

Out Comes Learning

McHenry County College's Assessment Team Newsletter

A newsletter dedicated to the promotion and recognition of Academic Assessment at MCC

How I Spent My Summer **Student Assessment Results**

by Annette Waddelow

As a data enthusiast, I spent my summer immersed in data from student surveys for departments going through Program Review this year and consolidating the general education assessment data we have from Academic Profile testing. I wanted to share the results with everyone.

Our students generally provided very thoughtful feedback on the program review surveys. The student-identified strengths of the programs were the instructors, what they were taught, and how the material was taught. In their comments, our students touched on a number of areas included in Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson's article *Seven Principles For Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*: encourages contact between students and faculty, develops reciprocity and cooperation among students, encourages active learning, gives prompt feedback, emphasizes time on task, communicates high expectations, and respects diverse talents and ways of learning. Based on consolidating hundreds of comments from our students, I thought the following summarizes what our students would like:

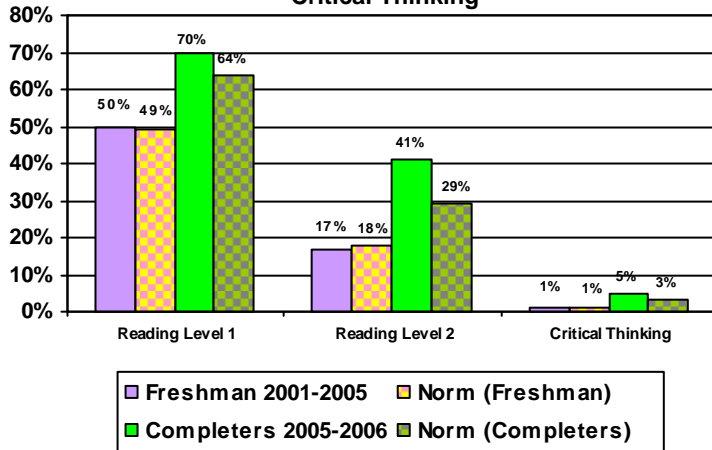
A course taught by an instructor who is knowledgeable and passionate about the subject matter and is an enthusiastic, available, concerned person who provides interesting lectures supplemented by hands-on activities and classroom interaction. A course with current technology and good equipment that is offered at a variety of times/days for flexible scheduling.

Since MCC has finished testing incoming students and graduates with Academic Profile, I consolidated data from over 2500 students. Generally our students coming into MCC test around the average for all incoming community college students taking the test. Our outgoing students tested higher than the comparative group of community college students. The charts below provide proficiency percentages for our students and the comparison groups from community colleges taking Academic Profile. The results suggest our general education program has positively impacted our students in a number of areas while providing areas for improvement. Each proficiency level is associated with statements on student expectations at that level.

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Our Mission: The mission of the McHenry County College assessment team is to provide support to divisional faculty for learning outcomes assessment. This support will be provided by division liaisons who will communicate information about the assessment and transformation process; coordinate the flow of information; investigate and recommend plans to record, organize, analyze, and report data; and be an advocate for the integration of assessment into the College community for the purpose of improving student learning.

**Figure 1: % Students proficient in Reading/
Critical Thinking**



Reading/Critical Thinking (Figure 1)

To be considered Proficient at **level 1** a student should be able to:

- Recognize factual material explicitly presented in a reading passage
- Understand the meaning of particular words or phrases of a reading passage

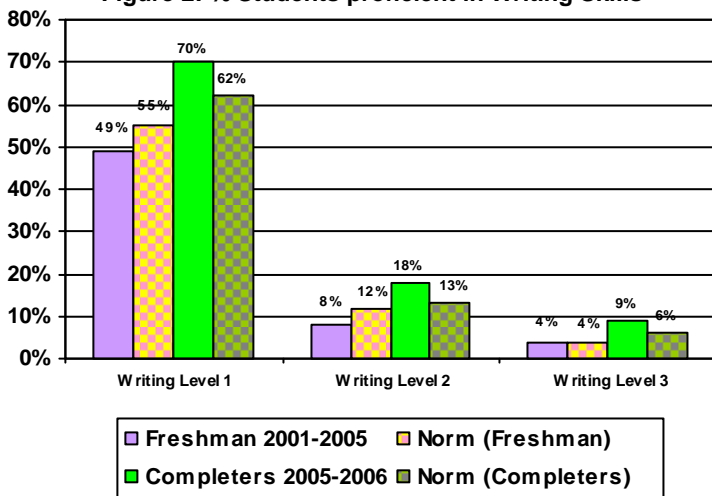
To be considered Proficient at **level 2** a student should be able to:

