Writing Enriched Curriculum Program

Creating a Culture of Writing Instruction at OU

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Presentation to OU Assessment Forum
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The WEC Team

- 4 faculty from the Expository Writing Program
- Part of the Academic Engagement unit
- Affiliated with the Writing Center

**Mandate:** Help faculty develop writing instruction in their classes and major curricula
Past and Current Clients

Construction Science
Computer Science
Music Theory
Communication
Meteorology
Geology
Given ideal time and resources, would you teach/assign more writing in your classes?

Assign More Writing

- Yes: 72%
- No: 28%

More Time Teaching Writing

- Yes: 61%
- No: 39%
What factors prevent you from assigning more writing? (Qualitative)

- Time Constraints: 100%
- Grading Time: 60%
- Need to Cover Subject: 40%
- Class Size: 40%
- Range of Skills: 20%
Premises of the WEC Program

Premise 1:

Only practitioners of a given discipline can effectively teach students to write in that discipline.
Premises of the WEC Program

**Premise 2:**

Students learn writing in their major discipline most effectively when writing skills are taught, reinforced, and assessed throughout their major curriculum.
Premises of the WEC Program

**Premise 3:**

The curriculum decisions necessary to integrate writing into a major should be made, implemented, and overseen collectively by the faculty in that major.
What is a Writing Enriched Curriculum?

An overview of the WEC process
Step 1: Administer Surveys

- Poll students and faculty about writing standards within their major

- Can also poll Alumni and Professional Affiliates about writing expectations within associated professions

- Survey results are publishable under a standing IRB
Faculty: How important do you consider the following writing abilities to writing in your discipline?

- Analyze Data
- Structure Essays
- Describe Processes
- Summarize Ideas
- Use Terminology
- Synthesize Information
- Identify/Engage Problems
- Refine through Revision
- Argue a Position
- Discuss Caveats
- Use Appropriate Grammar

Choose one of the following:
- Essential
- Important
- Useful
- Irrelevant
Faculty: At what point do you believe students should develop proficiency in the following abilities?

- Use Appropriate Grammar
- Argue a Position
- Structure Essays
- Describe Processes
- Summarize Ideas
- Use Terminology
- Analyze Data
- Synthesize Information
- Refine through Revision
- Discuss Caveats
- Identify/Engage Problems

Before Major: 0
1000-level: 1.5
2000-level: 3
3000-level: 4.5
4000-level: 6
Grad level: 7.5
Faculty: Overall, how would you rate your majors’ proficiency in the following abilities?
Students: How would you rate your proficiency in the following abilities?

- Analyze Data
- Describe Processes
- Summarize Ideas
- Use Terminology
- Structure Essays
- Synthesize Information
- Identify/Engage Problems
- Refine through Revision
- Argue a Position
- Discuss Caveats
- Use Appropriate Grammar

- Excellent
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Extremely Unsatisfactory
- Unsure
Step 2: Create Course Map

### Curriculum Map for Writing Instruction in the Music Theory Course Sequence

#### Fundamental Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Structures I</th>
<th>Structures II</th>
<th>Structures III</th>
<th>Structures IV</th>
<th>F&amp;A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Priority Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe processes, objects, findings, environments</td>
<td>I, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Priority Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use appropriate grammar</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R, A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporate visuals (charts, diagrams, annotated musical examples)</td>
<td>I, A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>R, A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Intermediate Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Structures I</th>
<th>Structures II</th>
<th>Structures III</th>
<th>Structures IV</th>
<th>F&amp;A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Priority Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze and/or evaluate ideas, texts, or events</td>
<td>I, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and refine texts over multiple drafts</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I, A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Priority Skills</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrapolate complex patterns from basic observations</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
<td>R, A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3: Develop Writing Instruction Across Major

- Identify key classes for writing instruction
- Help individual instructors develop teaching, assignment, and grading strategies
- Train faculty and GTAs to teach and assess writing
Low vs. High Stakes Writing Assignments

**High Stakes**

- Significant impact on grade

- Generally large and/or complex (e.g. essays)

- Assess multiple skills used in conjunction

- Require significant preparation and feedback

- Often depend on skills learned in previous classes
Low vs. High Stakes Writing Assignments

Low Stakes

- Small impact on grade
- Generally short
- Assess one or two specific writing skills
- Require minimal preparation and feedback
- May be component of another assignment or exam