

Assessment Report
General Education Category 1c: Writing Intensive
2006-2007

Executive Summary

Assessment of General Education Category 1c: Writing Intensive took place during 2006-2007. The General Education Category Course Instructor Group (GECCIG), which conducted the assessment, was genuinely concerned and disappointed at the lack of quality in the samples read. The GECCIG determined that MSU students in 1c courses are, by and large, not succeeding at “college-level” writing.

Category 1c was first assessed in 2001-2002, and the second assessment generally followed the procedures and recommended changes from the first assessment. A random selection of 104 student essays was collected during Fall semester from the seventy-six sections of 1c courses offered; the degree of cooperation from departments offering 1c courses was high. The GECCIG was convened in January, 2007. The members discussed and revised the rubric, were trained in the rubric, practiced scoring some of the collected student essays, and when the members felt reasonably well calibrated, particularly while scoring essays outside their individual disciplinary areas, they scored a sample (45) of the essays collected.

The goals and objectives of Category 1c, which is MSU’s addition to the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, are as follows:

Part C: Writing Intensive

Goal: Students will continue to develop skills taught in Composition, applying them in the context of a particular discipline.

Students will be able to

- (a) use writing to explore and gain a basic familiarity with the questions, values and analytical or critical thinking methods used in the discipline;

- (b) locate, analyze, evaluate, and use source material or data in their writing in a manner appropriate to intended audiences (popular or within the discipline)

In keeping with these objectives, the GECCIG scored each student essay on three measures: Organization and Development, Supporting Evidence, and Writing Skills. The previous 1c assessment GECCIG recommended revising the rubric to a 4-point scale, which was done (see attached rubric). A score of 1 indicated a lack of skills (Beginning); a score of 2 the presence of some skills, but still missing essentials (Developing); a score of 3 solid possession of the basics (Accomplished), and a score of 4 confidence and superior application (Exemplar). Each essay was scored by two raters on this four point

scale for the three measures. If the scores of the raters varied by more than one point (e.g., a 1 and a 3) on any of the three measures, a third reader re-scored the essay on all three measures.

The sample of student essays scored represented the general distribution of all essays collected, which is to say, equal parts Biology; English and Humanities; and other courses from Allied Health and Nursing, Arts and Humanities, Education, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The previous GECCIG noted a wide disparity of kinds of writing in their sample; the present GECCIG received the desired concentration in final drafts (as opposed to journals and in-process writing). Nonetheless, it seemed to the raters that there was a disparity in the level of revision. A further unavoidable problem noted by the current GECCIG as well as the previous one was that raters felt “stretched” when “outside their academic area.” GECCIG members from Biology and Philosophy gave a short course to the other raters on such matters as the conventions for content in various parts of a lab report, what constitutes evidence, and how a writer conventionally deals with anomalous or contrary findings.

The average scores on the three measures are as follows:

Writing Area Assessed	Mean	S.D.
Organization and Development	2.14	0.79
Supporting Evidence	2.01	0.79
Writing Skills	2.33	0.70
Average	2.15	0.79

All of these scores are in the lower half of the “developing” range (score of 2), which is to say, missing some essential elements. In the Organization and Development measure, only 45% of essays contained a sufficiently specific organizing thesis with well-developed supporting points that demonstrate familiarity with disciplinary methods or values (a score of 3 or higher). On the Supporting Evidence measure, only 31% demonstrated college-level skills in using evidence to support their points (a score of 3 or higher). In Writing Skills, 48% demonstrated command of academic writing conventions and addressed audience needs for context, purpose, and direction. The complete report summarizes in more detail the scores in each of these areas.

It is to be emphasized that the committee understands that “college level” writing represents a quantum leap from high school writing in terms of a student’s individual responsibility to manage the writing task, to conduct appropriate research, to analyze and evaluate sources, and to use them productively to make independent arguments. And the student’s general skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking must all develop further in the more specialized contexts of disciplinary knowledge. Our writing-intensive requirement sets high expectations by asking students to write for a specific audience, taking into account the values and methods of reasoning used in the course, a valuable skill that is said to distinguish college-level writing. If it can be assumed that students make significant gains in developing writing skills after they finish writing intensive courses, maybe by the time they graduate they would be prepared to write in subsequent careers and future study. But students will certainly not be prepared if they graduate with

this level of skills. The results were so consistently under expectations--(only two essays received even 3 (of a possible 6) scores of 4, the highest score) that the committee felt—to a person—that a systematic revision of the way in which we conceptualize and deliver writing instruction is in order.

