Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at the University of Virginia

Creating a Culture of Writing

Year 2 Report
Academic Year 2018 – 2019

The purpose of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to enhance the culture of writing at the University of Virginia, through increased pedagogical support for faculty and students with respect to writing instruction, a wider range of inquiry-based writing opportunities for students, and adequate infrastructure to support writing instruction.

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October 1, 2019

Dear Faculty, Students, and Staff:

As we close the second year of implementation of the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), I write to provide an update on the progress that has been made towards enhancing a culture of writing and to share our goals as we move into year three of this endeavor.

Chief among year-two accomplishments was the development of criteria for courses that advance the goals of the QEP. We are currently calling these courses writing-enhanced (WE). Expected outcomes from focusing on writing-enhanced courses, which are considered high-impact practices, include increasing student engagement and retention, increasing students' understanding of course content, and supporting the development of students' critical thinking skills. The process that led to these criteria involved benchmarking with peer institution as well as leveraging the institution-wide baseline assessment and foundation that was established in year-one of the QEP. All courses that fulfill the WE requirement will adhere to the following interrelated set of criteria:

1. One major learning objective for the course must be the development of student writing, which is reflected in the final course grade;
2. Multiple writing assignments are sequenced and distributed over the course of the semester;
3. Students are required to revise at least one longer assignment based on feedback from the instructor and/or peers. This longer assignment should be developed through a multi-step drafting process; and
4. The course provides writing instruction and repeated opportunities to discuss and practice writing.

By offering students repeated practiced and guided instruction in discipline-specific writing conventions, the QEP Oversight Committee believes that courses that use the new criteria will better support the development of students' writing proficiency and deepen their engagement with learning.

The QEP Oversight Committee engaged in a series of faculty focus groups designed to give faculty members the opportunity to better understand the new criteria and provide feedback. These conversations helped us to refine the criteria so that the criteria could provide faculty members with flexible opportunities to develop a new writing-enhanced course that is discipline-specific, or discover that an existing course already aligns with the new criteria. I want to thank T. Kenny Fountain, Associate Professor and Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, for his leadership in working with me, the QEP Oversight Committee, and others across Grounds in the development of the new criteria. Additional outreach will continue into Year 3.

The QEP Oversight Committee also spent the past year discussing professional development opportunities and other resources that should be made available to the faculty and graduate students in order to best equip them to be instructors of writing-enhanced courses. These efforts will include workshops and technology tools, on which the faculty focus groups also provided guidance. For instance, in Year 3 we will pilot the use of Digication to support WE courses. Digication offers a range of

possibilities that align both with principles of engaged, learning-focused teaching, and with the goal of the QEP to enhance the culture of writing at UVA. Digication can function as a platform for peer-review and feedback processes, it can display students' achievements in writing if used in a public-facing way, and it can be an aid to reflection by allowing students to curate selections of their work across as semester and analyze their development and remaining room for growth in their writing. Additionally, students will be able to use their Digication portfolios beyond the scope of a single class in order to collect and disseminate writing from across their entire college experience.

We have taken much of what we learned in these conversations and have refined both the new criteria and the types of professional development opportunities we plan to further explore. To support the transition to a new writing across the curriculum model, the development of such resources and opportunities will remain an important priority.

In Year 3 of QEP implementation, the Oversight Committee will continue to explore and pilot opportunities for resources that support a writing across the curriculum model at the University. We also look forward to piloting courses this academic year that align with the new WE criteria. As we embark on year three of the QEP, I welcome your continued engagement as we continue to seek to demonstrate to our students that writing is a valued and integral part of their University of Virginia education.

Sincerely,

Archie Holmes
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Chair, QEP Oversight Committee

QEP Oversight Committee
2018-2019 Academic Year

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Writing-Intensive Course Criteria: Beyond UVA

Published Research
Articles or books that <u>describe WI course criteria in detail.</u> Note, these are ONLY a few sources from a very large body of research on WI courses.

	1. Multiple Writing Assignments, Distributed over Semester: Not just 1 larger assignment at the end of the course with little other writing.	2. Revision of Written Work: Requires revision of at least 1 paper.	3. Timely Feedback from Instructor & Peers: If using TAs, instructor still directs or supervises all evaluation.	4. Writing is Taught & Practiced in Class: Writing instruction takes many forms, incorporates practice.	5. Sequenced/ Scaffolded Assignments, with Major Assignments Written in Drafts	6. Written Work is Significant/ Substantial Portion of Final Course Grade	Integration of Course Content & Writing Assignments: Students should be able to see how writing tasks relate to course content	Small Class Size/Small Section Size: Section size, if using TAs & recitation-type sections.	Total Page Count: Some specify # of polished pages, others total # of pages (formal & informal writing).	Covers Discipline-specific Writing or Conventions Appropriate to Course Content
Farris & Smith 2000	X	X	X **Faculty**	X	X	X	X	X		
Hilgers et al. 1995	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Townsend 2001	X	X	X **Faculty**	X	X	X		X 20:1	20pgs	
Stratchen 2008	X	X	X	X	X	X 50%				X

Farri, C. & Smith, R. (1992/2000). Writing-intensive courses: Tools for curricular change. In S. H. McLeod & M. Soven (Eds.), *Writing across the curriculum: A guide to developing programs* (52-62). Ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. Available at WAC Clearinghouse Landmark Publications in Writing Studies: http://wac.colostate.edu/books/mcleod_soven/

Hilgers, T. et al. (1995). Doing more than 'thinning out the herd': How eighty-two college seniors perceived writing-intensive courses. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 20(1), 59-87. [About University of Hawai'i, Manoa]

Townsend, M. (2001). Writing intensive courses and WAC. In S. McLeod, E. Miraglia, M. Soven, & C. Thaiss (Eds.), *WAC for the new millennium: Strategies for continuing writing across the curriculum programs* (233-258). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. Available at https://wac.colostate.edu/books/millenium/ [About University of Missouri]

Stratchen, W. (2008). *Writing-intensive: Becoming W-faculty in a new writing curriculum*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press. [About Simon Fraser University

Universities with Writing-Intensive Courses (SWR equivalents): WI Course Criteria

All WI courses require formal approval from an interdisciplinary/multi-college faculty committee (which includes the WAC Director). Most require a re-certification process after 2-5 years. Students must pass with C or better. Instructors of record must be faculty (i.e., TAs cannot be the sole instructor or instructor of record). Years are included if the program's guidelines listed the date of the most recent updates.

* = Programs recognized as distinctive in the published research or by WAC/writing studies professional organizations.

PI = Institutions approved as UVA's peer institutions by SCHEV.

LE = Programs providing specific suggestions for WI courses that enroll more than the specified student-to-faculty ratio.

	1. Multiple Writing Assignments, Distributed over Semester	2. Revision of Written Work	3. Timely Feedback from Instructor & Peers	4. Writing is Taught & Practiced in Class	5. Sequenced/ Scaffolded Assignments, with Major Ones Written in Drafts	6. Written Work is Significant/ Substantial Portion of Course Grade	Integration of Course Content & Writing Assignments	Small Class Size/Small Section Size	Total Page Count	Discipline-specific Writing/ Conventions Appropriate to Content
Brown U	X ≥ 2 papers	X	X	X	X					
Cornell [PI]	No specified criteria									
Duke [PI]	X	X	X	X	X		X			X
*Emory [PI]	X	X	X Faculty	X	X	X 40%	X		20pgs	
*George Mason U	X ≥ 2 papers	X	X Faculty	X	X			X 35:1	3500wds	X
*Harvard	X	X	X Faculty		X	X	X	X		
Rutgers [PI]	X	X	X Faculty		X			X 25:1		
SUNY Buffalo [PI]	X ≥ 3 papers	X	X	X		X 50%			5000wds	X
Temple	X	X	X Faculty		X	X 40%		X 20:1		X
Tulane [PI]	X	X	X Faculty		X				20pgs	
U of Arizona [PI]	No specified criteria									
U of CA-Berkeley [PI]	No specified criteria									
UCLA [PI]	X 3-4 papers	X	X Faculty	X	X	X	X	X 20:1	15-20pgs	X
U of CO-Boulder [PI]	No specified criteria									
*U of Conn 2005	X	X	X	X	X			X	15pgs	
*U of Denver	X	X	X Faculty	X	X					
U of Florida [PI]	X	X	X	X	X					X
*U of Georgia	X	X	X Faculty	X	X	X	X			X
U of Illinois-UC [PI]	X	X	X			X	X		20-30pgs	X
*U of Michigan [PI]	X	X	X Faculty		X		X			X
*U of Minnesota 2010	X	X	X Faculty	X	X	X 33%	X		2500wds	X
*U of Missouri 2014	X	X	X Faculty	X	X	X 30-70%		X 20:1 LB	20pgs	
U of New Hampshire	X	X	X		X	X 50%	X			X
U of North Carolina [PI]		X	X Faculty			X 20%	X	X 19-25:1	10pgs	
U of Pennsylvania [PI]	No specified criteria									
*U of Pittsburgh [PI]	X	X	X Faculty	X	X		X		20-25pgs	X
U of Texas-Austin [PI]	X	X	X Faculty			X 33%				X
U of Washington [PI]		X	X						10-15pgs	X
*U of Wisconsin [PI]	X 4 papers	X	X Faculty	X	X	X	X	X 30:1 LB	14pgs	X
Vanderbilt [PI]	X ≥ 3 papers	X	X Faculty	X		X			15-20pgs	X
Washington U [PI]	X 3-4 papers	X	X Faculty	X	X	X 50%		X LB		X
*Yale U	X ≥ 2 papers	X	X Faculty	X	X	X 25%	X	20:1 (15:1 if TA)	15-25pgs	

