



COURSE ASSESSMENT REPORT (CAR)

A. BACKGROUND

1. Course number: WRT 150
2. Course title: Strategies in Writing
3. Instructional Method: Traditional Online Hybrid
4. How many sections were assessed: 5
5. Assessment Term: Fall 2016
6. General Education Category (check all that apply)

FOUNDATIONS - Writing

B. TEACHING METHODS

7. Explain how the information in the previous CAR – and the GEC's feedback - helped you improve your teaching of the course this time.

Since the last assessment, we changed from the collaboration goal to the information literacy goal—and the GE program changed from the four-item rubric to the three-item rubric, so in a way we had to start from scratch here. Even so, last time we shared our assessment results with all WRT 150 faculty and discussed ways to improve our teaching of both written communication and collaboration—including sharpening our own portfolio-grading rubric based on the GE written communication rubric.

8. Your Course Assessment Plan (CAP) contains examples of how you planned to teach each of the content and skills student learning outcomes. For the Course Assessment Report please describe the most important things you did to teach the student learning outcomes (you don't need to describe everything you did, but you may if you wish).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. An understanding of general academic writing conventions for language, development, organization, and format.

Describe what you did to teach this student learning outcome:

Teacher #1: All of the projects in WRT 150 focus on acquiring these skills. To begin each project, I provided rubric outlining the goals of the given project; I also broke down each overarching genre into key elements in an attempt to help demystify the writing process for students. I lectured on the rhetorical considerations of each type of paper, paired with activities designed to help students heighten their awareness and skill levels of the subject matter (usually, this would take the form of in-class writing exercises, collaborative activities, and/or multimedia). Students also read and discussed models of "A" papers within their assigned genre from the Green Book. As they dived deeper into the writing process, I worked with students in groups and one-on-one, providing verbal and written feedback on their work. This feedback was typically Socratic in nature, designed to encourage students to identify problems and devise their own solutions. Some specific examples of related lectures and exercises included:

- *Illustrating the differences between informal and formal language conventions (appropriate use of "I" language).*
- *Discussing the balance between "showing" and "telling."*
- *In order to give students a sense of how style works in language, I briefly lectured on some basic style elements that occur on the sentence, paragraph, and composition level. Then, I had students work in groups to look over some passages from established authors in an attempt to find sentence, paragraph, and composition level decisions that help deliver the authors dominant impression.*
- *Another exercise involved students reading over three different papers, each having received a different grade in the portfolio process (A, B, and C). Based on discussions we'd had up to that point, I asked them to write down the grade they think it received and WHY. We were able to discuss their reasons and how it fit into what the portfolio group would be looking for in terms of content, format, language, organization, and development.*
- *Spent a class discussing MLA format, with an in-class activity.*
- *For one of our research projects, students not only worked on their own topics, but we also collectively worked on writing an all-class paper. The subject we decided on was the Flint water crisis, and over the course of the project I had students go through each step of the writing process (from seeking out quality sources, to identifying focus areas, organizing information, working on style, and MLA). The intent was for students to gain a deeper understanding for what they needed to do for their own papers alongside each step that we took in the larger group paper.*

Teacher #2: I combined assignments from the textbook, Writing Matters, 2nd edition, by Rebecca Moore Howard, with samples of student writing to acquaint the students with the expectations for WRT 150 papers.

Teacher #3: We often do a full-class workshop with an "unfinished" paper—one with clunky sentences, a lack of organization, little evidence, and fuzzy citations. We sometimes cut the paragraphs apart and re-organize them based on a reader's needs and expectations, or we focus

on a single paragraph and revise on a sentence level with a specific style issue in mind (active sentence constructions, for example.) We also make use of laptops in class by brainstorming keywords and finding additional sources that could help develop the paper. By solving the problems of a nameless student writer, they can better solve their own.

Teacher #4: I taught the rhetorical situation as a foundation to explore how language, development, organization, and format change depending on audience, purpose, and constraints. We read several student essays (typically two per week until the last two weeks) in our textbook to examine how each essay uses language differently or organizes information differently depending on the purpose of that piece, the audience's needs for that piece, and the constraints the author likely experienced.

To teach development and organization, I facilitated activities where students read closely sample essays and located the focus or function of each paragraph in order to see the strategic order of the essay and brainstorm ways to improve it. We also did this with specific paragraphs, working to see the specific ways each sentence worked to further develop the paragraph's focus through illustrations, similes and metaphors, a source or sources that build on one another, and examples. We used these breakdowns of essays to then examine thesis statements, introductions, and conclusions to see how they functioned to guide and effectively close the whole essay.

I taught several lessons to help students refine their language skills including lessons on sentence variation and using punctuation and grammar strategically, especially considering audience needs and the purpose of the piece. I also emphasized that students be clear above all else in their papers, as many were struggling with their sentences because they were trying to sound "academic" before thoroughly understanding their content.

Teacher #5: I taught these through assigned readings, in-lab writing exercises, in class group activities, and lectures.

2. An awareness of a full range of writing processes, including invention, planning, organizing, revising, and editing.

Describe what you did to teach this student learning outcome:

Teacher #1: Throughout each paper, I had deadlines for their ideas, as well as deadlines for the opening pages and first drafts. Having multiple deadlines helps students see writing as more of a process instead of something to be completed the night before one final project deadline. I feel if I can get students to develop good writing habits, they will be more apt to revise and edit effectively. In addition, three of our workshops were assisted with writing consultants leading peer-review groups to receive further feedback before a project was due.

To help invent, I had students perform basic brainstorming activities. For example, for the narrative, one exercise involved playing a short video (The Moth Presents: Matteson Perry's "Running of the Bulls") in which a man recalls a moment where he had to "cross a fence" -- make a crucial out of character decision of some kind. I then had students think of their own

"fence moment" and asked them questions to further explore the moment. We discussed these afterwards. There were multiple prewriting exercises to help invent, but also to explore and idea (such as working on a bubble map for their research topic idea).

In terms of organization -- basic organizational structure was discussed through a "Research Paper 101" lecture, but each project discussed had its own unique structural differences that were laid out after ideas were in place. For example, with the narrative, I had students not only explore a chronological structure, but also gave them a handout in which they tried to arrange their paper using a flashback structure. For the analysis, I lectured on the importance of organizing content from more concrete points first to more abstract ones last, emphasizing how there is a logic to every structure and how it helps root, guide, and engage the intended audience.

