MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DEAN
Dr. Deidre Greer

The College of Education and Health Professions at Columbus State University is proud to offer accredited programs to our students. Attending an accredited program means our graduates are eligible for licensure upon graduation and passing state certification or licensure exams. A big part of being accredited involves having an effective method of collecting and analyzing data to determine whether our programs meet the objectives we aim to meet based on standards set by professional organizations and our accrediting bodies. LiveText is a tool that helps us accomplish the task of collecting and analyzing data in an efficient manner, leaving us time to do what we are here to do, teach students. Students and parents want to be assured that the programs offered are of high quality. Accreditation provides that assurance. The investment students make by purchasing LiveText gives them more than just an electronic repository for their assignments, portfolios, and video clips. It gives them the confidence that faculty who teach in their programs are using teaching strategies that work because they regularly analyze data collected in LiveText to ensure students are learning.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION
Dr. Sallie Averitt Miller

Thank you for your efforts in the LiveText initiative. I think we have made great progress in the last two years.

We are publishing the newsletter to further facilitate the LiveText initiative by keeping faculty, staff, and administration informed of new features and an overview of its uses in assessment. I hope that you will find it helpful.

Let me recap the current regulatory and accreditation landscape and briefly our intent for LiveText. Unfortunately, this time the landscape is different and quite rigorous.

First, the changing and often uncertain assessment and accreditation landscape in higher education continues to pose challenges for universities. For example in 2011 the National Academy of Education proposed that it should support state efforts that reward the best programs, strive to better mediocre ones, and interestingly, change or shut down the poorest programs. Well, it’s happening! The U.S. Department of Education, Title II Report, is already publishing the programs that are At-Risk and Low Performing.

RECENT RELEASES

Turnitin Integration
Using Turnitin within LiveText allows instructors to conveniently check for improper citation or potential plagiarism by comparing it against the world's largest academic database.

Dropbox Integration
Users now have the ability to import and attach a variety of file types to LiveText documents and assignments from dropbox.com - allowing for the submission of artifacts users have stored in Dropbox.

Video Assessment Feature
This feature is designed to allow for the assessment of streaming video artifacts. This includes uploading, streaming, commenting, grading and scoring video artifacts with a rubric.

LIVETEXT TRAINING
Training sessions can be scheduled upon request. To schedule a training session, please contact the LiveText Coordinator at maarouf_saoussan@columbusstate.edu
Second, just as the landscape began to noticeably change the COEHP recognized the need for software to assist in the warehousing of data as well as the data display; that is, the data had to be captured and organized into reports that could satisfy the needs of a number of potential users; i.e., the U.S. Department of Education, National and State Accrediting Agencies, Independent Third Party Evaluators (I3PEs), Critics, etc. Thus, in 2012 the College selected LiveText as its official assessment tool.

Third, evidence is now an expectation of our accrediting agencies and others. In efforts to secure the viability of university educator preparation programs faculty and administration are focusing on strengthening evidence. In addition to the I3PEs, the College is revisiting the validity and reliability of its Key Assessments and continuing to add Critical Assessments on the program and course levels. It's important to know that our accrediting agencies expect these data to be accessible on our website and serve as a critical source of information for our programs’ continuous improvement effort. Of course these data will also build a significant accreditation resource to assist state and national accrediting agencies in monitoring of Educator Preparation Program performance.

Fourth, although the College will maintain two annual portfolios to reduce the copious amounts of clutter (disorganized data that cannot be reasonably extracted into reports as needed), only the sample data that Chairs and/or Program Coordinators approve will be displayed on the LiveText Exhibit Center site.

Faculty and staff may contact Department Chairs for access to the portfolio links.

The Associate Dean for Assessment and Accreditation office is always open to faculty, staff, and administration and I invite your questions and suggestions.

FACULTY SECTION
Dr. Erinn Bentley

And that’s the end of my report. I hope you liked it. Such are the famous last words used to conclude nearly every 4th grade writing response I have read this week. How often do our students – whether they are in 4th grade, high school, or college – view schoolwork as something to be liked or scored by the teacher? What if our students viewed their work as something much bigger and richer? What if teachers made authentic student growth visible to students and other teachers?