Accordingly, the committee makes the following recommendations:

1. The writing intensive requirement should be restructured into a three tier approach:

--English 101 should be a pre- or a co-requisite for writing-intensive courses, as is implied in the goal statement..

--One writing-intensive course should remain a general education requirement.

--The second writing-intensive course requirement should be shifted to a graduation requirement. This requirements should be fulfilled in upper division courses in the major or in advanced writing courses selected by the major to fulfill this purpose.

2. There should be training and incentives--including course caps of 15 as recommended by the Association of Departments of English (ADE) and a load-multiplier (4 credits in load for a 3-credit course)--for teachers of writing-intensive courses. Training should include discussion of the rubric as well as course materials and methods, particularly methods to improve revision.

3. Writing Intensive courses should be part of a university-wide commitment to excellence in writing that should include a well-supported, university-wide Writing Center and more systematic attention to differing writing and language-learning problems of students, including placement; allowing the combination of English 100 and 101 to count for the general education writing component of 1c as well as the current combination of 101 and a writing intensive course; and other improvements as suggested by a newly convened advisory group, including CAS, LLAS, other faculty and representatives from relevant recruiting, retention, and student support groups.

4. The GECCIG Assessment Process should continued to be updated. The final report details several suggestions for publicizing and collecting data.

Submitted by:

GECCIG 1c, 2006-2007

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Assessment Report General Education Category 1c: Writing Intensive 2006-2007

Background

General Education Writing-Intensive courses (Category 1c) were last assessed in 2001-2002. In keeping with the General Education assessment rotation, such courses were again the subject of assessment in 2006-2007.

The Writing-Intensive requirement is an MSU addition to Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, which is typically satisfied with composition and speech courses across the state. This is the first year of MSU's two-course writing-intensive requirement. The goals and objectives of the writing-intensive requirement are articulated as follows:

Part C: Writing Intensive

Goal: Students will continue to develop skills taught in Composition, applying them in the context of a particular discipline.

Students will be able to

(a) use writing to explore and gain a basic familiarity with the questions, values and analytical or critical thinking methods used in the discipline;

(b) locate, analyze, evaluate, and use source material or data in their writing in a manner appropriate to intended audiences (popular or within the discipline)

The full goal for General Education Category 1 and for Parts A (English 101) and C appear in Appendix 1.

Assessment Procedure

GECCIG Members

The General Education Category Course Instructor Group (GECCIG) was composed of faculty who teach writing intensive courses or library research and who volunteered or were recruited for the assessment task. Kellian Clink (from General Education Sub-Meet and Confer) convened a meeting of all 1c instructors in September, 2006. Anne O'Meara was asked to chair the GECCIG. Cathryn Bailey (Philosophy), Kellian Clink (Library), Bill Dyer (English), Gretta Handke (History), and Bob Sorensen (Biology) also agreed to serve. GECCIG members were paid a nominal sum for their work.

Collection of Data

Seventy-six sections of writing-intensive courses from sixteen departments were offered in Fall, 2006 (See Appendix 2). Department chairs were notified and appointed people within their departments to supervise collection of data. Sample letters to instructors explaining the assessment procedures were sent to these collectors (See

Appendix 3.) Academic Affairs provided several copy cards, which were distributed around campus for collectors to use. Instructors were asked to select an assignment that would best demonstrate the category 1c competencies and then to copy the work on that assignment of any student whose Tech ID number ended in 3. Ungraded and unidentified copies were then forwarded to Anne O'Meara in December, 2006.. About half of the 104 essays forwarded were randomly selected for assessment, and others were used for rater training. The selected essays mirrored the distribution of the collected pool: approximately 1/3 were from Biology; 1/3 were from English and Humanities; and 1/3 were from other courses in Arts and Humanities, Social and Behavioural Sciences, Education, and Allied Health and Nursing.

Rubric

Among the recommendations of the 2001-2 GECCIG was the modification of the rubric from a three to a four-point scale in keeping with assessment best practice guidelines. The 2001-2 GECCIG also suggested revision to make the language of the rubric more applicable across the disciplines. O'Meara (in consultation with two other faculty) revised the rubric per these recommendations and brought it to the training session. Discussion followed and a further revision was made. The 2006-2007 rubric appears below. (See Appendix 4 for the 2006-7 Rubric and Appendix 5 for 2001-2002 rubric).