New Criteria for Writing Enhanced Courses

This section explains the criteria used for Writing-Enhanced (WE) courses, the evolution of the Second Writing Requirement (SWR), and provides suggestions for instructors. Currently, courses that meet the following criteria are eligible to fulfill the SWR: (1) assign at least 2 writing assignments in English totaling 4,000 words (20 pages) or more, independent of quizzes and final examinations; and (2) have a student/faculty ratio no greater than 30:1. The new criteria, discussed below, are based on empirical evidence, recognized best practices, and a review of initiatives at other universities.

Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Writing

The goal of the University of Virginia's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to create and sustain a culture of writing, often known as Writing Across the Curriculum (or WAC). The common goals of WAC initiatives are (1) to develop students' written abilities across their academic careers, (2) to increase students' writing proficiency, (3) to deepen students' engagement with learning, (4) to foster a campus culture that supports writing, and (5) to create a community of faculty around teaching and student writing (*Statement on WAC Principles & Practices* 2014).

The WAC approach does this by recognizing writing as both a cognitive tool that augments and deepens learning (Kellogg 2008; Klein & Boscolo 2011; Weinstein, Sumeracki, & Caviglioli 2018) and a mode of expression that allows the communication of ideas to various audiences. In order for students to develop and sustain their writing skills and deepen their engagement with learning, students need to engage with assignments that practice *writing to learn* (Anderson, Anson, Gonyea, & Paine 2015) and *writing to communicate*, especially in courses that expose students to disciplinary forms of writing (Beaufort 2007; Prior 1998; Tardy 2009). WAC initiatives encourage this by strategically integrating writing practice and instruction across a series of courses that incorporate *writing to learn* (W2L) and *writing to communicate* (W2C).

W2L assignments are often informal or shorter writing tasks that engage students in focused inquiry, reflection, response, and meaning-exploration (such as reflection tasks, journals, reading responses, and impromptu in-class writing). W2C assignments are more formal, often longer writing tasks that require students to engage with sources in a more thorough manner by taking a stand or offering insights, usually using discipline-specific conventions (such as literature reviews, research proposals, seminar papers, memos, reports, and research-based essays).

Purpose of a Writing-Enhanced Requirement

WAC is implemented through writing-enhanced (WE) courses (usually taken after the first-year writing course) that allow students to further practice their writing by engaging with and learning disciplinary conventions from faculty with expertise in those disciplines (Farris & Smith 2001; Strachan 2008). WE courses have been recognized by the *Association of American College and Universities* as "high-impact practices" that increase student engagement and retention (Kuh 2008). Also, WE courses have been shown to increase students' understanding of course content and develop their critical thinking skills (Hilgers, Bayer, Stitt-Bergh, & Taniguchi 1995; Hilgers, Hussey, & Stitt-Bergh 1999) as well as increase students' self-efficacy and writing proficiency (Blakeslee, Hines, Primeau, McBain, Versluis, & McCaffery 2017).

WI courses have been implemented in a host of disciplines, including biochemistry (Colabroy 2011), biology (Brownell, Price, & Steinman 2013), chemistry (Whelan & Zare 2003), economics (Docherty, Tse, Forman, & McKenzie 2010; Simpson & Carroll 1999), history (Murphree 2014), nursing (Miller, Russell, Cheng, & Sharbek 2015), physics (Patton 2008), sociology (Malcolm 2006), theatre (Roost 2003), and engineering (Craig, Lerner, & Poe 2008; Pomykalski 2006).

WI courses are designed to develop students' writing proficiency and deepen students' engagement with learning by offering students repeated practiced and guided instruction in discipline-specific writing conventions.

New Criteria for WE Courses

All courses that fulfill the WE requirement will adhere to the following interrelated set of criteria:

1. *One major learning objective for the course must be the development of student writing, which is reflected in the final course grade.*

The writing assignments in WE courses should be designed to engage students in the content and ideas of the course. Through a combination of W2L and W2C activities, students practice writing as a mode of inquiry and a means of communicating their ideas. By making writing a significant portion of the final grade, the instructor communicates to students the importance of writing, while also matching the assessment to the course objectives. The goals and objectives of the writing assignments should be made clear to students, in order for them to recognize the types of knowledge and skills they will gain from these assignments.

2. *Multiple writing assignments are sequenced and distributed over the course of the semester.*

These assignments should include both shorter, lower-stakes tasks (W2L) and more formal, sophisticated assignments (W2C). By distributing writing assignments over the course of the semester, students will have multiple opportunities to practice. These distributed assignments should be sequenced and scaffolded so that tasks build on each other. For instance, early assignments might require students to practice skills they will further develop in later more complex assignments. Writing in WE course may take a number of forms, including conventional print texts as well as word-dominant multimodal projects, which can complicate traditional conceptions of pages and page counts. However, to ensure that WE courses are in fact writing-enhanced, students should write a minimum of 15-20 double-spaced pages (or the equivalent in word-dominant multimodal projects), which may include both drafts and final versions of assignments. Of this total, at least 10 double-spaced pages should be finished, polished writing (i.e., final versions of W2C assignments).

3. *Students are required to revise at least 1 longer assignment based on feedback from the instructor and/or peers. This longer assignment should be developed through a multi-step drafting process.*

By allowing students the opportunity to revise one longer assignment based on feedback, instructors engage students in writing as a process, make tangible the issue of audience, and develop students' abilities to evaluate and implement feedback. Students can engage in the drafting process in a number of ways, including writing a brief topic proposal, creating an outline and talking through it with the instructor or peers, writing an annotated bibliography, engaging in a guided peer review, or composing a partial or complete draft. By requiring revision of one longer assignment, the instructor can incorporate those drafting/revision steps into the evaluation of that paper. This paper need not be significantly longer than others in the course. What is most important is the incorporation of a drafting process.

4. The course provides writing instruction and repeated opportunities to discuss and practice writing.

WI instructors do not need to provide students grammar instruction or expect grammatically-perfect writing. Instead, the main goals of writing instruction in a WE course should be to help students (1) continue to engage with the writing process, (2) recognize how the basic concepts of academic writing (like audience, purpose, etc.) can be useful in disciplinary contexts, (3) understand how to complete writing assignments successfully, and (4) understand, identify, and repeatedly practice disciplinary or field-specific writing conventions. (See the teaching suggestions below.) After all, each discipline has its own habits of mind, which are reflected in its writing conventions (Carter 2007). As such, students engaging with the ideas and methods of those disciplines often best learn to recognize and produce those disciplinary conventions through repeated practice and guided instruction from disciplinary experts (Beaufort 2000; Soliday 2011).

Teaching Suggestions: Providing guided instruction is an important way to develop students' writing proficiency. Some of the most effective forms of writing instruction can be integrated easily into the overall structure of any course.

1. Incorporate lower-stakes (W2L) activities throughout the semester;
2. Walk students through the assignment sheets or writing prompts during class;
3. Support metacognition about the writing process by explaining the role of drafts and other sub-tasks;
4. Introduce students to written models, such as sample student papers or published examples;
5. Identify and explain the key features of those models that students will be expected to learn and produce;
6. Teach students to recognize for themselves those key features in the course readings and other written models;
7. Offer students opportunities to practice composing those key features with both W2L and W2C assignments;
8. Guide students on how to review their peers' writing to provide feedback on those key features;
9. Evaluate student writing using a grading rubric or scoring guide that reflects those key features.

