

## **SECTION TWO - MID-LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

**7. What measures were used to assess reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, and other institutionally recognized general education competencies? Describe how assessment activities were linked to the institutional general education program competencies.**

### **Assessment Measures**

Mid-level assessment is an evolutionary process at Southeastern. Prior to March 1998, several nationally-recognized assessment instruments were used including: ACT CAAP, ACT COMP, College Base, and ETS Academic Profile. The General Education Committee, working with the Director of Assessment and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, began a process of self-evaluation and starting in March 1998, Southeastern has used the ACT CAAP as its barometer for the General Education Competencies. On assessment day, five different ACT CAAP assessment tests (Critical Thinking, Writing Skills, Science Reasoning, Reading, and Mathematics) were given to all students that had completed between 60 and 85 hours and had not previously participated in mid-level assessment. By the end of the testing period, students were mentally exhausted and did not give their best performance. The General Education Committee requested that the Institutional Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Research change the mid-level assessment protocols beginning with the Spring Semester 2003. Changes that were incorporated included:

- On assessment day two ACT CAAP subtests were administered: Critical Thinking and Reading (in Spring Semester 2005 Writing Essay was added). Thirty students in each classification level (Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, Senior) took each of these subtests. Thus, on assessment day 240 students took these tests in Fall 2004 and 360 students took these subtests in Spring 2005. These students are selected randomly from a group of their peers.
- In the month of November for the Fall Semester and April for Spring Semester, the other three subtests in Writing Skills, Mathematics, and Science Reasoning, were given in targeted classes. Approximately 100 students took the Writing Skills subtest in English Composition II (ENG 1213); 100 students took the Mathematics subtest in College Algebra (MATH 1513) and other MATH prefixed courses; and 100 Students took the Science Reasoning subtest in either General Biology (BIOL 1114) or Principles of Biology I (BIOL 1404).

### **Linkage of Assessment and Goals**

Several of the goals of Southeastern's general education program are linked directly to an ACT CAAP subtest. The goals of general education and specific learner outcomes were revised by the General Education Council, chaired by the Director of General Education (now the Associate Dean for the School of Graduate and University Studies), working with academic departments during 2004-2005; specific ACT CAAP subtests used to assess pertinent goals are listed below:

- The goal of the communication component of general education is to enhance the ability of students to effectively convey and receive information at the college level of competence. **ACT CAAP Writing Skills and ACT CAAP Writing Essay**
- The goal of the computer literacy component of general education is to develop the computer skills of students so that they may use computers and associated technology for communicating, researching, organizing, storing, accessing, and presenting information.
- The goal of the mathematical or quantitative reasoning component of general education is to develop the ability of students to understand and apply mathematical abstraction.  
**ACT CAAP Mathematics**
- The goal of the science reasoning component of general education is to promote scientific literacy in students. **ACT CAAP Science Reasoning**
- The goal of the critical thinking component of general education is to enhance the ability of students to integrate new information with previously acquired information to solve novel complex problems. **ACT CAAP Critical Thinking**
- The goal of the social and political institutions component of general education is to promote an understanding of the forces that have influenced the development of social, governmental, political, and/or economic institutions.
- The goal of the wellness component of general education is to improve the ability of students to recognize the factors that promote healthy lifestyles.
- The goal of the humanities component of general education is to enhance the awareness of students of the cultural heritage of humans.
- The goal of the fine arts component of general education is to enhance the appreciation and understanding of the nature and value of the fine arts.
- The goal of the ethics and values component of general education is to promote an understanding of ethical issues implicit in their personal behavior and in the operation of political, social, and economic institutions.

Each academic department has been charged with developing assessment protocols for the specific learning outcomes for each goal addressed by courses they offer in the general education program. Departments are beta testing these assessment instruments in Fall Semester 2005 and Spring Semester 2006.

We believe the changes that have been made in the assessment protocols for general education will address concerns raised by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in November 2003 during the reaccreditation visit. The Commission reaccredited Southeastern for 10 years; however, they requested a monitoring report concerning general education be turned in by 30

June 2007. The new assessment protocols being implemented use a two-tiered approach to assessing general education. The first level involves academic departments, working with the General Education Council and Associate Dean of the School of Graduate and University Studies, to develop specific outcomes for each goal. Then, departments developed assessment protocols and benchmarks of student achievement for each outcome; these were approved by the General Education Council. The second level of assessment occurs at the University level. The ACT CAAP Subtests currently in place are the primary assessment tools. Last year, the General Education Council proposed adding the ACT CAAP Writing Essay Subtest to the battery of tests given on assessment day; it was given during Spring Semester 2005. Additional instruments currently under consideration include the National Survey of Student Engagement (or other such instrument), locally-developed Exit Survey, and a revision of the computer proficiency requirement. The General Education Council recommended that materials available from Thomson Learning Global Rights Group be used in conjunction with locally-developed materials (e.g., information retrieval techniques developed by librarians at Southeastern) to increase the rigor of the computer proficiency requirement. Initial drafts of the Exit Survey have been developed; it will be implemented during Spring Semester 2006. Although several of these items require funding, the University has made the commitment to enhance the assessment of general education and money has been reallocated to cover most of the costs.

**8. Which and how many students participate in Mid-Level Assessment? Describe how the instruments were administered and how students were selected. Describe strategies to motivate students to participate meaningfully.**

### **Student Participants**

The number of students assessed since Fall 1991 is given in Table 2.1; between 400-800 Juniors participated each academic year up through Fall 2002. Beginning with the Spring Semester 2003, Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors participated in the testing. The percentage of those students who were Juniors also is given in Table 2.1. For all years, Juniors comprised over 60% of students selected for Mid-Level Assessment. Numbers of Juniors participating in mid-level assessment has ranged from a high of 491 in Fall Semester 1992 to a low of 92 in Fall Semester 2003. While this decrease may cause some concern, the size of the sample was still well within the acceptable range. Furthermore, students requested to participate in mid-level assessment testing are carefully selected. Demographic characteristics of Southeastern Juniors and user norms are provided in Table 2.2.

Starting with Spring Semester 2003, selection of student participants was changed in the following ways. We carefully selected 120 students, thirty (30) from each grade level (Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior), to take the ACT CAAP Reading subtest and another 120 students to take the ACT CAAP Critical Thinking subtest on assessment day (Table 2.3). During Spring Semester 2005, we added the ACT CAAP Writing Essay subtest to the battery of tests and selected an additional 120 students. Therefore, we now select 360 students, 90 from each grade, to take these three subtests. Students selected have completed all their coursework at Southeastern. The Director of Assessment sends a letter to students at the beginning of each semester indicating that they have been selected and are required to take the assessment test on assessment day. The letter also includes information on the importance of mid-level assessment

and why students should give their best effort.

**Table 2.1. SOSU juniors involved in mid-level assessment by semester and year.**

Semester	Exam	No. Students	% Tested on MLA Day
October 1991	ACT CAAP	136*	NA
March 1992	ACT CAAP	394	81%
October 1992	College Base	491	81%
March 1993	ETS Academic Profile	302	81%
October 1993	ACT COMP	416	82%
March 1994	ACT CAAP	312	76%
October 1994	College Base	372	80%
March 1995	ETS Academic Profile	268	78%
October 1995	ACT COMP	338	80%
March 1996	ACT CAAP	286	66%
October 1996	College Base	345	69%
March 1997	ETS Academic Profile	210	68%
October 1997	ACT COMP	280	71%
March 1998	ACT CAAP	225	71%
October 1998	ACT CAAP	242	71%
March 1999	ACT CAAP	265	78%
October 1999	ACT CAAP	276	75%
March 2000	ACT CAAP	224	73%
October 2000	ACT CAAP	220	76%
March 2001	ACT CAAP	223	72%
October 2001	ACT CAAP	215	69%
March 2002	ACT CAAP	198	67%
October 2002	ACT CAAP	213	65%
March 2003	ACT CAAP	172	72%
October 2003	ACT CAAP	92	68%
March 2004	ACT CAAP	101	70%
October 2004	ACT CAAP	93	61%
March 2005	ACT CAAP	120	70%

\* Pilot Testing with Juniors in the School of Science and Technology.