- Synthesize material from different sections of a passage
- Recognize valid inferences derived from material in the passage
- Identify accurate summaries of a passage or of significant sections of the passage
- Understand and interpret figurative language
- Discern the main idea, purpose, or focus of a passage

To be considered Proficient at **level 3** a student should be able to:

- Evaluate competing causal explanations
- Evaluate hypotheses for consistency with known facts
- Determine the relevance of information for evaluating an argument or conclusion
- Determine whether an artistic interpretation is supported by evidence
- Recognize the salient features or themes in a work of art
- Evaluate the appropriateness of procedures for investigating a question of causation
- Evaluate data for consistency with known facts, hypotheses or methods
- Recognize flaws and inconsistencies in an argument

Figure 2: % Students proficient in Writing Skills



Writing Skills (Figure 2)

To be considered Proficient at **level 1** a student should be able to:

- Recognize agreement among basic grammatical elements
- Recognize appropriate transition words
- Recognize incorrect word choice
- Order sentences in a paragraph
- Order elements in an outline

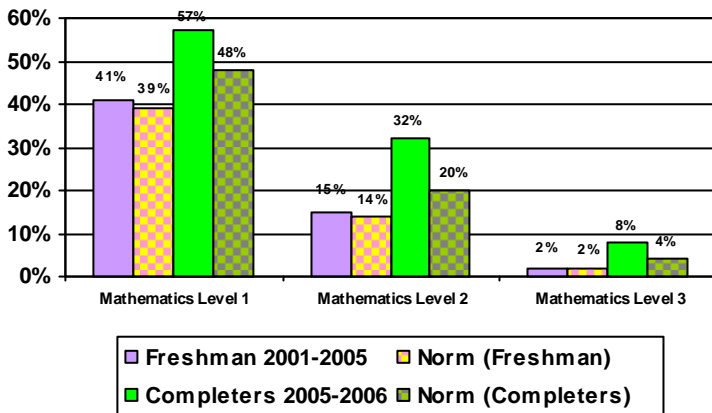
To be considered Proficient at **level 2** a student should be able to:

- Incorporate new material into a passage
- Recognize agreement among basic grammatical elements when these elements are complicated by intervening words or phrases
- Combine simple clauses into single, more complex combinations
- Recast existing sentences into new syntactic combinations

To be considered Proficient at **level 3** a student should be able to:

- Discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate use of parallelism
- Discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate use of idiomatic language
- Recognize redundancy
- Discriminate between correct and incorrect constructions
- Recognize the most effective revision of a sentence

Figure 3: % Students proficient in Mathematics



Mathematics (Figure 3)

To be considered Proficient at **level 1** a student should be able to

- Solve word problems that would most likely be solved by arithmetic
- Solve problems involving the informal properties of numbers and operations, often involving the Number Line, whole numbers and fractions
- Solve problems requiring a general understanding of square roots/squares of numbers.
- Solve a simple equation or substitute numbers into a algebraic expression.
- Find information from a graph.

To be considered Proficient at **level 2** a student should be able to

- Solve arithmetic problems with some complications
- Simplify algebraic expressions, perform basic translations, and draw conclusions
- Interpret a trend represented in a graph, or choose a graph that reflects a trend.
- Solve problems involving sets; the problems would have numeric answer choices.

To be considered Proficient at **level 3** a student should be able to

- Solve word problems that would be unlikely to be solved by arithmetic
- Solve problems involving difficult arithmetic concepts
- Generalize about numbers
- Solve problems with integers, rational numbers, etc.
- Interpret a graph in which the trends are to be expressed algebraically
- Solve problems requiring insight or logical reasoning