

University Writing 20 Assessment – Fall 2003 to Spring 2004

Table 1. Pretest: Types of writing

	Percent N=562
Book review	
Very often	8%
Often	22%
Sometimes	20%
Occasionally	27%
Not at all	24%
Creative writing (e.g., poem, short story)	
Very often	12%
Often	29%
Sometimes	25%
Occasionally	26%
Not at all	8%
Laboratory report	
Very often	12%
Often	31%
Sometimes	19%
Occasionally	13%
Not at all	24%
Literary analysis	
Very often	47%
Often	36%
Sometimes	11%
Occasionally	5%
Not at all	1%
News report writing	
Very often	6%
Often	10%
Sometimes	12%
Occasionally	30%
Not at all	42%
News feature writing	
Very often	5%
Often	9%
Sometimes	11%
Occasionally	25%
Not at all	50%
Research paper	
Very often	7%
Often	23%
Sometimes	27%
Occasionally	38%
Not at all	5%

	Percent
Historical research essay	
Very often	5%
Often	18%
Sometimes	26%
Occasionally	35%
Not at all	15%
Writing for extracurricular activities	
Very often	14%
Often	12%
Sometimes	11%
Occasionally	17%
Not at all	46%
Others	
Very often	24%
Often	16%
Sometimes	5%
Occasionally	4%
Not at all	51%

Table 2. Pretest: Writing tasks

	Percent N=562
Describe	
Very often	18%
Often	36%
Sometimes	30%
Occasionally	13%
Not at all	4%
Report facts	
Very often	22%
Often	36%
Sometimes	26%
Occasionally	12%
Not at all	4%
Synthesize information from different sources	
Very often	27%
Often	43%
Sometimes	19%
Occasionally	8%
Not at all	2%
Analyze the needs of a writing audience	
Very often	13%
Often	25%
Sometimes	26%
Occasionally	17%
Not at all	19%
Criticize written arguments	
Very often	22%
Often	32%
Sometimes	26%
Occasionally	15%
Not at all	6%
Offer and support your opinion	
Very often	59%
Often	30%
Sometimes	7%
Occasionally	3%
Not at all	1%

Table 3. Pretest: Writing process

	Percent N=562
Turned in drafts of an assignment prior to the final paper	
Very often	13%
Often	32%
Sometimes	21%
Occasionally	22%
Not at all	12%
Exchanged paper with classmates to give and receive feedback on works in progress	
Very often	14%
Often	32%
Sometimes	23%
Occasionally	22%
Not at all	8%
Received feedback from your teachers prior to final paper	
Very often	15%
Often	31%
Sometimes	25%
Occasionally	22%
Not at all	7%
Received feedback on final paper	
Very often	23%
Often	38%
Sometimes	22%
Occasionally	13%
Not at all	4%

Table 4. Pretest: Research sources

	Percent N=562
Topic-specific books	
Very often	24%
Often	41%
Sometimes	22%
Occasionally	10%
Not at all	2%
Assigned textbooks	
Very often	38%
Often	33%
Sometimes	16%
Occasionally	9%
Not at all	4%
Articles in scholarly journals	
Very often	9%
Often	19%
Sometimes	28%
Occasionally	27%
Not at all	17%
Articles in popular magazines	
Very often	5%
Often	10%
Sometimes	25%
Occasionally	33%
Not at all	27%
Articles in newspapers	
Very often	10%
Often	20%
Sometimes	32%
Occasionally	27%
Not at all	11%
Internet	
Very often	48%
Often	31%
Sometimes	13%
Occasionally	7%
Not at all	1%
Encyclopedias	
Very often	8%
Often	21%
Sometimes	28%
Occasionally	26%
Not at all	17%
Interviews	
Very often	2%
Often	8%
Sometimes	20%
Occasionally	37%
Not at all	33%

	Percent
Other	
Very often	21%
Often	9%
Sometimes	7%
Occasionally	4%
Not at all	59%

Table 5. Pretest: Frequency, Length, and Format of Writing Papers

	Percent N=562
Estimate the frequency with which you used the five paragraph format	
Very often	51%
Often	26%
Sometimes	14%
Occasionally	7%
Not at all	3%
Less than 3 pages	
More than 10 assignments	67%
6-10 assignments	19%
2-5 assignments	11%
One assignment	2%
None	1%
3-5 pages	
More than 10 assignments	28%
6-10 assignments	35%
2-5 assignments	31%
One assignment	4%
None	1%
6-10 pages	
More than 10 assignments	4%
6-10 assignments	11%
2-5 assignments	43%
One assignment	28%
None	14%
Over 10 pages	
More than 10 assignments	< 0.5%
6-10 assignments	1%
2-5 assignments	24%
One assignment	34%
None	40%

