

General Information

Core Category Discussed:	Writing
Current Semester:	Spring 2016
Date of Assessment Meeting(s):	May 17, 2016

Participants in Assessment Meeting

Tom Pace, PhD, Director of Core Writing
Gwen Compton Engle, PhD
Nevin Mayer, Library Instruction Coordinator
Maria Soriano, Writing Center Director

Courses Offered in Fall 2015

EN 120 (4 sections)
EN 125 (30 regular sections + 2 Arrupe sections)
HP 101 (3 sections)

Courses Offered in Spring 2016

EN 121 (4 sections)
EN 125 (10 sections)

Typical Assessment Process

Faculty members teaching a class in this category are asked to complete the committee-approved rubric for the diagnostic essay and for the research project and then provide the scores as well as the original student work to the Core Committee. Each semester, the category sub-committee and a group English department graduate assistants who have taught EN 125 assess a sample of student work from the previous semester focusing on work from the level of course listed in the core assessment schedule. **The focus for the 2016 meeting is Foundational Writing.** The assessment meeting, held at the end of the Spring semester each year, focuses on data from the previous spring semester and the most recent fall semester. (Preliminary instructor-produced data for the current semester is also examined when available.)

Deviations from the Assessment Process

Because fall 2015 was the first semester of the new integrative core, there were no integrative core classes offered in spring 2015; therefore, this meeting will make use of assessment data from fall 2015 and preliminary data from spring 2016.

Attachments Containing Assessment Data and Instructor Feedback

Writing Rubric; Writing Instructor Data 2016; Writing Committee Data 2016; Writing Feedback 2016, Writing Preliminary Data 2016

Findings

Prompt: Describe, in words, what your sub-committee has learned about student learning during this assessment cycle. What were the strengths? In what ways did students fail to meet the goals set for them?

What we learned

There appears to be disconnect between what the instructors reported and what the sub-committee reported. Instructors reported that all five benchmarks were met. However, not all the categories under sub-committee and GA reports were met. Specifically, the two benchmarks not met were the two for argument: Selection and Development of Topic and Context and Purpose for Writing.

Strengths

All the categories under instructors and sub-committee were met, other than the two argument categories as reported by the sub-committee. Otherwise, students seemed to be doing well with integrating sources and documenting them. Also, students appear to be doing well with syntax and mechanics.

Failing to meet goals

Students, according to the sub-committee report, appear to just miss the benchmark for the two categories related to articulating an argument.

Suggestions for Instructors

Prompt: Do any of your findings translate into helpful suggestions for all instructors teaching courses with this designation? Are there areas that need more emphasis? What would be the best mechanism for delivering this feedback? (Possible mechanisms might include an e-mail from the committee, a message delivered at a fall orientation session, a faculty development workshop.) If not obvious, please explain the connection between your findings and these suggestions.

The findings suggest that instructor need to evaluate the complexity of their research paper topics in accordance with rubric expectations. We will discuss this issue at the annual First-Year Writing Orientation in August 2016 for all EN 125/120 instructors and provide detailed suggestions for incorporating argument and research more effectively in FYW. If need be, a faculty workshop on argument and research paper topics will be considered.

Based on the sub-committee's conversations about the findings as well as conversations we have had with part-time instructors and GAs who teach EN 125, we have also updated and revised some of the assignments in EN 125. Previously, the EN 125 curriculum consisted of four major assignments: 1) 4-5 page essay making a claim about a topic from course reading, incorporating minor research; 2) Annotated bibliography and proposal; 3) Major research project; 4) Academic literacy narrative.

The new curriculum moves the bibliography and proposal to the research project assignment and adds and additional writing assignment: Project 1: 3-4 page summary of an argument from one or more of the course readings; Project 2: 4-5 page essay making a claim about a topic from course readings and incorporating minor research; Project 3: 5-7 page research project with 1-2 page proposal and 3-5 item annotated bibliography; Project 4: 3-4 page academic literacy narrative.

Evaluation of Processes

Prompt: Describe, in words, your sub-committee's evaluation of application and assessment processes. What works well? What needs improvement? (All processes should useful provide data with a reasonable amount of effort.)

The subcommittee has updated and revised the two rubric categories addressing articulation of argument to separate and clarify the differences between choosing a topic and development of topic. We will also calibrate and norm the responses the next time we meet to read essays in fall 2016.

Recommendations for Internal Changes

Prompt: This section pertains to changes that can be made by the sub-committee and the assessment office. What changes, if any, do you need to make to your application or assessment processes or to other aspects of the core designation? If not obvious, please explain the connection between your findings/evaluation and these recommendations.

We updated the language for writing in the disciplines and writing as a process on the application form for the integrated courses: EHE, ENW, and EGC. Specifically, we also suggest changing "Briefly explain how discipline-specific writing will be employed in each course" to "Briefly explain how discipline-specific writing will be incorporated into the curriculum of each course."