These suggestions make explicit for students the tacit knowledge about writing conventions and purposes that have become second nature to scholars trained in a discipline. These tips also increase students' writing competence by teaching them to recognize and produce key features and types of disciplinary writing (Goldschmidt 2014, 2017; Lindenman 2015; Tardy 2009).

New WE Criteria: Implementation Examples

- One major learning objective for the course must be the development of student writing, which is reflected in the final course grade.
- Multiple writing assignments are sequenced and distributed over the course of the semester.
- Students are required to revise at least 1 longer assignment based on feedback from the instructor and/or peers. This longer assignment should be developed through a multi-step drafting process.
- The course provides writing instruction and repeated opportunities to discuss and practice writing.

Example A

Short Writing Tasks (.5-1 pg. each, once per week) = 15% (ungraded but discussed in class)

Paper 1 (3 pgs.) = 15%
Drafting process:
1. "Talk through" of outline (1 pg.): conducted by peers in class
2. Final version: <u>graded by instructor</u>

Paper 2 (4 pgs.) = 20%
Drafting process:
1. "Talk through" of outline (1 pg.): conducted by peers in class
2. Peer review of draft: guided by instructor's questions and conducted during class
3. Final version: <u>graded by instructor</u>

Paper 3 (6 pgs.) = 35%
Drafting process:
1. Proposal (1 pg.): <u>reviewed/lightly-graded by instructor</u>
2. "Talk through" of outline (1 pg.): conducted by peers or <u>in small groups with instructor outside of class</u>
3. Peer review of partial draft: guided by instructor's questions and conducted during class
4. Complete draft: <u>reviewed by instructor</u>
5. Final version: <u>graded by instructor</u>

** **Papers** can be anything from essays, reports, memos, and reviews, to word-dominant multimodal projects.
**

Participation/Attendance = 15%

Example B

Bi-weekly Reading Responses (1 pg. each, 6 per semester) = 15% (lightly graded and discussed in class)

Research-based Project (8-10 pgs.) = 70% (points can be distributed to stages of drafting process)
Drafting process:
1. Proposal + bibliography (1-2 pgs.): <u>reviewed/lightly-graded by instructor</u>
2. Annotated bibliography or literature review (2-3 pgs.): <u>graded by instructor</u>
3. "Talk through" of outline (1 pg.): conducted by peers or <u>in small groups with instructor outside of class</u>
4. Peer review of complete draft: guided by instructor's questions and conducted during class
5. Complete draft: <u>reviewed by instructor</u>
6. Final version: <u>graded by instructor</u>

Participation/Attendance (including periodic in-class writing) = 15% (ungraded but discussed in class)

Aggregated Feedback from Faculty Focus Groups

Challenges	Benefits
- Scale (i.e.: allowing for multiple peer revisions in large classes) - Time to read and grade, especially at the end of a semester - Disciplines that are science and/or number intensive - Will students be adequately prepared? - Navigating student expectations - Applicability to external transfers - Students having access to needed courses to fulfill the requirement - Allowing students to take a SWR in their third and fourth years	- Value in peer revisions and iterative writing - Writing to learn - Flexibility of faculty and/or peer review - Strengthens a culture of writing

Desired Support	Overall
- Undergraduate, discipline-specific writing TAs - Sample rubrics - Sample team-based writing assignments - Sharable video module for faculty members to share in class on how to conduct peer review - Writing "ambassadors" to meet with individual faculty members or departments to ease the transition - SWR workshops/town halls during transition period - Public inventory of what schools are doing already in the SWR space - GTA workshop specific to writing instruction - Communication plan that shows intention for students beyond a checklist	"SWR" has an existing brand and may make a new requirement easier to sell - Interest in a 1-credit lab component - Consider looping in the Career Center - Examples of current popular methods of writing instruction include: - Reflective - Literature review - Blogging - Semester-long paper - Writing for public speaking - Group writing - Research paper - Memo writing - Short-form writing

WI Course Technology Infrastructure Needs

The following technology needs have been identified by the QEP Oversight Committee as tools that would support writing instruction in WE courses.

- A built-in text editor function that will allow
    - peer evaluation;
    - peer review to be anonymous or attributed; and
    - instructors to divide the class into smaller groups on the platform so there could be small peer-review groups within the course.

- Options for public and private facing platforms, the former essentially serving as a "portfolio."

- The ability for the system to follow a student, not a course.

- All tools available in one platform.

- Integration with Collab or UVA Box.

- Compatibility with existing print infrastructure on Grounds.

- Voice and video feedback capabilities.

- Ability to use Zoom in order for students to collaborate and provide feedback for peer review.

- Integration with LMS and cloud-based storage.

- Support multiple forms of writing for multi-language and multi-media.

- Integration with bibliography software.

Executive Summary
To provide useful information for program management, the 2019 assessment of the FWR program intentionally addressed three topics: 1) instructors' confidence in teaching writing; 2) instructors' use of recommended teaching practices; and 3) students' writing proficiency as measured across four outcomes specified in a rubric. Instructors were surveyed early (re: confidence) and late (re: instruction) in spring term 2019. Areas in which instructors lacked confidence or were less likely to employ specific teaching practices were identified and shared with the Director for subsequent intervention.

In a scoring workshop, instructors assessed a stratified random sample of students' final papers by applying the four outcome rubric to each paper. Analysis found that student writing was competent across all four outcomes, with nearly half of students scoring as proficient or highly proficient.

The assessment confirmed the value in taking a multi-dimensional approach, focusing on instructor confidence, use of recommended teaching practices, and on student proficiency. Together, the two surveys and use of the rubric reinforced the recommended Goals and Practices among the instructors. The surveys yielded information for mid-semester interventions with instructors as well as for planning subsequent support for instructors. The rubric served well to assess student papers regardless of section, assignment, and instructor. As many of the instructors are graduate students and/or new to teaching writing, it may be worth encouraging instructors to use the rubrics in their course grading.

The QEP stipulates that both formative and summative assessments will be conducted. While the formative assessments are intended to provide useful feedback for faculty for course and initiative improvement, the QEP does not describe methods in detail except to state that a stratified random sample of student papers based on ENWR course type and volume will be assessed.

In AY2018-19 total of 2774 students enrolled in FWR courses during spring and/or fall terms. Across the four types of FWR courses, 61 instructors taught 86 sections each term. While ENWR 1510 sections were taught by faculty and graduate students (about a third are graduate students) the year-long courses and the advanced writing courses were taught only by faculty.

FWR Formative Assessment Methods
Given the relative newness of the universal FWR approach, the number and type of instructors involved, the formative assessment is designed to capture information that can be applied directly to improving instruction and student outcomes.

The assessment addressed three questions, each of which contributed to a formative understanding of the newly-revised FWR program:
1. How confident are FWR instructors with their ability to teach writing, to apply instructional techniques, and to inspire students to write well? Data for this assessment were collected at the beginning of spring term via a survey.

2. Did instructors apply the recommended instructional approaches and techniques in their sections? This assessment was conducted at the end of spring term via a survey.
3. How competent are students at writing as measured by a rubric applied to students' papers? This assessment focused on students' final papers in the course, submitted at the end of spring term.

A final assessment of the FWR program will be conducted in Spring 2022.

1. Instructor Confidence

The same survey that was used to assess the impact of the May 2018 Faculty Seminar in Teaching of Writing on instructor confidence was administered to FWR instructors in February 2019. The survey presents instructors with 20 aspects of teaching and asks them to rate their confidence on each on a scale from "Not at all confident" to "Very confident" (Appendix B-Instrument and Results). The items range from "designing a writing intensive syllabus" to "motivating the less motivated writers." This survey was employed because in its prior use, it proved effective in highlighting areas pre-seminar in which instructors were more likely to lack confidence. Moreover, it reported significant improvements in confidence in such areas as "effectively balancing teaching of content with teaching of writing."

Thirty-eight (63%) of FWR instructors completed the confidence survey. Respondents were most confident in their ability to organize in-class peer review, to provide students with opportunities for revision, and to provide useful feedback to students on their progress in writing. They were least confident in their ability to motivate the less motivated writers and to teach students the techniques of editing.