Another exercise for organization (as well as style) involved having students gather in groups and working together in order to put a cut-up sample paper together, using transitional sentences as clues. Students needed to think about and decide what order certain topics should be discussed as they arranged this paper.

For revising, I had students submit one full draft of each paper for notes. The notes I place on each draft are thorough, with not only my reactions as I read through the draft, but also a letter that I write to the student discussing what is working and what could be improved moving forward. Students also worked with writing consultants in three peer review workshops over the course of the semester.

Throughout the course, style was discussed by looking at Green Book portfolios and supplemental materials. The aforementioned cut-up paper exercise and established author paragraph exercise were two examples of specific activities centered around this concept. For the final couple weeks of class, we shifted into heavy revision and the class became more about addressing style issues one-on-one in preparation for the final portfolio submission.

Teacher #2: In addition to assignments in Writing Matters that addressed these issues, I had students prepare a topic proposal form that required them to explain what topic they planned to write about, what initial research they had done, how they thought they might organize their papers, and include a list of sources they had found that related to the topic. A librarian presented a class early in the semester that presented the library's website and ways to use it to find useful information. A peer review session was held in which students reviewed each other's papers and filled out a form that asked specific questions about the papers. The students then submitted instructor drafts, which I reviewed for content, organization, style, and mechanics. The students were also encouraged to use the writing consultant in the classroom, the Knowledge Market, and the Writing Center.

Teacher #3: I stress the technique of "reading their way" into a topic...to use news articles and outside sources to uncover interesting topics that other writers are discussing. I require three drafts of each paper as well as short revision reports in which they outline the changes made from draft to draft.

Teacher #4: I taught many different ways of approaching the writing process. I encouraged students to see writing as a recursive process where they will often return to earlier steps as they draft and revise.

In terms of invention, I used several brainstorming activities to help students create, narrow, and develop their topics that involved research but also personal experience, observations, and basic fieldwork. I guided them in using freewriting, mind-mapping, and searching specific websites to help them generate or narrow ideas.

For all types of papers, I had students explore each part of their specific rhetorical situation. As they identified details about their college-level audience, their purposes in writing about their topics, and their unique constraints, they each developed an individualized plan that helped them identify their personal obstacles and prepare to deal with them. These worksheets closed out with students identifying which resources they would use and when they planned to use them (writing center consultants, research consultants, sample essays, office hours). At the end of each unit, I had students reflect back on their plan for that unit and identify what they would do differently for the next paper.

For research-based papers I had students come up with potential research questions to develop their understanding of their topic and identify the types of evidence (statistical, anecdotal, scientific, analogical, and/or expert testimonial) that would help engage and/or convince their audience.

I provided a couple of different outlining techniques to students to help them organize their papers. Students broke down sample essays by analyzing each paragraph's function or purpose rather than just its topic. Students studied how those paragraphs flowed through specific movements in the essay and how those movements fleshed out the thesis. Then at the beginning of their own writing process, students moved through this exercise in reverse by breaking down a thesis into movements and then planning specific paragraphs. Later in the drafting process, they reverse-outlined their own papers using this method.

To help students revise, I often brought back some of our early invention and outlining activities while incorporating some new methods. We used our earlier outline template to reverse-outline papers, we used highlighters to identify parts of paragraphs and illuminate where students needed to add more of their own explanation and voice, and I provided numerous optional activities for students to choose from (such as cutting up a paper into paragraphs, messing up the order, and asking a peer to reorder to see where transitions or clearer connections are needed). These activities allowed students to experiment and learn more about what could work better in their essays.

Students also completed at least one peer group workshop per paper. I provided worksheets to serve as a guide. These workshops covered large-scale issues such as organization and source integration, but also dealt with sentence-level issues.

I encouraged students to edit papers by reading aloud or having a peer read aloud to them. Some students have difficulty hearing when errors occur in their writing, so I also provided

specific lessons on common errors like comma issues or punctuation inside and around quotation marks. I had students identify “to be” verbs and vague words to help them make their writing more specific.

Teacher #5: I taught these through assigned readings, brainstorming/freewriting and revision activities in class and lab, peer-feedback workshop sessions, professor feedback, one-on-one conferences, in-lab reflections on work in progress, end of semester editing session, and lecture.

3. Familiarity with at least one academic citation and documentation system (such as MLA or APA style).

Describe what you did to teach this student learning outcome:

Teacher #1: MLA was the sole focus for the better part of a class session. For the first part of the session, I lectured on the basics of citation. This was accompanied by a model (sample paper) they could refer back to later. For the second part of class, I broke us into groups to play a round of "MLA Jeopardy," which was a game I was able to create through an online site called Jeopardy Labs. I also provided handouts and a list of resources to students where they could proactively seek out solutions for their citation needs (examples: a handout specifically on how to cite their images in the art/ad analysis paper, links to helpful resources online, such as the Purdue OWL, the Cornell University Library, etc.)

During the group project described earlier, I also had the entire class create MLA in-text citations for the sections they did on that particular paper. We went over these in class, which I hoped students would find helpful before creating their own works cited pages.

As the semester moved forward, I provided further citation feedback on an individual basis.

Teacher #2: I assigned a documentation exercise early in the semester that required students to locate ten sources in library databases or from websites and to develop a Works Cited page that contained all ten sources in the correct format. Also, a sample Works Cited page was posted on Blackboard to give the students another example to use. I referred them to the Purdue OWL for Works Cited information and to Chapter 19 of Writing Matters for citation formats. Citations and documentation were commented on during my evaluation of student drafts.

Teacher #3: We complete weekly MLA exercises that focus on in-text citations (voice-markers and parentheticals), paraphrasing vs. plagiarizing, and Works Cited entries for various sources. Students use their own sources and papers to complete these exercises.

Teacher #4: I gave three presentations, spread out over the semester, providing a broader understanding of documentation at the start (exploring why we cite, why we use MLA in the humanities versus other citation styles, and how styles differ) moving to the specifics of using the MLA documentation style. I also provided worksheets with simple fill-in-the-blanks to help guide students through the process of creating Works Cited page citations.

Teacher #5: I taught this through lecture/PPT, and in-lab exercise on evaluating a source, handouts, peer feedback forms, an end of semester editing session, and one on one conference sessions.