For the section on the Integration and Additional Writing applications titled “Student Learning Objectives,” we will update the language so that it is consistent with the changes we have recommended for the writing rubric.

Recommendations for the Core Committee

Prompt: This section pertains to changes that will require action by the entire core committee (and potentially the faculty). What changes, if any, do you need to make to application or assessment processes or to other aspects of the core designation, including learning goals, rubrics, and curricular requirements and/or structures. If not obvious, please explain the connection between your findings/evaluation and these recommendations.

The core committee will need to weigh in on the changes we have recommended for the writing rubric.

Rubric for Scoring Rhetorically-Effective Writing

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Articulate an Argument				
Selection of Topic	The writer selects a topic that is unsuitable for audience, purpose, and length requirements and <i>does not situate</i> the topic in a larger context.	The writer selects a complex topic and articulates a clear argument given audience, purpose, and length requirements but <i>may not</i> situate the topic in a larger context.	The writer selects a complex topic given audience, purpose, and length requirements and <i>begins to properly situate</i> the topic in relation to a larger context.	The writer selects a complex topic given audience, purpose, and length requirements and <i>effectively</i> situates the topic in the context of the field.
Development and Support of Writing	The writer <i>does not at all</i> develop or support the stated topic in relation to context, audience, and purpose.	The writer <i>attempts to</i> develop and support an argument that appeals to context, audience, and purpose.	The writer develops and supports an argument that appeals to context, audience, and purpose.	The writer <i>thoroughly</i> develops and supports an argument that appeals to context, audience, and purpose
Integrate Sources				
Source Integration	The writer <i>does not</i> incorporate evidence, or fails to integrate evidence.	The writer locates and integrates evidence into his/her own argument.	The writer locates, engages with, and integrates <i>credible and relevant</i> sources.	The writer locates, engages with, and <i>thoroughly</i> integrates credible and reliable sources.
Document Ethically				
Plagiarism and Citation	Writer <i>omits</i> important citation information or <i>appears to have plagiarized</i> .	The writer avoids plagiarism, and all important citation information is present, though documentation may contain <i>formatting errors</i> .	The writer avoids plagiarism and documents sources <i>consistently</i> using a citation style with <i>few</i> formatting errors.	The writer avoids plagiarism and documents sources consistently, also demonstrating concern for ethical representation of others scholars' work.
Control Surface Features				
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Writer uses language with major and frequent sentence-level errors that impede the reader's ability to understand the argument.	The writer uses language that <i>generally</i> conveys meaning to readers with clarity, though writing may include <i>some</i> errors.	The writer uses <i>straightforward</i> language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity, with <i>few</i> errors.	The writer uses language that <i>skillfully</i> communicates meaning to readers with clarity and <i>fluency</i> , and is <i>virtually error-free</i> .

Level 1 is the target performance level in foundational courses.
 Level 2 is the target performance level in integrated courses and in additional writing courses (see note on next page).

NOTE: Integrated courses and additional writing courses use the same rubric with minor variations in the description for **Level 2**:

	Level 2 (Foundational)	Level 2 (Integrated)	Level 2 (Additional)
Articulate an Argument			
Selection and Development of Topic	The writer selects a complex topic given audience, purpose, and length requirements and <i>begins to properly situate</i> the topic in <u>relation to a larger context</u> .	The writer selects a complex topic given audience, purpose, and length requirements and <i>begins to situate</i> the topic in <u>relation to the content of the course</u> .	The writer selects a complex topic given audience, purpose, and length requirements and <i>begins to situate</i> the topic <u>in the context of the field</u> .
Context of and Purpose for Writing	The writer develops and supports an argument that appeals to context, audience, and purpose.	The writer develops and supports an argument appropriate to context, audience, and purpose.	The writer develops and supports an argument appropriate to context, audience, and purpose.
Integrate Sources			
Source Integration	The writer locates, engages with, and integrates <i>credible and relevant</i> sources.	The writer locates, engages with, and integrates <i>credible and relevant</i> sources <u>appropriate to the content of the course</u> .	The writer locates, engages with, and integrates <i>credible and relevant</i> sources <u>appropriate to the student's major discipline</u> .
Document Ethically			
Plagiarism and Citation	The writer avoids plagiarism and documents sources <i>consistently</i> using a citation style with <i>few</i> formatting errors.	The writer avoids plagiarism and documents sources <i>consistently</i> using a citation style <u>appropriate to the course</u> with <i>few</i> formatting errors.	The writer avoids plagiarism and documents sources <i>consistently</i> using a citation style <u>appropriate to the discipline</u> with <i>few</i> formatting errors.
Control Surface Features			
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	The writer uses <i>straightforward</i> language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity, with <i>few</i> errors.	The writer uses <i>straightforward</i> language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity, with <i>few</i> errors.	The writer uses <i>straightforward</i> language that conveys meaning to readers with clarity, with <i>few</i> errors.