
CLASSROOM EVALUATION MEASURES:
STUDENTS AS PARTNERS IN THE ASSESSMENT
PROCESS

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For the past three years faculty and students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania have been building criteria for assessment. It has been my goal in supervising this project to find a better way of evaluating students so that grade anxiety is reduced at the same time levels of performance and production remain high.

Each semester, students are encouraged to investigate professional and peer writing to determine what they themselves value in writing. We train students in writing to learn, because self-discovery through writing promotes greater interest in writing, more frequent writing, and ultimately greater strength in writing. In order to promote writing to learn, or discovery writing, I have most recently implemented several strategies designed to bolster confidence, expertise, and incentive for writing: response journals, a three-point scoring system that proceeds developmentally as the course progresses to assess categories of writing, and a three-part "paper" for each assignment, derived from Elbow's concept of a reader's and a writer's draft. Only one part is scored (the reader's draft), but the other two parts (a writer's draft and a story of the story process report) enable peer reviewers and the teacher to provide better feedback to the writer.

Finally, we help students to become more proficient in self-assessment because writers know instinctively what is and is not working in a paper. Several questionnaires have been used with students to help them (and me) see what they are feeling about the papers they are writing and to help them determine where they think they stand in relation to the criteria of writing they have helped to establish. Eventually as the semester progresses, the students can take over their own evaluation procedures so that they know how they are progressing, not only at the completion of a paper but also as they are writing it.