop strategies to improve student retention and completion.

I first had the pleasure of working with Amy and Catharine five years ago as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Faculty Orientation Program. In this program, Amy and Catharine were part of Faculty Inquiry Groups. Amy's group investigated Student Services effectiveness; Catharine's group looked at helping students improve their copy-editing skills. As you can see, their interest in assessment and process improvements has continued to be a significant focus of their work.

Congratulations, Amy and Catharine.