

A Process for Assessing and Improving Business Writing at the MBA Level

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Assurance of learning continues to be a hot topic in higher education. Both accreditation agencies and employers are asking a key question: Are we graduating students who actually have the knowledge and skills that we promise and that the marketplace demands (Martell & Caldron, 2005; Suskie, 2004)? At the graduate level, employers are expecting MBA students to graduate with a high level of “soft skills” in addition to a command of the traditional basics, such as finance, marketing, and strategy. Indeed, communication skills and the ability to work well within a team are the top-ranked attributes sought by corporate recruiters (Alsop, 2002).

Within the topic of communication, the lack of effective writing skills continues to be a major source of complaint by MBA recruiters (Alsop, 2004; Butler, 2007), and graduate faculty often complain that students do not meet expectations in professional writing (Demast, 2008; Grinols & Waller, 2010). One employer on our advisory board summed up the situation during a curriculum-review meeting:

I’m constantly surprised by the unreadable memos and e-mails I receive from employees with MBA degrees. They may be great with spreadsheets, but some of them can’t write even a simple paragraph that is clear, concise, and grammatically correct. You can have the greatest ideas in the world, but they’re no good to your company if you can’t express them clearly and persuasively.

Given the expectation in the marketplace for MBA graduates to have strong communication skills, the School of Business at Clayton State University determined to give extra attention to the teaching and assessment of communication skills when we developed our first MBA program in 2008. This particular case study focuses on one component of the program: our process for teaching and assessing business writing for an MBA program and providing prescriptive support for students with weak writing skills.

The school embeds the writing component in a required, boot-camp style, 5-day seminar titled *Communication and Leadership*. The course serves as the gateway to the MBA program, which provides a classic MBA curriculum with a concentration in supply chain management. The majority of students are mid-level managers with at least 4 years of managerial experience. The typical class size is 22. We deliver the MBA program in cohort format over a 20-month period. As the first course in the curriculum, *Communication and Leadership* equips the students with essential skills in critical thinking, writing, presenting, and working in collaborative teams – skills they will need to be successful in their other MBA courses, as well as the marketplace. The class is taught on a team basis by a full-time faculty member and a writing professional on adjunct status who takes the lead on the writing component of the class.

The writing component of the course consists of five process steps:

1. Diagnose: pre-class writing assignment graded for both content and correctness

2. Instruct: classroom activities and use of learning aids keyed to student weaknesses
3. Practice: team-based practice case with requirements similar to the writing assessment
4. Assess: formal seated writing assessment under controlled conditions
5. Remediate: post-course remediation and reassessment for students who do not pass the writing assessment

Analysis of the data generated by the writing assessment also provides insight for “closing the loop” actions to improve student learning in subsequent classes and feeds into the School’s AACSB Assurance of Learning process.

In this paper, we will briefly explain each of the process steps, review an example of “closing the loop,” and conclude with some thoughts on lessons learned and our plans for the future.

Diagnostic: Pre-class Writing Assignment

Since the *Communication and Leadership* course runs five consecutive days, students are required to complete a series of assignments prior to class. The first pre-class assignment, due via e-mail submission one week before class starts, requires a one-page written communication strategy analysis and a one-page memo in response to a case situation provided in the course text (Barrett, 2011). As part of the writing assignment, students are required to read three chapters in the text that address business-writing fundamentals. The instructions stress that the assignment will be graded rigorously for both content and writing, including grammar and punctuation. The emphasis on writing correctness in the instructions is important because many students, having been out of college for 4 or 5 years, need refreshing on writing mechanics. The pre-class writing assignment accounts for 50 grade points (10% of the course grade).

We return the graded papers, which include detailed comments, late morning on the first day of class after laying the foundation as to the importance of writing in today’s business environment. As a whole, the scores on the initial assignment are quite low (averaging 33 out of 50) and generally create quite a stir in the classroom. Our writing instructor does a wonderful job helping the students process through their emotions and refocusing the class on what needs to be done to improve their writing. Maintaining a positive and encouraging environment is a key to the process.