Table 6. Pretest: Student self-evaluation

	Percent N=562
Learn how to write papers for college	
Very important	77%
Somewhat important	18%
Neither important nor unimportant	3%
Somewhat unimportant	1%
Very unimportant	1%
Improve writing skills	
Very important	82%
Somewhat important	16%
Neither important nor unimportant	2%
Somewhat unimportant	-
Very unimportant	< 0.5%
Refresh what I already know about writing	
Very important	35%
Somewhat important	48%
Neither important nor unimportant	14%
Somewhat unimportant	2%
Very unimportant	1%
Fine-tune my writing skills	
Very important	76%
Somewhat important	20%
Neither important nor unimportant	3%
Somewhat unimportant	1%
Very unimportant	< 0.5%
Figure out what it takes to do well in UW 20	
Very important	52%
Somewhat important	32%
Neither important nor unimportant	13%
Somewhat unimportant	2%
Very unimportant	2%
Impress the instructor with my writing skills	
Very important	24%
Somewhat important	41%
Neither important nor unimportant	27%
Somewhat unimportant	4%
Very unimportant	3%
Avoid doing poorly in class	
Very important	81%
Somewhat important	15%
Neither important nor unimportant	3%
Somewhat unimportant	1%
Very unimportant	< 0.5%
Get an A in the course	
Very important	52%
Somewhat important	36%
Neither important nor unimportant	10%
Somewhat unimportant	1%
Very unimportant	1%

	Percent
Write better than other students in the class	
Very important	11%
Somewhat important	22%
Neither important nor unimportant	49%
Somewhat unimportant	9%
Very unimportant	9%
Avoid getting a bad grade in the course	
Very important	78%
Somewhat important	18%
Neither important nor unimportant	3%
Somewhat unimportant	1%
Very unimportant	-
How would you characterize yourself as a writer?	
Excellent	3%
Very good	39%
Good	47%
Fair	10%
Poor	1%
How do you think others view your writing ability?	
Excellent	6%
Very good	41%
Good	45%
Fair	8%
Poor	-

Table 7. Pretest: Student self-description

	Percent N=562
I try to keep track of how well I am doing while I work	
Describes me very well	31%
Describes me well	39%
Describes me somewhat	25%
Does not describe me very well	4%
Does not describe me at all	1%
I often use reminders to help me remember things I need to do	
Describes me very well	45%
Describes me well	27%
Describes me somewhat	19%
Does not describe me very well	7%
Does not describe me at all	2%
I like to work towards specific goals I set for myself	
Describes me very well	34%
Describes me well	34%
Describes me somewhat	25%
Does not describe me very well	5%
Does not describe me at all	1%

	Percent
After I perform well on an activity, I feel good about myself	
Describes me very well	65%
Describes me well	30%
Describes me somewhat	5%
Does not describe me very well	< 0.5%
Does not describe me at all	< 0.5%
I tend to get down on myself when I have performed poorly	
Describes me very well	35%
Describes me well	29%
Describes me somewhat	26%
Does not describe me very well	9%
Does not describe me at all	2%
I often practice important tasks before I actually do them	
Describes me very well	7%
Describes me well	20%
Describes me somewhat	44%
Does not describe me very well	26%
Does not describe me at all	3%
I usually am aware of how I am performing on an activity	
Describes me very well	18%
Describes me well	51%
Describes me somewhat	28%
Does not describe me very well	3%
Does not describe me at all	1%
I try to arrange my work area to focus on my work	
Describes me very well	24%
Describes me well	32%
Describes me somewhat	26%
Does not describe me very well	15%
Does not describe me at all	4%
I establish personal goals for myself	
Describes me very well	33%
Describes me well	33%
Describes me somewhat	26%
Does not describe me very well	6%
Does not describe me at all	1%
When I have completed a task I reward myself	
Describes me very well	17%
Describes me well	24%
Describes me somewhat	33%
Does not describe me very well	22%
Does not describe me at all	4%
I tend to be tough on myself when I have not done well on a task	
Describes me very well	30%
Describes me well	29%
Describes me somewhat	25%
Does not describe me very well	13%
Does not describe me at all	2%

	Percent
I like to go over an important activity before performing it	
Describes me very well	13%
Describes me well	26%
Describes me somewhat	39%
Does not describe me very well	21%
Does not describe me at all	2%
I like to keep track of my progress on projects	
Describes me very well	22%
Describes me well	38%
Describes me somewhat	30%
Does not describe me very well	9%
Does not describe me at all	1%
I try to surround myself with objects and people that bring out desirable behaviors	
Describes me very well	26%
Describes me well	39%
Describes me somewhat	25%
Does not describe me very well	7%
Does not describe me at all	2%
I like to set task goals for my performance	
Describes me very well	24%
Describes me well	36%
Describes me somewhat	28%
Does not describe me very well	10%
Does not describe me at all	2%
When I do an assignment well I treat myself to something I enjoy	
Describes me very well	17%
Describes me well	29%
Describes me somewhat	32%
Does not describe me very well	19%
Does not describe me at all	3%
I am often critical of myself concerning my failures	
Describes me very well	34%
Describes me well	30%
Describes me somewhat	21%
Does not describe me very well	13%
Does not describe me at all	2%
I often rehearse my plan for dealing with a challenge before facing it	
Describes me very well	11%
Describes me well	29%
Describes me somewhat	40%
Does not describe me very well	18%
Does not describe me at all	3%

Table 8. Post-test: Student self-evaluation

	Percent N=559
I registered for this particular section because the content interested me.	
Strongly agree	33%
Agree	42%
Neutral	10%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	6%
By the end of the course I was more interested in the subject matter than at the start.	
Strongly agree	22%
Agree	35%
Neutral	23%
Disagree	14%
Strongly disagree	6%
The assignments for this course were challenging or thought-provoking.	
Strongly agree	34%
Agree	45%
Neutral	16%
Disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	1%
Comments on my work by the professor were thorough and informative.	
Strongly agree	45%
Agree	39%
Neutral	9%
Disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	1%
The assignments were returned in time to be useful.	
Strongly agree	36%
Agree	40%
Neutral	12%
Disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	2%
If I had questions or concerns, the instructor was accessible.	
Strongly agree	52%
Agree	40%
Neutral	7%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	< 0.5%
The class size contributed to making this course an effective learning experience.	
Strongly agree	57%
Agree	33%
Neutral	8%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	1%

	Percent
Comments on my work from other students in the class were generally informative and helpful.	
Strongly agree	19%
Agree	43%
Neutral	24%
Disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	2%
Collaborating with other students in the class helped to improve my writing skills.	
Strongly agree	15%
Agree	34%
Neutral	32%
Disagree	15%
Strongly disagree	4%
I improved my capacity to analyze and evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view in the readings for the course.	
Strongly agree	22%
Agree	44%
Neutral	22%
Disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	3%
I improved my capacities for analytical writing in this course.	
Strongly agree	23%
Agree	47%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	4%
My ability to synthesize ideas from a number of sources was enhanced by this course.	
Strongly agree	23%
Agree	49%
Neutral	20%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	2%
I improved my ability to construct an informed and persuasive argument.	
Strongly agree	22%
Agree	51%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	2%
I am comfortable asking the professor of this course for a letter of recommendation.	
Strongly agree	31%
Agree	33%
Neutral	22%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	4%

	Percent
UW 20 improved my research skills.	
Strongly agree	28%
Agree	42%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	3%
I feel comfortable using GW libraries for research.	
Strongly agree	41%
Agree	47%
Neutral	10%
Disagree	2%
Strongly disagree	1%
I know how to find subject-specific scholarly articles.	
Strongly agree	40%
Agree	51%
Neutral	7%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	< 0.5%
Having a librarian involved in UW 20 enhanced the course experience.	
Strongly agree	28%
Agree	30%
Neutral	26%
Disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	3%
The class instruction session on library and research skills led by the class librarian was valuable.	
Strongly agree	25%
Agree	39%
Neutral	22%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	4%

Table 9. Post-test: Research

	Percent N=559
In addition to UW 20, I took one or more classes this semester that required significant research.	
Yes	52%
No	48%
The research skills learned in UW 20 were useful for other classes this semester.	
Strongly agree	29%
Agree	45%
Neutral	20%
Disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	2%
The individual research appointments led by the class librarian were valuable.	
Strongly agree	25%
Agree	38%
Neutral	20%
Disagree somewhat	12%
Strongly disagree	5%

Table 10. Post-test: Student self-evaluation

	Percent N=559
Overall, my level of engagement in this course was	
Very high	28%
High	49%
Moderate	19%
Low	2%
Very low	1%
Overall, I found this course to be very challenging.	
Strongly agree	39%
Agree	45%
Neutral	10%
Disagree somewhat	4%
Strongly disagree	2%
Compared with my other GW courses this semester the amount of effort I put into UW 20 was	
Higher	77%
About the same	21%
Lower	2%
The average amount of time per week I spent outside of class on UW20 was	[Spring Only N=313]
More than 20 hours	4%
16-20 hours	8%
11-5 hours	17%
6-10 hours	33%
3-5 hours	34%
2 hours or less	4%

	Percent
How would you characterize yourself as a writer?	
Excellent	7%
Very good	41%
Good	43%
Fair	9%
Poor	1%
How do you think others view your writing ability?	
Excellent	7%
Very good	44%
Good	39%
Fair	10%
Poor	1%

Table 11. Students' grades in all sections

	Actual grade N=642	Anticipated grade N=553	Thought deserved grade N=554
A	46%	38%	61%
B	42%	48%	32%
C	9%	6%	2%
D-F	1%	<0.5%	-
R	1%	-	-
Z	< 0.5%	-	-
I	< 0.5%	-	-
Don't know	-	8%	5%