The second aspect of mid-level assessment occurs in selected classes that directly related to the ACT CAAP subtest. Approximately 100 students were given the ACT CAAP Writing Skills subtest in English Composition II near the end of the each semester (Table 2.3). Similarly, approximately 100 students were given the ACT CAAP Mathematics subtest in College Algebra and other MATH prefixed courses and another 100 students took the ACT CAAP Science Reasoning subtest in either General Biology or Principles of Biology I. This adds another 300 students to the mid-level participant pool. We believe that by administering specific ACT CAAP

subtests at the end of the semester in specific general education courses students may apply newly acquired skills, see direct application of those skills, and perform better.

**Table 2.2. Comparison of demographic characteristics of SOSU Juniors and user norms consisting of four-year public colleges taking the ACT CAAP Subtests.**

Demographic Variable	Southeastern Students										Public Colleges	
	Spr '03		Fall '03		Spr '04		Fall '04		Spr 05		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Gender Females	196	52	47	52.2	41	43.6	51	54.8	56	46.7	25,837	59.5
Race White/Caucasian	281	75	69	76.7	63	67	44	79.6	89	74.2	34,144	78.6
Race Black	9	2	6	6.7	10	10.6	3	3.2	9	7.5	4,500	10.4
Enrolled as Freshman	348	93	73	81.1	55	58.5	73	78.5	94	78.3	33,914	78.1
Full-time Students	351	94	83	92.2	86	91.5	85	91.4	117	97.5	39,511	90.9
Educational Plans Return to this School	309	83	80	88.9	89	89.4	89	96.8	114	95.0	39,245	90.3
Educational Plans Return to another school	33	9	5	5.6	6	6.4	1	1.1	4	3.3	3,066	7.1

Starting with Spring Semester 2005, undergraduate students were solicited to volunteer to take the ACT CAAP subtest of their choice. Students were notified by announcements in classes, postings on the homepage of the University website, and e-mail broadcasts. To increase student motivation, Southeastern started a Mid-level Assessment Scholarship program; students achieving the highest three (3) scores on each of the six (6) ACT CAAP subtests were provided a scholarship for the following Fall Semester. Numbers of volunteers for each subtest were: Reading (7); Critical Thinking (5); Writing Skills (3); Science Reasoning (2), Writing Essay (1); and Mathematics (1). The volunteer program was started to provide all undergraduates with an opportunity to earn a scholarship, not just those randomly selected to participate in mid-level assessment. More information is provided under the section concerning student motivation.

In total, we had 1,026 students (471 in Fall Semester and 555 in Spring Semester) participate in mid-level assessment (Table 2.3). The Office of Academic Affairs continues to monitor the participation rate from semester to semester. Since changing the testing procedures in Spring 2003, we have fewer Juniors who participate, but more overall participation.

**Table 2.3. Number of students taking each of the ACT CAAP Subtests by classification and date tested.**

Subtest	Date Tested	Classification				Totals
		Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	
Writing	Fall 2004	33	38	4	1	76
	Spr 2005	17	24	23	25	89
Reading	Fall 2004	25	29	28	23	105
	Spr 2005	26	28	31	24	109
Critical Thinking	Fall 2004	30	27	29	25	111
	Spr 2005	22	26	30	22	100
Mathematics	Fall 2004	41	22	21	9	93
	Spr 2005	56	18	16	5	95
Science Reasoning	Fall 2004	42	24	12	8	86
	Spr 2005	37	34	20	4	95
Writing Essay	Fall 2004	0	0	0	0	0
	Spr 2005	48	11	4	4	67
Totals	Fall 2004	171	140	94	66	471
	Spr 2005	206	141	124	84	555
	Fall + Spr	377	281	218	150	1,026

Demographic data for all student participants in mid-level assessment testing are listed in Table 2.4. Over 72% of all students are white/Caucasian both semesters; Native American/Alaska Native was the only other group with more than 10%. African American/Black comprised 4.3% and 5.8% of the participants in Fall 2004 and Spring 2005, respectively. More females than males took the ACT CAAP subtests during both semesters (Table 2.4); percent female increased from 50.8% in Fall Semester 2004 to 54.0% in Spring Semester 2005. More than 67% of the participants were between 19 and 25 years of age; over 21% of the participants were less than 18 years old in Fall Semester. Most students (98%) indicated that English was their first language. Over 89% of all participants enrolled as freshman. More than 95% of the participants were full-time students (at least a 12 hour load) and over 83% plan on returning to Southeastern the next semester. Percent of students expecting to transfer increased from 4.7% in Fall Semester 2004 to 8.5% in Spring 2005. Freshmen were the largest group and represented over 34% of the participants both semesters; Sophomores and Juniors comprised over 48% of all students both semesters. A majority of the students had a GPA of between 2.51 and 3.50; more than 21% had a 3.51 GPA or above.

**Table 2.4. Demographic characteristics of all Southeastern students participating in mid-level assessment during Fall Semester 2004 and Spring Semester 2005.**

Parameter	Characteristic	Fall Semester 2004		Spring Semester 2005	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Ethnicity	African American/Black	19	4.3	30	5.8
	American Indian/Alaska Nat.	62	13.9	74	14.2
	White/Caucasian	327	73.2	376	72.3
	Mexican American/Chicano	7	1.6	9	1.7
	Asian/Pacific Islander	9	2.0	4	0.8
	Puerto Rican/Cuban/Hispanic	1	0.2	5	1.0
	Other	5	1.1	4	0.8
	Prefer not to respond	6	1.3	10	1.9
	No response	11	2.5	8	1.5
Gender	Male	216	48.3	236	45.4
	Female	227	50.8	281	54.0
	No response	4	0.9	3	0.6
Age	18 and under	96	21.5	68	13.1
	19-20	158	35.3	203	39.0
	21-25	144	32.2	186	35.8
	26-30	21	4.7	20	3.8
	31-39	15	3.4	20	3.8
	40 and older	13	2.9	23	4.4
	No response	0	0	0	0
English	First language	440	98.4	512	98.5
	Not first language	7	1.6	8	1.5
Enrolled as Freshman	Yes	403	90.2	467	89.8
	No	44	9.8	53	10.2
	No response	0	0	0	0
Education Level	Freshman	157	35.1	179	34.4
	Sophomore	131	29.3	132	25.4
	Junior	93	20.8	120	23.1
	Senior	65	14.5	89	17.1
	No response	1	0.2	0	0
Student Status	Full-time	425	95.1	495	95.2
	Part-time	22	4.9	25	4.8
	No response	0	0	0	0
Cumulative GPA	Below 2.00	12	2.7	17	3.3
	2.01-2.50	63	14.1	86	16.5
	2.51-3.00	129	28.9	141	27.1
	3.01-3.50	133	29.8	164	31.5
	3.51 and above	102	22.8	109	21.0
	No response	8	1.8	3	0.6
Educational Plans	Return to this school	379	84.8	432	83.1
	Transfer to different school	21	4.7	44	8.5
	Other	44	9.8	41	7.9
	No response	3	0.7	3	0.6

## **Administration of Instruments**

All subtests are administered by individuals (Director of Assessment, Associate Dean, School of Graduate and University Studies, or faculty members) familiar with the protocols and guidelines established by ACT. Students are instructed to complete the subtests to the best of their abilities. On assessment day during Fall Semester 2004, the ACT CAAP Reading and Critical Thinking subtests were administered; whereas, on assessment day in Spring Semester 2005, the ACT CAAP Reading, Critical Thinking, and Writing Essay subtests were given. Starting in Spring Semester 2005, students volunteering to participate in mid-level assessment also were provided the ACT CAAP subtest of their choice on assessment day. In the month of November for the Fall Semester and April for Spring Semester, the other subtests in Writing Skills, Mathematics, and Science Reasoning, were administered in the classes described above. Subtests are bundled at the end of each semester and sent to ACT for scoring.

