Assessment of learning outcomes is the major topic of conversation in higher education. What if courses focused on questions instead of answers? Would we get better writing outcomes? The skill of writing is a direct outcome of critical thinking. Using a learning-centered approach to course construction requires students to use critical thinking skills and problem-solving strategies rather than study skills that emphasize correct responses on exams and quizzes. In order to strengthen writing skills it is critical to provide students with the opportunities and challenges to improve their critical and reflective thinking skills. This means that courses need to foster curiosity and questions rather settling on correct answers (“Will this be on the test?”). This study examines the effects of changing assessment criteria from a total points basis to a list of descriptive standards reflecting expectations for A level of effort, B level of effort, etc. Preliminary observations indicate the possibility of reducing grade skewing often present in a points-based system, especially if extra credit is allowed.