Instruction: Classroom Activities

After returning the graded papers, we have the students’ complete attention. MBA students tend to have a high need for achievement and are very competitive. Knowing the writing assessment is coming and given the marks on their first writing paper, they become very focused on what they need to do to improve their writing. The remainder of the first day and the next day are devoted to working interactively with the students on the writing issues revealed in the diagnostic assignment. Typical topics include:

- Using a communication strategy analysis template (a critical thinking tool which includes such elements as purpose, audience, and context)
- Employing economy of words and active voice
- Organizing and formatting content to create reader-friendly messages (use of patterns)

- Writing correctly (tips on typical grammar and punctuation problems)

The teaching is experiential, with practice activities, mini cases, games, and “check your understanding” quizzes. For example, we play a “conciseness game,” where students compete to reduce the number of words in an actual business e-mail, and the class votes to select the best in terms of clarity and conciseness (with prizes awarded). We also provide a series of “job aids,” rubrics, and reference materials for their class notebook.

Practice: A Team-Based Case Application

After reviewing writing fundamentals, the majority of the second day is devoted to a team-based case application in a persuasive problem-solution context. The case scenario, which we developed, deals with making a persuasive argument for a tuition reimbursement plan (TRP). We task students, who are working in the role of a regional Human Resources team, to create a communication strategy analysis and produce a one-page memo to the Sr. VP of HR that conforms to our rubric for a persuasive problem-solution message. The purpose is to make the initial case for the TRP in the memo and seek permission to conduct further research on the feasibility of implementing a TRP pilot program in the team’s region. Within this activity, we also teach team skills and processes, as well as review cost/benefit analysis and how to present supporting data within a memo.

We divide the project into two sessions, with the teams first conducting Internet-based research on TRPs and then constructing a communication strategy analysis. Each team presents their strategy analysis to the class for critique and discussion. The second team session is devoted to creation of the memo and again concludes with presentations and discussions.

At the conclusion of the exercise, we hand out and review a model strategy analysis and memo, again reviewing and reinforcing the principles of good writing. We point to the process and the deliverable as examples of what they will be expected to do for the writing assessment.

Assessment: A Seated-Writing Assessment under Controlled Conditions

The morning of the third course day is devoted to the writing assessment. Students use their own laptops. We hand out a case situation and give the students 1 hour and 45 minutes to write and submit a communication strategy analysis and one page memo. We allow the students to use the resources from the course for reference, just as if they were in their own office. The assessment counts for 100 grade points (20% of course grade). Figure 1 provides an example of a case situation and Figure 2 shows the instructions provided to the students. The writing instructor spends the remainder of the day and the next day grading the papers, using the rubric to insure consistency and providing detailed feedback on each paper. After grading each paper, she completes an assessment form (see Appendix A for example). The second instructor reviews papers that receive a score of less than 70% (passing grade) for validation.

Figure 1. Example Writing Assessment Case Situation

**National Manufacturing, Inc.
Making a Case for Additional Training**

You are the manager for the Atlanta plant of National Manufacturing, Inc. Recently, corporate management decided to purchase a new manufacturing system for installation in your plant. You are responsible for organizing the new section. The new technology requires 16 people to staff the section around-the-clock in three shifts. There will be four teams of four people each.

After the purchasing department ordered the equipment, you selected four senior workers to go to Germany for advanced training on operating the equipment. They are now attending the 3-week training and, according to the reports, are doing very well.

Corporate management wants you to use the four trained workers as supervisors, one for each team. The trained workers are to train their team members on the same skills that they learned in Germany. The training is critical to maintaining good quality of output. Due to the learning curve, untrained or partially trained workers are likely to average as high as a 5% rejection rate for output (compared to the norm of a 2%) during their first 4 weeks of operation. Trained workers are also critical to the service and maintenance of the equipment to keep it from breaking down. The workers selected to go to Germany for the advanced training were chosen because of their teaching skills, as well as their seniority and experience.

For several good reasons, you disagree with the decision to use these four trained experienced workers as supervisor/trainers in this way. First of all, the combination of supervising and training responsibilities, you feel, is too much for just one person to perform for a long period of time. There are reports to fill out, meetings to attend, work schedules to draw up and many other supervisory duties above and beyond the training. Second, the physical layout of the equipment is such that one person cannot keep track of what is going on at both ends and in the middle sufficiently well to ensure proper operator function. Third, the operator training is so complex that operators will need more attention simultaneously than one person can easily provide.

Your solution is to send four more of the 16 people to training in Germany just as soon as the first four finish. You want to delay opening the new section for 3 weeks until the second group returns. That way, each team will have two trained people to train the other two people on the team, the output quality can be kept to high levels, and the other problems you have described can be avoided.

It will cost about \$9,000 per person for the training. The 3-week delay in beginning operations may cost as much as \$50,000 per week. On the other hand, you know from experience that each percentage point of rejected output costs as much as \$1,300 per shift, or \$3,900 per day for the 6-day production week.

You decide that you must first write a memo to your boss, James Resnick, to request approval for the additional training. Mr. Resnick, based in St. Louis, is VP of Manufacturing. You have worked for Mr. Resnick for 3 years and have a good relationship with him. You know he is under pressure to control costs and to get the new system online as soon as possible. He is a no-nonsense, “bottom line” kind of guy who is always in a hurry. For example, he insists that all memos be limited to one page. You expect some resistance to your request, so you decide to use the **problem-solution persuasive pattern** to develop your memo.

Adapted from a case developed by C. Howard Ralph, Ph.D., Clayton State University

Figure 2 . Writing Assessment Instructions for National Manufacturing Case

Assignment Instructions:

1. Use your laptop and Microsoft Word to write a one-page communication strategy analysis and a one-page problem-solution persuasive memo to James Resnick.
2. You may use the strategy analysis template designed for problem-solution persuasive situations.
Remember to use complete sentences and proper punctuation / grammar in your strategy analysis.
3. Use the standard memo format.
4. Make the file name your last name, first initial with the letters WA (e.g., **SmithG WA**).
5. Submit your document as an e-mail attachment to the following instructor addresses:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
6. Include the words **MGMT 6100 WA Green** in the subject line of your e-mail.
7. Time limit: 105 minutes
8. Suggested time allocation:
 - a. Strategy Analysis – 40 minutes
 - b. Memo – 50 minutes
 - c. Final Proofing and Editing – 15 minutes

Grading Criteria:

1. Point value: 100 points
2. Deductions: 2 points for each content or writing error based on the rubric for problem-solution persuasive messages
3. This assignment also serves as the official School of Business writing assessment for the MBA program. For students who do not achieve 70 out of 100 points (70%), we provide tutorial support and require you to take a second assessment during the subsequent semester. You must pass the writing assessment to graduate from the MBA program.

Use the space below and the back of this page to prepare an outline or mind map. Return this sheet to the instructor after you submit your document.

Remediation: Feedback and Follow-up

We return the graded papers the afternoon of the final course day. The writing instructor then works the class through a model strategy analysis and memo, incorporating excerpts from the students' work, which provides opportunity for more praise and encouragement. The students return the papers at the end of the review.

At the conclusion of the course, students who do not pass the writing assessment meet individually with the writing instructor for an in-depth review of their paper and remediation needs. Over seven cohorts,

an average of three students per cohort (about 12%) have not passed the assessment. Students are required to complete a second writing assessment during the semester following the course.

Clayton State has a learning support center, but, due to budget issues, staffing for writing specialists is limited and scheduled primarily for daytime hours, which does not meet the scheduling needs for most MBA students. Therefore, we developed our own internal remediation process. To support students who do not pass the initial writing assessment, we established the following 3-step protocol:

1. Each student subscribes to a Web-based writing program called “Comfit” (Communication Fitness Online Learning Center – www.comfit.com). Comfit is an innovative program that provides a one-stop combination of diagnostic assessment and self-paced skill building through assigned practice drills. The program provides a variety of learning management tools that help focus and motivate independent study. Instructors can monitor student progress through an administration module.
2. After students complete their Comfit assignments, they make an appointment with one of the course instructors. During this one-on-one learning session, we review the work in Comfit, discuss strategies and tactics for improving writing, and administer a practice assessment case, which we grade interactively with the student, providing immediate feedback.
3. The student then schedules an appointment for a second administration of the formal writing assessment, using a different case.

If the student does not pass the second administration of the writing assessment, the next step is to contract with an external writing professional to work individually with the student over a semester, followed by a third administration. The process continues until the student passes the assessment (a requirement for graduation). To date, we have had only one student require more than three administrations. Table 1 provides a summary of the scores by administration and indicates significant improvement by the students over their baseline scores. For those who did not pass the assessment, the mean score is 55 points (out of 100), with 70 as the minimum pass rate. After remediation, for administration number two, the mean score is 77, a 40% improvement.

Assurance of Learning and “Closing the Loop”

The ability to write clearly, concisely, and correctly is a key learning outcome for our MBA program. Our writing assessment process generates excellent data that guides “closing the loop” adjustments to our course design and teaching practices and generates meaningful documentation for our AACSB assurance of learning requirements.

We designed our rubric for easy data entry by performance criteria into an Excel template. Appendix B presents example performance data on the writing mechanics portion of the assessment (We conduct similar analysis on the communication strategy analysis, which we present as a critical thinking outcome). Our target is 70% of students scoring satisfactory or better on every criterion. The report indicates some performance issues in the Awareness of the Reader and Punctuation criteria.

As indicated in Appendix B, only 41% of the students scored satisfactory or better on the Awareness of the Reader criterion we call “development / emphasis.” This score means the students were not providing adequate evidence and examples relevant to the reader’s needs. Specific to the problem-solution case situation, we found the students to be very weak in developing and presenting cost-

benefit data as part of their persuasive argument. In talking with the students, we found many, especially those who were not business majors as undergraduates, simply did not know how to use numbers in a persuasive context. Some had only limited knowledge of Excel. Our “closing the loop” response was to add an instructional module with a mini-case situation that allowed us to work the students through an example analysis and development of a simple presentation table. We also demonstrated and allowed the students to practice inserting and formatting the table in a memo. As we continued to refine this activity, performance improved in subsequent cohorts, with the most recent cohort averaging 73% on the “development / emphasis” criterion.

Table 1. Writing Assessment Scores after Remediation

Student	Writing Assessment Scores by Administration			
	One	Two	Three	Four
K.D.	62	82		
C.M.*	44	38	48	72
T.W.	62	58	74	
F.F.*	46	withdrew		
A.M.	60	76		
D.D.	66	88		
D.F.	30	92		
I.S.	50	88		
N.W.	56	82		
A.U.*	46	78		
V.B.	54	pending		
C.C.	60	76		
C.P.	60	74		
J.P.	64	74		
T.M.	54	88		
N.S.	66	94		
B.L.	44	76		
E.L.	58	76		
R.L.	56	70		
Z.L.	52	pending		

* = English Second Language (ESL) Student

Appendix B also shows below par performance on punctuation, especially in advanced usage such as semicolons. Improving punctuation is an on-going challenge. As part of our “closing the loop” activities, we continue to refine our handouts and increase the number of practice drills related to punctuation as time permits. But weak punctuation is a persistent problem with roots back to high school, exacerbated by limited feedback from college professors who insist on grading just content and not correctness. We continue to look for ideas on how to improve the situation.