Results, presented in the aggregate to protect instructor confidentiality, were shared with the Director of the Academic and Professional Writing Program to guide instructional support (e.g., workshops, materials)

In response, the Director hosted a pedagogy panel that spring to which all FWR instructors were invited. This panel was devoted to "teaching for transfer"—an approach to writing instruction that emphasizes helping students recognize how to transfer what they learn in FWR courses to the other courses they'll take in the future. While not directly focused on unmotivated student writers, this panel addressed that issue in the course of discussing how teaching for transfer helps students to see the value of their FWR course in relation to the rest of their education.

2. Instruction

At the end of spring term, instructors were invited to complete a nine-item course assessment (Appendix C- Instrument and Results) that asked them to what extent they agreed that those instructional practices were implemented in their courses. Fifty-five percent of instructors (n=34) responded. About nine in ten respondents strongly agreed that their students 1) completed at least three writing projects of roughly 1000-1500 words; 2) had the opportunity to write in or out of class every week of the semester; 3) had the opportunity to revise initial drafts of some writing projects; and 4) periodically engaged in self-evaluation and peer review. These four instructional practices in particular are fundamental to the FWR curriculum. Responses to the other survey items were not as definitive, although overall agreement was still high. For example, 71 percent of respondents strongly

agreed and 29 percent agreed that their course was designed to explore questions of writing as well as the course topic (e.g., environment, arts). Also, 59 percent strongly agreed and 35 percent agreed that they had selected course readings to model the writing that students were asked to perform.

3. Student Writing

Student Artifacts
The assessment focused on student papers submitted at the end of spring term 2019 in ENWR 1510 course sections. ENWR 1510 accounts for 90 percent of first-year students completing the First-year Writing Requirement.[1] In spring term, the course was taught by over 50 instructors teaching over 70 sections. The students' papers, which generally ranged from 3-5 pages in length, were the third and final papers of the course and had been revised by the students at least once in response to feedback.

Instructors were encouraged to share their students' final papers for inclusion in the assessment; 55% did so, submitting 662 student papers representing about half of enrolled students. From this set of student papers, a random sample of 148 papers was selected for assessment, stratified by type of instructor (faculty vs. graduate student) and ensuring that individual instructors were not over-represented.

Process
After a norming session, a team of eleven faculty members and one graduate student, all from the English Department, read and scored the 148 student papers by applying a rubric that had been designed specifically for this assessment (Appendix D). Based on the Goals and Principles for First-Year Writing Courses, the rubric presented four outcomes:
  1. Analysis: The student analyzes problems, ideas and/or texts with insight, precision, and nuance.
  2. Sources: The student engages thoughtfully and responsibly with the perspectives of others.
  3. Voice: The student writes in a style that enhances the rhetorical appeal of his/her text.
  4. Conventions: The student displays an awareness of structural and sentence-level conventions that clarify meaning.

For each outcome, four levels of competence were described: Not yet competent (1); Competent (2); Proficient (3); Very Proficient (4). Applying the rubric, two raters independently assessed each paper according to the four outcomes, each on the scale from 1 to 4. Raters were allowed to give scores between the levels, e.g., a 2.5 or 3.5. The maximum achievable total score was 16; the lowest possible total score was 4. Where scores given by the two raters differed substantially (generally by 2 points but also for multiple differences of 1.5), a third rater also read and scored the paper. The analysis of these papers took into account all three sets of scores.

During the scoring workshop, raters raised questions about rating some papers that did not refer to sources in their analysis. It was decided that for each paper, the raters would infer whether or not the outcome Sources was to be scored. In all, 36 papers eventually were not scored for Sources. For these papers, only ratings for Analysis, Voice and Conventions were recorded. Assuming that the assignments had not required that the student analyze or refer to sources, the maximum achievable score for these papers was set at 12 and the minimum at 3.

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[1] Except for Echols Scholars, the remaining 10% of students enroll either in year-long ENWR courses that provide additional support (e.g., for students whose first language is not English) or in higher level ENWR courses for already proficient writers.

Two papers eluded second reads and so were discarded as they had been scored only once, leaving a total of 146 papers for assessment and analysis. For 110 papers, all four outcomes were assessed; for 36 papers, three outcomes were assessed.

This report describes the analysis and results for inter-rater reliability and for rubric scores (total score and mean score for each outcome).

Inter-rater Reliability

Raters' scores for each outcome on each paper were compared to assess agreement. Comparisons between raters revealed relatively good agreement for the four criteria. Agreement within +/- 1 point was 94 percent for Sources and 88-89 percent for Analysis, Voice and Conventions (Figure 1). Where the scoring range is one-to-four, IAS practice is to recommend that no more than ten percent of ratings differ by more than one point. While that expectation is somewhat arbitrary, raters' agreement on these papers is sufficiently close that the results can be considered reliable.

Figure 1: Inter-rater Reliability by Criterion: % of Papers by Difference in Scores
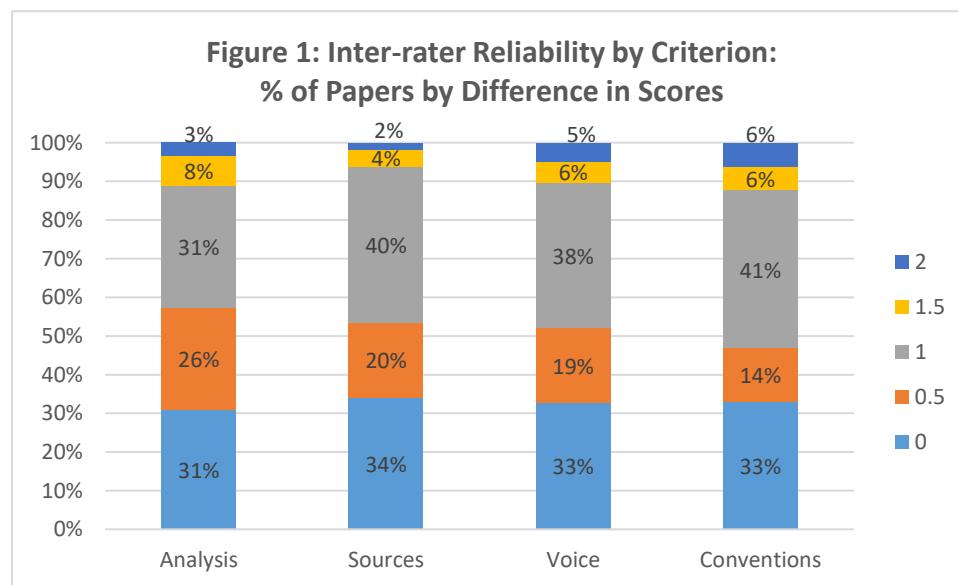
Results by Outcome

Mean score for each outcome was calculated by adding each rater's scores on each paper, then computing the average. For example, a mean score of 2 would suggest that on average the raters considered the student's performance on that outcome to be Competent even though one rater could have scored that outcome a 1.5 and the other could have given it a 2.5. A mean score of 4 (High Proficiency), however, could only be achieved if both raters scored that outcome as a 4.

For the 110 papers for which all four outcomes were assessed: Students do not appear to have done better or worse in regard to any specific outcome. Mean scores by outcome were strikingly similar, differing only slightly (Figure 2). The mean scores ranged from 2.5 to 2.7 suggesting that for each outcome the average paper reflected competency, leaning toward proficiency.