Training and Rating

The GECCIG gathered on January 11, 2007 for training and assessment. Faculty discussed the rubric prior to applying it independently to essays from various disciplines. Each essay was scored on three dimensions: Organization and Development, Supporting Evidence, and Writing Skills. Scores ranged from 1 (beginning to develop skills) to 4 (exemplar). Scores for each of the three areas of the rubric were compared for each sample essay and differences were discussed. Faculty from the various disciplines helped the other faculty understand how the rubric applied to essays from their college. Faculty practiced repeated essays in disciplines where more calibration was needed. (Since the majority of faculty were not from natural science disciplines, reading the biology lab reports required some guided practice).

The 2001-2002 GECCIG also recommended awareness of Category 1A objectives (these were included in the rater's training materials) and better planning so that greater consistency and co-ordination between the assessments of the two categories would result. O'Meara conferred with Randall McClure, who is chair of the assessment effort for Category 1A, during revision of the rubric; a 4-point rubric is also used for Category 1A. McClure also attended the rater training session and helped discuss the rubric and show its connection with the rubric used in assessing essays for Category 1A.

During the assessment itself, each essay was read by two faculty members who independently scored it on each of the three areas. If the raters' scores for any one of these three areas differed by more than 1 point (e.g., a 1 and a 3), the essay was rescored in all three areas by a third reader.

Assessment Results

Findings

Scores for each essay were compiled. An essay could receive from one to four points on each of the three Writing Areas, and therefore a possible 12 points in all. The average total score was 6.48. The average ratings on the three individual areas were:

Table 1: Average Essay Rating

Writing Area Assessed	Mean	S.D.
Organization and Development	2.14	0.79
Supporting Evidence	2.01	0.79
Writing Skills	2.33	0.70
Average	2.15	0.79

The Supporting Evidence was the most problematic area followed by Organization and Development of ideas. In all three categories, student essays averaged in the lower half of the “Developing” (score of 2) category of the rubric.

Scores for each of the three Writing Areas individually are tallied below.

Table 2: Organization and Development (N=45)

Rating & Definition	Number	Percent.
“1” Beginning: Does not have skills	4	9
“2” Developing: Has some skills, still needs some essentials	21	47
“3” Accomplished: Has foundation, basics	17	38
“4” Exemplar: Confident in skills; applies them very well	3	7
Total	45	100

Forty-five percent of student papers contained a sufficiently specific organizing thesis with well developed supporting points that addressed questions and values or demonstrated methods of critical thinking or analysis related to the field.

Table 3: Supporting Evidence (N=45)

Rating & Definition	Number	Percent.
“1” Beginning: Does not have skills	9	20
“2” Developing: Has some skills, still needs some essentials	22	49
“3” Accomplished: Has foundation, basics	13	29
“4” Exemplar: Confident in skills; applies them very well	1	2
Total	45	100

Thirty-one percent of student papers demonstrated college-level skills of selecting and using evidence to support their points. In papers with lower scores, the relationship of evidence that was offered to the point it supported was not clear, or the evidence was not sufficiently analyzed, explained, or applied. Although this area also includes the use of

citation conventions, the raters did not lower scores for lack of citations when it appeared that common class texts were being used.

Table 4: Writing Skills (N=45)

Rating & Definition	Number	Percent.
“1” Beginning: Does not have skills	1	2
“2” Developing: Has some skills, still needs some essentials	22	49
“3” Accomplished: Has foundation, basics	20	44
“4” Exemplar: Confident in skills; applies them very well	2	4
Total	45	100

Forty-eight percent of student papers demonstrated command of academic writing conventions and addressed audience needs for context, purpose, and direction.

Inter-rater Reliability

The tables below show the scores on each of the three dimensions as scored by both raters of each essay. Overall, seven essays had to be read a third time because the score on at least one of the three Writing Areas differed by more than one point (e.g. 1 and 3). Four of these essays were from Biology, one from Psychology, and one from Creative Writing; a seventh was not scored by 2 of 3 raters because it was thought to be plagiarized.