Lessons Learned / Future Plans

Serving as the gateway to our MBA program, *Communication and Leadership* is a unique and challenging course. Covering a full semester of work in five straight days, supplemented by Web-based assignments,

makes for an intense experience for both students and instructors. As we have evolved the course over multiple cohorts, we believe we have learned some useful insights about teaching and assessing writing at the MBA level:

1. The students need the instruction. For some, their skills are simply rusty, others come from undergraduate disciplines that did not emphasize business-style writing, and some simply didn't learn the fundamentals.
2. Don't be apologetic about having to spend time on writing. At the beginning of the course, make a strong case for the career importance of writing clearly, concisely, and correctly in today's hyper-competitive environment. For example, we emphasize the issue of time. Everyone is swimming in information overload. No boss has the time to read an e-mail sentence twice for understanding, and grammatical errors not only slow the reader down, but also cast doubt on the writer's competence. We share examples from our corporate experience of poorly written e-mails, blogs, and memos and the business problems they caused. We quote research on income levels related to writing skills. Be passionate about the importance of good writing.
3. Follow a process that gets their attention and holds them accountable. Our model of diagnosis, instruction, practice with feedback, assessment, and remediation is one approach.
4. Focus your instruction. When faced with such a wide range of writing and grammar competencies, it is impossible to meet all the student needs within a 5 day period. Our approach is to determine the 12 most common errors in the group and provide instruction to correct those areas. We affectionately call this material The Deadly Dozen.
5. Carve out one-on-one time for your worst-case students. We seek out the students with major writing issues, provide additional support materials, and look for opportunities to deliver private tutoring sessions before and after class and even during breaks.
6. Replicate the process across all course sections. We now deliver our MBA in multiple locations and start three new cohorts at different times during the year. We have a second instructional team, professor and adjunct, that follows the same learning plan so all MBA cohorts receive the same entry-level experience. The four of us are now a collaborative team, working together to continuously improve the course.
7. Close the loop. Use the assessment data to improve the learning. We believe the assessment process and analysis of learning data have made us better teachers.

As we look to the future, we have two major issues we need to address. The first is increasing enrollment of English Second Language (ESL) students due to student exchange agreements. Our timed assessment process is especially challenging to ESL students. We hope to engage an ESL specialist to provide the support needed, both pre-course and, when required, during the remediation process.

The second issue is lack of reinforcement of business-writing fundamentals in subsequent MBA courses. This coming year, we plan to work with at least two professors that have formal writing assignments in their courses. Our purpose is to encourage them to allocate some grade points to writing clarity, conciseness, and correctness and to involve them in developing a simplified version of our writing rubric tailored to their content. Our capstone strategy course already requires multiple strategy analysis papers and allocates 10 grade points out of 50 to writing for each paper. So our goal is to fill in the interim space in the curriculum with one or two additional courses that will reinforce good writing practices.

In conclusion, even though the course is intense, exhausting, and even stressful for the students, we've received rave reviews in our course and instructor evaluations. The common "boot camp" experience helps the students bond as a cohort. The emphasis on the fundamentals – critical thinking, writing, presenting, and teamwork – gives them confidence as they begin their regular semester MBA courses the following week. It's interesting to note, that in the open-ended feedback portion of the course evaluation, the writing portion of the course receives the most positive mentions. Here are a few representative student comments in response to the question about strong points of the course:

- The specifics of grammar/punctuation. Everything taught will be a valuable tool that I can use daily.
- The rubrics that provide a correct format to follow. They are tools I can take with me.
- Grammar boot camp. All of the collaborative learning exercises were excellent.
- The grammar review/study was excellent. How did we all ever get by without it in the past?
- Communication strategy analysis. "You-Attitude."
- I like the fact that we have such passionate instructors and that they will do all they can to help us. Even though I didn't pass the writing assessment, I feel great knowing that CSU offers help in that area.
- The grammar lessons were very beneficial. We really need this instruction to become efficient leaders.
- This was one of the best courses I have ever taken! For MBA students, effective communication is vital for being an effective leader. The writing assignments were the most effective tasks.
- The communication strategy is a device that I can put to use immediately! The grammar tools (such as the Deadly Dozen) are great.
- The highlight of the course for me was understanding how important grammar is and the concept of "less is more."
- The grammar mistakes do impact my leadership communication.
- The grammar corrections and writing concisely were valuable lessons. Even though it was hard to acknowledge, I had areas that needed improvement; it was important to know.