4. Written communication — the practice of creating and refining messages that educated readers will value.

Describe what you did to teach this student learning outcome:

Teacher #1: In my class, students were required to write and revise three papers (6-8 pages in length, on average) for their final portfolio. Each paper was intended to illustrate a breadth of skills intended for a college level audience. Through lecture, assigned readings, group activities, class discussions, multimedia, and feedback on their work, I placed emphasis on developing unique topics that demonstrate original, critical thought while keeping in mind mechanic fundamentals (see previous examples).

Teacher #2: In addition to items covered in #2, I took the class through group work on student papers that presented an example of each of the paper assignment options. Later in the semester, I presented three classes on revision: one on source-based papers, one on narratives, and one on grammar. The first two classes included group work on sample student papers that needed work. The grammar class presented three example exercises. The students worked through the exercises for a few minutes, and then a solution was presented and discussed.

Teacher #3: We spend the semester crafting and revising papers that will challenge college-level readers.

Teacher #4: Our first unit, as discussed earlier in my answer to #2, required students to start with inquiry, using their own big questions and then learning about successful topics for academic papers through reading sample essays and learning about the academic audience. In order to better help students understand the perspective of an educated audience, I provided short quotes from my current portfolio grading group as well as comments from past portfolio grading groups and comments regarding the same portfolio collected from all WRT 150 instructors last year.

I also used activities to help students narrow their topics so that they would be more engaging for an educated audience. Through combining “Who? What? Where? When? and Why?” questions with their original bigger question, students often took their topics to a deeper level and situated or applied them more specifically.

My second unit required students to write about a specific local problem and provide a solution. Students had to consider what problems would engage the attention of a college-level audience. They planned what research might help a college-level audience see the importance of the problem they chose. Finding a solution for this paper required students to really think critically because many of the first solutions they chose were too simple to be convincing for college-aged readers. Students also met in a peer group led by a writing consultant and received feedback from me to help them advance their exploration of their problems and solutions to better engage their audience.

Students also completed a narrative which allowed them to think about different needs readers may have for their writing. At the end of this unit, I worked to connect their audiences needs regarding their narratives to their audiences needs regarding their other research based papers. For each paper, students met in a peer group led by a writing consultant and received feedback from me to help them advance their exploration of their topics, develop their research, and better engage their audience.

Teacher #5: I teach this through four essay assignments, in-lab short writing exercises, brainstorming/pre-writing activities, working at writing in lab, peer-feedback sessions, professor feedback, in lab and in class miscellaneous activities, one-on-one conferences, and lecture.

5. Information literacy — the iterative process of identifying, accessing, evaluating, and synthesizing multiple forms of information.

Describe what you did to teach this student learning outcome:

Teacher #1: Several steps were undertaken to guide students through the information literacy process: I began by having students do a bubble map with their basic ideas. Then, we shifted into a keyword exercise in which they took their broad ideas and went online to three different search engines (Google, Google Scholar, and the library databases). In each search engine, I had students type in their topic, followed by each letter of the alphabet. On the search engines and databases used, I chose each because they provide suggestions when you begin typing a letter. I had them write down the more interesting or unfamiliar keyword suggestions for further exploration later. This also allowed us to have a conversation about the differences between a basic Google search and Google Scholar/Database source materials.

As a homework assignment, I had students seek out two scholarly articles to read through and reverse outline, considering how each source "spoke" to one another on the subject.

I set up a class session with library liaison Gayle Schaub to introduce students to the library system and provide some tips they could use within the system for narrowing the scope of their research topics.

We had a class discussion on what makes a source useful or less useful; this included discussion of peer reviewed materials and the importance of primary sources. Also, I had students fill out a "Search Plan" form to help them consider the journey they would need to undertake in the research process to seek out quality source material.

We watched a video entitled "Everything is a Remix" that uses a metaphor they can relate to (the idea of "remixing") as a way of illustrating originality within a discussion where you're relying on other people's material. Also, we discussed ways in which researchers might connect their own thoughts and ideas to established research and how every source needs to be contained within a "sandwich", where the author of the paper leads us into the source (using signal phrases, for example) and then adds commentary after the source. Also, part of our discussions was how to search AROUND a given topic to help make more unique connections between

source materials. For example, I had students do some searching online for areas connected to almost any topic: seeking out a new technology/discovery associated with their topic, seeking out what a philosopher might have to say on the topic, find a connected TED talk, etc.

Teacher #2: This outcome was covered in reading assignments from Writing Matters, the library class, in group work on student papers, in in class lectures, and in comments on their topic proposals and drafts.

Teacher #3: With help from our library liaison, we show students how to navigate through “Uh-Oh!” moments in the GVSU library databases—apparent dead-ends in research that are actually mere speed bumps. We take them through some sample searches in which they encounter these moments and explain how to find the source despite the apparent dead-end. Students brainstorm and latch on to search terms and pull additional search terms from the sources they find. They synthesize their sources with voice markers and the “sandwich technique” of both introducing and following-up a quotation from an outside source.

Teacher #4: Near the beginning of the semester, I invited my librarian to come and present on finding scholarly sources using database searches as well as evaluating sources found using basic Google searches. She also presented on coming up with search terms and refining searches to obtain better results.

I expanded on the librarian’s lecture by explaining peer review in more detail to students, showing them where to find publisher/sponsor information on websites in order to identify bias regarding who is paying for the source, and searching author names to locate more information to help students determine if the author is credible in speaking to their subject.

Later in the semester, when students were working on a problem solution paper, we took a tour of the library and my librarian gave another lecture on finding statistics collected by government agencies, evaluating them, and using them to generate topics or deepen research.

In a lecture, I gave students a list of five types of evidence that I used to help students evaluate their sources and other media they consume and help them compose essays that are better at convincing their audiences. These five types of evidence included statistical, scientific, anecdotal, analogical (using evidence from a situation very closely related due to a lack of research for a specific topic), and expert testimonial. We discussed how anecdotal evidence isn’t enough to convince a college-level audience, though it may engage them, and needs to be backed up. I emphasized how specific types of evidence should be used in specific types of rhetorical situations, and it’s important for students to examine their own rhetorical situations in order to know which types of evidence will work best in their papers.

To help students synthesize information, I used an activity where they essentially journal through a difficult scholarly source. They wrote about their own prior knowledge, experiences, and ideas in connection with the information they found in their scholarly source. They also wrote down any questions that came to mind as they read. I provided a handout with an example where I did the same in order to model this process of writing to understand challenging material.