## **Student Motivation**

Motivation improved dramatically on this campus when the number of subtests a student had to take went from 5 to 1. It is still possible for some students to take more than one, but not many, and certainly not 5 at one time. Several other strategies have been used to motivate students to participate seriously in this testing. A letter by the Director of Assessment is sent to students randomly selected to participate in mid-level assessment day. This letter includes the following information to increase student motivation: scores will be used to provide feedback about individual general education knowledge and skills; second, aggregate test results will be used to make changes in Southeastern's curriculum to enhance the quality of General Education at the institution; third, advisors will have access to student scores and may take them into consideration as they write letters of recommendations. The Director of Assessment, Associate Dean of the School of Graduate and University Studies, and/or faculty members also explains the importance of doing their best to students before they begin. Starting with Spring Semester 2005, students participating in mid-level assessment were provided a t-shirt for their effort and all qualified for a tuition waiver scholarship. Eligible students that achieved one of the top three scores on each subtest were provided a tuition waiver scholarship (\$500, \$300, and \$200 for the first, second, and third highest scores); scholarships are awarded for the following Fall Semester.

Currently, students selected to take Reading, Critical Thinking, and Writing Essay subtests and do not participate have pre-enrollment holds placed in the computer shortly after the scheduled testing period; they are informed of this potential action in the initial letter from the Director of Assessment. These students are not allowed to pre-enroll for subsequent semesters until their testing is completed. When a student misses a scheduled subtest, each is informed of the scheduled make-up day; students also may arrange to take their respective subtests with a staff member in the Office of Academic Affairs. Table 2.5 shows the number of students tested in the residual group since the implementation of this policy.

**Table 2.5. SOSU residual groups by semester and year.**



Semester	No. of Students
Spring 1993	62
Fall 1993	59
Spring 1994	26
Fall 1994 and Spring 1995	51
Fall 1995 and Spring 1996	86
Fall 1996 and Spring 1997	82
Fall 1997 and Spring 1998	121
Fall 1998 and Spring 1999	110
Fall 1999 and Spring 2000	101
Fall 2000 and Spring 2001	75
Fall 2001 and Spring 2002	98
Fall 2002 and Spring 2003	112
Fall 2003 and Spring 2004	
Fall 2004 and Spring 2005	

Students are requested to self-report their level of effort on all ACT CAAP subtests except Writing Essay. For Southeastern students, performance was linked to effort. For example, for students that gave their best effort, average scores were above the national average (using all students) on six different occasions (Table 2.6). On no occasion did Southeastern students that self-reported moderate effort, little effort, or no effort score above the national average. Therefore, additional measures to increase student motivation may be warranted.

**Table 2.6. Scores achieved by students on the ACT CAAP Subtests by semester and self-reported level of effort (shaded cells represent institutional score greater than the national average).**

ACT CAAP Test	Semester	Gave Best Effort		Gave Moderate Effort		Gave Little Effort		Gave No Effort		No Response		SOSU Avg.	Nat. Avg.
		Score	N	Score	N	Score	N	Score	N	Score	N		
Writing Skills	Fall 2004	NA	1	NA	3	NA	0	NA	1	60.0	72	59.9	64.5
	Spr. 2005	63.7	48	59.8	5	NA	0	NA	1	62.5	35	63.0	64.5
Mathematics	Fall 2004	56.2	21	57.2	42	55.9	10	NA	1	57.6	19	57.3	58.1
	Spr. 2005	58.4	45	56.4	29	57.0	17	NA	1	NA	3	57.3	58.1
Reading	Fall 2004	63.0	49	61.6	71	NA	2	NA	2	58.4	9	61.9	62.5
	Spr. 2005	64.7	66	62.2	13	NA	1	NA	0	60.6	29	63.2	62.5
Critical Thinking	Fall 2004	63.5	62	61.1	29	NA	1	NA	0	62.1	19	62.5	62.4
	Spr. 2005	62.8	63	60.2	22	NA	2	NA	1	62.2	12	62.0	62.4
Science Reasoning	Fall 2004	62.7	19	59.6	42	57.5	19	NA	4	NA	2	59.7	61.1
	Spr. 2005	60.5	20	59.1	38	55.3	24	54.5	10	NA	3	57.9	61.1

**9. How was student progress tracked into future semesters and what were the findings?**

The reorganization for the testing procedures for Mid-Level Assessment has started a new tracking of student progress. As stated previously, protocols for mid-level assessment were changed beginning with the Spring 2003 semester. The new assessment protocols allow us to extrapolate student progress by sampling the four (4) undergraduate classifications at one point in time. Although we are not tracking individual students, we can complete a longitudinal analysis and examine for differences among the various classifications. For all subtests, Seniors consistently performed better than other classifications and the average score was above the national average on 6 of 10 occasions with sufficient numbers to make meaningful comparisons (Table 2.7). Juniors scored higher than national averages on 3 of 11 and Sophomores on 2 of 11 opportunities; no average score for Freshmen was above the national average for any subtest. This supports the notion that the fundamental skills of reading, writing, mathematics, science reasoning, and critical thinking typically improve as students take additional coursework. Lastly, students at Southeastern performed the best on the Reading subtest; they scored higher than the national average on 5 of 8 occasions (2 testing dates X 4 classifications).

The new testing procedures allow us to track student progress by semester and classification. It will give us better insight into our General Education Program that will allow us to develop students with the skills and habits that promote values for career preparation, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning.

**Table 2.7. Summary of scores achieved by students on ACT CAAP Subtests for Fall Semester 2004 and Spring Semester 2005 by classification (shaded cells represent institutional score greater than the national average).**

Subtest	Testing Date	Freshmen Average	Number of Students	Sophomore Average	Number of Students	Junior Average	Number of Students	Senior Average	Number of Students	National Average
Writing Skills	Fall 2004	59.9	33	59.9	38	61.8	4	NA	1	64.5
	Spring 2005	62.2	17	63.0	24	61.9	23	64.4	25	64.5
Mathematics	Fall 2004	57.5	41	57.4	22	56.9	21	57.8	9	58.1
	Spring 2005	56.9	56	57.1	18	57.8	16	61.4	5	58.1
Reading	Fall 2004	61.3	25	62.7	29	62.8	28	60.4	23	62.5
	Spring 2005	61.3	26	63.2	28	63.6	31	64.7	24	62.5
Critical Thinking	Fall 2004	62.3	30	61.3	27	62.7	29	64.0	25	62.4
	Spring 2005	59.8	22	61.8	26	62.1	30	64.3	22	62.4
Science Reasoning	Fall 2004	59.3	42	60.2	24	57.8	12	63.6	8	61.1
	Spring 2005	57.8	37	57.5	34	57.7	20	64.0	4	61.1
Writing Essay	Fall 2004	No test	No test	No test	No test	No test	No test	No test	No test	3.3
	Spring 2005	3.1	48	3.0	11	3.1	4	2.8	4	3.3