Table 5: Inter-Rater Reliability of Organization and Development

Rater 1	Rater 2				Total
	Rating of “1”	Rating of “2”	Rating of “3”	Rating of “4”	
Rating of “1”	4	5	1	0	10
Rating of “2”	7	8	9	0	24
Rating of “3”	0	1	7	2	10
Rating of “4”	0	0	1	0	1
Total	11	14	18	2	45

The average score on all 45 essays for organization and development was 2.17. Only three essays received one score of 4 on organization and development; no essays received scores of 4 from both raters. However, 13 essays received one score of 1 and four additional essays received scores of 1 from both raters. The scores that are in bold face (forming a diagonal down the table) represent perfect agreement between the raters. Scores were perfectly matched on 19 of 45 essays (42%). Only one of the essays had to be read a third time because the scores on Organization and Development differed by more than one point.

In 2001-2002, using a three-point rubric, the average for this area was 2.10. Scores were perfectly matched 55% of the time.

Table 6: Inter-Rater Reliability on Supporting Evidence

		Rater 2				Total
Rater 1	Rating of "1"	Rating of "2"	Rating of "3"	Rating of "4"		
Rating of "1"	8	5	1	0	14	
Rating of "2"	4	11	4	0	19	
Rating of "3"	2	1	8	1	12	
Rating of "4"	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	14	17	13	1	45	

The average score for Supporting Evidence was 2.03. One essay received one score of four; no essays received two scores of four. However, 12 essays received a score of 1 on supporting evidence while an additional 8 received two scores of 1. Perfect matches, again denoted by bold face on the table's diagonal, occurred on 27 of 45 essays (60%). The scores on three essays differed by more than one point and were re-read by a third reader. Overall, however, the area was the highest in terms of inter-rater reliability, perhaps reflecting significant discussion during the training period about what constituted supporting evidence and what constituted "use" of it.

In 2001-2002, the average score was 1.94 on a three-point scale. This was the lowest area of inter-rater reliability in the 2001-2002 assessment where a perfect match occurred in 51% of scores.

Table 7: Inter-Rater Reliability of Writing Skills

		Rater 2				Total
Rater 1	Rating of "1"	Rating of "2"	Rating of "3"	Rating of "4"		
Rating of "1"	1	3	0	0	4	
Rating of "2"	1	14	6	0	21	
Rating of "3"	4	6	8	1	19	
Rating of "4"	0	0	0	1	1	
Total	6	23	14	2	45	

The average score on this measure (writing ability) was 2.33. One essay received a score of four and another essay received a score of 4 on Writing Skills from both raters. Eight essays received one score of 1, and one essay received a score of one from both raters. A perfect match in scores occurred on 24 of 45 essays (53%). Scores on three essays differed by more than one point and had to be reread.

In 2001-2002, the average score was 1.98 on a three point scale. Perfect matches in scoring occurred on 59% of the essays.

Discussion

The GECCIG committee, on the basis of this year's assessment, has determined that MSU students, by and large, are not succeeding at "college-level" writing (as defined by scores of 3 on the rubric) and may be leaving MSU without effective writing skills.

The committee was genuinely concerned and disappointed at the lack of quality in the samples we read. The results were so consistently under expectations (only two essays received even three scores of 4 out of a possible six scores of 4 from the two raters on the three measures), that the committee felt—to a person—that a systematic revision of the way in which we conceptualize and deliver writing instruction is in order.

It is to be emphasized that the committee understands that “college-level” writing represents a quantum leap from high school writing in terms of student’s individual responsibility to manage the writing task, to conduct appropriate research, to analyze and evaluate sources and to use them productively to make arguments. And, in a volume dedicated to discussing the difficulties in transition from high school to college, writing faculty across the curriculum pointed to an ability to write for an audience as a defining difference between adolescent and college-level writing (Schorn 336-339). In our discussion, the committee also frequently returned to the interaction of writing, reading, and thinking in the development of any one of these skills. Our writing intensive requirement entails students writing, reading, and thinking as they engage the questions, values, and methods of analysis that are specific to various disciplines. In many ways, by asking general education students to engage in writing across disciplines we are asking the least experienced students to exhibit the broadest flexibility in writing, reading, and thinking skills; they must assemble evidence, create arguments, and address audiences in specific disciplines at the same time as they learn these skills at a more general level..

Certainly attaining college proficiency in writing, reading, and thinking is a process, which takes place gradually across much writing and thinking experience. If we were certain that students would continue to develop these skills beyond their general education writing-intensive course, perhaps scores of 2 would not be so disheartening. But graduating students with these scores are underprepared. The scores clearly point to a sustained need to develop more effective ways to teach students to frame and support arguments.

