

# Diagnostic Exam Writing Component and Subsequent Exam Performance

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At the beginning of each semester, I administer a diagnostic exam to my BBA 407 class. During the spring 2016 semester, I introduced a short writing component. The writing component was evaluated for students' reading for detail and writing mechanics. I then created standardized scores for students based on those two components and whether they had conducted prior research using one of the Library's leading business databases. The class was then split into "below" and "above average" cohorts based on the standardized measure.

The standardized measure proved fairly predictive when it came to Mid-Term results. In general, students in the "above average" group earned an average of nearly 1.3 points for every 1.0 points earned by those in the "below average" group. That advantage declined on the Final Exam, but did not disappear. The "above average" group still earned just over 1.1 points for every 1.0 points received by the "below average" group.

Further, the narrowing of the gap was uneven. Most of the gap was eliminated when it came to true-false/multiple-choice questions. However, only one-third of the gap was eliminated on short answer questions while almost none (5%) was eliminated on cases, which involve a combination of complex skills.

## Premium in Points for $> 0\sigma$ group vs. $< 0\sigma$ Group:

Criteria	Mid-Term	Final Exam
True-False/Multiple Choice	+30%	+ 8%
Short Answer	+27%	+18%
Case	<b>+56%</b>	<b>+53%</b>
Overall	+29%	+12%

The same comparisons will be made during the fall 2016 semester. This time, I also asked students to self-identify themselves as native freshmen or transfer students for an additional layer of analysis.