In my perfect world as a writing teacher, students would enter my classroom with individual composition portfolios and rubrics from former teachers. From our first moment together, I would know students’ writing pasts, see how they progressed, and begin guiding them toward further growth. Instead, I often have to guess, use trial and error, or rely on available data (e.g., standardized tests scores or course grades) to plan instruction. Honestly, my greatest joy does not come from grading a perfect student paper (if such a paper exists). Each individual paper is merely a snapshot of the student-writer. That single paper cannot show me how the student – over time – added evidence to strengthen her claim or how she manipulated language to create a vivid voice. Student growth is best measured over time. Such growth might take place across several drafts of the same paper; or, such growth might take weeks, months, or years. By identifying and teaching specific writing traits and observing how students develop those traits over time, I determine how to respond to students’ learning needs. Some need additional support. Some need a wake-up call. Some just need encouragement. They all have needs, and it takes time to determine those needs.
Without the “big picture” of my students’ growth, I lose precious time.

As a faculty member mentoring pre-service and in-service teachers, I often feel the same frustration: I am losing precious time that could be used to “grow” my candidates. Though I know the courses students have taken before they enter my classroom, I do not know their individual learning needs regarding specific skills and sets of knowledge. How I wish they each came with a portfolio focused a few key traits with rubrics or other assessments identifying students’ areas of strength and places they need to grow. I may only work with these students for one semester or one course; I want to build on the work started by colleagues.

Enter LiveText. Enter critical and key assessments.

I will be honest. Critical and key assessments in higher education are not appealing. They are not appealing to me; they may not be appealing to you. As I delve into new scholarship, I reinvent my courses, my students’ assignments. I do not want to standardize my courses so they become rigid. I believe all of us need flexibility to invent and reinvent our courses as our disciplines change. As a writing teacher, how can I not embrace creativity and flexibility? As a writing teacher educator, though, how can I not embrace a way to better help my students grow over time? To better serve my students, to better utilize the limited time I have with them, I need more (authentic) information about my students.

In my perfect world as a writing teacher educator, students would enter my classroom with a portfolio comprised of… Honestly, I do not know the answer. What about you? What do you wish you knew about your students? Their skills and knowledge gained in the classes before yours? The expectations for them in the classes and field placements following yours? I do not have a plan for building the perfect student portfolio or assessment system. I do know that with shared access, shared expectations, and a shared vision in students’ growth over time – we can make use of our time, make use of one another’s expertise, and make our courses and programs stronger. As your colleague, as someone who teaches your students, I hope you will join the conversation. Together, what can we do to build a place where students’ work does more than earn a grade? How can we use students’ work as a vehicle for tracking growth and improvement over time? How can we maximize the limited time with our students to help them grow even more?

Reminders for Program Coordinators and Faculty

- Follow the COEHP guideline to code your course key/critical assignments and rubrics: http://coehp.columbusstate.edu/livetext/coehpcoding.pdf
- All rubrics must be aligned with InTASC standards at a minimum.
- Verify that all rubrics are valid; i.e., they measure what you intend to measure.
- The rubrics should be error-free.
- Checklist rubrics are no longer acceptable by accreditors.
- Key and Critical Assessments are due in LiveText on May 13th
LIVETEXT ANALYTICS
Ms. Saoussan Maarouf, LiveText Coordinator

“LiveText Analytics is a dynamic and comprehensive reporting tool, with access to advanced filtering options, offered in addition to the standard LiveText reports. Analytics is intended to be an exploratory tool with the goals of looking at trend data and increasing the ability to make informed changes to improve student learning outcomes. Operational reports are also available.” LiveText, Inc.

Assessed student count by academic year

Assessor count by ethnicity and gender

Scores by assessor gender and student gender

LiveText Newsletter Manager
Ms. Saoussan Maarouf, LiveText Coordinator
College of Education and Health Professions

Editorial Oversight and Editorial Board
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Dr. Erinn Bentley, Assistant Department Chair for Teacher Education
Dr. Deirdre Greer, Interim Dean, College of Education and Health Professions