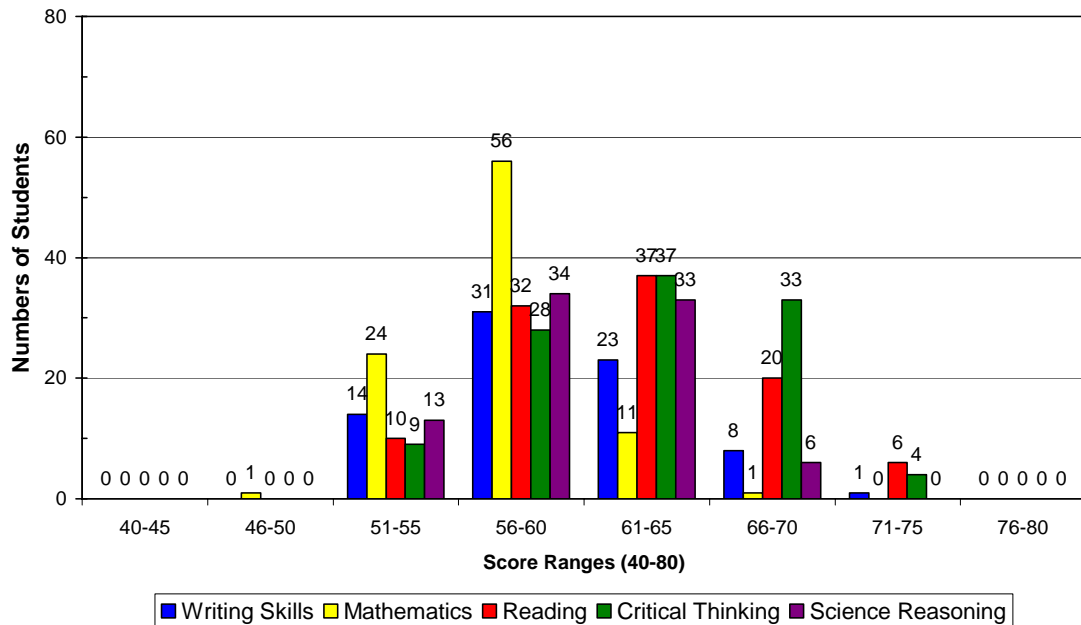
**10. What were the analyses and findings from the 2004-2005 Mid-Level Assessment?**

## Overall Student Performance

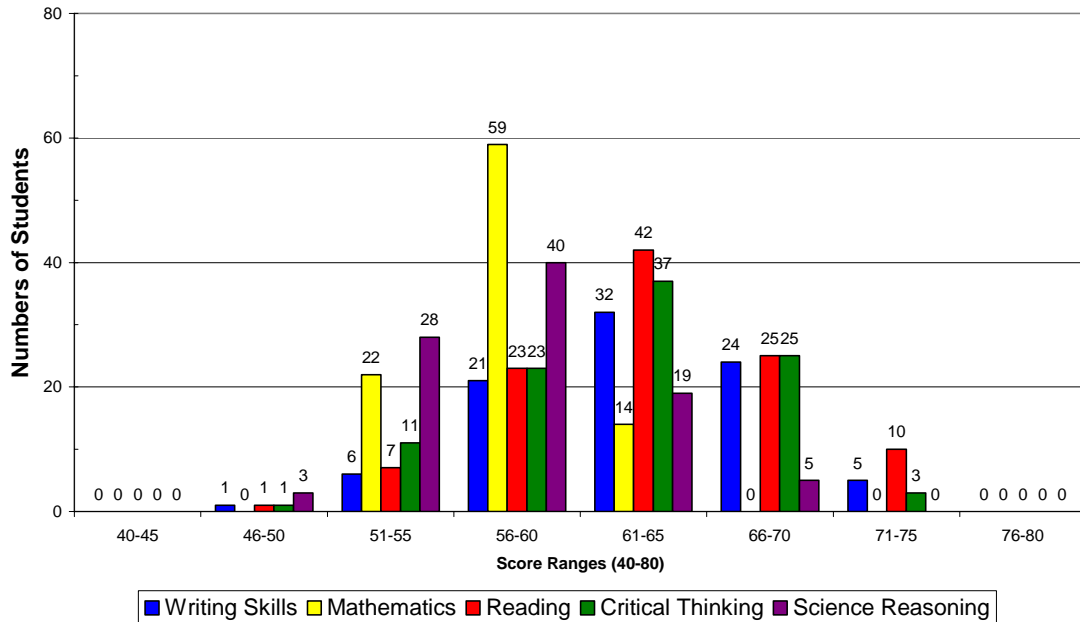
Figures 2.1 and 2.2 provide a frequency distribution of student scores the ACT CAAP subtests during Fall Semester 2004 and Spring Semester 2005, respectively. In Fall 2004 and Spring 2005, average scores for Southeastern students consistently are lower than the national average for most areas (Critical Thinking, Writing Skills, Writing Essay, Mathematics, Science Reasoning, and Reading) both semesters (Table 2.8). Two overall scores (Critical Thinking in Fall 2004 and Reading in Spring 2005) were above the national average. Average score for critical thinking has been equal to, or above, the national average during two previous occasions. During most previous years, the mean scores for spring semesters have consistently been lower than those of the fall semesters; however, this pattern was not evident in the 2004-2005 data.

Table 2.9 provides summary of subscores reported for ACT CAAP Subtests in Mathematics (Math/Algebra), Reading (Arts and Literature; Social Science and Science), and Writing (Usage and Mechanics; Rhetorical Skills). In Spring 2005, two subscores (Reading Arts and Literature; Reading Social Science and Science) were above the national average; these represent the only instances of Southeastern students scoring at, or above, the national average for subscores.

**Fig. 2.1 Scores Achieved by Students in Fall Semester 2004 on each of the ACT CAAP Subtests**



**Fig. 2.2. Scores Achieved by Students in Spring Semester 2005 on each of the ACT CAAP Subtests**



**Table 2.8. Summary of student performance on the ACT CAAP Subtests between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005; user norms for four-year public colleges during 2004-2005 are listed below (shaded cells represent institutional score greater than the national average).**

Date	ACT CAAP Subtests											
	Critical Thinking		Science Reasoning		Mathematics		Reading		Writing Mechanics		Writing Essay	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Oct. 2000	61.9	5.3	59.4	4.2	55.7	3.6	61.5	5.3	62.9	4.6	NA	NA
March 2001	60.2	5.3	58.4	4.4	55.4	3.8	60.6	5.6	60.7	5.1	NA	NA
Oct. 2001	61.1	5.7	59.1	4.3	56.3	3.6	60.9	6.1	63.3	4.8	NA	NA
March 2002	59.9	5.8	58.4	3.8	56.2	3.3	60.2	5.3	61.4	4.5	NA	NA
Oct. 2002	60.0	5.6	59.0	3.6	56.2	3.7	60.6	4.7	62.4	4.7	NA	NA
March 2003	63.2	4.2	NA	NA	57.1	3.0	62.4	4.8	61.3	4.8	NA	NA
Oct. 2003	62.1	5.2	58.1	3.5	57.0	2.9	61.0	4.9	60.2	5.4	NA	NA
March 2004	61.4	5.0	57.8	4.2	56.2	2.8	61.8	5.2	62.1	4.0	NA	NA
Oct. 2004	62.5	5.0	59.7	3.8	57.3	3.0	61.9	5.0	59.9	4.4	NA	NA
March 2005	62.0	5.0	57.9	4.5	57.3	3.0	63.2	5.3	63.0	4.9	3.0	0.5
User Norms	62.2	5.5	61.1	4.6	58.3	3.9	62.9	5.3	64.5	4.6	3.3	0.6

**Table 2.9. Summary of subscores of student performance on the ACT CAAP Subtests between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005; user norms for four-year public colleges during 2004-2005 listed below (shaded cells represent institutional score greater than the national average).**

Date	ACT CAAP Subtests									
	Math/Algebra		Reading Arts & Lit.		Reading Soc. Sci./Sci.		Writing Usage & Mech.		Writing Rhetorical Skill	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Oct. 2000	13.7	1.8	15.3	2.5	15.9	2.7	16.6	2.3	16.5	2.4
March 2001	13.5	2.0	15.0	2.6	15.4	2.8	15.5	2.5	15.4	2.6
Oct. 2001	14.0	1.9	15.2	2.8	15.5	3.0	16.7	2.3	16.7	2.5
March 2002	14.0	1.7	14.6	2.6	15.4	2.7	15.6	2.2	15.8	2.5
Oct. 2002	14.1	2.4	14.9	2.3	15.6	2.6	16.0	2.2	16.3	2.5
March 2003	14.7	2.2	15.8	2.4	16.3	2.4	16.0	2.3	15.5	2.5
Oct. 2003	14.1	2.0	15.2	2.4	15.7	2.5	15.3	2.3	15.1	2.9
March 2004	13.7	1.8	15.3	2.4	16.2	2.6	16.4	2.0	15.9	2.3
Oct. 2004	14.5	2.0	15.5	2.3	16.0	2.6	15.1	2.3	15.0	2.4
March 2005	14.3	2.2	16.0	2.5	16.7	2.5	16.6	2.4	16.5	2.7
User Norms	15.4	2.4	15.9	2.5	16.5	2.7	17.2	2.2	17.3	2.4

We would urge some caution when making direct comparisons of average scores of Southeastern students to user norms because of differences in abilities when students arrive on campus. For example, entering ACT scores of Southeastern students were always below those of user norms for each area reported the linkage report (Table 2.10). These higher scores for students at four-year public schools used for our user norms ranged from a high of 1.7 points for Writing Skills to a low of 0.2 points for Reading; Mathematics and Science Reasoning were in between with a 1.5 and 1.2 point difference, respectively.

