



Consolidated Notes on Pilot Writing Assessment Conference Call

Below is a synopsis of the key topics coming out of the call on November 20, 2008. Please contact Jim Kroening at JKroening@dpi.state.nc.us or Phyllis Blue at PBlue@dpi.state.nc.us with any follow-up questions. In depth information on all aspects of the electronic writing pilot can be found at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/writing/writingpilot>.

We have received encouraging support from pilots and non-pilots in regards to the focus on authentic and cross-curricular writing. We are thrilled that you all have agreed to be part of this work and believe that we will learn a lot this year that will help us improve the writing skills of students across the state. Thank you!

TOPIC	DETAILS
Scoring	<p>Who scores?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ It is <i>preferable</i> but not <i>necessary</i> that an ELA teacher score the writing portion of the content-specific writing tasks. Any teacher who takes and masters the objectives of the Moodle course on applying the writing rubric properly to score student work can participate in the scoring process. <p>Concern about ELA teacher scoring capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Capacity and time issues for ELA teachers may make it necessary and helpful to A) have non-ELA teachers train and score writing tasks or B) have teachers outside of the 4th and 7th grade train and share in the scoring process. <p>Does every LEA have to score 4 writing tasks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The plan adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) in August, 2008 stipulates that each student in grades 4 and 7 will complete 2 content-specific and 2 on-demand writing tasks and those tasks will be locally scored by teachers during the 2008-09 school year. However, if local circumstances prevent all four writing tasks from being completed and/or scored, those instances must be appropriately documented by the LEA and a report must be filed with the regional accountability coordinator (RAC).

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<p>On-Demand Writing Tasks</p>	<p>When will the on-demand writing tasks be available?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The on-demand writing tasks will be available to LEA testing coordinators on the TNN Manuals page on December 7, 2008. <p>Can students pre-write in advance for the on-demand tasks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No. The purpose of on-demand writing is to assess independent writing skills in a controlled, timed environment. Pre-writing might dramatically impact the quality of writing produced and compromise the on-demand assessment process.
<p>Content-Specific Writing Tasks</p>	<p>What tasks can be used for content-specific writing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any open-ended, authentic writing task. Schools and teachers are strongly encouraged to use those writing tasks that they <i>currently use</i> in the classroom. The intent of content-specific writing assessments is to ensure that teachers integrate writing across all content areas – it is not to create an additional layer of assessment. All teachers should collectively take responsibility in building students’ writing skills.
<p>Special Needs Students</p>	<p>What special accommodations will be made for students with disabilities who are participating in the centrally-hosted online pilot?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the notes area for a particular student, enter the word “untimed” and the built-in countdown timer will be disabled. This is only applicable for the on-demand writing task administrations. More specific information on this process will be forthcoming.
<p>Technical Issues</p>	<p>Can Moodle be used to save the drafts of content-specific writing tasks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No. Saving drafts will unnecessarily tax the system. Students should be encouraged to learn the skill of saving, organizing, and keeping track of word processing files. <p>Can a staff member go on-line, register and try out the assessment system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes. Note that you cannot remove your name once you have registered in the system. http://center.ncsu.edu/write/ <p>Keyboarding Issues (slowing down student response time)</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time has been extended for the on-demand writing tasks from 75 minutes to 90 minutes. <p>How is scorer objectivity ensured if the scorer knows whose writing he or she is assessing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is a legitimate concern as it is one of the most important of the biases involved in scoring. While scorer bias may effect the data, given the focus on assessing for learning and not on accountability, this issue will be addressed following this current pilot year. When scores are used for accountability purposes, adjustments to the system will be made to allow for the masking of student identities.
<p>What's to come in Writing Assessment?</p>	<p>Is it possible that on-demand writing will be phased out in the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Very unlikely. While the way on-demand tasks look may change in the future, the state will determine a way to gather standardized data on student writing. This will ensure that all students are achieving, the public is aware of student achievement levels and all schools are held accountable. <p>What tools/options will we have to analyze the assessment data?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The programming has not yet been completed. However, a variety of reports, including how many staff members have accessed and completed the professional development courses, student assignment completion rates, and student score data will be available. One of the primary purposes of conducting a pilot program is to collect data, both quantitative and qualitative, to determine the feasibility of continuing the program as designed or to make adjustments and modifications for the future.