Figure 2: Mean Scores by Outcome

(1=Not yet competent; 2=Competent; 3=Proficient;   4=Highly proficient)

Outcome	Mean Score
Analysis	2.5
Sources	2.6
Voice	2.7
Conventions	2.6
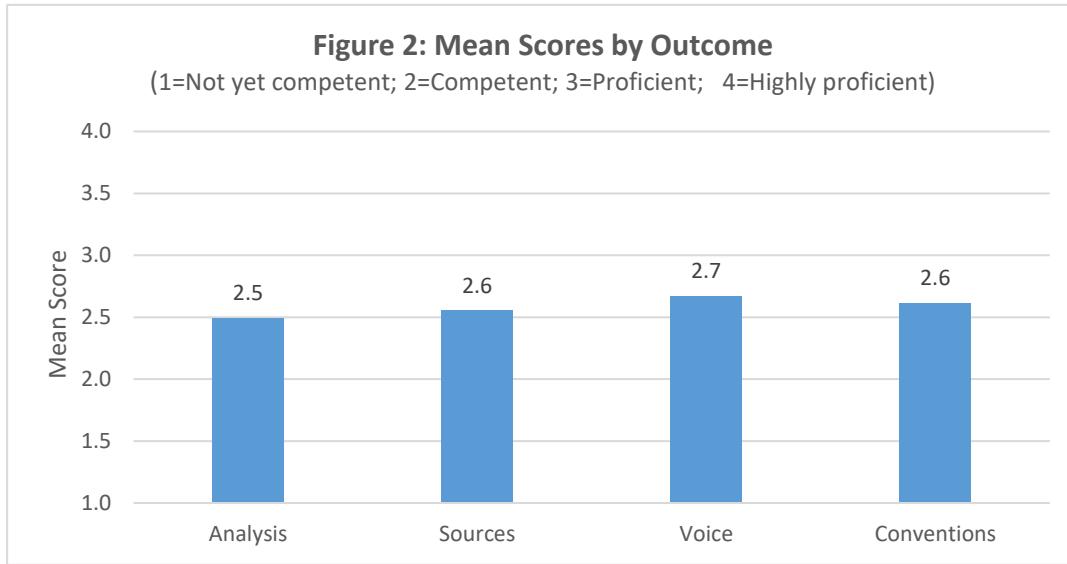
For the 36 papers for which only three outcomes were assessed (not Sources): The means for the individual outcomes are similar to those from the set of 4-outcome papers (Figure 3). For Analysis, however, the means are somewhat lower (2.2 for 3-outcome papers vs. 2.5 for 4-outcome papers). Without access to course assignments, it is not clear if the lack of emphasis on Sources is related to expectations for Analysis in these papers, and if yes, how much.

Figure 3: Mean Scores by Outcome: Comparison of Samples

(1=not yet competent; 2=competent; 3=proficient; 4=highly proficient)

Outcome	sample w 4 outcomes	sample w 3 outcomes
Analysis	2.5	2.2
Sources	2.6	
Voice	2.7	2.7
Conventions	2.6	2.6
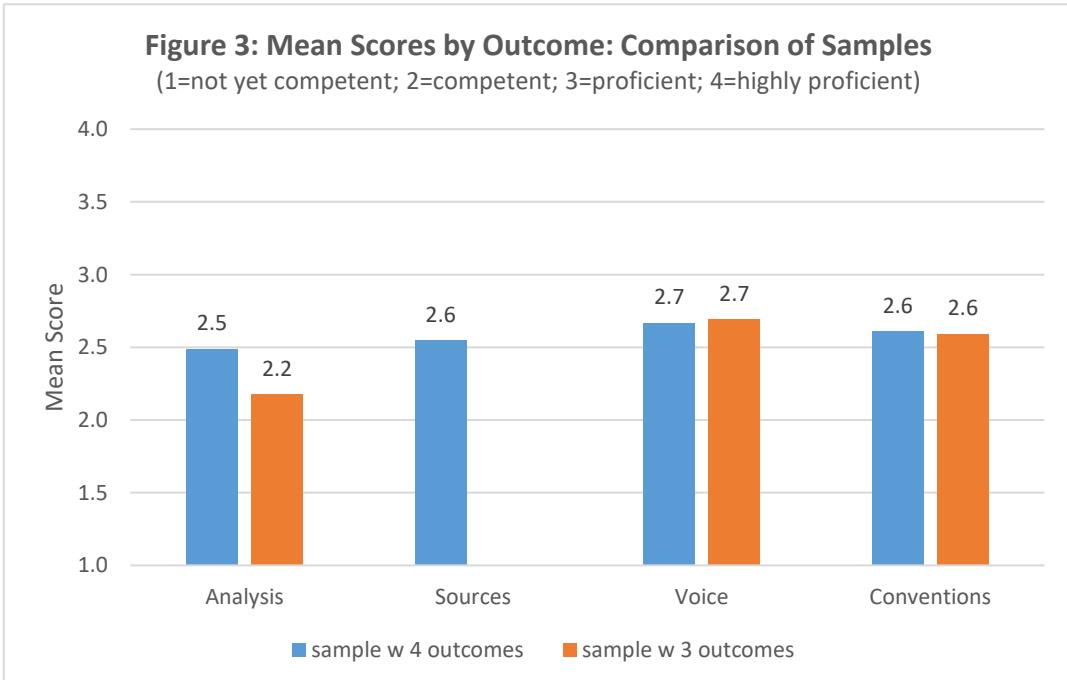
Overall mean scores alone can obscure underlying differences. Are papers that were scored as less competent more lacking in one outcome versus another? Are papers that were scored as Proficient

likely to reflect proficiency across all outcomes? Examining outcome scores for low scoring papers vs. high scoring papers may reveal differences between outcomes within each group that may be informative.

Mean scores for each of the four outcomes for three subsets of the 110 papers were compared: the 30 lowest scoring papers, the 30 highest scoring papers, and the 30 papers in the middle range of scores. Even within each of these three groups, however, the mean scores for each outcome are strikingly similar (Figure 4). In the lowest scoring group, the means for all four outcomes reflect a judgment of Competent. In the highest scoring group, the mean scores all reflect Proficiency. And the middle scoring group suggests competency approaching proficiency. Within each group, on average, strengths or weaknesses do not emerge.

Figure 4: Mean Scores for 4 Outcomes by 3 Subsets of Papers: Lowest Scores, Middle Scores, Highest Scores
(1=not yet competent; 2=competent; 3=proficient; 4=highly proficient)
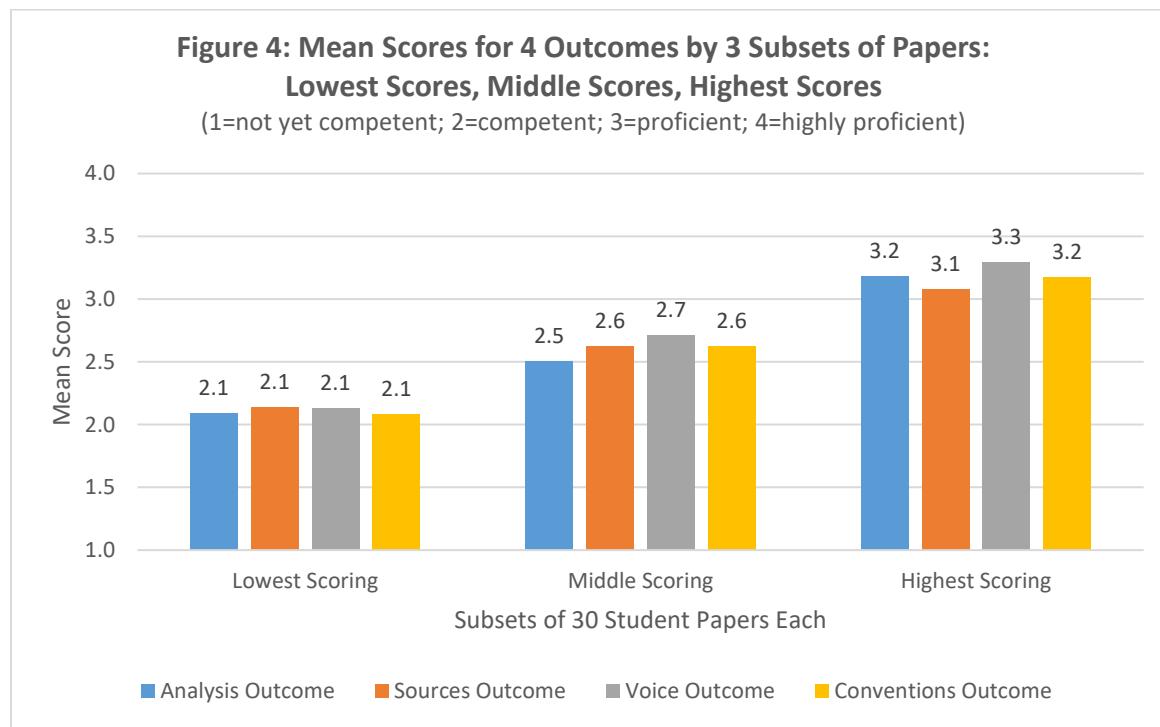
For the sample of 36 papers, those with scores for only three outcomes, this analysis is a little more revealing (Figure 5). Papers in the lowest-scoring subset show the greatest lag in mean scores for Analysis (1.6 for papers with three outcomes vs. 2.1 for papers with four outcomes), but also lag slightly for Analysis in the middle and upper subsets. Again, it is not clear if the assignments that did not require use of sources also emphasized analysis less, or if use of sources facilitates more recognizable analysis.

