ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Project Title: Program Assessment of Writing Processes

Department(s)/Program(s) Included in This Project:

Languages & Literatures

Project Leader:

>   **Name:** David M. Grant

>   **Department:** Languages & Literatures

>   **E-mail:** david.grant@uni.edu

>   **Phone:** 7-2639

Names, Departments, and E-Mail Addresses of Other Project Participants:

DLL Writing Committee (Administrative and Consultative Body)
- James Davis, Associate Professor, Languages & Literatures, james.davis@uni.edu
- Jeremy Schraffenberger, Associate Professor, Languages & Literatures, Jeremy.Schraffenberger@uni.edu.
- Karen Tracey, Associate Professor, Languages & Literatures, Karen.tracey@uni.edu

Participants
- Adjunct English 1005 instructors, TBD.

Brief Description of Project: *(Please limit description to 150 words.)*

This assessment examines LAC 1A Student Outcomes 2a and 2b, which focus on students' knowledge and use of writing processes. English 1005 instructors are collecting all documents produced by students for one (1) research-based project in Spring 2013. Documents will be organized individually to produce a snapshot of the writing processes and their effects. One round of assessment will enumerate program-wide data (e.g., avg. number of drafts, types of writing within process, etc.). A second round of assessment will randomly sample across sections and inquire into specific qualities which may include integration of research, significance, and degrees of revision.

This grant is solely to adequately train and fund raters for the assessment.

Total Amount of Funding Requested: $1080

List below the names of Department Head(s) and Dean(s) who will be submitting e-mailed acknowledgements/approval of this project:

Julie Husband, Joel Haack

Check one:
__X__Proposal Submission
_____Proposal Resubmission

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL PROJECT DETAILS

Overview

(Address the following as appropriate: Problem or Need That Your Project Addresses, Relationship to Current Assessment Plan/Activities, Intended Outcomes of the Project)

This project will provide descriptive insight to the Department of Languages & Literatures, the Liberal Arts Core Coordinating Committee, and other university groups about student behaviors and outcomes within LAC 1A. Goal 1 of the LAC 1A Student Outcomes, along with its sub-goals, focuses primarily on the formal written product, while Goal 2 and its sub-goals focus on the student's ability to use a writing *process*. Nancie Atwell (1987) described writing process as "an iterative, complex experience, rather than a linear sequence of steps that writers must follow to achieve a product." This assessment looks specifically at Goal 2 and its sub-goals in order to better understand the teaching of writing as a process in English 1005.

First, this assessment will demonstrate the complexity of student performances within writing courses. It will generate descriptive rather than evaluative data about how students respond to various aspects of writing instruction, at various stages within the process, and how they work and re-work their ideas over a span of time, not just at its final outcome. In turn, these results may foster conversations both across and outside LAC 1A courses about teaching written composition and research with a process-based approach.

Second, this assessment provides data that can aid thinking about teaching writing and research in other areas of the LAC. Complexity of student performances within writing tasks has led composition studies to focus on processes rather than products yet UNI has little data to reflect this. As a result, the nature of composition teaching outside the Department of Languages and Literatures (and hence what gets taught in English 1005, Cornerstone, and writing-enhanced courses) appears spotty and unclear to many. This lack of clarity is corroborated by the recent University Writing Committee survey of the faculty about teaching writing and reported in the Spring 2012 Report to the Faculty Senate.

Third, this assessment will provide valuable feedback to instructors about different pedagogical strategies relative to student outcomes. We recognize the perception held by some that students do not learn how to write in ENGLISH 1005 and/or do not receive a coherent learning experience because there is no standardized approach to writing instruction. The assessment can provide a perspective with which to examine those perceptions and base any future changes regarding both program coherence and academic freedom. Again, this project may be valuable not only to the Department of Languages & Literatures, but also to other parts of LAC 1A, such as Cornerstone, which faces similar issues across its sections.

Fourth, because ENGLISH 1005, "College Writing and Research" is concerned with how students think about and integrate information sources into their own perspective, this assessment will provide student-level data about student research processes. As with the writing process generally, more specific attention to processes and development of ideas through research will add to the 2011 LAC 1A Report, which only noted types of research assignments given, not how students performed. This data can help establish an initial sense of what students are able to do within a written research assignment after completion of English 1005 so that other instructors might better understand how students use the writing process to conduct and report research. In turn, this will help faculty provide students with a clear sense of expectations, ways to build upon prior experiences, and eventually how to succeed in their writing and research projects.

Description of the Project

(Address the following as appropriate: Explanation of What Will Be Done and By Whom Approximate Timeline of Activities/Steps, Description Of Funding Needed and How It Will Be Used)

Ongoing work <u>not</u> covered by grant money:

1005 instructors are already gathering from each student in their courses all documents produced in relation to one (1) research-based assignment. This part of the assessment, then, is already underway and is not covered by the assessment grant monies. English 1005 instructors have been directed to

"collect all the following (or photocopies of the following), if applicable:

- all drafts and revisions from each student
- any pre-, post-, and intermediate reflections on the writing
- any peer and instructor feedback, whether or not this is separate from the draft itself (e.g., your marginal comments, written peer comments, even notes a student may take during a peer review or workshop session, etc.)
- your assignment sheet."

