



Assessment Times

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT~ CAPA SPRING 2017 PILOT STUDIES

Bowie State University (BSU) is participating in two assessment pilot studies in the next year: WAVES and HEIghten. The first assessment initiative is a U.S. Department of Education (DOEd) and Educational Testing Services (ETS) grant called "Exploring Writing Achievement and Its Role in Success at 4-Year Postsecondary Institutions" to study writing achievement and to ascertain how achievement in this area relates to student success. This ETS study, which is also called WAVES, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences' Program for Postsecondary and Adult Education. WAVES is a \$1.3 million grant with five participating higher education institutions. Besides Bowie, the other institutions are Prairie View A&M University, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Slippery Rock University, and University of North Carolina, Charlotte.



At BSU, the Center for Academic Programs Assessment (CAPA) is heading up the assessment. WAVES will begin in the summer of 2017 at BSU, focusing on freshmen and seniors. The focus on freshmen and seniors will allow CAPA to ascertain over time whether students' performance in writing, and the relationship to academic success during their college careers, changes between the students' freshman and senior year.

According to the DOEd website:

“The researchers will evaluate writing-specific and domain-general knowledge using subtests of ETS's HEIghten [writing] assessment and intrapersonal factors using existing motivation and interest scales. They will also collect administrative data on students' overall GPA and GPA from writing intensive courses, course completion, major course enrollment and completion, and retention in college for five semesters following primary data collection.” (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1807>)

The DOEd web site states that in the area of writing-domain knowledge, the researchers are focusing on:

- Conventions (e.g., grammar, spelling, citations);
- Coherence (e.g., topic development, topical cohesion);
- Organization (e.g., thesis sentences, use of rhetorical and discourse markers, such as therefore, however);
- Source use and integration (e.g., appropriate use of citations); and topicality (e.g., relevant vocabulary)

Furthermore, the researchers are analyzing whether critical thinking skills correlate with writing ability. Regarding intrapersonal factors, the site states that the researchers are exploring whether the student's interest, engagement, goal-setting and motivation in writing correlate with the student's writing ability (<https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1807>). Students will receive a small stipend for participating. If you would like to have your students participate in the WAVES study, please contact the CAPA office.

In the next edition...Collegiate Learning Assessment feedback and results



**How to contact us...
 Center for Academic Programs Assessment (CAPA)**

Martin Luther King Jr.
 Communication Arts Center
 Suite 236-237
 Office: 301-860-3501
 Office: 301-860-4504
 Office:301-860-4004

Fax: 301-860-4296

bverzinski@bowiestate.edu
 lharbinson@bowiestate.edu
 jredd@bowiestate.edu



CAPA SPRING 2017 PILOT STUDIES, CONT.

The HEIghten pilot program is also sponsored by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), but it is focusing on different competencies than the WAVES. These include students’ civic competency and engagement and intercultural competency and diversity.

More than 40 higher education institutions are participating in this pilot in January and February of 2017. These institutions, including Bowie State University, represent a diversity of types of institutions (HBCUs, MSAs, public/private, community colleges, liberal arts/research, etc.). Each of these tests will be taken by at least 50 students, with about half of them being newer students, and half being further along in their college careers. In the fall of 2017 (August and September) a field test will take place for HEIghten, where the same institutions will assess 100 students on each of the two tests. If you would like to have your students participate in the HEIghten study, please contact the CAPA office.

On The Horizon:

Middle States Commission on Higher Education Periodic Review Report Results and Upcoming Self-Study

Findings from the Periodic Review Report in the areas of general education and student learning outcomes assessment require no additional reporting and meet standards.

BSU is in good standing with the Commission. The decennial self-study will begin in 2018.

According to the ETS, civic competence and engagement is:

- seen as a public and private good
• seen as a component of higher education
• links educational institutions with the community and nation
• is valued in the workplace, and
• contribute to young adults' development.

The assessment framework for civic competency is made up of civic knowledge, analytic skills and participatory/involvement skills. In the area of civic engagement, the components are motivations, attitudes and efficacy, democratic norms/values, participation and activities.

The assessment tasks that students will be given for civic competency and engagement consist of activities such as:

- analyzing a document and developing a response
• drawing conclusions from analysis of a document
• reviewing/analyzing facts and opinions to recognize misleading and biased information, and
• role-playing and perspective-taking, and recognizing what response is appropriate for particular participants/stakeholders.

The other part of the Heighten pilot program is Intercultural Competency and Diversity (ICD).

According to ETS, intercultural competency and diversity is defined as:

“...the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

The ETS states that ICD is important particularly to:

- Student learning outcomes
• Student success, and
• Workforce and civic skills.

The assessment for Intercultural Competency and Diversity will be scenario-based items that gives students a particular scenario where an intercultural situation comes up. The students will need to analyze the situation and identify the action/response that provides the solution that is the most appropriate response.

The follow-up to the early spring 2017 HEIghten Civic Engagement and Intercultural Competency and Diversity assessment will be a summer webinar and a report on the spring pilot. It is anticipated that these results will be able to be shared with the BSU community in late summer or early fall 2017.

Star border containing the quote: 'The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.' - Eleanor Roosevelt

