Teaching Writing-Intensive Courses: A Workshop for TAs

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What are Writing-Intensive (WI) Courses?

The WI Designation

Student Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

WLO1. Adapt writing to a clearly identified purpose and audience, according to disciplinary conventions and genres;

WLO2. Develop and organize appropriate and relevant content;

WLO3. Evaluate and integrate supporting materials from appropriate sources, and credit them appropriately according to the genre and discourse requirements of the field; and

WLO4. Control style and mechanics to communicate effectively.

Hallmarks

W1. The class uses writing to promote the learning of course materials.

W2. The class provides interaction between the instructor and students while students do assigned writing.

W3. Written assignments contribute significantly to each student's course grade (minimum 40%).

W4. The course requires students to do a substantial amount of writing—a minimum of 4,000 words, or about 16 pages.

W5. To allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing, the class is restricted to 20 students.

Important Explanatory Notes

- can include **formal and "informal"** (writing that is not revised) **writing:**
    a. analytic essays, critical reviews, journals, lab reports, research reports, reaction papers, etc. Note: In-class quizzes and in-class exams where students do not have the ability to make revisions do not count toward the W component of the course. Take-home exams may qualify if the quality of the writing is assessed.

- **Types of interaction will vary:**
    a. a professor who requires the completion of one long essay may review sections of the essay, write comments on drafts, and be available for conferences. The professor who requires several short papers may demonstrate techniques for drafting and revising in the classroom, give guidance during the composition of the papers, and consult with students after they complete their papers.

Assignment Design & Scaffolded Learning

Writing to Learn vs. Learning How to Write

- Disciplinary differences
- Context, purpose, audience variability
- Writing process addressed separately from, but integrated via assignments with, disciplinary content
- Integrating formal and informal writing assignments (e.g. freewriting, minute paper, exit ticket)
- See this collection of teaching resources: https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/r/writing-to-learn/

Writing Assignments & Scaffolded Learning

Think of the end goal (e.g. an 8-10 page research paper about X), and start making a list of what students at your course's level need to know to be successful.

What can your students already do well?

How will you help them build each element of the final product up to where you want them to be?
(see this example of steps of doing research)

What parts of the writing process and which skills will you ask them to demonstrate, and which ones will they need to develop or have previously mastered on their own?

This page of teaching resources includes links to collections of writing assignments, as well as a list of basics to include with your assignment instructions:
https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/r/assignment-design-for-writing-courses/

Providing Useful, Helpful Feedback

Feedback on Students' Drafts

- Written and oral, individual and group, whole class
- Focus on 1-3 things (HOCs to LOCs), and aim for consistency
- Revision (for meaning, organization, purpose, style) vs editing
- Comment bank/document
- Simple tech tools (Google docs comment and editing history, Microsoft Word's tracking, marginal comments as examples linked to top 2-3 at top of first page)
- Emphasize specific elements of the argument or rhetorical format (e.g. connection between central claim and evidentiary support): see this example about evidence
- See this page for more details about how to give useful, helpful feedback on students' work: https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/r/w-rsw/

Let's look at some samples!

Go to **this document**, and read the first excerpt from a student draft

Last But Not Least...

More to Dive Into

Handling the workload: https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/r/handling-the-workload/

Information Literacy: https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/resources/tr/il/

Avoiding Plagiarism: https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/r/w-pp/

Online Course Considerations: https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/r/w-wtl/

ChatGPT and Generative AI Resources:

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ULLogEW8BrblIVir8LPd27u3B_83IFrCa-Utj7Zb6oM/edit#heading=h.fav6scqmwu85
- https://www.uhonline.hawaii.edu/ai
- https://manoa.hawaii.edu/gened/r/handling-large-learning-models-llms/

Questions? Requests?

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