**Table 2.10. Comparison of ACT scores of Southeastern students and user norms (no comparisons can be made for Critical Thinking or Writing Essay because they are not a part of ACT assessment).**

Group	Reading	Writing Skills	Mathematics	Science Reasoning
Southeastern	21.9	19.1	19.4	20.5
User Norms	22.1	21.8	20.9	21.7

Because of similarities in the ACT Assessment taken by some students and ACT CAAP Subtests, it is possible to track student progress as the complete courses in general education. ACT provides a linkage report in which it rates student progress into three categories: (1) achieved less than expected based on entering ACT score; (2) achieved as expected based on entering ACT score; achieved greater than expected based on entering ACT score. The linkage report states that “The ACT CAAP subtests require greater knowledge and more complex

cognitive skills than ACT assessment. Therefore, students scoring at the same “level” on both tests must have increased their knowledge and cognitive skills.” The percent of Southeastern students that made expected progress was equal to, or greater, than user norms for Reading, Writing Skills, and Mathematics, but not Science Reasoning (Table 2.11).

**Table 2.11. Percent of students scoring lower than expected, as expected, or greater than expected on the ACT CAAP Subtests for Fall Semester 2004 and Spring Semester 2005 as linked to their entering ACT scores in the same areas (shaded cells indicate performance of SOSU students equal to or better than national average). It is not possible to match ACT CAAP Writing Essay or Critical Thinking subtests to the ACT assessment.**

ACT CAAP Test	Number of Students	Percent Lower than Expected		Percent as expected		Percent Greater than Expected	
		SOSU	Nat. Avg.	SOSU	Nat. Avg.	SOSU	Nat. Avg.
Reading	117	8	11	81	81	11	8
Writing Skills	94	9	6	90	83	1	11
Mathematics	85	7	7	84	80	9	13
Science Reasoning	87	15	7	78	82	7	11

We also completed subgroup analyses for data collected during both Fall Semester 2004 (Table 2.12) and Spring Semester 2005 (Table 2.13). As expected, students with the highest grade point average performed better than other students at Southeastern. For example, students with a GPA of 3.51 or above scored above the user norm average for Reading, Critical Thinking, and Science Reasoning in Fall Semester 2004 (Table 2.12) and for Writing Skills, Reading, and Critical Thinking in Spring Semester 2005 (Table 2.13). A logical explanation for this pattern is that these students have higher entering ACT scores than other students at Southeastern, as well as those for user norms. We plan to further investigate this pattern in the future. Students with a GPA of between 3.01 and 3.50 also scored above the user norms for Reading in both semesters (Table 2.12 and 2.13).

Starting in Spring Semester 2005, we started a Mid-level Scholarship program to increase student motivation when taking the ACT CAAP subtests. Because only a portion of the student body is selected for participation in mid-level assessment, we did not want to preclude other students from earning scholarships. Therefore we advertised the scholarship program and solicited volunteers to take the ACT CAAP subtest of their choice. We had 19 students volunteer to take a subtest on mid-level assessment day (Table 2.14). As expected, these students performed quite well and scored above the average for user norms for Science Reasoning, Reading, Writing Skills, and Writing Essay. Even though these results are promising, we would urge caution because of the small sample size (e.g., only one student took the Mathematics and the Writing Essay subtests) and self-selection of subtests by students. We will continue to evaluate the Mid-level Scholarship program and the use of volunteers in the assessment process.

**Table 2.12. Scores of students on ACT CAAP Subtests by subgroup during Fall 2004.**

Subgroup	Writing Skills		Mathematics		Reading		Critical Thinking		Science Reasoning	
	Avg.	N	Avg.	N	Avg.	N	Avg.	N	Avg.	N
GPA of 3.01-3.50	59.0	15	58.0	26	63.0	33	62.0	38	59.0	29
GPA pf 3.51 or Above	64.0	10	58.0	26	68.0	26	66.0	31	63.0	19
Full-time Students	60.0	74	57.0	88	62.0	100	63.0	104	60.0	84
Enrolled as Freshman	59.0	70	57.0	71	62.0	103	63.0	110	60.0	74
Did not Enroll as Freshman	64.0	7	57.0	22	NA	2	NA	1	61.0	12
Education Majors	59.0	18	59.0	11	63.0	16	61.0	13	58.0	10
SOSU Students	59.9	77	57.3	93	61.9	105	62.5	111	59.7	86
User Norms	64.5	34,995	58.1	26,102	62.5	30,388	62.5	12,905	61.1	27,555

**Table 2.13. Scores by students on ACT CAAP Subtests by subgroups during Spring 2005.**

Subgroup	Writing Skills		Mathematics		Reading		Critical Thinking		Science Reasoning	
	Avg.	N	Avg.	N	Avg.	N	Avg.	N	Avg.	N
GPA of 3.01-3.50	64.0	26	57.0	29	64.0	45	62.0	25	59.0	28
GPA of 3.51 or Above	66.0	19	58.0	28	64.0	20	64.0	19	60.0	24
Full-time Students	63.0	84	57.0	91	63.0	105	62.0	92	58.0	93
Enrolled as Freshman	63.0	86	57.0	82	63.0	106	63.2	94	58.0	70
Did not Enroll as Freshman	NA	3	58.0	13	NA	3	60.0	6	58.0	25
Education Majors	63.0	16	56.0	19	62.0	26	61.0	22	56.0	17
SOSU Students	63.0	89	57.3	95	63.2	109	62.0	100	57.9	95
User norms	64.5	34,995	58.1	26,102	62.5	30,388	62.4	12,905	61.1	27,555

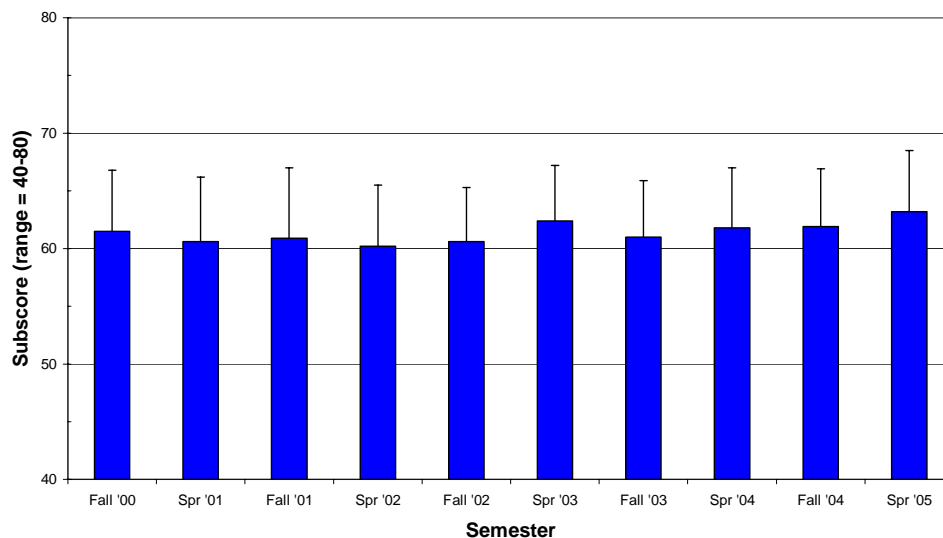
**Table 2.14. Summary of results of student volunteers that took ACT CAAP Subtests in March 2005 (shaded cells represent institutional score greater than the national average).**

