

Evaluation of Student Learning in the Core Curriculum Fall 2018 Project: Competency in First-Year Writing (CFYW)

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The purpose of this project was to evaluate student learning in First-Year Writing, which is a competency in USD's Core Curriculum. To achieve this, a sample of student essays was pulled from all CFYW-designated courses taught in Fall 2018. Student essays were then scored against a rubric and the summary results are presented here.

The main goals of this project were to:

- Obtain data pertaining to the ability of our students to meet desired levels of achievement in First-Year Writing, and
- Refine standard procedures for collecting electronic versions of student works via Blackboard.

This is the first full-scale Evaluation of Student Learning Report presented to the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC) since implementation of the Fall 2017 Core, and the third report overall. While this was a full-scale project, we are still refining logistics of collecting student assignments, minimizing disruption to students and faculty, and establishing a solid foundation for the scoring of student work, and analyzing data in a manner that includes faculty input and feedback.

You are receiving this report because suggestions and recommendations from the CCC will inform how these assessment results are used.

During the CCC meeting on 2 May 2019, the Core Assessment Team (CAT) will present the major findings detailed here and solicit your discussion and feedback. The CCC will then be asked to vote to endorse the recommendations listed at the end of this report.

Note: Special terms related to FYW can be found in the "FYW Rubric Glossary of Terms" within Appendix E.

Role of Writing Program Director

The competency of Writing is a unique area to assess within USD's core curriculum because it is coordinated by the Writing Program under the guidance of its Director. It was essential therefore that the Core Assessment Team work closely with the Writing Program Director to ensure that we are working in a unified manner, and are communicating consistent information to faculty and students in the First Year Writing program. Given that the Core Assessment Team is specifically charged with assessing the core areas, the Writing Program Director's role in this project was that of consultant. As such, the Writing Program Director provided important insights to CAT during project preparations and attended the norming/scoring session and feedback session to answer course and discipline-specific questions that the scorers had.

CFYW Specifications and Learning Outcomes

In the Writing Area Task Force (ATF) report ratified by faculty vote CFYW has the following specifications and learning outcomes (LO):

CFYW Specifications

The ATF report states, “FYW must be taken in the first year, and should prepare students for writing in subsequent Core and major courses. FYW should stretch beyond a single discipline, so that students will study multiple discourses and gain practice in multiple kinds of writing.”

CFYW Student Learning Outcomes (LO’s)

1. Contexts and Purposes

Students will:

- write in ways appropriate to the audiences and occasions of each assignment
- write effectively in or about multiple discourses by distinguishing among and responding to rhetorical contexts

2. Content

Students will:

- apply relevant and compelling content, based on strong understandings of assigned subjects, in order to write effectively across multiple types of discourse

3. Sources and Evidence

Students will:

- use credible sources to develop ideas and arguments that are effective within assigned disciplines and discourses
- cite sources accurately according to conventions of the topic and discipline

4. Mechanics

Students will:

- write clearly and fluently, with few errors in syntax and grammar

Project Methods

For this project, a random subset of 200 “Comparative Rhetorical Analysis” student essays from 615 total students across all 30 sections of FYW 150 was collected during Fall 2018. This sample size reflects a 5.7% margin of error. These essays were part of the normal course work occurring sufficiently late in the semester after students had already received related feedback on earlier work. The general assignment prompt for these essays was designed by the Writing Program Director and First-Year Writing faculty in Spring 2018 to specifically align with the CFYW learning outcomes. Faculty teaching the Fall 2018 FYW 150 course could use either this generic prompt or customize it with specifics for their respective sections. During this same period, the Core Assessment Team worked with the Writing Program Director, FYW faculty, and Writing Core Area Representative to develop an appropriate rubric aligned with the learning outcomes. Several criteria regarding evidence and sources were refined and “organization” was articulated as part of the content criterion.

Volunteer scorers were solicited in late Fall 2018. The fifteen scorers included a diverse group of tenure-line and adjunct faculty across a range of disciplines including faculty from departments other than English. While most scorers were, or have been, FYW 150 instructors at USD some scorers had not taught FYW 150 but may teach advanced writing courses in their own majors.

In January 2019, the scorers attended a seven-hour norming session to calibrate the scorers to the rubric. Scorers received written and verbal instructions, a copy of the CCC-approved CFYW rubric (Appendix A), a sample scoring sheet, and copies of the assignment prompts from the courses (with course identifiers

removed for anonymity). During the initial part of the norming session, scorers made minor refinements to the rubric and agreed upon a final rubric to be used for scoring¹ (Appendix B). These five criteria were assessed:

- A: Audience Awareness [CFYW LO1a]
- B: Analysis of Multiple Discourses [CFYW LO1b]
- C: Content Development, Organization, and Use of Evidence [CFYW LO2]
- D: Sources and citation [CFYW LO 3a&b]
- E: Control of syntax and mechanics [CFYW LO4]

Each student essay was reviewed by at least two scorers resulting in 400 sets of scores (200 essays each scored twice). Discrepancies between scorers were tracked during the scoring process. In cases where scorers differed by two or more points in any of the five criteria, the student's essay was sent to a third scorer, and the best pairing between two scorers was used. In the end, each scorer scored a total of 32-33 student essays. Appendix C contains the scorer discrepancy comparisons both before and after accounting for third scorings.

After all scores were compiled, the scoring team was invited to meet for a scorer feedback session. The team was also asked to complete a survey; from these the Core Assessment Team was able to capture detailed feedback on the scorers' experiences and recommendations.

Findings

Each criterion was scored on a scale of 0-4 with 4 being the highest level of achievement. Table 1 summarizes the frequency of each score, for each criterion, as well as each criterion's mean and standard deviation. Figure 1 charts these results. Appendix D contains Figure A-1, which is the same graph as Figure 1, but separated by each criterion for easier viewing.

