1. Assessment information collected

SUMMARY: Overall, every criteria on which we assessed student essays improves over the course of the core writing classes. Students generally come into our classes having some ability in each of the criteria, so they are not blank slates. The changes in scores from the beginning of 111x to the end of 111x are dramatic and the changes that happen during the 200 level course are less so.

English 111x, 211x, and 213x classes taught at UAF in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 participated in assessment. The assessment consisted of one essay collected from each student at the beginning of English 111x, one essay at the end of 111x, and one essay at the end of English 211x or English 213x. This process was designed to track student progress across the core writing courses. We chose to assess the essays for Control of Syntax and Mechanics, Self-Assessment, and Transfer. These require critical thinking skills, which we value as a program. The rubric that we used can be found here.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

Overall

Results: On average, student writing shows improvement in all categories. Students
begin English 111x with higher scores in control of syntax and mechanics than in the other categories. Self-assessment shows the greatest improvement. By the time students finish 211x or 213x, they are much closer to the 2 milestone than when they begin. The picture with transfer is a bit more complicated, as the improvement is not linear, but there is still an 8.37% increase in the average transfer scores by the end of 211/213x.

**Control of Syntax and Mechanics:** The education that students receive before they arrive has prepared them for the English 111x course in terms of control of mechanics and syntax, and they continue to improve in this competency.

**Self-Assessment:** Our department’s emphasis on students’ awareness of the choices they make as writers is paying off. Nearly 70% of students entering English 111x are at the benchmark or lower. However, students make a huge leap in their self-assessment, especially over the course of English 111x. By the time they finish the course, nearly 70% of students score above the benchmark score of 1. This is in line with our program curriculum, which values this kind of self-reflection and awareness of one’s choices as a writer. Additionally, scores continue to rise during 211/213x. By the end of the courses, only twenty percent of students score at the benchmark or below and about twenty percent of students score above the second milestone.

**Transfer:** There is a slight decrease between the end of 111x and the end of the 200 level courses; however, students still show improvement between the beginning of 111x and the end of the 200 level courses. When they begin 111x, less than 30% of students reach the first milestone. At the end of 211/213x, nearly 40% of students reach that milestone. And it is significant that the 0 scores are virtually eliminated by the end of the 200 level courses. This is a small improvement and one that we hope to continue to work on.

3. **Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above**

It is clear that students are improving their writing skills over the course of the core writing classes. The jump that happens during English 111x is remarkable and we would like to see those same results at the 200 level. This suggests that we need to:

- Revise guidelines for teaching analysis
  - include more analysis resources on WriteAlaska
  - include more detailed training on analysis for incoming TAs
- Improve support for 200 level instructors
  - conduct training workshops for 200 level instructors
- Adjust student expectations for 200 level courses
  - give 200 level courses new title
possible inclusion of 214, so the emphasis is on continuing the progress that happens in 111x instead of having a divide between disciplines

4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting

All University Writing Program changes will be addressed by the Composition Committee of the English Department. The assessment committee included the following faculty.

Sarah Stanley, Chair
August Johnson, Write Alaska Research Assistant
Jaclyn Bergamino, Write Alaska Research Assistant
Eileen Harney
Jennifer Tilbury
Cindy Hardy
Victoria Avery
Megan Mericle