Comments like these make all the hard work worthwhile.

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Appendix A

Figure 3: CSU School of Business MBA Writing Assessment Rubric

Name: _____ Assignment: Writing Assessment: Case Situation – Problem-Solution Persuasive Memo Date: _____

Performance Element	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Communication Strategy Analysis			
✓ Problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not provide clear definition of problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides clear definition of problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides clear definition of problem and identifies negative effect(s) on organization
✓ Purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not provide correct statement of purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides correct statement of purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides correct statement of purpose and adds clarifying information
✓ Audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify correct target audience <u>or</u> does not describe audience characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies correct target audience <u>and</u> describes at least <u>one</u> characteristic that may influence the message	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies correct target audience and describes <u>multiple</u> characteristics that may influence the message
✓ Context	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify feasible contextual factors that could influence the message	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies at least <u>two</u> contextual factors that could influence the message	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies <u>multiple</u> contextual variables that could influence the message
✓ Message	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not provide a summary of the message, or does not describe what the audience should do. Does not or incorrectly identifies organizing pattern for the message	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides a <u>one</u> sentence summary of the message, describes what the audience should do, and identifies appropriate organizing pattern for the message	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides a detailed summary of the message, describes what the audience should do, and identifies appropriate organizing pattern for the message
✓ Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies <u>less than three</u> information items necessary for audience to make decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Lists <u>at least three</u> items of information necessary for the audience to make decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides <u>four or more</u> items of information necessary for the audience to make a decision
✓ Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Identifies <u>only one or no</u> correct benefits from the point of view of the target audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Lists <u>at least two</u> correct benefits from the point of view of the target audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Lists <u>three or more</u> correct benefits from the point of view of the target audience
✓ Objections	<input type="checkbox"/> Lists <u>only one or no</u> objections <u>or</u> does not identify strategies for overcoming	<input type="checkbox"/> Lists <u>at least two</u> objections <u>and</u> identifies strategies for overcoming the objections	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides <u>three or more</u> potential objections and identifies strategies for overcoming
Awareness of the Reader			
✓ Development / emphasis	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient use of evidence, examples, and points of emphasis relevant to the reader	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses sufficient evidence, examples, and points of emphasis relevant to the reader	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses evidence, examples, and points of emphasis most relevant to the reader
✓ Diction (word choice)	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses words inappropriate to context and reader's knowledge; negative emphasis	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses words generally appropriate to context and reader's knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Selects words appropriate to context and reader's knowledge
✓ Bias-free language	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses biased language: sexist, racist, agist	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoids biased language	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoids biased language and builds goodwill