We discussed the purposes of summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources in their papers. I provided a worksheet on source introduction which provides a variety of Mad Libs for students to fill in to help them give important information readers may need before encountering the source material.

Teacher #5: I taught this through a lab session with librarian Cara Cadena on information literacy and finding sources. I also assigned the CRAAP Test (a handout designed to get students to evaluate sources fully), a search plan that included the evaluation of sources, peer feedback, professor feedback, and lecture.

C. ASSESSMENT METHODS

9. Explain how the information in the previous CAR – and the GEC’s feedback - helped you improve your assessing of the course this time.

The major change from last time to this time was our shift from “collaboration” to “information literacy,” but because we have these end-of-semester student portfolios to use for the assessment, we were able to make the shift fairly easily, especially because information literacy has long been part of the WRT 150 course, whereas collaboration had been something new for us. So we used the detailed explanations of how we taught and assessed collaboration to come up with equally detailed plans for teaching and assessing information literacy.

10. Your CAP contains examples of how you planned to assess student learning of each of the content and skills student learning outcomes associated with your class. For the Course Assessment Report please briefly list the measures you actually used to assess student learning (for example, include the test question you used or the instructions you gave for a report, etc.). [If you handed out 2 pages of directions for a report, please summarize the essence of the assignment]

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. An understanding of general academic writing conventions for language, development, organization, and format.

Measure(s) for this student learning outcome:

At the end of the term, we read portfolios containing three examples of student work (essays of about 4-8 pages, on average) that we graded collaboratively, using rubrics that articulate more fully the goals expressed in the General Education rubric for Written Communication. The teachers then used this grading and their experience with each student’s writing all term long to assign the appropriate score from the General Education rubric to each student.

2. An awareness of a full range of writing processes, including invention, planning, organizing, revising, and editing.

Measure(s) for this student learning outcome:

To help us measure this outcome as objectively as possible, the teachers participating in this assessment agreed to keep a log of observations on each student in their assessed section. They all worked closely with their students' writing at each stage of the writing process, giving comments at different stages, conferencing with students, and ultimately assessing the results. Teachers used this rich interaction with their students' writing processes to form judgments about the effectiveness of those processes.

3. Familiarity with at least one academic citation and documentation system (such as MLA or APA style).

Measure(s) for this student learning outcome:

We again used the final portfolios as our primary measure of this outcome. Students demonstrated their command of MLA style (or APA, with permission of the teacher and the reviewing portfolio group) in at least one work (averaging 4-8 pages and several varied sources) in the final portfolio.

4. Written communication — the practice of creating and refining messages that educated readers will value.

Measure(s) for this student learning outcome:

Again, we read final portfolios containing three examples of student work (essays of about 4-8 pages, on average) that we graded collaboratively, using rubrics that articulate more fully the goals expressed in the General Education rubric for Written Communication. The teachers then used this grading and their experience with each student's writing all term long to assign the appropriate score from the General Education rubric to each student.

5. Information literacy — the iterative process of identifying, accessing, evaluating, and synthesizing multiple forms of information.

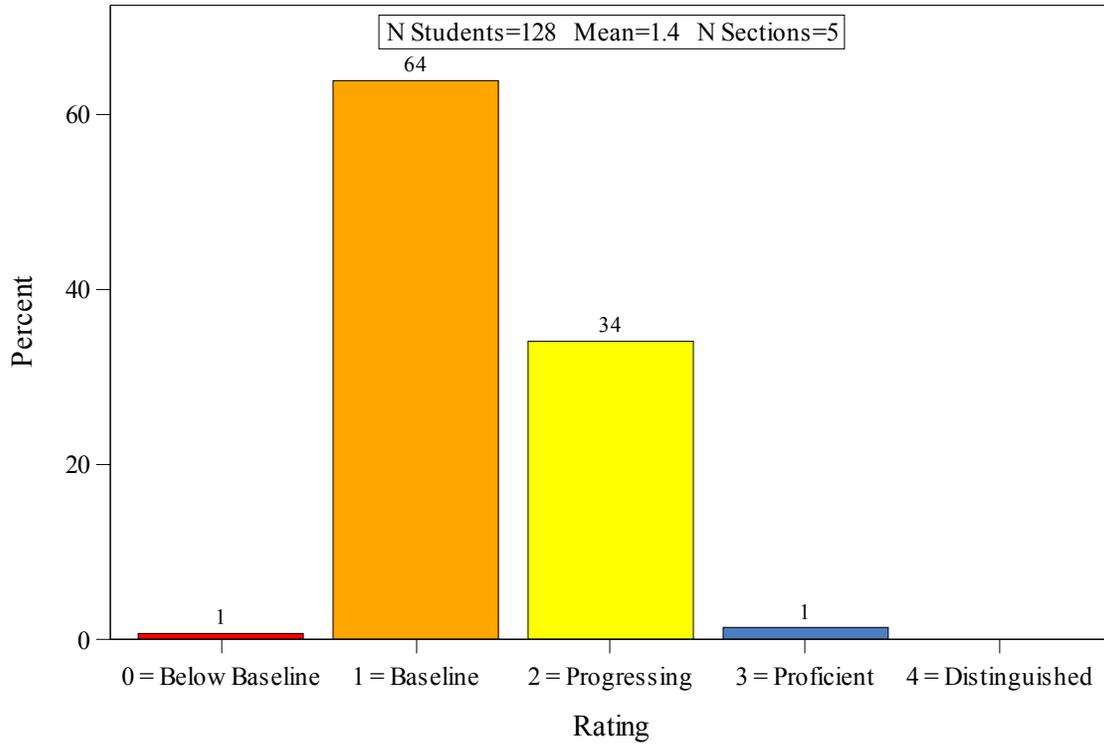
Measure(s) for this student learning outcome:

We measured information literacy in two ways: To get at the students' ability to identify, access, and evaluate multiple forms of information for potential use in their papers, we designed a worksheet that asked students to record the steps of their initial research into a paper topic, and we then evaluated the depth and relevance of their research practices. To get at the students' ability to synthesize the information they located, we again looked at the final portfolios at the end of the semester.