Table 1. Frequency of scores achieved by students in their first-semester at USD in Fall 2018 FYW150 courses; 200 student essays, each read by two scorers (400 reads). Note: Scores of "0" were included in mean and standard deviation calculations. Had they not been included, Criterion D's standard deviation value would decrease to 0.82; other values would remain unchanged.

| | A Audience Awareness | B Analysis of Multiple Discourses | C Development, Organization, Use of Evidence | D Sources & Citation | E Syntax & Mechanics |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Score of 4 | 48 | 38 | 28 | 31 | 27 |
| Score of 3 | 187 | 134 | 142 | 170 | 215 |
| Score of 2 | 147 | 178 | 198 | 140 | 133 |
| Score of 1 | 18 | 49 | 32 | 53 | 25 |
| Score of 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Mean: | 2.7 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.6 |
| Std Dev: | 0.74 | 0.83 | 0.74 | 0.87 | 0.71 |

¹ The CCC approved a CFYW rubric in Fall 2018 because no rubric previously existed for CFYW. It is normal, however, for rubrics to receive some minor revision during scoring, in order to refine the rubric for use.

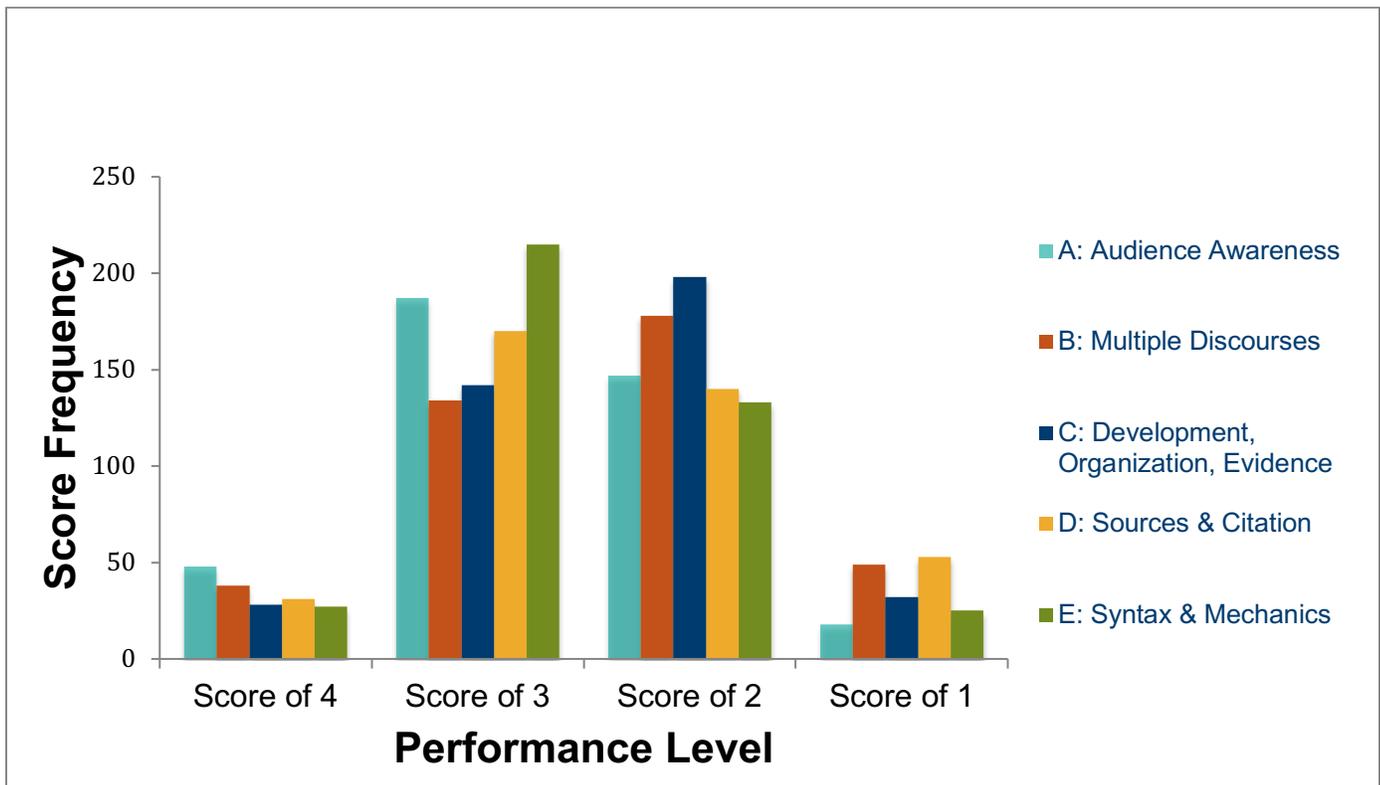


Figure 1. Frequency of scores across each criterion in the CFYW rubric achieved by first-semester USD students in Fall 2018 FYW 150; 200 student essays, each read by two scorers (400 reads). Scores of “0” (“unable to score”, 7 counts total) were not included in graph.

In conversations during the norming and feedback sessions and in the survey responses, scorers agreed that:

1. Variations in assignment prompt instructions impacted the essays. Two notable examples were: a) whether the professor assigned, or students chose, which two texts would be used for the comparative analysis, and b) whether or not explicit guidelines were provided to cite sources. Scorers suggested that it would be useful to disaggregate the scores by these two variations to see if any notable trends exist.
2. Specific aspects of certain assignment prompts seemed to be particularly helpful to students. These aspects have been summarized in Appendix E.
3. Some terms – such as “rhetorical analysis,” “genre,” “discourse,” “rhetorical stance” – were unfamiliar to several scorers, and thus likely would be unfamiliar to someone using the rubric. Thus, it would be helpful to add a glossary of terms to the rubric. This glossary can also be found in Appendix E.
4. The rubric would yield more useful results and be easier to use if:
 - a. Criterion C was split into two rows: “Content Development & Use of Evidence” and “Organization.” While “Organization” is not explicitly stated in the CFYW Learning Outcomes, both FYW faculty and CFYW scorers strongly agreed that it is not possible to address Content Development without also looking at Organization.
 - b. Criterion D was split into two rows: “Use of Sources” and “Citation of Sources.”

