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## EVALUATING WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AND OTHER ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

**Speakers:** Edward White, California State University, San Bernadino  
Gale Hughes-Wiener, Minnesota Community College System  
Harvey Wiener, LaGuardia Community College, CUNY

**Introducer/Recorder:** Marianne Reynolds, Mercer County Community College, N.J.

Edward White provided an overview of how students' writing is assessed, and he emphasized the notion that a writing test is inseparable from its purpose. He identified six types of tests according to function: admission, placement, equivalency, rising junior, exit barrier, and program assessment tests. He pointed out some of the differences in criteria applied to each type. For example, an admission test must have predictive validity, whereas a placement test need not be as rigorous since consequential decisions are not as drastic or final. White also emphasized that no single test score should be used as the only measure of a student's achievement or potential.

Next, Gale Hughes-Wiener described the Writing Across the Curriculum Program of the Minnesota Community College System. As a program evaluator, she has been involved in the program's implementation and teacher training and in the preliminary collection and analysis of data. She stressed the need to employ sound research methods in testing the assumption that increasing the quality and quantity of student writing leads to increased learning. Some of the assessment techniques she used to assess the program were Likert Scale surveys and hour-long interviews of faculty, holistic rating of student essays, matched class studies, student evaluation surveys, and workshop questionnaires. The project is scheduled to run for an additional year and a half, after which the evaluation will be completed.

Finally, Harvey Wiener described the current state of assessment. Although faculty interest in assessment is growing, the purposes and practices of assessment at most institutions are often questionable. Wiener noted the conflict between faculty and policy-makers that often accompanies assessment programs and decisions. He stressed the need for instructors to clarify the instructional purposes of assessment and plan accordingly. He emphasized the need to analyze assessment data sensibly and make appropriate program changes. He briefly described the National Project for College Assessment Program Evaluation (CAPE) as a resource for administrators and faculty members who are interested in evaluating and improving their testing programs. Wiener stressed, however, that members of institutions should engage in some self-study and analysis before consulting outside experts.◊