Writing Intensive Course Assessment

UNA Colleagues:

The following excerpt was posted to the Writing Program Administration list by Dr. Terry Zawacki at George Mason University. It is part of their writing assessment proposal. This is an interesting point for us to begin thinking about our expectations, how we assess writing and how we teach it in the context of our disciplines, particularly in Writing Intensive courses (Writing in the Disciplines).

Cheers,

Rob

To ensure development of writing competence, Mason has several requirements in place: English 100/101 (first-year composition), English 302 (advanced writing in the disciplines), and a Writing Intensive (WI) course in the major. The English composition requirements support writing in the disciplines and are part of the sequence of courses that make up Mason's Writing Across the Curriculum program. Students who successfully complete one or more writing-intensive courses in their major will be able to:

- analyze and synthesize course content using methods appropriate to the major;
- make reasoned, well-organized arguments with introductions, thesis statements, supporting evidence, and conclusions appropriate to the major;
- use credible evidence, to include, as applicable, data from credible primary and/or secondary sources, integrated and documented accurately according to styles preferred in the major;
- employ rhetorical strategies suited to the purpose(s) and audience(s) for the writing, to include appropriate vocabulary, voice, tone, and level of formality;
- produce writing that employs the organizational techniques, formats, and genres (print and/or digital) typical in the major and/or workplace;
- produce writing that demonstrates proficiency in standard edited American English, including correct grammar/syntax, sentence structure, word choice, and punctuation.

See next page for writing assessment checklist.

Mason Writing Assessment Checklist

Compiled from Criteria Included on Discipline-Specific Rubrics Developed between 2001-2007

Writing Assessment Criteria and Elements	Level of Competence		
Audience/Purpose/Context ☐ Demonstrates understanding of how knowledge is constructed in discipline/context ☐ Uses appropriate strategies for intended audience/purpose ☐ Demonstrates awareness of conventions for context/genre ☐ Uses appropriate vocabulary/voice/register (level of formality) ☐ Follows ethical standards ☐ Other: _____	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory
Content ☐ Meets requirements of the assignment ☐ Demonstrates understanding of the topic/discipline ☐ Uses correct methods to analyze data/information/arguments ☐ Uses appropriate examples/evidence/data to support arguments ☐ Synthesizes information/data from multiple sources ☐ Includes diverse/global perspectives ☐ Other: _____	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory
Organization/Structure ☐ Includes an introduction and appropriate conclusion ☐ Has a thesis statement and/or clear topic sentences ☐ Has appropriate transitions between ideas/arguments ☐ Demonstrates a logical "flow" of ideas/arguments ☐ Uses appropriate headings and sub-headings ☐ Other: _____	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory
Sources/Evidence/Documentation ☐ Uses sufficient amount and quality of source material ☐ Uses sources appropriate to assignment/discipline (credible, relevant, current, etc.) ☐ Accurately cites and documents sources according to discipline-specific standards (e.g., APA style) ☐ Appropriately integrates/quotes/paraphrases/summarizes information from sources ☐ Other: _____	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory
Mechanics/Style (Sentence Level) ☐ Uses correct grammar/syntax/punctuation ☐ Uses correct and appropriate sentence structure ☐ Uses appropriate style/tone/word choice ☐ Shows evidence of proof-reading ☐ Other: _____	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory
Other Discipline-Specific Criteria ☐ Demonstrates strong critical thinking/reasoning abilities ☐ Demonstrates engagement in the topic/ideas ☐ Demonstrates original thinking/analysis ☐ Demonstrates appropriate creativity/personal voice ☐ Uses appropriate examples/illustrations/charts/hyperlinks to illustrate complex ideas ☐ Other:_____	More than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory