Course Design Institute: WAC/WID Courses
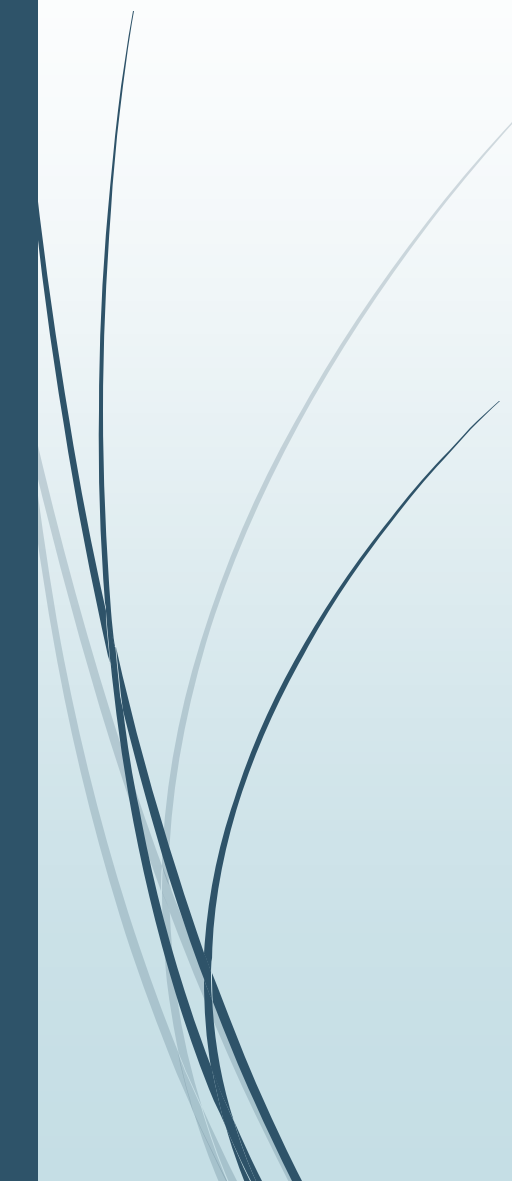
Center for Academic Excellence

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CDI Overview

- Identifying & Integrating WAC/WID learning outcomes
- Examining End-of-Course Writing Projects
- Supporting WAC/WID outcomes throughout the course

Why Do They Write?

- Consider the specific writing assignments in your course.

- Given these assignments, what is the purpose of the writing students currently do in your course?

CDI Outcomes

- Integrate two or more of the WAC/WID **learning outcomes** into your course

- Examine and expand on the writing students do in your courses, including **writing to learn** opportunities

- Integrate strategies to scaffold students' **writing in your discipline**

A Backwards Design Approach

"The best designs derive backwards from the learnings sought."

(Wiggins & McTighe)

Course Design Thought Process…

What is it I hope that students will have learned, that will still be there and have value, several years after the course is over?" The answer to this question forms the basis of the learning goals. Then the designer moves backward in time to the end of the course and asks the assessment question, "**What would the students have to do to convince me— and themselves— that they had achieved those learning goals?"** The process of working out the answer to that question clarifies the real meaning of the learning goals. And then it's time to move back in time once more, to the time of the course itself, and ask, "**What would the students need to do during the course to be able to do well on these assessment activities**?"

(Fink, 2013)

Course Goals

- Our goals describe broad learning outcomes and concepts (*what you want students to learn*) expressed in general terms.

6 Areas of Significant Learning
(Fink, 2013)

1. **Foundational knowledge**: Understanding of key content: facts, principles, concepts, procedures, etc.

2. **Application**: Thinking skills, other physical and intellectual skills, managing complex projects

3. **Integration**: Connecting ideas, information, realms of life, etc.

4. **Human dimension**: Knowing how to interact with oneself and with others

5. **Caring**: Making changes in one's feelings, interests, and values

6. **Learning how to learn**: Learning how to keep on learning after the course is over

Objectives / Learning Outcomes

➡ Your objectives identify the specific knowledge and behaviors (skills, values, attitudes) students should exhibit by the end of the course.

➡ Objectives transform goal generalizations into specific student performance and behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skill development.

➡ Which writing outcomes will help you to achieve your course goals or support other content objectives?

Assessment Brainstorming Questions

1. What am I trying to prepare students to do?
2. How will I know if students have achieved the desired results?
3. What will I accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency?
4. Through what authentic performance task(s) will students demonstrate the desired understandings?

Sample WI Syllabus (Excerpts)

1. How does the SOM assignment provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of course objectives in a meaningful way?

2. What opportunities are there for students to receive and use feedback on drafts of this writing during the course? To use writing to support their learning?

3. How does the assessment require students to demonstrate knowledge of discipline-specific writing, including knowledge of purpose, audience, rhetorical context and forms of attribution appropriate to academic discourse?

Review Your End-of-Course Writing Assignment

1. (How) Does your assignment provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of course objectives in a meaningful way?

2. (How) Does it provide an opportunity for students to communicate their understanding of the course goals/objectives through writing?

3. Are there opportunities for students to receive and use feedback on drafts of this writing during the course? To use writing to support learning?

4. If a WID course, does the assessment require students to demonstrate discipline-specific knowledge of purpose, audience, and rhetorical context and employ the forms of attribution appropriate to academic discourse?

5. What needs to be revised to address the above?

Closing the Loop: Supporting Outcomes During the Course

➧ "What is it I hope that students will have learned, that will still be there and have value, several years after the course is over?" The answer to this question forms the basis of the learning goals. Then the designer moves backward in time to the end of the course and asks the assessment question, "What would the students have to do to convince me— and themselves— that they had achieved those learning goals?" The process of working out the answer to that question clarifies the real meaning of the learning goals. And then it's time to move back in time once more, to the time of the course itself, and ask, "What would the students need to do during the course to be able to do well on these assessment activities?" (Fink, 2013)

Writing Assessment Task Analysis (for WID courses)

➡ What genre or discipline-specific writing skills does a student need to successfully complete this assignment?