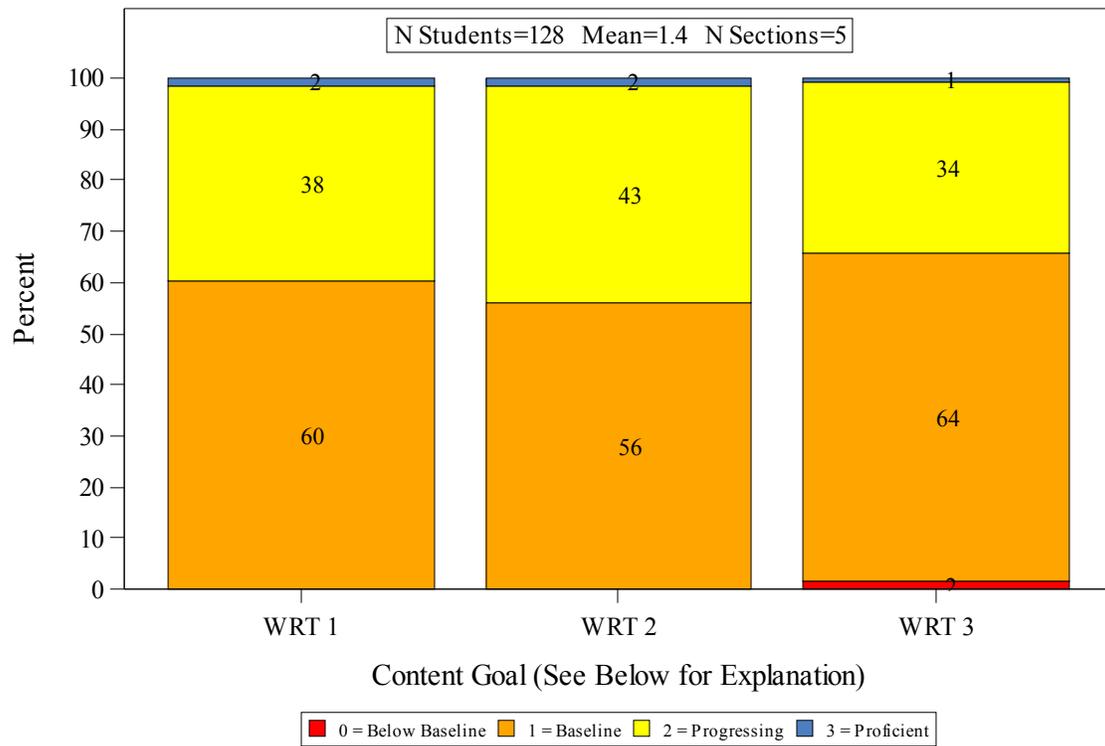
D. RESULTS

SUMMARY

**Figure O-1. All Content and Skills Goals
Student Learning in WRT 150 - Fall 2016**

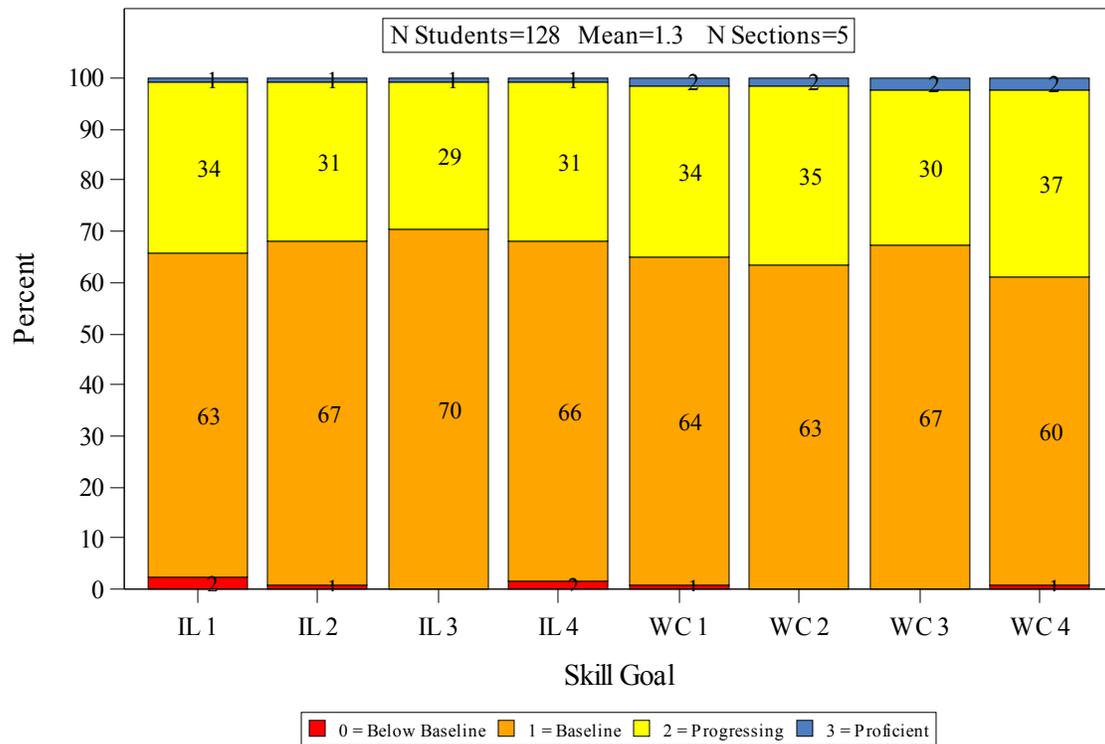


**Figure C-1. Content Goals
Student Learning in WRT 150 - Fall 2016**



Code	Sub Goal Description
WRT 1	An understanding of general academic writing conventions for language, development, organization, and format
WRT 2	An awareness of a full range of writing processes, including invention, planning, organizing, revising, and editing
WRT 3	Familiarity with at least one academic citation and documentation system (such as MLA or APA style)

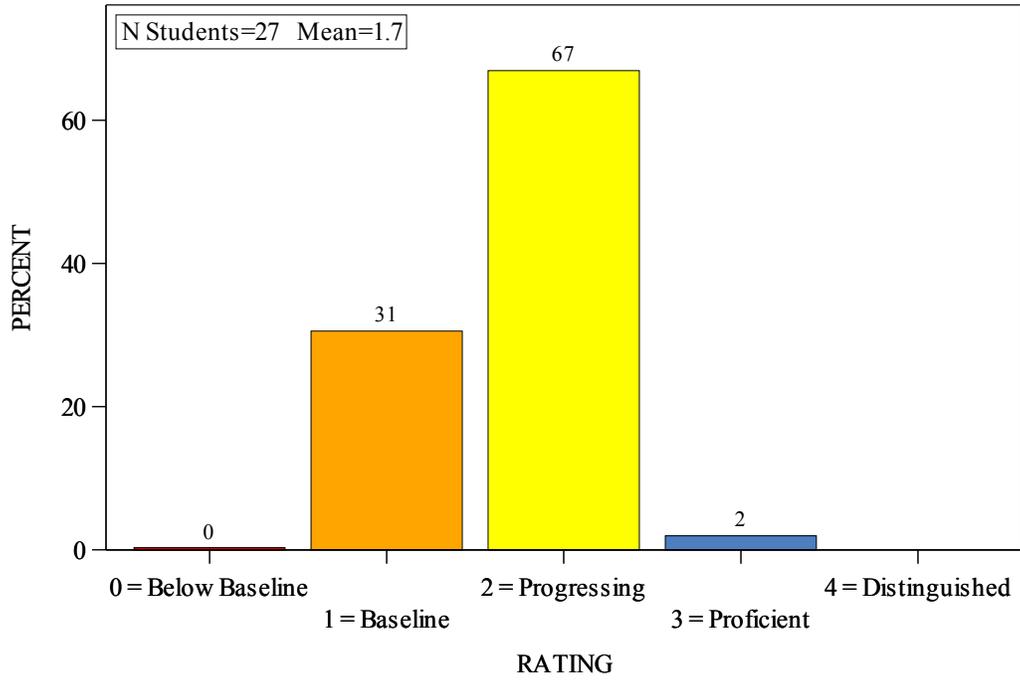
Figure S-1. Skills Goals
Student Learning in WRT 150 - Fall 2016



Code	Objective
IL 1	Ethically communicate synthesized information
IL 2	Articulate the specific information needed
IL 3	Evaluate the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information
IL 4	Access information using appropriate search tools
WC 1	Develop content that is appropriate to a specific disciplinary or professional context, drawing upon relevant sources
WC 2	Express ideas using language that meets the needs and expectations of the intended audience
WC 3	Organize written material to suit the purposes of the document and meet the needs of the intended audience
WC 4	Use conventions of grammar, punctuation, usage, formatting, and citation appropriate to the specific writing situation

Section 11

**Figure O-1. All Content and Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-11 - Fall 2016**



**Figure C-1. Content Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-11 - Fall 2016**

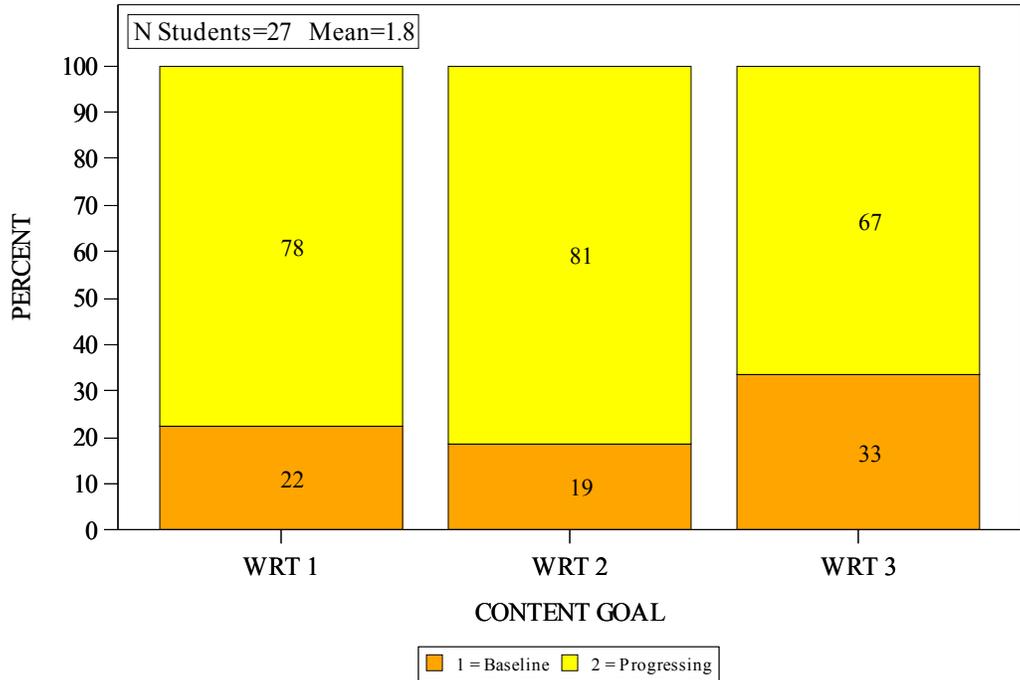
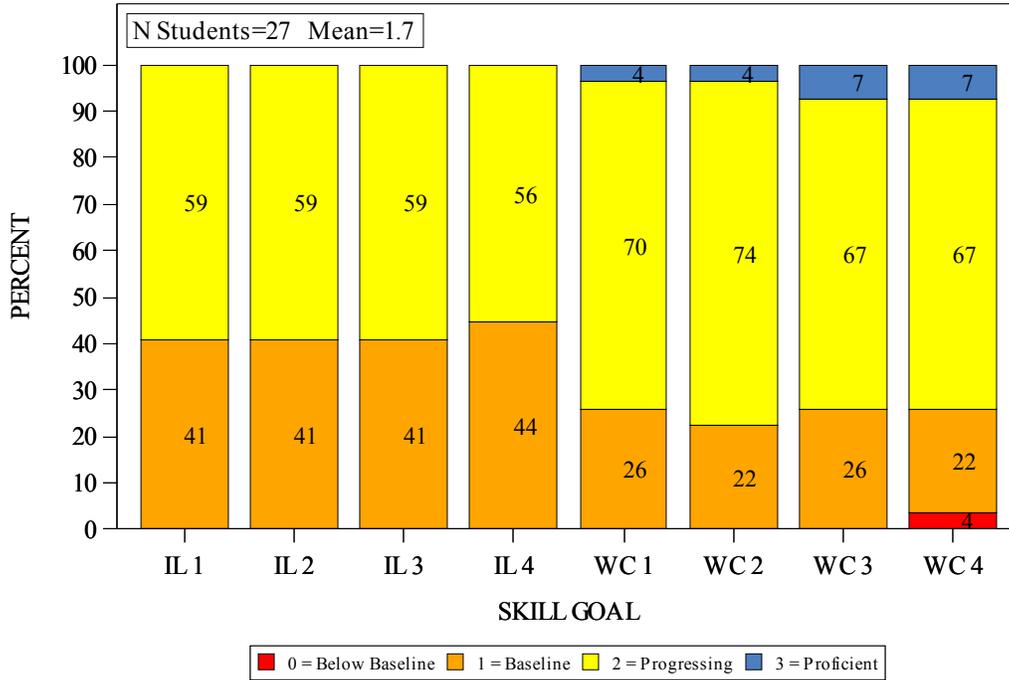


Figure S-1. Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-11 - Fall 2016



Section 17

Figure O-1. All Content and Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-17 - Fall 2016

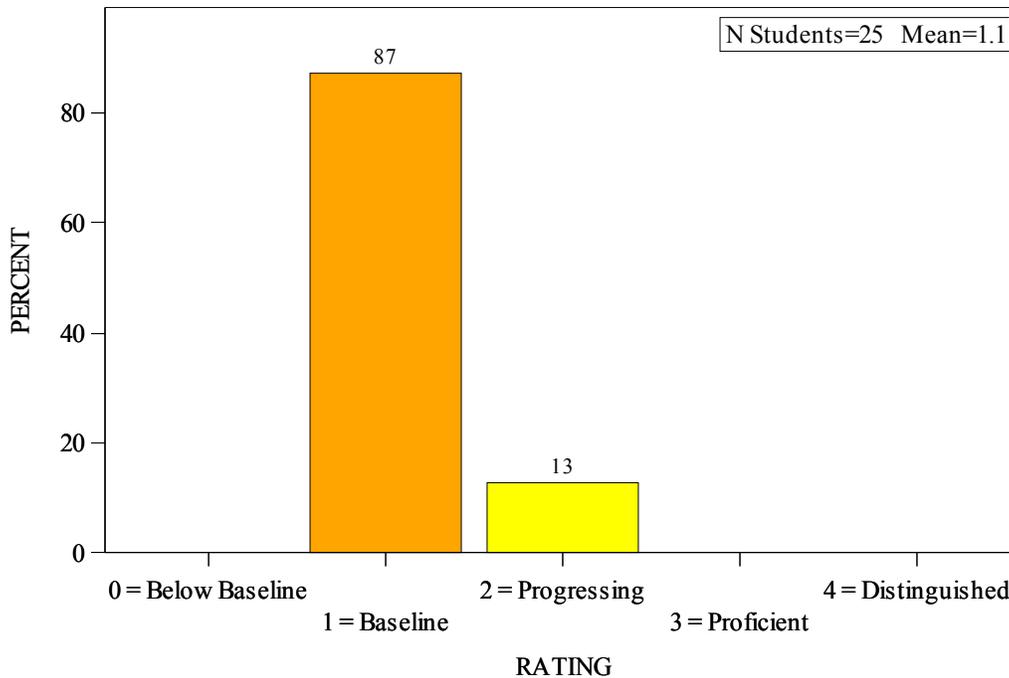


Figure C-1. Content Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-17 - Fall 2016