5. This type of assignment is worth doing in FYW 150 courses. Scorers commented that, “These skills transfer to other disciplines,” and “It is good for students to practice them in their first year.” The scorers that had taught the FYW course said they found this assignment valuable to students and they planned to continue using this assignment, even when it is not being used for assessment purposes.

As recommended by the faculty scorers, the overall compiled scores were then disaggregated by:

- Whether or not the prompt explicitly stated to cite sources
- Who selected the texts to be used in the comparative analysis

Although scorers noted that Criterion D (sources and citation) was easier to score when there was extra information provided in the assignment prompt, we found that only 17 of the 200 essays correlated to assignment prompts where students were explicitly asked to include formal, formatted citation of sources. Thus, we are unable to reach meaningful conclusions based on such a small pool of data.

Table 2 provides the mean scores with standard deviations for each criterion when results are disaggregated by assignment prompt type. The details of this data also appear graphically in Appendix F, Figure A-2.

Table 2. Mean scores with standard deviations for each criterion disaggregated by Assignment Prompt Type.

| Presentation Type | Number of Essays | A Audience Awareness | B Multiple Discourses | C Development, Organization, Evidence | D Sources & Citation | E Syntax & Mechanics |
|---|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| T1: Students chose any two texts they wished | 41 | 2.4 (+/- .75) | 2.2 (+/- .89) | 2.2 (+/- .78) | 2.3 (+/- .91) | 2.4 (+/- .66) |
| T2: Students chose two texts from set that was pre-selected by professor | 37 | 2.7 (+/- .82) | 2.4 (+/- .84) | 2.4 (+/- .76) | 2.7 (+/- .84) | 2.6 (+/- .75) |
| T3: The professor assigned the specific two texts to be compared | 80 | 2.8 (+/- .73) | 2.5 (+/- .78) | 2.6 (+/- .71) | 2.5 (+/- .79) | 2.7 (+/- .67) |
| T4: The professor assigned one text and allowed the student to choose the other one from a pre-selected set | 26 | 2.7 (+/- .65) | 2.5 (+/- .84) | 2.5 (+/- .75) | 2.2 (+/- .93) | 2.5 (+/- .72) |
| T5: The professor assigned one text and allowed the student to choose any other text | 16 | 2.7 (+/- .59) | 2.4 (+/- .72) | 2.4 (+/- .53) | 2.4 (+/- .89) | 2.6 (+/- .68) |

To test for statistically significant differences in assignment prompt types, a oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in SPSS across all five rubric criteria scores. The details of this analysis can be found in Appendix G: Assignment Prompt Statistics Summary. This analysis showed that statistically significant lower score means were affiliated with students choosing their own reading selections (T1) across all rubric criteria except Analysis of Multiple Discourses. These results correlate to what scorers had observed – that the essays correlating to assignment prompts where students chose both of the texts generally scored lower than other essays. Scorers had also commented that the two texts that were used for the analysis had a significant impact on scoring Criterion B (multiple discourses), and that in the best-case scenarios the two discourses were clearly quite different from one another. If the discourses were too similar, it immediately lowered students’ ability to address Criterion B effectively.

Working Towards Establishing Benchmarks

In response to CCC inquiries regarding benchmarks in the previous two projects, we asked scorers, via the survey, how they would benchmark each criterion. This full-scale project had a sufficient, representative sample size and scorer pool to ask scorers to establish preliminary benchmarks for CFYW. Fourteen of 15 scorers (93%) completed the survey; results contained 13 numerical responses and one response of “no opinion yet” for each criterion. The benchmarks are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Benchmarks proposed by CFYW faculty scorers (mean values, 13 responses) compared with the student’s mean scores by criterion for the 200 student essays scored in this project.

| Criterion | Scorers’ Proposed Benchmark | Students’ Mean Score in Fall 2018 Project (standard deviation) |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| A: Audience Awareness | 2.8 | 2.7 (+/-0.74) |
| B: Analysis of Multiple Discourses | 2.6 | 2.4 (+/- 0.83) |
| C1: Content Development & Use of Evidence | 2.9 | 2.4 (+/-0.74) |
| C2: Organization | 2.8 | |
| D1: Use of Sources | 3.0 | 2.4 (+/- 0.87) |
| D2: Source Citation | 3.1 | |
| E: Control of Syntax & Mechanics | 2.8 | 2.6 (+/- 0.71) |

In keeping with the scorer recommendation to split content of Criteria C and D, two separate benchmark estimations were provided for these two criteria. The next time that CFYW is evaluated, we can again ask scorers for their benchmark recommendations and use the two sets to come up with a more “finalized” set of benchmarks.

Summary and Recommendations

The focus of this project was to obtain data and feedback regarding how well our students are achieving competency in FYW. In addition, we refined our methods for collecting and analyzing the data and feedback. As one example of our refinement of these procedures, we included much more detailed questions in the scorer survey regarding the assignment prompt, rubric, results, and also added a question regarding proposed benchmarks; the latter coming directly from faculty discussions and feedback at the CCC.

For each criterion evaluated, the mean student score was close to the proposed benchmarks. Faculty scorers provided several recommendations to the assignment prompt, rubric, and other areas that can help future faculty and students involved in CFYW.

The Core Assessment Team and faculty scorers thus make the following recommendations (these recommendations are made with the support of both the Writing Core Area Representative and the Writing Program Director.):

1. **Approve the faculty scorers’ recommended modifications to the First-Year Writing Rubric. (See Appendix H for the rubric to be approved.)** The modifications include both those that faculty scorers made during the norming session as well as the modifications recommended during the scorer feedback session, and widely supported by scorers based on the scorer survey results.