Recommendations

Because we value the skills that Writing Intensive courses are meant to foster and because these skills are central to student achievement and success, we recommend the following changes to improve delivery of and performance in these courses.:

1. The writing intensive requirement should be restructured into a three-tiered approach:

- English 101** should be a pre- or a co-requisite for writing-intensive courses.
- One writing-intensive course** should remain a general education requirement.
- The second writing-intensive course** requirement should be shifted to graduation requirement. This requirements should be fulfilled in upper division courses in the major or in advanced writing courses selected by the major to fulfill this purpose.

Rationale:

English 101: Although the current goals state that students in writing-intensive classes will “continue to develop skills taught in Composition,” English 101 is not a pre-requisite

for writing-intensive courses. Teachers face a grab bag of students with even more diversity than usual in their preparation for the writing-intensive elements of the course. Some students will have had English 101; others will not. If English 101 were a pre- or co-requisite, teachers of writing-intensive courses could assume introductory exposure to research methods and academic literacy. Currently, there is no coordinated effort to build on and advance writing skills. A discussion of the relationship between writing-intensive courses and English 101 is a first step. Writing faculty at the 101 and general education writing-intensive levels should work together to improve students' introduction to college-level writing.

Second writing-intensive course: The current writing intensive requirement works against resources. General education courses are often large and support department's ability to teach smaller courses in the major. Students, by definition, are being introduced to the discipline's values, questions, and methods. For the second writing-intensive course, teaching writing to majors who share a more sophisticated sense of the discipline and who are enrolled in smaller classes is much more likely to be a sustainable enterprise (in terms of department resources and faculty engagement). Teachers' expertise may also help students more in the field in which they will be seeking employment if a writing intensive course were part of the major or chosen by the department for necessary writing skills.

2. There should be training and incentives (including course cap of 15 and a load-multiplier) for teachers of writing-intensive courses.

Training: Teachers of writing-intensive courses should go through training such as Valley Writing or programs in CETL. Training should include at a minimum discussion of: the objectives, the assessment rubric, and the writing-intensive requirement itself, including what constitutes revision and how to encourage it effectively. Ongoing university-wide support should be instituted in such forms as a Writing Intensive website of course materials and meetings of writing-intensive instructors, sometimes jointly with English 101 instructors and on occasions such as Faculty Development Day. The scoring rubric for writing intensive assessment should be discussed among the writing intensive faculty and amended if necessary. A Director of Writing Intensive courses who trained, oversaw, and ran assessment would be a good hire.

Incentives:

--**Course size in Writing Intensive classes should be capped.** In discussing class size for writing classes in English, ADE (Association of Departments of English) guidelines say that "The number of students in each section should be fifteen or fewer, with no more than twenty students in any case." They further remark that no teacher of writing should have more than three writing sections (60 students) per term.

--**A load-multiplier**, like the one attached to graduate courses (4 hours load credit for a three hour course), should be applied.

Rationale:

These two incentives may draw more teachers into the teaching of writing across the

disciplines and allow teachers the time necessary to plan, guide, and respond productively to student writing. As ADE explains in discussing class size:

The process of learning to write clearly and effectively is not a simple matter of acquiring information or memorizing rules. It requires a parallel and simultaneous process of learning to read with more sophistication. Because reading and writing are related activities, learning to write entails a complex interaction between writer and reader. Students write; teachers respond. But a teacher's response must be more than "correcting" and more than perfunctory grading. Evaluations must involve a detailed reaction, often in conference with the student, to each piece of writing.

Good teachers want to teach as many students as they can teach well. But if teachers are forced to respond to the writing of more than sixty students weekly, they will necessarily oversimplify their responses. Their students will not learn that the basic ingredient of good writing and good reading is the ready and vigorous ability to understand, to formulate, and to express ideas. Students will regard their own writing as a mere exercise, unworthy of careful attention or serious thought.

It is worth emphasizing that the teaching of writing is also the teaching of reading. The GECCIG commented on their teaching experience that students' inability to read complex arguments went hand in hand with their inability to formulate and support good arguments in their papers. Faculty need the time that it takes to work with students on both reading and writing across the disciplines.