Figure 5: Mean Scores for 3 Outcomes by 3 Subsets of Papers: Lowest Scores, Middle Scores, Highest Scores

(1=not yet competent; 2=competent; 3=proficient; 4=highly proficient)

	Analysis Outcome	Voice Outcome	Conventions Outcome
Lowest Scores	1.6	2.3	2.1
Middle Scores	2.3	2.7	2.6
Highest Scores	3.0	3.2	3.2

Subsets of 10 papers each
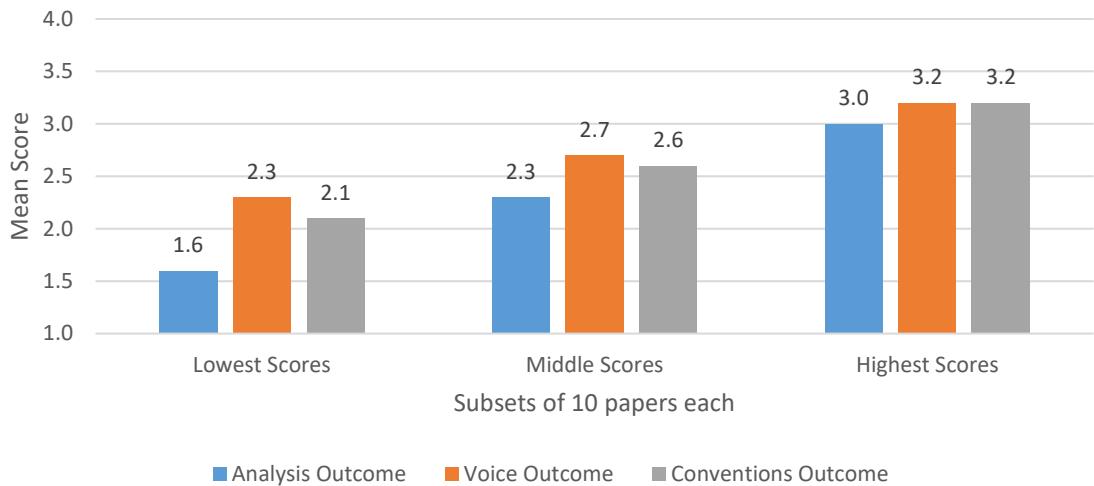
Total Scores

Mean total score was calculated by summing ratings across outcomes for each paper's raters, then averaging the sums. For the 110 papers for which four outcomes were assessed, the lowest possible mean total score was 4, that is, "Not yet Competent" (the paper would receive all 1's from both raters). This highest possible mean score was 16, that is, "Highly Proficient" (the paper receives all 4's from both raters).

For the 110 papers for which all four outcomes were assessed:

- Ninety-nine percent (all papers except one) received a total score of 8 or better (Figure 6) (Competent). Thirty-five percent of the papers received a total score of 12 or better (Proficient). One paper was assessed as Highly Proficient (total score of 16).
- The mean total score across all 110 papers was 10.5 (SD=0.17). Median and mode were both 10.5. With a total mean score of 10.5, the papers would be considered Competent and trending toward Proficient.

Figure 6: Percent of Papers by Averaged Total Score
(n=110 papers scored on 4 outcomes by 2 or 3 raters)

Percent of Papers

| Total Score	Percent
4	1%
5	0%
6	0%
7	0%
8	7%
9	13%
10	24%
11	22%
12	15%
13	12%
14	5%
15	2%
16	1%

Total Score (Possible range = 4-16)
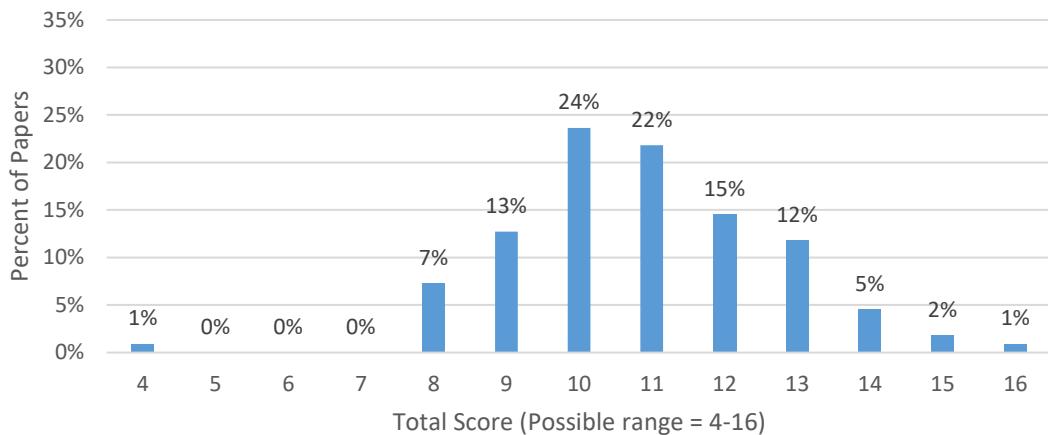
For the 36 papers that were assessed on three outcomes (not including Source), the results are similar, although not quite as positive. The lowest possible score is 3 that is, "Not yet Competent" (the paper would receive all 1's from both raters). A total of 12, that is "Highly Proficient," could only be achieved if both raters scored each of the three outcomes with a 4.

- Ninety-two percent of papers received a total score of 6 or better (Competent) (Figure 7). Thirty-one percent of the papers received a total score of 9 (Proficient) or better. No papers were assessed as Highly Proficient (total score of 12).
- The mean total score across the 36 papers was 7.6 (SD=1.49). Median and mode were both 7.5. A mean total score of 7.6 can be interpreted as Competent and trending toward Proficient.

Figure 7: Percent of Papers by Averaged Total Score
(n=36 papers scored on 3 outcomes by 2 or 3 raters)

Percent of Papers

Total Score	Percent
3	0%
4	4%
5	7%
6	7%
7	22%
8	30%
9	15%
10	7%
11	7%
12	0%

Total Score (possible range=3-12)
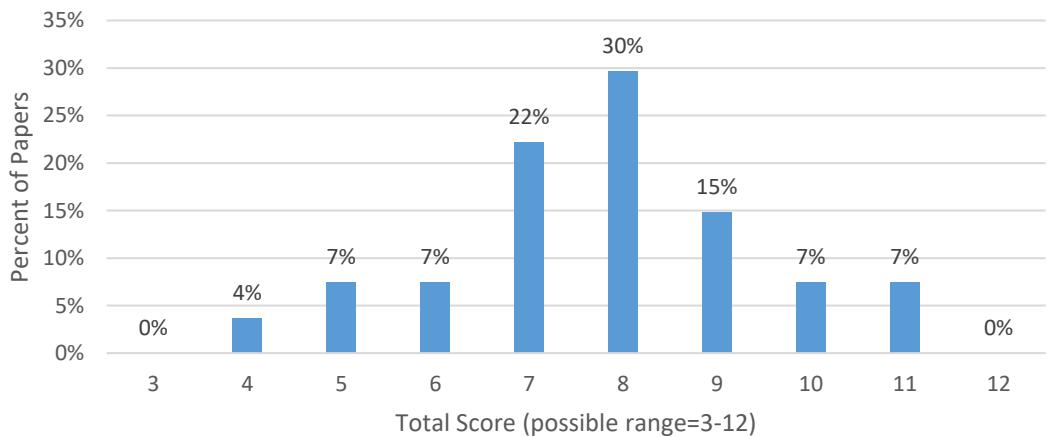
Interpretation

Results from the two sets of papers can be combined by computing a common metric: total score as percent of possible points. For each paper, regardless of whether three or four outcomes were assessed, the percent of possible points achieved was computed. For example, for papers in which <u>four</u> outcomes were assessed and 16 was the maximum possible score, a paper with a total score of 10 would achieve 63% of possible points. Likewise, a paper in which <u>three</u> outcomes were assessed and 12 was the maximum possible score, a paper with a total score of 10 would achieve 83% of possible points.