Group	Critical Thinking	Science Reasoning	Mathematics	Reading	Writing Skills	Writing Essay
Individual Scores	61	66	58	62	69	3.75
	63	61		72	70	
	63			70	65	
	67			66		
	57			70		
				73		
			61			
Mean & SD for Volunteers	62.2 ± 3.6	63.5 ± 3.5	58	67.7 ± 4.8	68.0 ± 2.6	3.75
Mean & SD for SOSU	62.0 ± 5.0	57.9 ± 4.5	57.3 ± 3.0	63.2 ± 5.3	63.0 ± 4.9	3.0 ± 0.5
Mean & SD for User Norms	62.4 ± 5.0	61.1 ± 4.5	58.1 ± 3.0	62.5 ± 5.3	64.5 ± 4.9	3.3 ± 0.6

### Student Performance--Reading

Performance by Southeastern students on the ACT CAAP Reading Subtest was above the average for user norms in Spring Semester 2005. The Reading scores on the entering ACT assessment of Southeastern students (21.9) are closer to user norms (22.1) than any of the other areas (Table 2.10). This may account for, at least in part, the performance of students on the ACT CAAP Reading Subtest. The change in testing protocols had a marked impact on student performance (Fig. 2.3). For the five testing periods before Spring 2003, the average score across semesters was 60.8; since the change, the average score was 62.1.

**Fig. 2.3. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Reading Subtest between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**

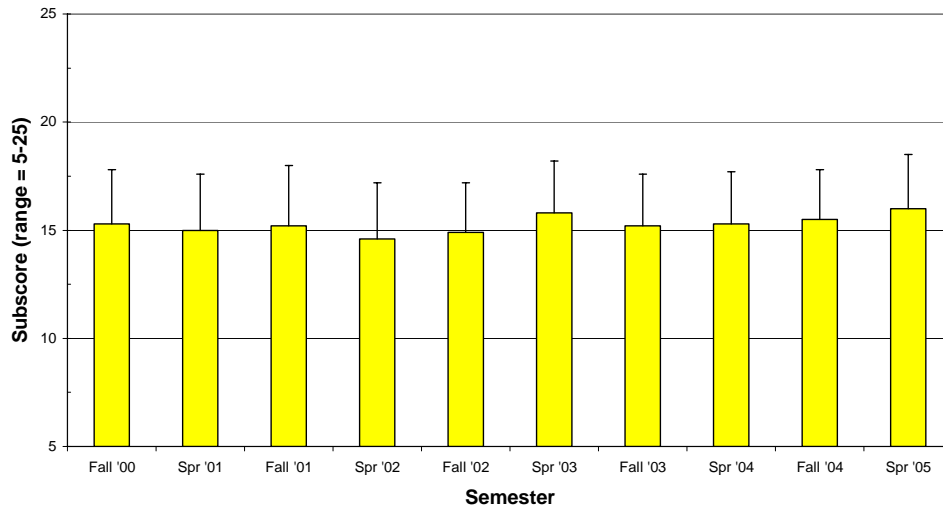


Changing the testing protocols also had a marked impact on student performance on the Reading Art and Literature subscore of the ACT CAAP Reading Subtest (Fig. 2.4). The average

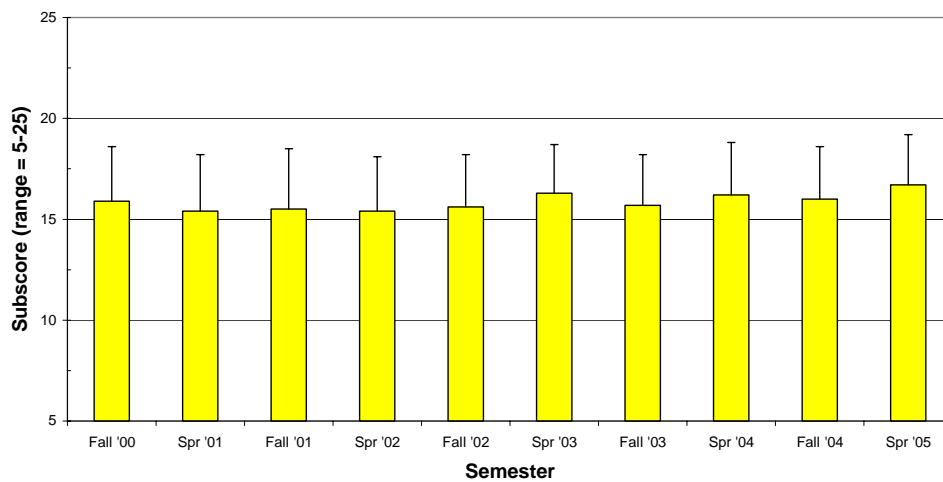


score before the change was 15.0; whereas, after the change it was 15.6. A similar pattern was noted for the Reading Social Science and Science subscore of the ACT CAAP Reading Subtest (Fig. 2.5). Prior to the change in testing, the average subscore across the five semesters was 15.6; it increased to an average of 16.2 in the subsequent five semesters.

**Fig. 2.4. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Reading Subtest (Subscores for Art and Literature) between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**



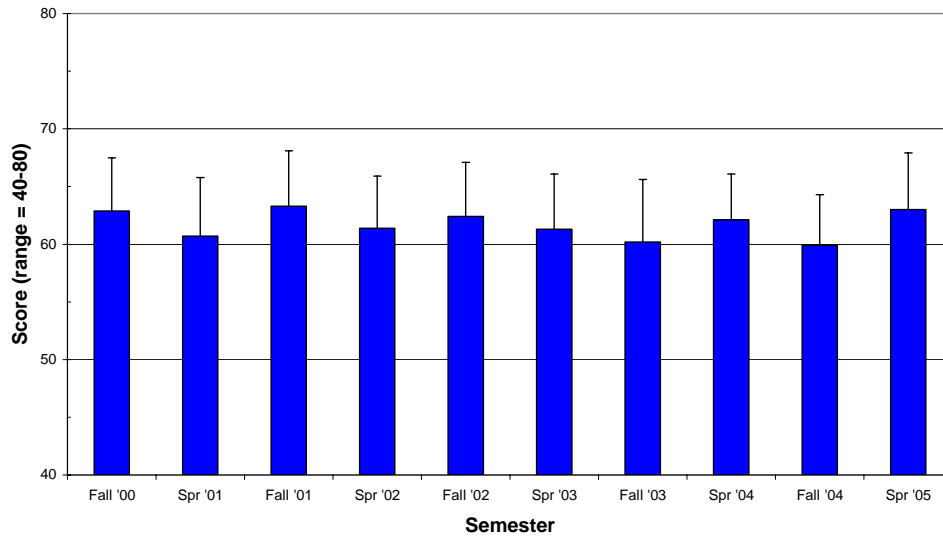
**Fig. 2.5. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Reading Subtest (Subscores for Social Science and Science) between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**



