**The Writing Program @ The College of New Jersey, FSP Assignment Workshop, May 12, 2011**

A Step-by-Step Guide for Aligning Your Course Learning Outcomes and Assignments:

1. Review your course’s learning outcomes.
2. Working backwards from here, make sure each of your major assignments (whether papers, group projects, or other activities) directly relates to one or more of the learning outcomes.
3. Now list the specific learning outcomes for each major assignment.
4. Examine your course schedule to make sure there are specific classroom activities and informal assignments (not simply assigned readings) designed to help students:
   * comprehend necessary information/concepts
   * question, analyze, and/or critique this information
   * make relevant connections among ideas
   * practice, in writing, the higher order thinking you expect them to be able to do in the formal assignments.

The following steps are for designing a series of “scaffolded” or sequenced writing assignments to help students move toward a formal paper:

1. In designing the final assignment, make sure you are clear about what you want students to do (argue a position, critique a theory, analyze a policy?).
2. Next, make two lists: first, the **skills and knowledge** one would need to have in order to carry out the project successfully, and second, the **steps** that one would have to take in order to do the research and write the paper.
3. Now design shorter assignments addressing each of the items on your lists and insert them into your semester in a time frame that makes sense. In some cases, these assignments will be linked to and will build upon the progression of material covered in your course. In other cases, these assignments may be related, but not directly dependent on or linked to the content of your lectures, readings, etc.