While the rubric defines Not Yet Competent as a score of 1, Competent as a score of 2, Proficient as a score of 3, and Highly Proficient as a score of 4, students' papers received more than one score for each outcome. For example, paper #4 received all 3's from one rater and all 4's from the second rater, averaging at 3.5 for each outcome and totaling 14 points overall. While not receiving all 4's from both raters, this student could arguably be considered highly proficient at writing.

Applying this approach, the following definitions could be used:

	Range: total score (4 outcomes)	Range: total score (3 outcomes)	Range: percent of possible points
Highly Proficient	14-16 (3.5-4/outcome)	10-12 (3.25-4/outcome)	86-100%
Proficient	11-13 (2.75-3.25/outcome)	8-9 (2.55-3/outcome)	66-85%
Competent	7-10 (1.75-2.5/outcome)	5-7 (1.5-2.25/outcome)	45-65%
Not yet competent	4-6 (1-1.5/outcome)	3-4 (1-1.25/outcome)	less than 45%

Using this framework (Figure 8):
- 12% of papers would be rated as Highly Proficient
- 36% of papers would be rated as Proficient
- 47% of papers would be rated as Competent
- 5% of papers would be rated as Not yet competent

Figure 8: Percent of Papers by Percent of PossibleTotal Score Achieved (n=146)

Competent   Proficient

Not yet competent   Highly Proficient

Percent of Papers

25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50% 55% 60% 65% 70% 75% 80% 85% 90% 95% 100%

Percent of Total Score Achieved
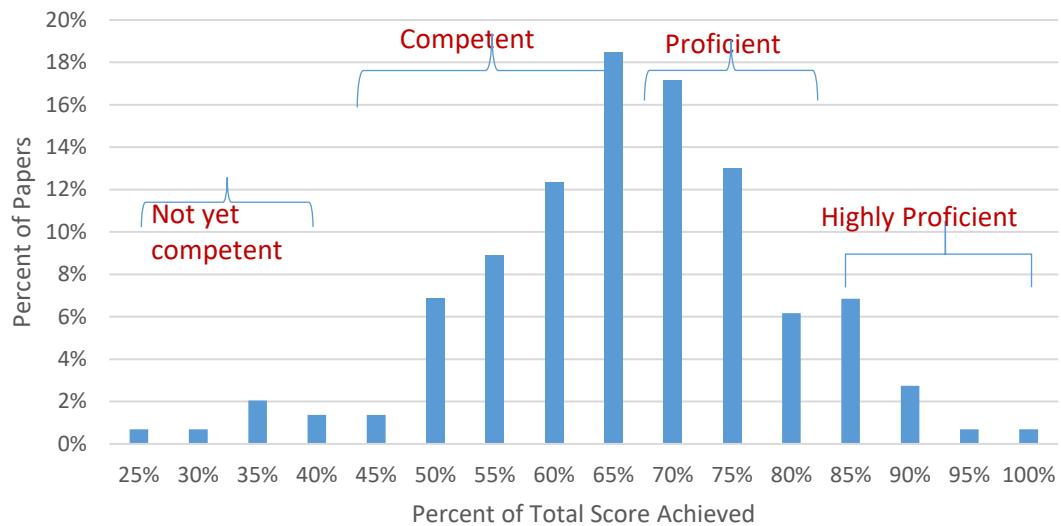
Or displayed as follows (Figure 9):

Figure 9: Distribution of Papers by Assessed Competency/Proficiency
n=146 papers

Percent of Papers

5%   47%   36%   12%

■ Not yet competent   ■ Competent   ■ Proficient   ■ Highly proficient
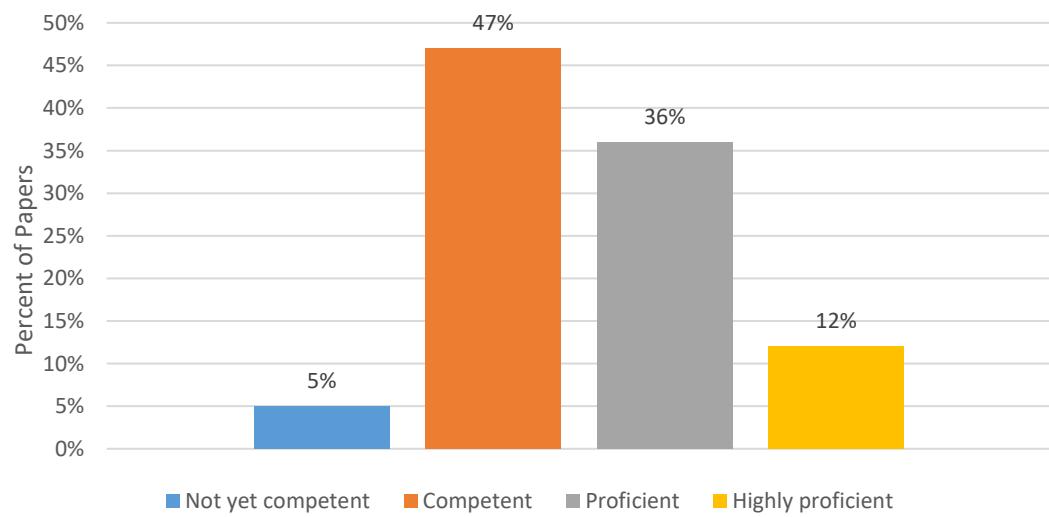
Conclusions

- There's value in taking a multi-dimensional approach to assessment. Students' proficiency in writing is the end result of multiple factors—instruction, curriculum, student innate ability, student learning, and student effort. Assessments of students' writing artifacts can reveal which aspects of their writing, if any, need more or different instruction. But those assessments may not provide insight into how the instruction needs to improve.

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This assessment addressed that dilemma by evaluating <u>both</u> students' proficiency in writing and instructors' confidence and practice. The assessment asked three questions, each of which contributed to a formative understanding of the newly-revised FWR program:

1. How confident are FWR instructors with in their ability to teach writing, to apply instructional techniques, and to inspire students to write well?
2. Did instructors apply the recommended instructional approaches and techniques in their classes?
3. How competent are students at writing as measured by a rubric applied to students' papers?

This multi-pronged assessment provided information that could (and was) used to provide timely information for instructors mid-semester and information for use in improving instruction in subsequent semesters. Based on results from the 20-item confidence survey, the Director offered additional support for teaching unmotivated student writers. The results of the end-of-semester instructor survey were especially revealing vis-a-vis the instruction that students received or did not. For example, 65 percent of instructors responding to the survey strongly agreed that "samples of student writing are frequently shared and discussed in class," a core practice in the curriculum. As all instructors should be sharing and discussing student work in class weekly, this may be a topic for improvement next year.

- <u>For assessment of the student papers, the rubric appeared to have served well</u> across sections, instructors and assignments. Interrater reliability was within an acceptable range. For some papers, reviewers inferred that those assignments had not required that students consider other sources in their analyses. Future assessments of FWR papers should provide the assignments to reduce rater uncertainty.
- <u>Nearly all student papers in the sample were rated as reflecting competency or better across all outcomes measured by the rubric</u>. Nearly half were judged to reflect proficiency or better. These results are in line with the student population served in ENWR 1510, that is, students who do not need extra time or support to improve their writing and students who are already highly proficient writers.
- <u>It will be useful for program instructors (faculty and graduate students) to learn of these assessment methods and results</u> and to know that these are the categories used for conducting assessments of this kind. It may be useful to encourage instructors to grade students' papers during the semester by applying the rubric, thereby reinforcing the expected outcomes. Along with the "Goals and Practices" statement, use of the rubric is a good way to reinforce instructors' understanding of the goals and outcomes and to provide information on how to support them in their courses.
- <u>A surprising result: the mean values for all four outcomes fell within tenths of a point</u> (2.5 to 2.7). It was expected that students' papers would be rated higher for Analysis and Conventions than for Sources and Voice. About half of the individual students' papers registered mean scores per outcome within half a point across all four outcomes (e.g., all scores between 2 and 2.5; range in points was 1-4). Why so close? Four ideas:

- o Students' proficiency across these four outcomes may truly be similar.
- o At 3-5 pages, the papers may have provided too little material to support distinct ratings by outcome.
- o As the instructors had just graded the similarly short papers for their students, they may have unconsciously reverted to judging the overall papers (this is an A paper, this is a B+…) and applying that blanket judgment, more or less, to the individual outcomes.
- o The raters may not have had experience in applying rubrics to grade student papers, that is, grading by individual outcome, and so reverted to their usual grading practice.