Documents are arranged according to each student to provide a "snapshot" of that student's writing process for that assignment. Names and identifying features of these documents will be removed before analysis. Only course section and a number of 1 – 25 (depending on number of students per section) will identify the individuals.

This will comprise a compilation of data points regarding each student's writing process. The data are effects of particular behaviors and will be interpreted as such. These behaviors are spelled out explicitly in the LAC 1A Student Outcomes, Goal 2:

"knowledge of and ability to practice the processes of effective writing

a. awareness and skillful use of writing processes, including invention, drafting, revising, and editing
b. ability to recognize in one's own writing possibilities for improvement."

<u>May 13 - 24</u>: Quantitative measures will be conducted by the Coordinator of Writing Programs and/ or by a student under his direction. Again, this is already covered through other monies and service load within the Department of Languages and Literatures. These measures will only regard the number of drafts produced by each individual, number of reflective essays, number of peer reviews, number of self-assessments, and/ or amount of instructor comments. This quantification will be descriptive rather than evaluative. This will establish the presence or absence of evidence of a writing process and provide numerical information to describe the writing program across sections. Documents within the data set will be categorized according to the basics of the writing process as listed in goal 2.a.: invention, drafting, revising, and editing. However, because the writing process is recursive (Flower & Hayes 1981) this will serve only as a guide.

Work to be covered by Assessment Grant:

During this time, raters will read and discuss implications raised by shared criteria on assessing the writing process (e.g., Thompkins 1992; Gearhart & Wolf 1997; Kolb, et al 2012, etc.) and writing assessment in general (Bloom's Taxonomy, NCTE Position Statement on Writing Assessment, etc.). In a meeting facilitated by the Coordinator of Writing Programs, raters will apply their understanding of these issues to a sample of student papers collected outside this study and discuss their reactions to those papers with each other. This will help establish inter-rater reliability before engaging with papers for this assessment. It will also provide a theoretical base-line for raters to develop additional criteria in order to generate the best "thick" description possible (Geertz 1973).

<u>May 27 – June 25</u>: A random sampling of assignments (around 10% of the total, n = +/- 20) will be consider qualitative measures applied by raters starting with set criteria but will also develop and examine further criteria as needed for further description and proper contextualization (Strauss and Corbin 1998). For example, raters may inquire into a specific instance of a "revision" counted quantitatively and attempt to ascertain further description of that: was it a global or local revision, were other processes enacted along with the revision, did the revision raise additional tasks to be addressed, etc.? Initial criteria will consider how students integrate research (see attached rubric), examine the "skills" evidenced within a writing process (Goal 2.a), how those skills vary according to student purpose within the process, and whether or not the student appears to go beyond given feedback and, thus, "recognize in one's own writing possibilities for improvement" (Goal 2b). Quantitative data of the whole will provide context and deeper understanding of qualitative measures. Contingent on funding, this can be done either by a single group handling all measures or two groups focusing on one LAC 1A sub-goal each.

Total time estimate: 3-4 sessions of several hours each, <u>minimum</u>.

Impact and Dissemination

(Address the following: Plans for Sharing Project Results, Plans for Using Project Outcomes to Improve Student Learning/Program Goals or Quality)