Although clearly more practice might help students, feedback is the key for developing writers. As Derek Bok remarks in his book, "Our Underachieving Colleges,"

Even students who have many papers to write may make limited progress unless their instructors give them ample, timely feedback, not only on the substance of the papers but also on the quality of the writing.Adequate feedback will rarely come about through exhortation from on high. More substantial efforts are needed to engage faculty members from a variety of disciplines in reading and critiquing student papers. *As a practical matter, few professors will accept this added responsibility for very long or perform it conscientiously and well unless they have adequate training and receive appropriate rewards in the form of extra salary or added teaching credit.* Since competent writing is so important. The investment seems well worth the cost. (emphasis ours. Bok, 99)

3. Writing Intensive courses should be part of a university-wide commitment to excellence in writing and include the following:

--A **Writing Center** (open to all faculty and students, including graduate students) either as a new center or in conjunction with, and with additional funding for, CAS (Center for

Academic Success) and LLAS (Learning Language for Academic Success);
--A **Placement** process for identifying students in an individually appropriate writing program. Some students may take the Eng 101, general education writing intensive, and upper division writing intensive course sequence. Others should have the option of taking a two-course composition sequence (Eng 100 and 101) instead of Eng 101 and the first writing-intensive course for general education. A remedial writing course may need to be established, but discussion should include at least CAS, LLAS, Modern Languages and English faculty..

4. The GECCIG Assessment Process should be improved in the following ways:

1. Writing intensive course instructors need to receive a copy of the current scoring rubric in advance in order to determine the most appropriate type of writing assignment to select for submission.
2. Instructors of all writing intensive courses offered during the assessment period must submit appropriate students essays meeting the sampling criteria.
3. Writing intensive course instructors must ensure that writing assignments reflecting revisions be submitted for evaluation.
4. Writing Intensive instructors should review the rubric during training and the rubric should be posted on the General Education Assessment website or some other easily accessible place.

Works Cited

ADE Policy Statements. "ADE Guidelines for Class Size and Workload for College and University Teachers of English: A Statement of Policy" 1992. Available:
<http://www.ade.org/policy/policy_guidelines.htm>

Bok, Derek. *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More.* Princeton: Princeton UP: 2006. 99.

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Appendix 1

Goal and learning objectives for Category 1A and 1C

Category 1: Communication

Goal: To develop writers and speakers who use the English language effectively and who read, write, speak, and listen critically. At a base, all students should complete introductory communication requirements early in their college studies. Writing competency is an ongoing process to be reinforced through writing-intensive courses and writing across the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills need reinforcement. There are multiple opportunities for interpersonal communication, public speaking and discussion.

Part A: English Composition

Goal: To develop writers who use the English language effectively and who read and write critically. This course will require faculty-critiqued writing. Writing competency is an ongoing process which needs to be reinforced throughout the curriculum.

Students will be able to:

- (a) demonstrate and practice strategies for idea generation, audience analysis, organization of texts, drafting, evaluation of drafts, revision, and editing;
- (b) write papers of varying lengths that demonstrate effective explanation, analysis, and argumentation;
- (c) become experienced in computer-assisted writing and research;
- (d) locate and evaluate material, using PALS, the Internet, and other sources;
- (e) analyze and synthesize source material, making appropriate use of paraphrase, summary, quotation, and citation conventions;
- (f) employ syntax and usage appropriate to academic writing and the professional world.
- (g) employ syntax, usage and analytical techniques appropriate to academic disciplines and the professional world.

Part C: Writing Intensive

Goal: Students will continue to develop skills taught in Composition, applying them in the context of a particular discipline.

Students will be able to

- (a) use writing to explore and gain a basic familiarity with the questions, values and analytical or critical thinking methods used in the discipline;**
- (b) locate, analyze, evaluate, and use source material or data in their writing in a manner appropriate to intended audiences (popular or within the discipline)**

Appendix 2

List of General Education courses offered in Fall, 2006

Department	Sections	Courses
Biology	15	105W
Economics	1	202W
EEC	5	222W
English	17	112W (1); 113W (3); 211W (5); 212W (2); 213W (2); 242W(8)
French	1	
History	3	170W (1); 180W (2)
Humanities	2	250W
KSP		220W
Philosophy	17	100W (3);120W (11); 224W (1); 240W (1); 334W (1)
Political Science	1	103W
Psychology	1	103W
RHB	2	110W
Social Work	3	190W
Spanish	1	210W
Speech	6	101W
Urban Studies	1	230W

Appendix 3

Sample Letter to department 1c coordinators

Dear Colleague--

Thank you for being part of the Gen Ed Category 1c (Writing Intensive) assessment effort this fall. Either your department chair volunteered you to take care of collecting data for the assessment of Gen Ed 1c courses, or you are the only person teaching 1c courses in your department.