- 2. Provide extra support to faculty teaching CFYW-designated classes by Approving Faculty “Tips” document to be posted on the Core website.** The Core Assessment Team, Writing Program Director, and the Writing Core Area Representative used the scorer feedback to construct this “Faculty Tips for FYW 150 Courses” document to support faculty teaching this course (Appendix E) along with a glossary of terms, both to be posted on the Core website. Additionally, the Writing Program Director will provide these resources to all faculty teaching FYW 150, with the recommendation to review the document during the annual FYW training session.

Appendix A: CCC-Approved CFYW Rubric

| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| A: Audience Awareness (LO 1a) | Thorough understanding of audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employs a skillfully developed authorial voice and appropriate rhetorical stance¹ provides appropriate context | Adequate understanding of audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows development of voice and rhetorical stance provides some context for audiences | Basic awareness of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> starting to develop a rhetorical stance, but may not succeed does not offer adequate context | Minimal awareness of audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no attempt to position self in relationship to readers |
| B: Analysis of Multiple Discourses (LO 1b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates skillful, insightful analysis of more than one discourse² Significance of comparison of discourses is insightful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates adequate analysis of more than one discourse² Significance of comparison of discourses is clear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is inconsistent; Essay may analyze two texts, but significance of comparison of the differing discourses is barely apparent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is underdeveloped; offers summary with little to no analysis No attempt at comparing differing discourses |
| C: Content Development, Organization, and Use of Evidence (LO 2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays strong understanding of topics. Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling evidence to support claims Organization is logical, transitions are seamless, and repetition is avoided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays adequate understanding of topics Consistently uses evidence to support claims Organization is logical, with some repetition or a few issues with transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays some understanding of topics Uses some evidence to support claims Organization has a few major flaws in logic or transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays little understanding of topics Inconsistently uses evidence to support claims Organization is haphazard |
| D: Sources and citation (LO 3a&b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates skillful use of sources³ Appropriately and accurately cites credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates adequate use of sources Adequately and accurately cites credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates an attempt to use sources Attempts to cite credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little attempt to use or cite sources Makes frequent errors with citation. Citation format may or may not be appropriate to the discipline. |
| E: Control of syntax and mechanics (LO 4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses fluent language and elegant prose with no distracting errors in syntax and grammar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses clear language with very few distracting errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses language that is generally clear with some distracting errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses language that impedes meaning |

¹Rhetorical stance describes how writers use language to position themselves in relationship to their intended audiences.

²Attends to issues such as purpose, characteristics of the medium, audience, and rhetorical context.

³Examples of skillful use of sources include: distilling the reference document down to its essence, using a quotation that is reasonable in length, using a reasonable number of quotations, and using a quotation in an appropriate place (not just for the purposes of adding a quotation to the essay).

Developed from Written Competency ATF Report outcomes & criteria and inspired by AAC&U VALUE Rubric for Written Communication. Developed by Writing Program Director and Core Assessment Team; reviewed by Core Area Representative for Writing, 9/20/18; approved by CCC 11/29/18. Last updated 9/20/18

Appendix B: Rubric Used in CFYW Fall 2018 pilot scoring; adjustments to CCC-approved rubric are shown in green.

| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| A: Audience Awareness (LO 1a) | Thorough understanding of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employs a skillfully developed authorial voice and appropriate rhetorical stance¹ provides appropriate context | Adequate understanding of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows development of voice and rhetorical stance provides some context for audiences | Basic awareness of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> starting to develop a rhetorical stance, but may not succeed does not offer adequate context | Minimal awareness of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no attempt to position self in relationship to readers |
| B: Analysis of Multiple Discourses (LO 1b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates skillful, insightful analysis of more than one discourse² Significance of comparison of discourses is insightful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates adequate analysis of more than one discourse² Significance of comparison of discourses is clear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is inconsistent; Essay may analyze two texts, but significance of comparison of the differing discourses is barely apparent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is underdeveloped; offers summary with little to no analysis No attempt at comparing differing discourses |
| C: Content Development, Organization, and Use of Evidence (LO 2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays strong understanding of topics. Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling evidence to support claims Organization is logical, transitions are seamless, and repetition is avoided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays adequate understanding of topics Consistently uses evidence to support claims Organization is logical, with some repetition or a few issues with transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays some understanding of topics Uses some evidence to support claims Organization has a few major flaws in logic or transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays little understanding of topics Inconsistently uses evidence to support claims Organization is haphazard |
| D: Sources and citation (LO 3a&b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates skillful use of sources³ Appropriately and accurately cites credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates adequate use of sources Adequately and accurately cites credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates an attempt to use sources Attempts to cite credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little attempt to use or cite sources Makes frequent errors with citation. Citation format may or may not be appropriate to the discipline. |
| E: Control of syntax and mechanics (LO 4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses fluent language and elegant style with no distracting errors in syntax and grammar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses clear language with very few types of distracting errors some attention to style | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses language that lacks clarity, contains some types of distracting errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses language that impedes meaning and/or contains many types of distracting errors |

¹Rhetorical stance describes how writers use language to position themselves in relationship to their intended audiences.

²Attends to issues such as purpose, characteristics of the medium, audience, and rhetorical context.

³Examples of skillful use of sources include: distilling the reference document down to its essence, using a quotation that is reasonable in length, using a reasonable number of quotations, and using a quotation in an appropriate place (not just for the purposes of adding a quotation to the essay).

Developed from Written Competency ATF Report outcomes & criteria and inspired by AAC&U VALUE Rubric for Written Communication. Developed by Writing Program Director and Core Assessment Team; reviewed by Core Area Representative for Writing, 9/20/18; approved by CCC 11/29/18. Modified for clarity, during Norming session 01/24/19.

