

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

General Education Task Force

Sub-Committee Members:

Elizabeth Zold, Joe Trefzger, Cara Rabe-
Hemp, Klaus Schmidt

Roles and Benefits of WAC

- ❑ Writing promotes learning and the construction of knowledge.
- ❑ Integration of writing and the writing process promotes student participation, and engages students as critical thinkers.
- ❑ Effective writing instruction integrates disciplines.
- ❑ The opportunity to write in every (or many) class(es) develops good writers.
- ❑ Only by practicing the thinking and writing conventions of an academic discipline will students begin to communicate effectively within that discipline.
- ❑ Retrieved from: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Science_WAC_2_3_264454_7.pdf

Writing to Learn

- ▣ fosters critical thinking, requiring analysis and application, and other higher level thinking skills
- ▣ uses impromptu, short or informal writing tasks designed by the teacher to help students think through key concepts and ideas. Attention is focused on ideas rather than correctness of style, grammar or spelling. It is less structured than disciplinary writing.
- ▣ frequently uses journals, logs, micro-themes, responses to written or oral questions, summaries, free writing, notes and other writing assignments that align to learning ideas and concepts.

Writing-To-Demonstrate-Knowledge

- ▣ students synthesize information and explain their understanding of concepts and ideas
- ▣ students write for an audience with a specific purpose
- ▣ Retrieved from: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Science_WAC_2_3_264454_7.pdf

Model 1: Status Quo+

- ▣ This model is corroborated with the appended NSSE data.
- ▣ Based on the assessment data, students believe that the writing instruction at ISU is good ... better than the national average (see NSSE).

Model 1: Status Quo+

- ▣ Advantages: No structural change required, No major change in costs.
- ▣ Disadvantages: Perception of current model on campus is rather negative. While students believe their writing has improved, instructors who grade their writing believe differently (FSSE).

Model 1: Status Quo+

- ▣ Suggestion/Needs: Enhance and advertise additional use of existing resources such as Visor Center.
- ▣ If all classes were to take advantage of the existing resources, those resources would need to be enhanced in order to accommodate students.
- ▣ Provide support for faculty (such as better/more effective grading techniques).
- ▣ Provide incentives for faculty to add more writing (ASPT?).

Model 2: English++

- ▣ This model would require the 'burden' of writing on the Department of English by adding additional English course(s) such as ENG 145 as requirements for General Education.

Model 2: English++

Advantages:

Professionals will teach writing class, students get writing experience in early college career, relatively easy to assess, relatively easy to measure direct learning outcome and enhancement of writing skills.

Disadvantages:

The Department of English will assume the major responsibility on campus for writing skills development.

Writing will/may not be continued after the courses in the English department are finished,

departments across campus may believe that Department of English should be responsible for all teaching of writing on campus.

Students in their junior and senior years may not get enough writing experience in their respective disciplines.

Students will receive only limited discipline specific writing experience.

Model 2: English++

- ▣ Suggestions/Needs:

Major funding will be necessary specifically for the department of English.

Students should be required to take an additional General Education course and/or the General Education curriculum should be expanded by one course.

Model 3: Writing+

- ▣ This model would require 'writing intensive' courses throughout the curriculum in both the GenEd curriculum and also the major curriculum.
- ▣ Courses will be designated by a "w" in the student catalog.
- ▣ Does not have to be the same course all the time (could be marked by course or by instructor)
- ▣ Could include writing intensive independent studies and/or honors projects.

Model 3: Writing+

Advantages:

Students learn that they need to be writing throughout their entire college career, not only during their early years at ISU.

Because students will get continuous writing practice, their writing skills will no doubt have a better chance of improving.

Writing in both discipline specific and more general curricula will be encouraged, broadening the students' writing experience.

Students will learn through practical experience how to adapt their writing for new genres, disciplines, and situations.

Disadvantages:

Some funds in training of teachers to become more effective in designated courses will be necessary. Faculty may not be qualified/interested.

Model 3: Writing+

Suggestions/Needs:

- ▣ What process is needed to decide what should and what should not be a 'writing intensive' course?
- ▣ What will be the reward system for faculty that teach one of those courses?
- ▣ What will be the training for those faculty members?

Conclusion

- ▣ All proposed models have advantages and disadvantages. Some of the challenges relate to finances and academic structure, others however, to political realities that go beyond the scope of the charge of this committee.
- ▣ All models have opportunities, some may be more cost effective than others, some may promise better learning outcomes and yet others may have the potential to communicate the significance of better writing to faculty, staff, administrators and ultimately to students.

Recommendations

- ▣ Resources for faculty and students will be necessary for any of the proposed models.
- ▣ Incentives need to be created for faculty to include writing into their courses.
- ▣ Writing+ Model has had the most consistent support in feedback from the campus forums and general education committee.