All people teaching category 1c courses this fall have received notification that we are conducting assessment this semester and that we need them to contribute student work to this effort. You will be making sure everyone got the message and will be acting as the go-between between teachers of 1c courses in your department and the Gen Ed assessment committee. **Please do the following:**

1. If you are not the only one teaching 1c courses in your department, remind the faculty who are teaching general education writing-intensive (1c) courses. Outline the way you will collect student work (I've included a sample reminder below that I used for teachers in English). Each instructor should select one assignment where students will best address the 1c objectives and collect work from students whose Tech IDs end in 3. (This is how we are getting a random sample of work). The student work should be photocopied before it is graded and student names should be covered so they don't appear on the copies. A description of the assignment should be collected with the student work.
2. Academic Affairs has given us a few copy cards which are located at various points (If I haven't contacted you already, I'll send a note about where your nearest copy card is—let me know if there are problems). If you are teaching online, you can email me the copies at anne.omeara@mnsu.edu
3. Send the photocopies you've collected to me (mail code: 230 AH) before Dec. 8.

I know this is a bit of a job and it is generally not a favorite activity of faculty, so I really appreciate your help with this. Please emphasize to your faculty that no student names, no faculty names, and no course numbers will be connected to results. The purpose of this assessment is to see how the university general education program is meeting its goals in category 1c (not to assess individual faculty or students) and to make recommendations about our performance that might be improved.

Need volunteers: Assessing the essays and writing the Report

The timeline calls for the Gen Ed 1c Assessment Committee to actually assess the collected student work and write up the report during spring semester. If you would like to help with this part of the project, please let me know anne.omeara@mnsu.edu. There will be a nominal stipend. In any event, we will send a copy of the report to your department.

Thank you so much.

SAMPLE REMINDER IF YOU HAVE A GROUP OF TEACHERS TO COLLECT FROM:

Teachers of Gen Ed category 1c courses:

This is just to remind you that we are doing assessment for the 1c courses. You need to please--

- Choose the writing assignment in your 1c class that best shows students attaining the 1c competencies*;
- Before you grade these papers, put the papers of all students **whose Tech IDs end in 3** in the box marked "1c Assessment" behind Kate's desk and attach a blue sheet that identifies you as the teacher (so you can get the paper back within the day)
- Also attach a copy of the assignment sheet if you have one or a copy of the syllabus with the assignment circled.

I need to turn in the photocopies by Dec. 6.

Thank you so much. We will only be doing this during fall semester this year.

FYI:

The General Education 1c objectives are:

Students will be able to:

- a) use writing to explore and gain a basic familiarity with the questions, values, and analytical or critical thinking methods used in the discipline*
- b) locate, analyze, evaluate, and use source material or data in their writing in a manner appropriate to intended audiences (popular or within the discipline).*

Appendix 4

**Rubric for Assessing Essays
(2006-2007)
For General Education Category 1c**

Assessing Organization and Development, Supporting Evidence (Use, Citation, Analysis) and Writing Skills in student papers

Writing Area	Rating of 1	Rating of 2	Rating of 3	Rating of 4
	Beginning Does not have skills	Developing Has some skills, still needs some essentials	Accomplished Has foundation, basics	Exemplar Confident in skills; applies them well.
Organization; Development --Thesis --Idea development --Use of disciplinary questions, values, and methods of analytical or critical thinking.	--No clear thesis, central idea or sense of purpose. --No clear development of ideas and arguments Ideas are not elaborated or supported or are not related to each other. Seems more a pastiche, or conglomeration of info --Writer appears unaware of disciplinary questions, values, and analytical or critical thinking methods..	--Vague or overly general thesis, central idea or purpose. --Parts of paper not clearly related to thesis, although information is usually relevant. Ideas may stay on too general a plane or may be stated but lack clear, sufficient elaboration or argumentation. --Writer uses some disciplinary questions, values, and analytical or critical thinking methods in parts of essay.	--Coherent thesis that sets up paper well. --Sense of “almost there,” ideas on the verge of coming together in interesting, original, or solid way. Not fully or consistently articulated or carried off. May contain occasional lack of clarity, relevance, development, or insight or lack of progress in argument. --Writer uses disciplinary questions, values and analytical or critical thinking methods throughout but is unaware of complexity or interrelationships.	--Coherent thesis, convincingly stated. --Key questions, proposed analyses clearly formulated and well-developed. Clear sense of disciplinary values or methods. Supporting points clearly linked to thesis and each other. Conclusions well supported. Easy to follow. – Writer shows nuanced understanding of disciplinary questions, values, analytical or critical thinking methods and employs them with confidence and skill..