Appendix C: Scorer Discrepancy Comparison

Scorer Discrepancy Comparison

(Goal is discrepancy of 0 at least 50% of the time, with no discrepancies >1)

**Summary Counts of Discrepancies by Criterion in First Round,
Prior to Third Scorings**

| Criterion: | A | B | C | D | E | Totals | Total % Discrepancy* |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|----------------------|
| Discrepancy of 4: | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Discrepancy of 3: | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0% |
| Discrepancy of 2: | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 16 | 128 | 13% |
| Discrepancy of 1: | 83 | 100 | 93 | 85 | 85 | 446 | 45% |
| Discrepancy of 0: | 90 | 71 | 79 | 83 | 99 | 422 | 42% |
| Totals: | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 1000 | 100% |
| % Discrepancy of 0 by Criterion: | 45% | 36% | 40% | 42% | 50% | | |

Noteworthy:

- 200 essays were scored.
- 77/200 essays (39%) had a discrepancy >1, and thus required a 3rd scoring
- 133/1000* total counts across all 5 criteria (13%) had a discrepancy >1 prior to 3rd scorings.
*1000 total counts exist across all criteria that were scored (200 essays x 5 criteria)

**Summary Counts of Discrepancies by Criterion in Final Compilation
(Using best two of three scores for each essay that required a third scoring)**

| Criterion: | A | B | C | D | E | Totals | Total Percent Discrepancy |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|---------------------------|
| Discrepancy of 4: | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Discrepancy of 3: | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| Discrepancy of 2: | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 17 | 2% |
| Discrepancy of 1: | 95 | 99 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 475 | 47% |
| Discrepancy of 0: | 104 | 95 | 102 | 102 | 107 | 508 | 51% |
| Totals: | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 1000 | 100% |
| % Discrepancy of 0 by Criterion: | 52% | 48% | 51% | 51% | 54% | | |

Noteworthy:

- 16/200 essays (8%) still contained a discrepancy >1
- 17/1000 total counts across all 5 criteria (1.7%), had a discrepancy >1
- Third scorings decreased discrepancies in 70/77 (91%) of essays.
- Target of discrepancy of zero >50% of the time was met overall (50.8%), and in all but one criterion (Criterion B = 47%).
- Target of no discrepancies >1 was not met, with 17/1000 counts across all criteria (1.7%) having a discrepancy >1.

Appendix D

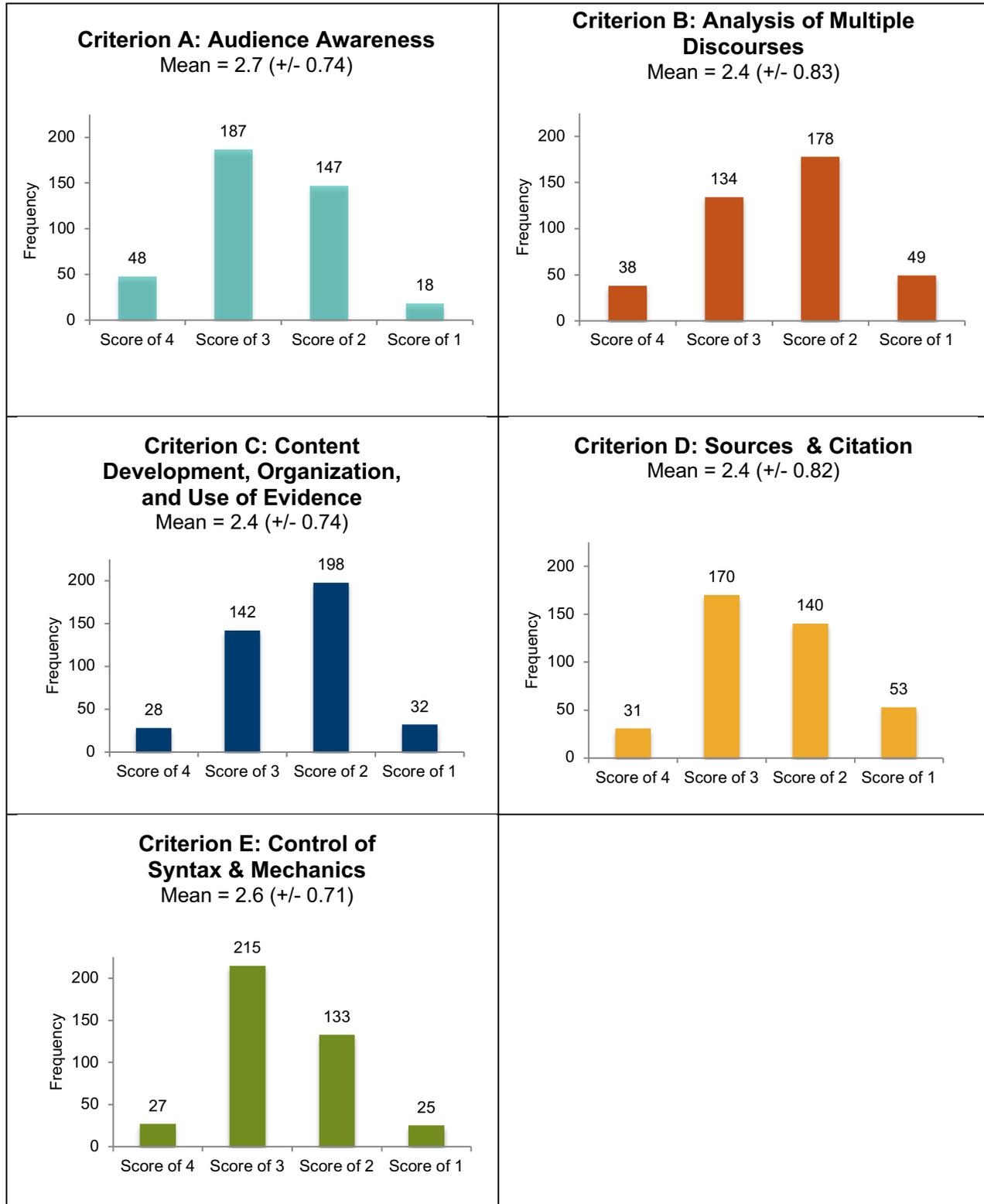


Figure A.1: Frequency of scores achieved by students across each criterion in the CFYW rubric, separated by criterion; 200 student essays, each read by two scorers (400 reads). Scores of “0” (“unable to score”, 7 counts total) were not included in graph.