### Student Performance--Writing

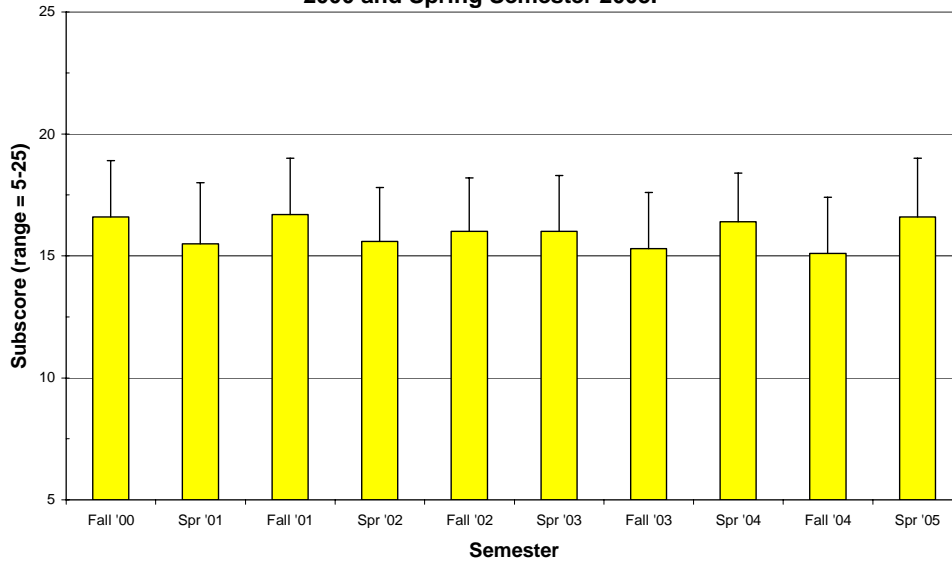
Performance by Southeastern students on the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Subtest was below the average for user norms (64.5) during both Fall Semester 2004 and Spring Semester 2005. The Writing scores on the entering ACT assessment of Southeastern students (19.1) are the lowest of the four assessment areas (Table 2.10); this area also exhibits the greatest difference between Southeastern students and user norms. This may account for, at least in part, the performance of students on the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Subtest. The change in testing protocols (students taking one test instead of five tests) did not have a positive impact on student performance (Fig. 2.6). For the five testing periods before Spring 2003, the average score across semesters was 62.1; since the change, the average score was 61.3.

**Fig. 2.6. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Subtest between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**

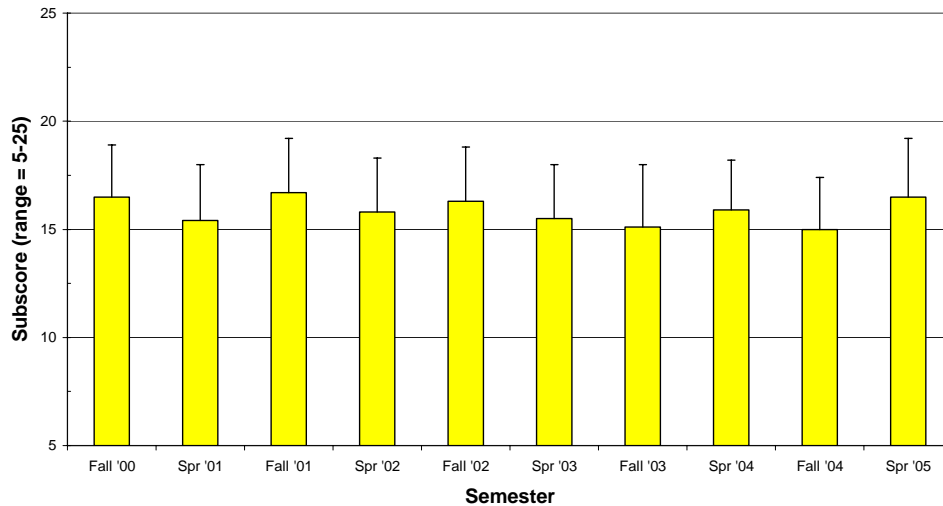


Changing the testing protocols did not have a positive impact on student performance on the Usage and Mechanics subscore of the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Subtest (Fig. 2.7). The average score before the change was 15.9; whereas, after the change it was 15.9. A similar pattern was noted for the Rhetorical Skills subscore of the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Subtest (Fig. 2.8). Prior to the change in testing, the average subscore across the five semesters was 16.1; it decreased to an average of 15.6 in the subsequent five semesters.

**Fig. 2.7. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Subtest (Subscores for Usage and Mechanics) between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**



**Fig. 2.8. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Subtest (Subscores for Rhetorical Skills) between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**

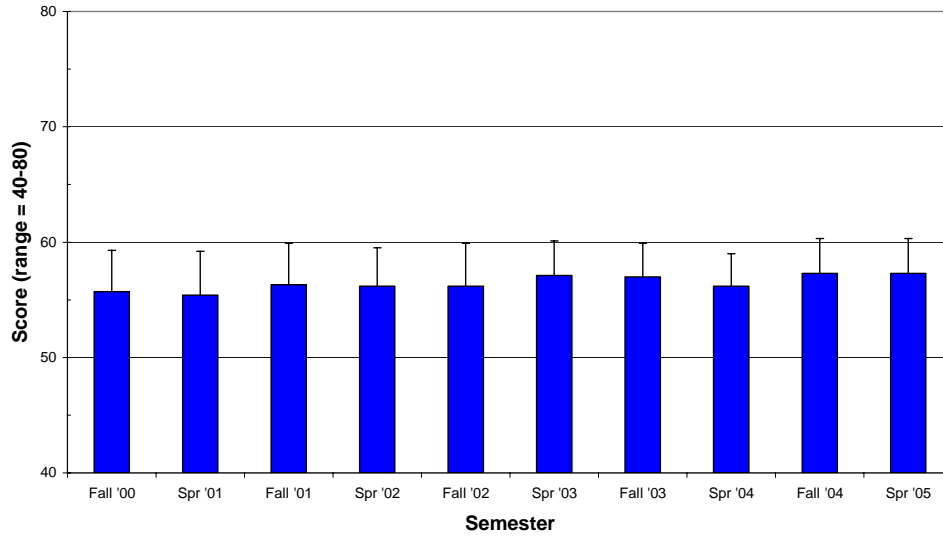


### **Student Performance--Mathematics**

Performance by Southeastern students on the ACT CAAP Mathematics Subtest was below the average for user norms (58.3) during both Fall Semester 2004 and Spring Semester 2005. The Mathematics scores on the entering ACT assessment of Southeastern students (19.4) is the second lowest of the four assessment areas (Table 2.10); this area also exhibits the second greatest difference between Southeastern students and user norms. This may account for, at least in part, the performance of students on the ACT CAAP Mathematics Subtest. However, the change in testing protocols (students taking one test instead of five tests) had a positive impact

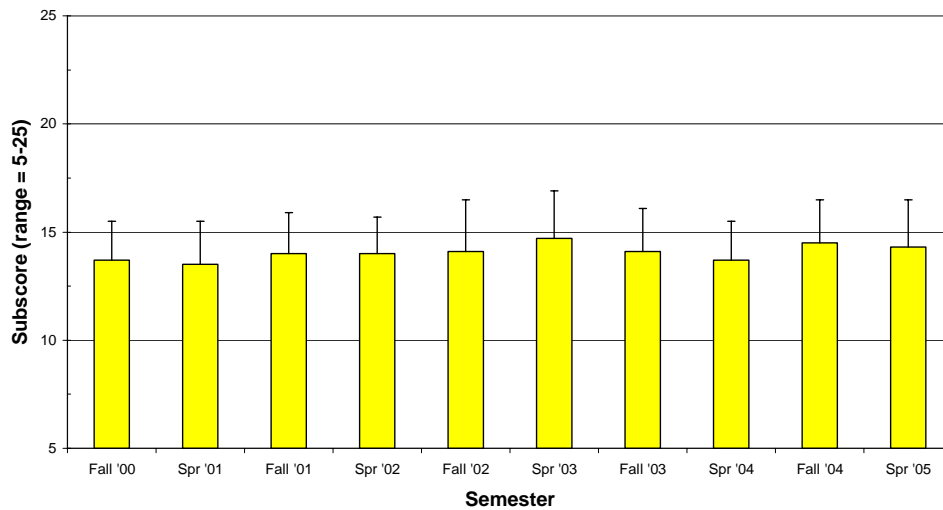
on student performance (Fig. 2.9). For the five testing periods before Spring 2003, the average score across semesters was 56.0; since the change, the average score was 57.0.

**Fig. 2.9. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Mathematics Subtest between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**



Changing the testing protocols also had a positive impact on student performance on the Math and Algebra subscore of the ACT CAAP Mathematics Subtest (Fig. 2.10). The average score before the change was 13.9; whereas, after the change it was 14.3.