Performance Element	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pattern ✓ Coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does not follow the pattern for problem/solution persuasive message <input type="checkbox"/> Provides little connection of ideas or continuity from point to point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Generally follows the pattern for problem/solution message (defines problem, explains solution, asks for action) <input type="checkbox"/> Provides some connection of information (or ideas) within and between paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follows the pattern for problem/solution pattern, including all eight check points <input type="checkbox"/> Provides clear and consistent connection of information within and between paragraphs
Format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Document format / design ✓ Spelling, abbreviations, numbers, symbols, caps, hyphens, and italics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses unacceptable page format and design <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits frequent misspellings and/or errors related to numbers, symbols, caps, hyphens, and italics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses acceptable format and page design <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits no more than <u>three</u> different misspellings, and/or errors related to numbers, symbols, caps, hyphens, and italics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses advanced format and attractive design <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits no misspellings and/or errors related to numbers, symbols, caps, hyphens, and italics
Punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Basic: commas, apostrophe, and end punctuation ✓ Advanced: semicolon, colon, dash, quotation marks, brackets, ellipses, and parentheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Makes more than three punctuation errors <input type="checkbox"/> Uses no advanced punctuation or uses incorrectly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Makes no more than <u>three</u> punctuation errors <input type="checkbox"/> If an advanced punctuation mark is used, it is used appropriately and correctly most of the time in the context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Makes only an occasional punctuation error <input type="checkbox"/> Uses advanced advance punctuation marks purposefully and meaningfully
Sentence Structure (Clarity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completeness (fragments, run-ons, comma splices, omitted words) ✓ Grammar & usage (subject-verb agreement, pronoun forms, and verb forms) ✓ Patterns (coordination, subordination, parallelism, and modifier placement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits so many fragments, run-ons, commas splices, and word omissions that meaning is frequently unclear or confused <input type="checkbox"/> Makes more than three errors in grammar or usage <input type="checkbox"/> Uses only simple sentences or exhibits such faulty use of patterns that meaning is frequently unclear or illogical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writes in complete sentences and has only an occasional sentence completeness error or word omission <input type="checkbox"/> Makes no more than <u>three</u> errors in grammar or usage <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits some use of coordination, subordination, parallelism, and modifier placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writes grammatically complete sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits only an occasional error or questionable practice in grammar or usage <input type="checkbox"/> Uses coordination, subordination, parallelism, and modifier placement to show appropriate relationships among ideas
Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tone ✓ Conciseness ✓ Active voice / strong verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conveys condescending or rude tone <input type="checkbox"/> Uses many unnecessary words <input type="checkbox"/> Uses passive voice and weak linking verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conveys a generally professional tone <input type="checkbox"/> Uses an occasional unnecessary word <input type="checkbox"/> Uses active voice and strong verbs most of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conveys “You-attitude” <input type="checkbox"/> Avoids unnecessary words <input type="checkbox"/> Uses active voice and strong verbs

Performance Element	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
		the time	throughout

Appendix B

MBA Written Communication: Summary of Assessment Results								
Course Number	MGMT 6100	Instructors:	May / Hebble	Location	P'Tree City			
Semester	Fall 2008	Section:	Cohort 3	Class Size	22			
Performance Element	Frequency			Percentage			Overall S+G	Satisfactory ?
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Outstanding	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good		
AWARENESS OF THE READER								
Development/emphasis	13	3	6	59%	14%	27%	41%	No
Diction(word choice)	0	2	20	0%	9%	91%	100%	Yes
Bias-free language	0	2	20	0%	9%	91%	100%	Yes
Sub-Total	13	7	46	20%	11%	70%	80%	Yes
ORGANIZATION								
Pattern	0	5	17	0%	23%	77%	100%	Yes
Coherence	0	1	21	0%	5%	95%	100%	Yes
Sub-Total	0	6	38	0%	14%	86%	100%	Yes
FORMAT								
Document format/design	0	2	20	0%	9%	91%	100%	Yes
Spelling, abbreviations	1	15	6	5%	68%	27%	95%	Yes
Sub-Total	1	17	26	2%	39%	59%	98%	Yes
PUNCTUATION								
Basic: commas, apostrophe	4	13	5	18%	59%	23%	82%	Yes
Advanced: semicolon, colon, dash	8	7	7	36%	32%	32%	64%	No
Sub-Total	12	20	12	27%	45%	27%	73%	Yes
SENTENCE STRUCTURE								
Completeness	0	17	5	0%	77%	23%	100%	Yes
Grammar & Usage	2	6	14	9%	27%	64%	91%	Yes
Patterns	0	10	12	0%	45%	55%	100%	Yes
Sub-Total	2	33	31	3%	50%	47%	97%	Yes
STYLE								
Tone	0	2	20	0%	9%	91%	100%	Yes
Conciseness	0	2	20	0%	9%	91%	100%	Yes
Active voice / strong verbs	0	0	22	0%	0%	100%	100%	Yes
Sub-Total	0	4	62	0%	6%	94%	100%	Yes