Appendix E: Faculty Tips for FYW 150 Courses

Faculty Tips for FYW 150 Courses

The following insights were generated by faculty scorers who collectively analyzed 200 student essays during the Fall 2018 CFYW Assessment Project. The Core Assessment Team, together with the Writing Program Director and the Writing Core Area Representative, compiled these tips, which are designed to help faculty and students in future FYW 150 courses. While these insights come from scorers who read the Comparative Rhetorical Analysis Essay, they can be applied to other assignments as well.

1. **Outcomes and Rubric.** Faculty scorers suggested that it would be beneficial for FYW professors to take time exploring the rubric criteria with students. Since this rubric was designed to align with the FYW learning outcomes, spending class time in this way could be valuable to other assignments as well.
2. **Assignment Prompts.** Faculty scorers suggested that students would benefit from assignment sheets/prompts with explicit directions related to the criteria. They found that when instructions were not explicit in the prompt - even if they were present on the rubric - the students' likelihood of successfully demonstrating the learning outcomes were diminished. Scorers agreed that there is a difference between students being given details in the assignment prompt and being able to actually execute those details within an essay, particularly at the freshman level.
3. **Choice of Texts for Comparative Analysis.** The choice of texts for the comparison will impact student success. The results from the assessment project showed that students were better able to meet the learning outcomes for CFYW on the comparative rhetorical analysis assignment if they were not left to decide which two texts to select for the comparison. This difference in performance was statistically significant across all criteria except "Analysis of Multiple Discourses." While the cause of this difference was not researched in depth, scorers did note that students had a more challenging time if they compared texts that may not be, in fact, very different in terms of the types of rhetoric used (a memoir and a novel, for instance, are both creative texts that are more similar to each other than, say, a newspaper article and an academic journal article).
4. **Criteria-Based Concepts Worth Emphasizing/Reinforcing.** Faculty scorers also provided criterion-specific suggestions:
 - Audience Awareness
 - It is helpful to remind students to supply needed context for their audience, minus extensive summary.
 - Analysis of Multiple Discourses
 - Clearly define the idea of different discourses/genres, provide examples, and give appropriate context for comparing different texts.
 - Help students to understand that they are not comparing the quality of each argument but rather how each argument was made, based on each discourse's conventions/methodologies. Emphasize genre conventions and the different strategies in which different genres engage.
 - Content Development & Use of Evidence
 - Remind students to supply details and quotes to support claims.

- Use of Sources vs Use of Evidence
 - Help student to understand the difference between these two terms.
 - Use of evidence: *what* you choose to use as support for a claim. Example: using appropriate, relevant, and compelling evidence to support claims.
 - Use of sources examples: *how* you choose to display that evidence to support the claim. Examples: distilling the reference document down to its essence, using a quotation that is reasonable in length, using a reasonable number of quotations, and using a quotation in an appropriate place (not just for the purposes of adding a quotation to the essay).
 - Source Citation
 - Clearly articulate expectations for using and citing sources (a basic example would be the explicit instruction for students to include a works cited page). Faculty scorers commented that students need an instruction to cite sources in an assignment such as this one, because - at the freshman level - the student tends to see the professor as the audience. In other words, if the professor assigns the text to analyze, the student assumes that the professor knows the citation, and thus, it does not need to be cited (when, in fact, it does).
5. **Terminology.** There are many technical terms associated with a comparative rhetorical analysis, e.g., “discourse,” “genre,” “audience,” etc. It is important to make sure students understand what these terms mean, and not assume they understand them. (This tip came from a professor who taught the FYW course and realized that this is something they needed to incorporate into their future courses.) The “CFYW Rubric Glossary of Terms” contains definitions of the main terms as well as several references for exploring/addressing the terms in greater depth. The glossary was constructed as an extra resource for you to use as inspiration when constructing your CFYW courses.

*We hope you find these tips helpful when you design your assignments.
Keep in mind that there is a lot of leeway in how you can frame an assignment
that addresses these learning outcomes!*

CFYW Rubric Glossary of Terms

GENRE: a category of texts that share repeatable patterns or features; a set of typified responses to repeated rhetorical situations

DISCOURSE: refers to the uses of language or symbols within a text or group of texts created for a particular community

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS: analysis of the language and other symbolic strategies people use to influence others

RHETORICAL STANCE: strategies that writers use to position themselves in relation to readers; often, a synonym for authorial voice

For Further Reading

Dirk, Kerry. “Navigating Genres.” *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1*, edited by Charles Lowe and Pavel Zemliansky. Anderson: Parlor Press and WAC Clearinghouse, 2010, pp. 249-62.

In this text, which is written specifically for an undergraduate audience, Dirk makes accessible the genre theories of Bitzer, Miller, Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff. Following these scholars, she offers two overlapping definitions of genre: genre is “rhetorical action” (it gets things done) and genre responds to recurring situations. Perhaps most importantly, Dirk argues that genre boundaries are never fixed. That is, the qualities that define a genre will change over time and in response to the exigencies of particular situations.

Gee, James Paul. “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics.” *Journal of Education* vol. 171, no. 1, 1989, pp. 5-17.

In this text, which is somewhat accessible to undergraduate audiences, Gee discusses how people are socialized through language. He defines concepts such as dominant Discourse, nondominant Discourse, primary and secondary Discourses, literacy, and metaknowledge. Particularly useful is his definition of Discourse, which he defines as a “sort of ‘identity kit’ which comes complete with appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize . . . It turns out that much that is claimed, controversially, to be true of second language acquisition or socially situated cognition . . . is, in fact, more obviously true of the acquisition of Discourse. Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction . . . but by enculturation (‘apprenticeship’) into social practices through scaffolded and supported interactions with people who have already mastered the Discourse” (7).

