

## Early Assessment in English

### Challenge

Students come to class possessing disparate skills. Although students may test into a specific level or have taken prerequisites, their overall course readiness still differs from one another.

### Solution

#### Early Assessment

How to determine individual skill levels:

1. Select an appropriate-level reading and assign an in-class written response to this reading on the second day of class.
  - a. 'Appropriate' means *mid-level* for the course and short. It shouldn't take the students longer than ten minutes to read.
  - b. Reading topic should focus on career and educational goals. [Click here for sample.](#)
  - c. Writing should take between 15 and 30 minutes depending on the expectations for the course.
2. Read through student responses and give an undisclosed assessment of 1 thru 5.

**Assessment level 1 or 2:** These students are not necessarily ready for the class and need a broader level of assistance. It is critical that faculty provide immediate individual advising and support service referrals.  
([See Student Referral Form](#))

**Assessment level 3:** Although this student is ready for the class, they may be challenged by it. The student receives a positive, personalized written response to their writing assignment.

**Assessment level 4 or 5:** These students are well prepared for the class. The students receive a positive written response to their writing assignment and are offered Honors Contracts.

3. Return writings with the following attachments:
  - Student Referral Form
  - [Individual Student Success Plan \(holistic\)](#)
  - Drop/Withdrawal info sheet

As an added assignment, students are required to follow-through with the Referral Form and reflect on their Individual Student Success Plan. Furthermore, the professor should meet individually with students who assess at levels 1 or 2 to discuss their learning needs.

### Faculty Expert



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### Related Topics

- Early Assessment
- English
- Chicano Studies
- Other SCS Models

**Early Assessment in English (continued)**

**Results**

- Students have a better understanding of course expectations.
- Students have a step by step plan for succeeding in the class and at City College.
- Students feel like a valued member of the class and develop a relationship earlier with the professor.
- Students are empowered to make effective use of campus resources.
- The professor is more familiar with students and more responsive to their learning needs.
- The professor is better able to facilitate student group work based on early assessment results.

**References**

Related documents:

- [Individual Student Success Plan \(holistic\)](#)
- [Defining College Readiness](#)
- [Student Referral Form](#)
- [Drop/Withdrawal info sheet](#)

Recommended reading for faculty:

Darder, A. *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A Pedagogy of Love*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 2002.

Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass. 1998.

**Quote from the Expert**

*"I feel more confident in my teaching after conducting early assessment, because I know where to start. I know what type of review I have to do. I'm preparing the students to succeed. I find that students are so grateful that they have someone who is being honest with them about their learning needs."*

**Faculty Expert**



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**This strategy embodies the following key conditions for student retention and success:**

Expectations       Support       Feedback       Involvement       Learning