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Examining Student Feedback in Writing Assessment: Validation Inquiry in a Writing Placement Program

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EXAMINING STUDENT FEEDBACK IN WRITING ASSESSMENT: VALIDATION

INQUIRY IN A WRITING PLACEMENT PROGRAM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Kristen M. Getchell

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2011

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Title: Examining Student Feedback in Writing Assessment: Validation Inquiry in a Writing

Placement Program

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This qualitative study investigated the use of student feedback as support in a validation

study of university writing placement practices. Using interviews with seventeen incoming first

year students, this study examined student experiences constructing and submitting writing

portfolios as opposed to taking a timed essay test. Also, this study was interested in determining

the viability of using student data as validation evidence.

The results showed that students make important considerations about the decision being

made on behalf of the assessment when completing the assessment task. Additionally, audience,

voice, and performance are three of the major themes to emerge out of the data.

Additionally, the results indicate that student feedback is valuable data when used to

support a validation argument. Students provided descriptive and insightful feedback into the

writing assessment process that at times challenged the conventional thinking of writing

assessment practitioners.