Lancaster, Zak. “Making Stance Explicit for Second-Language Writers in the Disciplines: What Faculty Need to Know about the Language of Stance-taking.” *WAC and Second Language Writers: Research Towards Linguistically and Culturally Inclusive Programs and Practices*, edited by Terry M. Zawacki and Michelle Cox. Anderson: Parlor Press and WAC Clearinghouse, 2014, pp. 269-298.

Instructors interested in reading more about rhetorical stance may find Lancaster’s essay helpful. In it, he defines rhetorical stance in the following way: “ways that writers—as they go about analyzing and evaluating things, making assertions and recommendations, providing evidence and justifications and so forth—project an authorial presence in their texts, one that conveys attitudes and feelings and that interacts with the imagined readers by recognizing their views, identifying points of shared knowledge, conceding limitations, and otherwise positioning them as aligned with or resistant to the views being advanced in the text” (273).

Selzer, Jack. "Rhetorical Analysis: Understanding How Texts Persuade Readers." *What Writing Does and How It Does It*, edited by Charles Bazerman and Paul Prior. Mahwah: Erlbaum, 2004, pp. 279-307.

Writing for an undergraduate audience, Selzer first defines rhetorical analysis and then demonstrates rhetorical analysis of two different texts. His first analysis is focused on the textual strategies and formal features of E.B. White's essay "Education" (1944). The second rhetorical analysis, a study of the rhetoric of Milton Friedman's "Open Letter to Bill Bennett" (1989), focuses on how Friedman's text functions in its historical, cultural, and publication context.

Appendix F

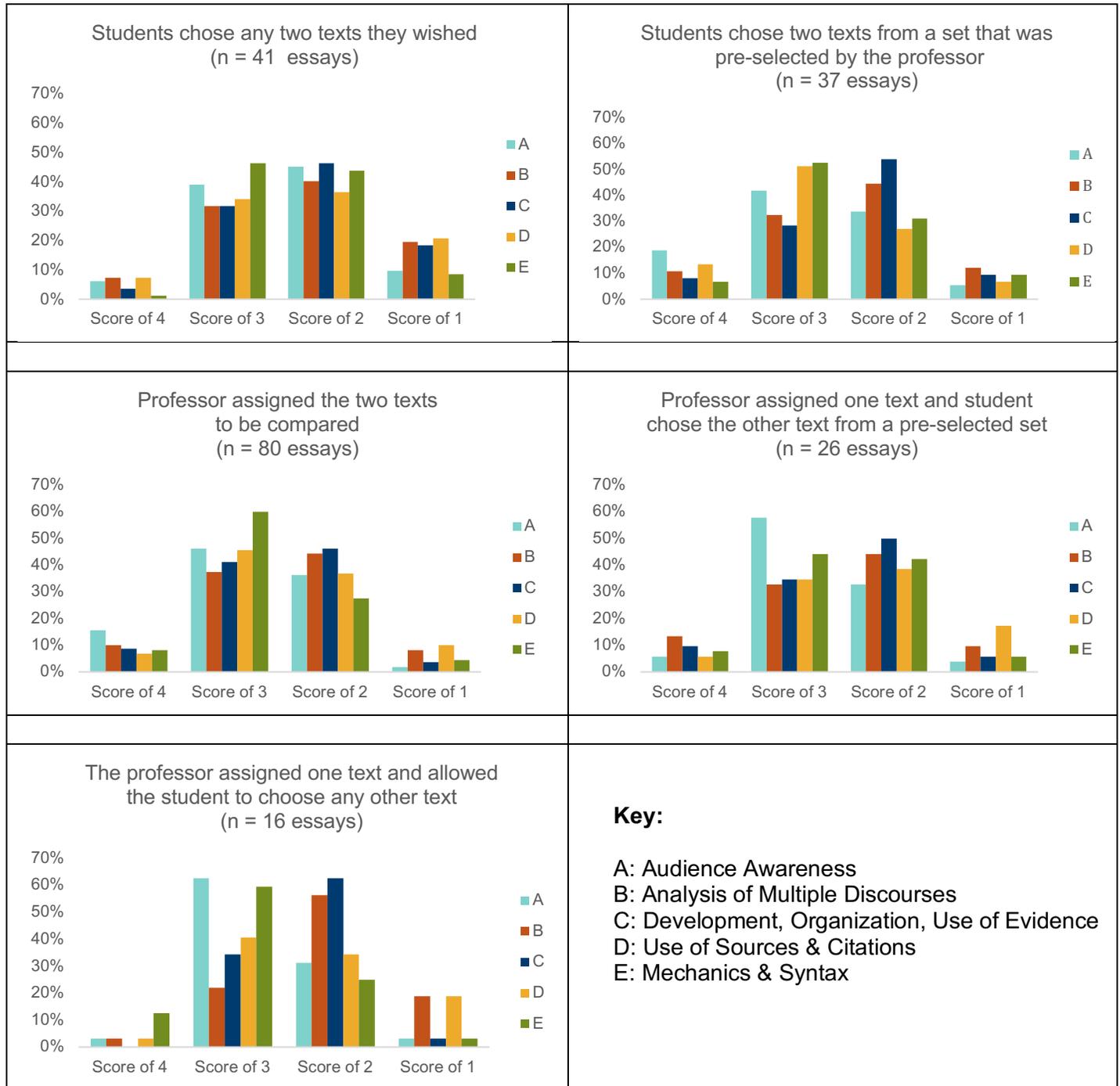


Figure A-2: Scores disaggregated by type of assignment prompt.