As noted earlier, it may be beneficial to teach instructors to grade their students' papers using the rubric (or a modification thereof), both to remind them of the learning outcomes and to improve validity of the assessment.

First Writing Requirement (FWR) Formative Assessment Appendix

FIRST-YEAR WRITING COURSES AT UVA: GOALS & PRACTICES

First-Year Writing at UVA

Goals and Practices

What are the goals of first-year writing at UVA?

- To offer students a course in which the focus is primarily on their own writing and its rhetorical possibilities.
- To engage students in writing as an act of critical inquiry—a process wherein they represent and engage with the ideas of others, test ideas of their own, explore uncertainty, and discover what they think on the page or screen.
- To assist students in writing with insight, precision, and nuance as they analyze and respond to texts from a variety of rhetorical contexts.
- To foster students' ability to evaluate their own writing and that of their peers, so that they learn to read closely and revise wisely.
- To help students engage in and reflect on contemporary forms of rhetorical expression, including oral and digital communication.

Why are these our goals?

- Studies of writing pedagogy have long shown that the most effective way for students to develop as writers is through continual practice, accompanied by encouraging and detailed response to their work.
- Different disciplines hold different conceptions of effective writing, but all disciplines pursue critical inquiry in which participants explore, examine, and question.
- Students need to respond with insight, precision, and nuance to what they read, encounter, or observe to develop as writers and thinkers in college and beyond.
- Becoming a mature, discerning writer requires an ability to evaluate writing—both one's own and that of others—from many perspectives, anticipating how diverse readers might respond.
- Entering the university at a moment of profound diversification of literate practices, students benefit from opportunities to represent their ideas in speech and in digital forms of communication.

These goals are supported by the following practices:

- Teachers give student writers the opportunity to write in or out of class every week of the semester. While teachers need not respond individually to every assignment, they frequently share and discuss examples of student work in class.
- Teachers design their courses to explore problems, issues, or questions related to writing as well as to the subject at hand. Readings (generally limited to 50 pages per week) are selected to develop the inquiry and/or model the kind of writing that student writers are asked to perform.
- Teachers include at least three writing projects or activities of roughly 1,000 – 1,500 words each, with opportunities for student writers to revise initial drafts by the end of the term.

- Teachers arrange for student writers to engage in self-evaluation and peer review of each other's work periodically throughout the term.
- Teachers include activities that help develop student writers' facility with oral presentation (perhaps by leading discussion or by sharing their research for an upcoming project) and with digital rhetoric (perhaps by creating a multimodal text or assembling a digital portfolio).

http://writingrhetoric.as.virginia.edu/first-year-writing-courses-uva-goals-practices

Appendix B: FWR Instructor Confidence Survey Instrument and Survey Results

NAME_____   DATE_____

	For each of the following teaching activities, how confident are you in your ability to:	Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Very confident	N/A or D/K
1	develop my own approach to effective writing instruction						
2	design writing-intensive syllabi						
3	stimulate students' interest in writing						
4	clearly communicate criteria for assessment and grading						
5	provide useful feedback to students on their progress in writing						
6	assess students fairly						
7	know when and where to refer students who need extra help with their writing						
8	manage the time commitment that a writing-intensive course requires						
9	motivate the less motivated writers						
10	manage teaching a class with a wide range in students' ability to write						
11	effectively balance teaching of content with teaching of writing						
12	provide students with model texts to enhance their own writing						
13	incorporate writing activities in the classroom setting						
14	organize in-class peer review and feedback opportunities						
15	teach students the techniques of editing						
16	provide students with opportunities for revision						
17	facilitate class discussions about writing						
18	create unconventional writing assignments						
19	promote students' appreciation for writing						
20	enhance students' use of writing for inquiry						

Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your writing instruction or your FWR course(s)?

WR instructors were invited on January 30th to complete a survey of their confidence in teaching writing (See page 3 for survey instrument). As of Friday, February 8th, 63% of instructors had completed the survey and the field period was closed. Results are displayed below, including text comments.

FWR Instructors, Spring Term 2019:
...how confident are you in your ability to:

Legend:
- Very confident
- Confident
- Somewhat confident
- Slightly confident
- Not at all confident

Categories (x-axis):
- develop my own approach to effective...
- design writing-intensive syllabi
- stimulate students' interest in writing
- clearly communicate criteria for assessment...
- provide userful feedback to students on...
- assess students fairly
- know when and where to refer students...
- manage the time commitment that a...
- motivate the less motivated writers
- manage teaching a class with a wide range...
- effectively balance teaching of content with...
- provide students with model texts to...
- incorporate writing activities into the...
- organize in-class peer-review and feedback...
- teach students the techniques of editing
- provide students with opportunities for...
- facilitate class discussions about writing
- create unconventional writing assignments
- promote students' appreciation for writing
- enhance students' use of writing for inquiry

Appendix C: Instructor Course Assessment Instrument and Survey Results

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your first-year writing course:	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Students had the opportunity to write in or out of class every week of the semester.				
2. Samples of student writing were frequently shared and discussed in class.				
3. The course was designed to explore questions of writing as well as the course topic.				
4. Readings were selected to model the kind of writing that students were asked to perform.				
5. Students completed at least three writing projects of roughly 1000-1500 words.				
6. Students had the opportunity to revise initial drafts of some writing projects by the end of the term.				
7. Students periodically engaged in self-evaluation and peer review of each other's work.				
8. Students had the opportunity to develop facility with oral presentation (perhaps by leading discussion or by sharing their research for an upcoming project).				
9. Students had the opportunity to develop facility with and/or reflect on digital rhetoric (perhaps by creating a multimodal text or assembling a digital portfolio).				

For each item, if respondent checked Disagree or Strongly disagree, a text box opens with the question:
You indicated disagreement with this statement. Please provide any feedback or explanation that you would like to share

FWR Instructor Course Assessment, 2018-19

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your first-year writing course. (n = 34, 55% response rate)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students completed at least three writing projects of roughly 1000-1500 words	91%		6%	3%
Students had the opportunity to write in or out of class every week of the semester	88%	12%		
Students had the opportunity to revise initial drafts of writing projects	88%	12%		
Students periodically engaged in self-evaluation and peer review	88%	12%		
The course was designed to explore questions of writing as well as the course topic	71%	29%		
Samples of student writing were frequently shared and discussed in class	65%	29%	6%	
Readings were selected to model the kind of writing that students were asked to perform	59%	35%	6%	
Students had the opportunity to develop facility with oral presentation	38%	47%	15%	
Students had the opportunity to develop facility with and/or reflect on digital rhetoric	35%	26%	38%	

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

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Appendix D: FWR Paper Scoring Rubric

Paper #_____   Reviewer _____

Criteria	4-Highly Proficient	3-Proficient	2-Competent	1-Not Yet Competent	
Analysis					
The student analyzes problems, ideas and/or texts with insight, precision, and nuance.	Draws insightful, carefully qualified conclusions through analysis of texts and other relevant content, conveying the writer's understanding and judgment.	Draws reasonable and appropriately qualified conclusions from analysis of texts and other content, exploring ideas and conveying the writer's analytic path.	Draws plausible conclusions based on workmanlike analysis (without inspiration or nuance), yielding ordinary judgments.	Is hesitant or uncertain in drawing conclusions from analysis, revealing tentative understanding and poor judgment.	
Sources					
The student engages thoughtfully and responsibly with the perspectives of others.	Demonstrates skillful consideration and interpretation of relevant texts to develop ideas.	Demonstrates responsible application of credible, relevant sources to support ideas.	Demonstrates an attempt to consider and apply relevant sources to support ideas.	Demonstrates minimal or no use of sources to support ideas.	
Voice					
The student writes in a style that enhances the rhetorical appeal of his/her text.	Uses a style that skillfully enhances meaning and enlivens the reader's experience of the text.	Uses a style that contributes to the meaning of the text, demonstrating an awareness of audience.	Uses a style that could benefit from revision but demonstrates a basic awareness of audience.	Uses a style that does nothing to enhance the text or that may even impede the reader's understanding.	
Conventions					
The student displays an awareness of structural and sentence-level conventions that clarify meaning.	Structures text wisely and uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning in virtually error-free prose.	Structures text adequately and uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning with few errors.	Could benefit from structural changes but generally conveys meaning sufficiently, despite some errors in usage.	Structures text poorly and/or uses language that sometimes impedes meaning due to errors in usage or poor syntax.	

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[2] For papers that do not mention or cite sources.

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