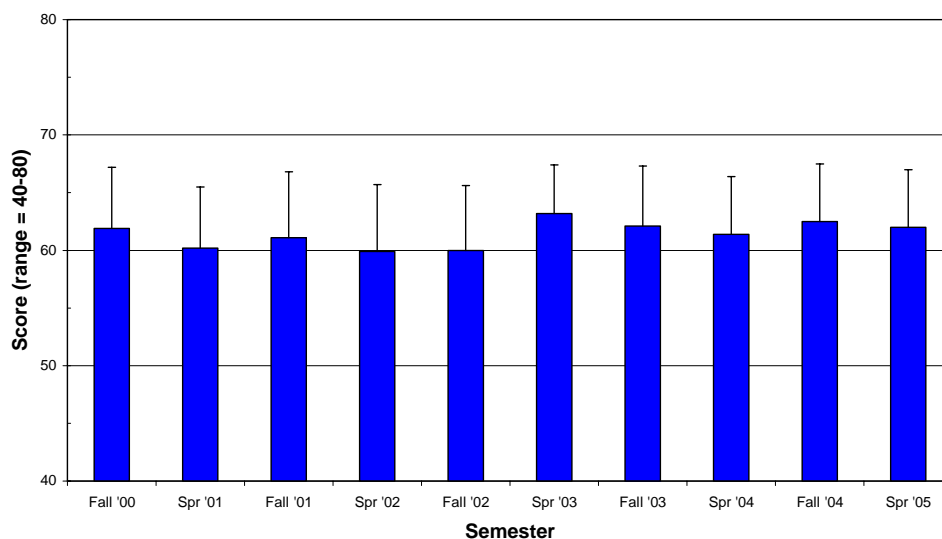
**Fig. 2.10. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Mathematics Subtest (Subscores for Math/Algebra) between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**



## Student Performance--Critical Thinking

Performance by Southeastern students on the ACT CAAP Critical Thinking Subtest was above the average for user norms (62.2) during Fall Semester 2004 but not Spring Semester 2005. The change in testing protocols (students taking one test instead of five tests) had a positive impact on student performance (Fig. 2.11). For the five testing periods before Spring 2003, the average score across semesters was 60.6; since the change, the average score was 62.2

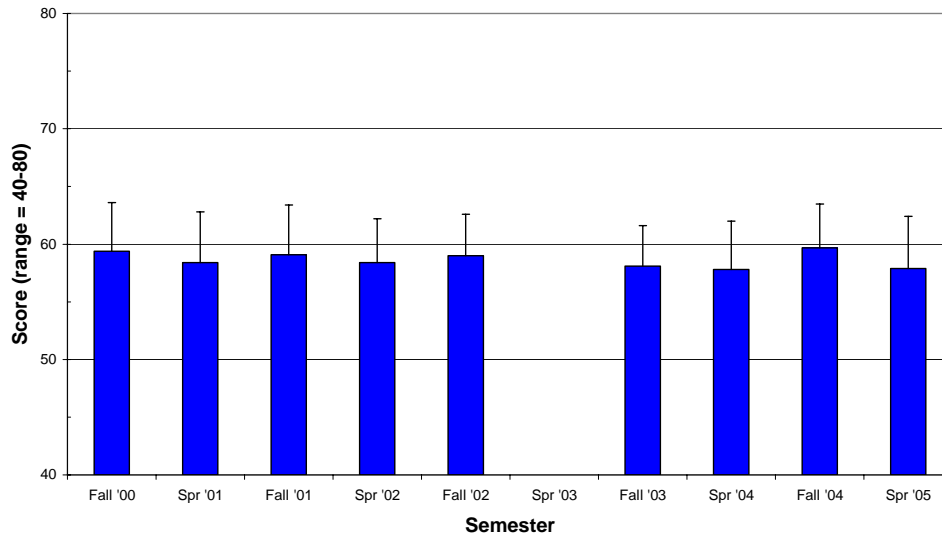
**Fig. 2.11. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Critical Thinking Subtest between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**



## Student Performance--Science Reasoning

Performance by Southeastern students on the ACT CAAP Science Reasoning Subtest was below the average for user norms (61.1) for both Fall Semester 2004 and Spring Semester 2005. The change in testing protocols (students taking one test instead of five tests) did not have a positive impact on student performance (Fig. 2.12). For the five testing periods before Spring 2003, the average score across semesters was 58.9; since the change, the average score was 58.2. The Science Reasoning scores on the entering ACT assessment of Southeastern students (20.5) is 1.2 points below the user norm average (Table 2.10). This may be a contributing factor to the unpredictable scores of Southeastern students.

**Fig. 2.12. Student performance on the ACT CAAP Science Reasoning Subtest between Fall Semester 2000 and Spring Semester 2005.**



**11. What instructional changes occurred or/are planned in the general education program due to mid-level assessment?**

Southeastern is in the process reviewing and upgrading its General Education Program. The initial hiring of a Director of General Education was a positive first step. To further strengthen and solidify the general education program, Southeastern formed the School of Graduate and University Studies. The University Studies portion of this School represents the general education program. Subsequently, an Associate Dean of the School of Graduate and University Studies was hired. The Associate Dean attends the Council of Deans weekly meeting and serves as a member of the Planning Resource Council. This individual serves as an advocate and leader for general education and has primary oversight of the program. Lastly, the reconstituting of the General Education Committee into the General Education Council, working in conjunction with the Associate Dean, provides the structure necessary to address challenges, monitor changes, and assess all goals and outcomes.

The General Education Council, working with chairs of academic departments, revised the goals and specific learner outcomes of Southeastern’s general education program during 2004-2005. Departments submitted assessment plans for the portions of the general education program each delivered. These were reviewed by the General Education Council and comments were returned to each Department by the Associate Dean of the School of Graduate and University Studies. The General Education Council plans to finalize the in-course assessment process during Fall Semester 2005. Additional policy and requirements approved by the General Education Council include the following; however, before these items mentioned above become requirements, they must be approved by the Academic Council and the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

- set a 2.0 GPA requirement in all general education coursework completed;

- set a 2.0 GPA requirement in all general education coursework completed at Southeastern;
- added a more stringent computer proficiency requirement;
- required that English Composition I (ENG 1113), the Math requirement, and computer proficiency be completed in the first 30 hours of college coursework;
- required that English Composition II (ENG 1213) and the communication requirement (Interpersonal Communication [COMM 1233] or Business and Professional Speaking [COMM 2213]) be completed within the first 45 hours of college coursework; and
- required that students earn a minimum grade of “C” in the courses listed above (ENG 1113; ENG 1213, COMM 1233; COMM 2213; and MATH) pending outcome of data requested from the registrar’s office.

The following information is provided as to what changes have occurred and what changes will and/or might occur in the future.

Strengths:

- Goals and learner outcomes have been revised by the General Education Council and Academic Departments.
- Specific goals and learner outcomes have been identified for every course in the general education program.
- Assessment protocols and benchmarks have been established for each learner outcome.
- Benchmarks have been established for performance on ACT CAAP Subtests.
- Overall student motivation appears to be higher than in previous years.

Weaknesses:

- The ACT CAAP only applies to a portion of goals and outcomes of general education.
- Assessment protocols and benchmarks proposed by Departments need to be validated.
- Too many students still are not giving their best effort on the ACT CAAP Subtests, especially on the Science Reasoning.

Modifications made:

- Revised of goals and learner outcomes of general education.
- Established uniform protocols for assessing IETV and web-based courses that are offered as part of the general education program.
- Added new assessment protocols to cover learner outcomes not addressed by the ACT CAAP.
- Changed protocols used to administer ACT CAAP Subtests.
- Developed of the mid-level scholarship program.
- Providing t-shirts to student participants to increase student motivation.

Plans for the future:

- Complete analysis of those students that made less than expected progress on the ACT CAAP to determine factors that may have contributed to this under achievement.
- Complete analysis of those students that made greater than expected progress on the ACT

- CAAP to determine factors that may have contributed to this over achievement.
- Attempt to determine the reasons for the “poor” effort given by students taking the Science Reasoning subtest.