Appendix G: Assignment Prompt Statistics Summary

ONEWAY ANOVA TEST RESULTS

The content of the assignments for the writing tasks was similar based on a generic assignment prompt developed by faculty teaching the course. However, the discourse selections or readings on which student analyses were based varied among the instructors. To test for significant differences in assignment prompt readings, a oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in SPSS across all five rubric criteria scores ($n = 400$): audience awareness; analysis of multiple discourses; content development, organization and evidence; source credibility and citation; and syntax and mechanics. For the grouping variable, five distinct assignment prompt types were used across all sections of FYW courses (see Table 1 for assignment reading prompt type descriptions).

Table 1. *Assignment Reading Prompt Types*

| Prompt Type Mean | Prompt Type Description |
|------------------|---|
| M1 | Students were allowed to select their own choices for any two readings |
| M2 | Students could choose any two selections from an instructor-provided list |
| M3 | Instructors assigned the two readings |
| M4 | Instructors assigned one reading and students chose one from an instructor-provided list |
| M5 | Instructors assigned one reading and students could choose any reading selection they found |

Significance levels, significant contrasts with means and standard deviations are reported in Table 2. F values were reported as significant for all five rubric criteria. However, the Tukey HSD test, used for a post hoc analysis, found significant contrasts for four of the five rubric criteria.

Table 2: *Rubric Criteria, Significance, Post Hoc Comparisons, Means and Standard Deviations*

| Rubric Criteria | Significance | Tukey Post Hoc Significant Comparisons | Means, Standard Deviations |
|--|--|--|---|
| Audience awareness | $F_{(4, 395)} = 3.191$, $p = .013$ | M1 < M2; M1 < M3 | M1 = 2.415 ($s = .75$) M2 = 2.743 ($s = .83$) M3 = 2.756 ($s = .73$) |
| Analysis of multiple discourses | $F_{(4, 395)} = 2.55$, $p = .039$ | No significant contrasts | |
| Content development, organization, and use of evidence | $F_{(4, 395)} = 3.443$, $p = .009$ | M1 < M3 | M1 = 2.207 ($s = .78$) M3 = 2.550 ($s = .71$) |
| Source credibility and citation | $F_{(4, 395)} = 3.996$, $p = .003$ | M1 < M2; M2 > M4 | M1 = 2.256 ($s = .91$) M2 = 2.689 ($s = .84$) M4 = 2.212 ($s = .935$) |
| Syntax and mechanics | $F_{(4, 395)} = 3.670$, $p = .006$ | M1 < M3; M1 < M5 | M1 = 2.402 ($s = .66$) M3 = 2.719 ($s = .67$) M5 = 2.813 ($s = .71$) |

Regarding differences in assignment prompt readings, students who made their own selections entirely (M1) scored significantly lower than students who chose from an instructor-provided list (M2) on the rubric criteria

of *audience awareness* and *source credibility and citation*. Students who made their own selections entirely (M1) also scored significantly lower than students whose instructors assigned two readings (M3) on the rubric criteria of *content development, organization and use of evidence* and *syntax and mechanics*. Students making independent selections (M1) also scored lower than students whose instructors assigned one reading and student chose any second reading (M5) on the rubric criterion of *syntax and mechanics*. Finally, students who chose any two readings from an instructor-provided list (M2) scored significantly higher than students whose instructor had assigned one reading and students chose the second from an instructor-provided list (M4) on *source credibility and citation*. Generally speaking, lower score means in significant contrasts were affiliated with students choosing their own reading selections (M1) across four of the five rubric criteria.

CFYW Fall 2018 Assessment Project Results

Appendix H: Recommended CFYW Rubric, containing norming session adjustments in **green** & scorer feedback suggested changes in **yellow**.

| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| A: Audience Awareness (LO 1a) | Thorough understanding of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employs a skillfully developed authorial voice and appropriate rhetorical stance¹ provides appropriate context | Adequate understanding of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows development of voice and rhetorical stance provides some context for audiences | Basic awareness of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> starting to develop a rhetorical stance, but may not succeed does not offer adequate context | Minimal awareness of assigned audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimal attempt to position self in relationship to readers |
| B: Analysis of Multiple Discourses (LO 1b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates skillful, insightful analysis of more than one discourse² Significance of comparison of discourses is insightful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates adequate analysis of more than one discourse² Significance of comparison of discourses is clear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is inconsistent; Essay may analyze two texts, but significance of comparison of the differing discourses was attempted, but unclear and/or underdeveloped. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is underdeveloped; offers summary with little to no analysis Essay may analyze two texts, but significance of comparison of the differing discourses is barely apparent |
| C1: Content Development and Use of Evidence (LO 2 and LO3a) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays strong understanding of topics. Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling evidence to support claims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays adequate understanding of topics Consistently uses evidence to support claims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays some understanding of topics Uses some evidence to support claims | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays little understanding of topics Inconsistently uses evidence to support claims |
| C2: Organization (LO2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is logical, transitions are seamless, and repetition is avoided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is logical, with some repetition or a few issues with transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization has a few major flaws in logic or transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization is haphazard |
| D1: Use of Sources (LO 3a) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates skillful use of sources³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates adequate use of sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates an attempt to use sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little attempt to use sources |
| D2: Citation (LO 3b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriately and accurately cites credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequately and accurately cites credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to cite credible sources in ways that are appropriate to the discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes frequent errors with citation. Citation format may or may not be appropriate to the discipline. |
| E: Control of syntax and mechanics (LO 4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses fluent language and elegant style with no distracting errors in syntax and grammar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses clear language with very few types of distracting errors some attention to style | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses language that lacks clarity, contains some types of distracting errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses language that impedes meaning and/or contains many types of distracting errors |

¹Rhetorical stance describes how writers use language to position themselves in relationship to their intended audiences.

²Attends to issues such as purpose, characteristics of the medium, audience, and rhetorical context.

³Examples of skillful use of sources include: distilling the reference document down to its essence, using a quotation that is reasonable in length, using a reasonable number of quotations, and using a quotation in an appropriate place (not just for the purposes of adding a quotation to the essay).