Writing Area	Rating of 1	Rating of 2	Rating of 3	Rating of 4
	Beginning Does not have skills	Developing Has some skills, still needs some essentials	Accomplished Has foundation, basics	Exemplar Confident in skills; applies them well.
Supporting Evidence: --Selection --Use of --Citation	--Marked scarcity of credible or relevant evidence. --Evidence not analyzed, explained, or applied. --Sources not properly cited or not cited at all.	--Uneven selection of credible or relevant sources. --Evidence not clearly analyzed, explained, or applied, or -- Occasional lapses in citation.	--Generally evidence is credible, relevant, and sufficient for purpose. --A attempt is made to analyze, explain, or apply the evidence though it falls short in some way. --Correct citation.	--Varied selection of credible sources, --Evidence is cogently analyzed, explained, or applied. --Consistent, correct citation

*Supporting Evidence = researched sources (from periodicals, websites etc.); materials cited from class texts; lab or research data.

Writing Area	Rating of 1	Rating of 2	Rating of 3	Rating of 4
	Beginning Does not have skills	Developing Has some skills, still needs some essentials	Accomplished Has foundation, basics	Exemplar Confident in skills; applies them well.
Writing Skills: --Focus, purpose --Writing for Reader --Command of writing conventions	--Unfocused; generally incoherent. --Readers aren't led to a conclusion. --Errors in paragraphing, grammar, usage, spelling, or punctuation are numerous and often interfere with meaning --Inappropriate diction for audience, writing occasion, or discipline..	--Recognizable purpose but some gaps in consistency or clarity; --Over-reliance on reader to fill in gaps in logic, context, or explanation. --Occasional lapses in diction, paragraphing, grammar or mechanics that interfere with meaning or are inconsistent with "college-level" writing.	--Focused, clearly stated --Good sense of reader needs and what is needed to accomplish communicative goal, though it falls short. --Conforms to standard academic usage, including diction, paragraphing, and mechanics. .	--Focused, clearly stated, builds to conclusion or toward main purpose. Overall impressions is that it is a well-written, credible argument. --Clear addressing of reader needs and interests; --Good grasp of standard academic usage in all aspects.

Appendix 4

**Rubric for Assessing Essays
(2001-2002)
For General Education Category 1c**

Writing Area	Rating of 1	Rating of 2	Rating of 3
Organization	No clear statement of objectives or sense of purpose. There is no clear development of ideas and arguments relevant to the purpose or there are serious and consistent inadequacies in these areas	Writer seems to have a clear idea of what he or she wants to accomplish and what is required in order to accomplish it; but has not fully articulated this or has not successfully or consistently carried it off. Work may contain uneven statements of its objectives, development or relevant ideas and arguments, analyses, or conclusions.	Work contains a clear statement of its objectives, a proper development of relevant ideas and arguments. Key questions and proposed analyses are clearly formulated. Its conclusions are supported by cogent reasons.
Sources and Evidence	A scarcity of credible sources and evidence and/or sources are not evaluated or shown to be relevant to the work's objectives.	Work uses a balance of credible sources, but gaps exist in critical evaluation, or credibility, or in demonstration of relevance to the work's objectives.	Work uses a balance of credible sources and evidence, is critically evaluated and relevant to the work's objectives.
Writing Skills	The essay exhibits a pervasive lack of clarity and incoherence; or its errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation often interfere with meaning; or errors are more numerous than are acceptable in college level writing.	The essay contains some gaps in clarity or consistency; or contains enough errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation to sometimes interfere with meaning; or despite not interfering with meaning, more errors than are consistent with very good college writing.	The essay is consistently clear and concise; exhibits a grasp of college-level writing skills; contains few errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.