Under separate funding, the narratives and integration of research, along with any other documentation from the groups will be submitted to the Languages and Literatures Writing Committee, the Head of the Department of Languages & Literatures, the Dean of the College of Humanities Arts and Sciences, and the Liberal Arts Core Coordinator (4 copies total). Pending budget, we would like to provide additional copies to the members of the Liberal Arts Core Committee, the Director of Academic Assessment, the Director of the Writing Center, the Dean of Rod Library, the University Writing Committee, and all Cornerstone teaching staff and leadership (+/- 35 additional copies).
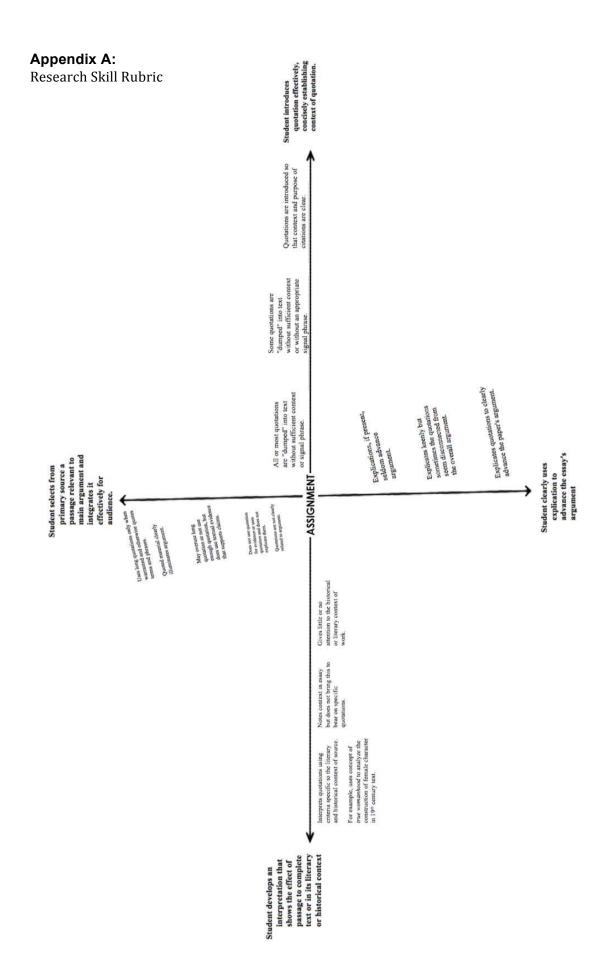
All these bodies have an interest in writing instruction and can use the data that will be generated to think critically about writing instruction in three areas of the curriculum: 1) the first year and as an entré to academic culture, 2) subsequent years within the Liberal Arts Core, and 3) within each disciplinary program and as an indication of readiness for graduation. These areas of the curriculum will each have their own needs, purposes, and expected outcomes. Indeed, each disciplinary program in 3) will have its own needs, purposes, and expected outcomes. However, to establish writing requirements beyond the generic "research paper" and relevant to the students' needs, each discipline needs information this assessment can provide.

Writing is a common, across the disciplines method instructors use to assess critical thinking and integration of knowledge into students' own perspectives. Yet this is a process students must practice and learn the differences in expectations through engagement with specific materials and disciplinary conventions (Bazerman and Paradis 1991, Sternglass 1997, Bean 2001, Russell 2002, Ziegler and Montplaisir 2012). Such models are increasingly important to universities in this competitive environment where attention to writing is a factor measured by formal and informal evaluators (e.g., U.S. News & World Report 2012). As such the impact of this study is a truly value-added enterprise that can significantly address what several internal studies have pointed to as one area the faculty at large would like to see more information.

ASSESSMENT MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL BUDGET

Add or delete rows as needed to complete this form. Provide brief, but specific descriptions.

Supplies, Resource Materials, Printing, Postage	
Item Description	*$ Amount Requested*
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Subtotal:	

Student Assistance	
Description (e.g., tasks, hours, rate/hour)	*$ Amount Requested*
1.	
2.	

Travel Reimbursement	
Description (e.g., who, where, mileage, meals)	*$ Amount Requested*
1.	
2.	
Subtotal:	

Equipment and/or Software	
Item Description	*$ Amount Requested*
1.	
2.	
Subtotal:	

Other Direct Costs	
Item Description	*$ Amount Requested*
1. **3 Instructors Compensation (each $18/hr x 20 hours = $360/ ea. X 3 = $1080)**	$ 1080
2.	
Subtotal:	$1080
Total Amount Requested:	$1080

ASSIGNMENT

Student selects from primary source a passage relevant to main argument and integrates it effectively for audience.

Student introduces quotation effectively, concisely establishing context of quotation.

Student clearly uses explication to advance the essay's argument

Student develops an interpretation that shows the effect of passage to complete text or in its literary or historical context

Student introduces quotation effectively, concisely establishing context of quotation.

Quotations are introduced so that context and purpose of citations are clear.

Some quotations are "dumped" into text without sufficient context or without an appropriate signal phrase.

All or most quotations are "dumped" into text without sufficient context or signal phrase.

Explications, if present, seldom advance argument.

Explicates keenly but sometimes the quotations seem disconnected from the overall argument.

Explicates quotations to clearly advance the paper's argument.

Uses long quotations only when warranted and otherwise quotes terms and phrases.

Quoted material clearly illuminates argument.

May overuse long quotation or not use enough quotsal evidence does use textual evidence that supports claims.

Does not use quotation for evidence or uses quotation and does not explicate them.

Quotations are not clearly related to argument.

Gives little or no attention to the historical or literary context of work.

Notes context in essay but does not bring this to bear on specific quotations.

Interprets quotations using criteria specific to the literary and historical context of source.

For example, uses concept of *true womanhood* to analyze the construction of female character in 19th century text.

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Kolb, Kenneth, et al. "Assessing the Writing Process: Do Writing-Intensive First-Year Seminars Change How Students Write?" *Teaching Sociology* 41.1 (December 2012), 20-31.

Russell, David. *Writing in the Academic Disciplines: A Curricular History, 2nd Edition*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2002.

Sternglass, Marilyn. *Time to Know Them: A Longitudinal Study of Writing and Learning at the College Level*. New York: Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997.

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Ziegler, Brittany and Lisa Montplaisir. "Measuring Student Understanding in a Portfolio-Based Course." *Journal of College Science Teaching* 42.1 (Sept. – Oct. 2012), 16 – 27.