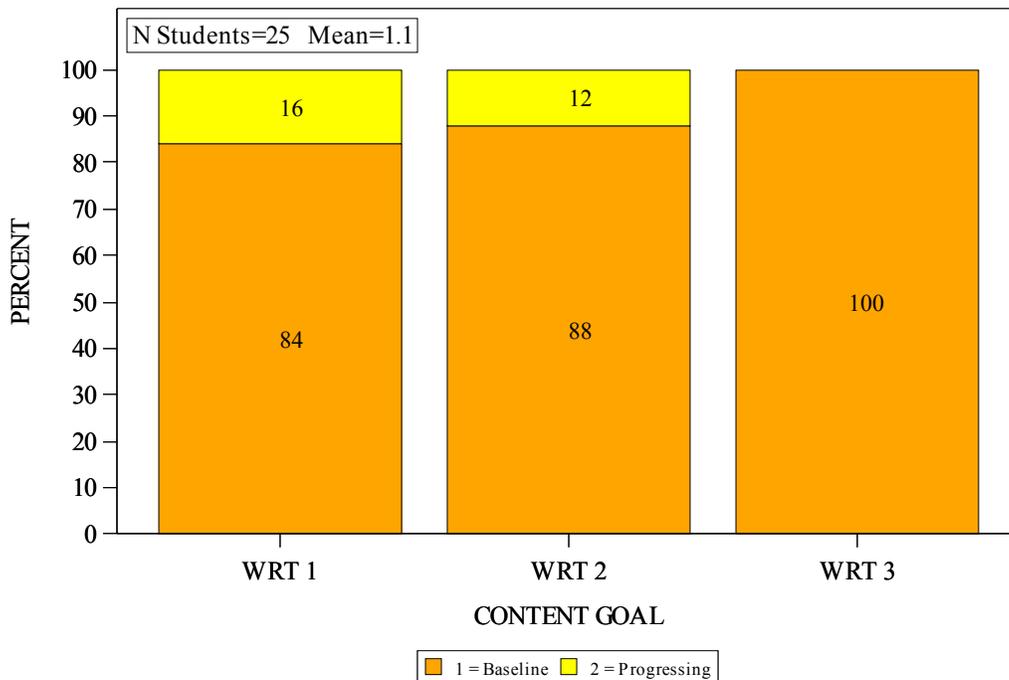
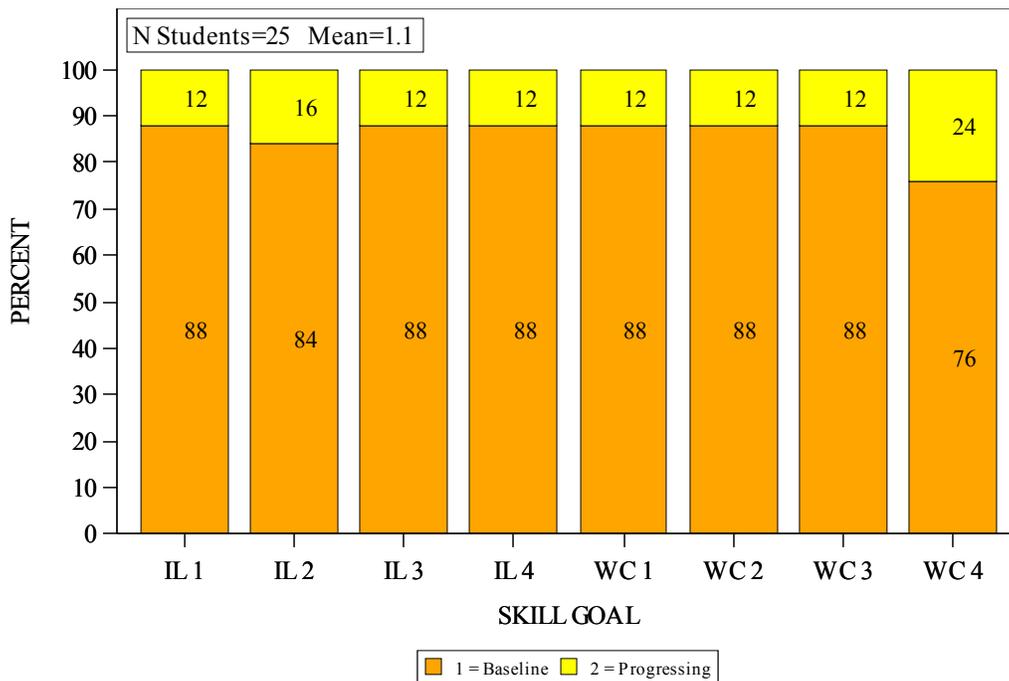
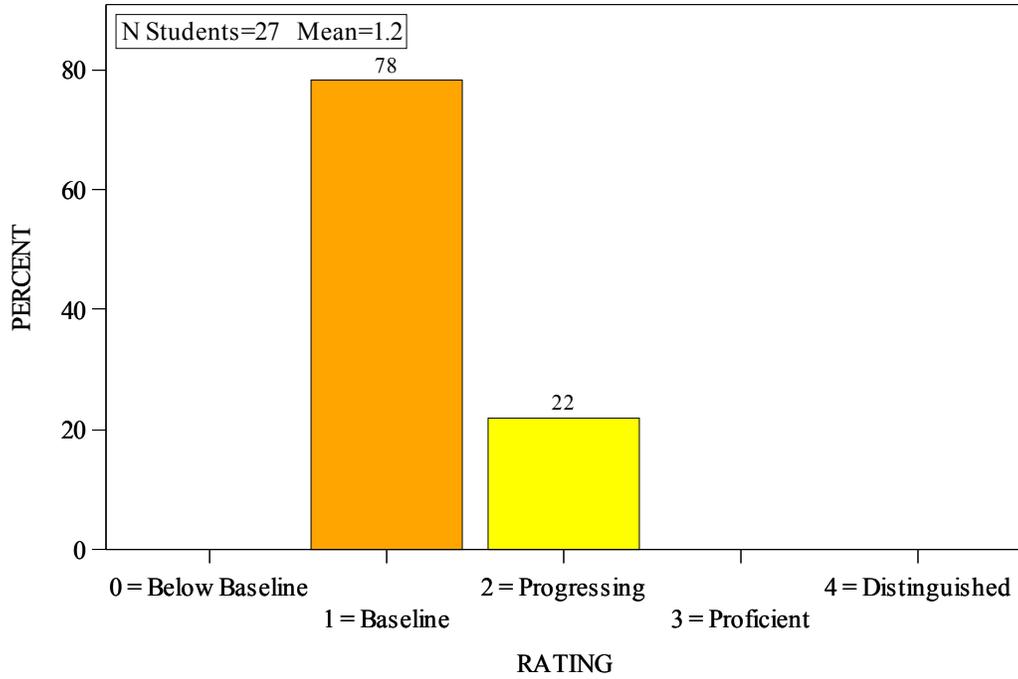


Figure S-1. Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-17 - Fall 2016



Section 19

**Figure O-1. All Content and Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-19 - Fall 2016**



**Figure C-1. Content Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-19 - Fall 2016**

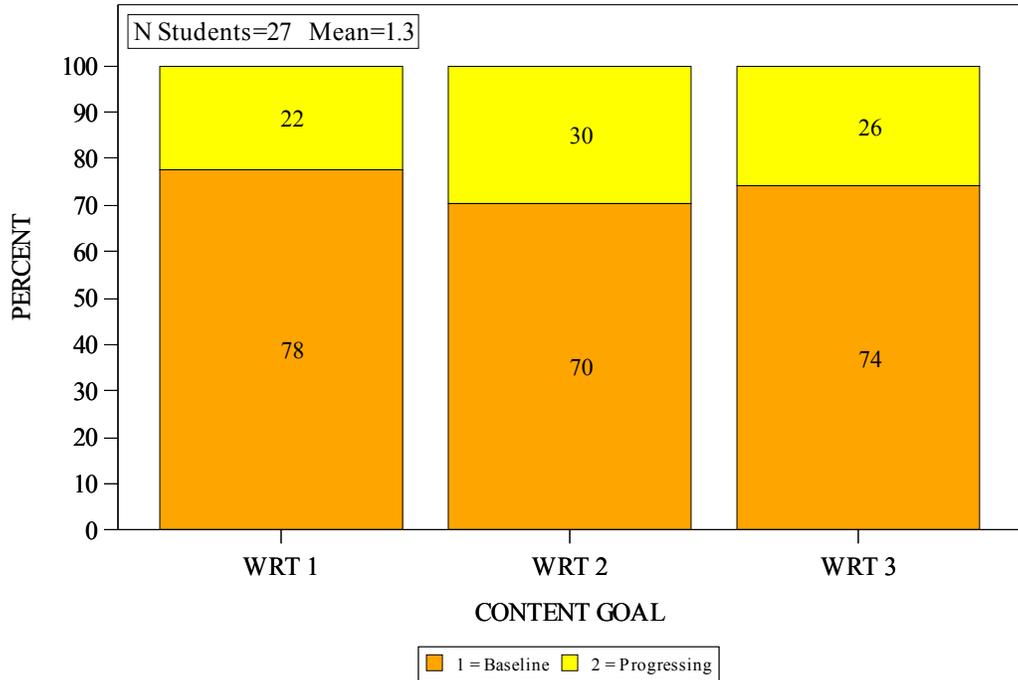
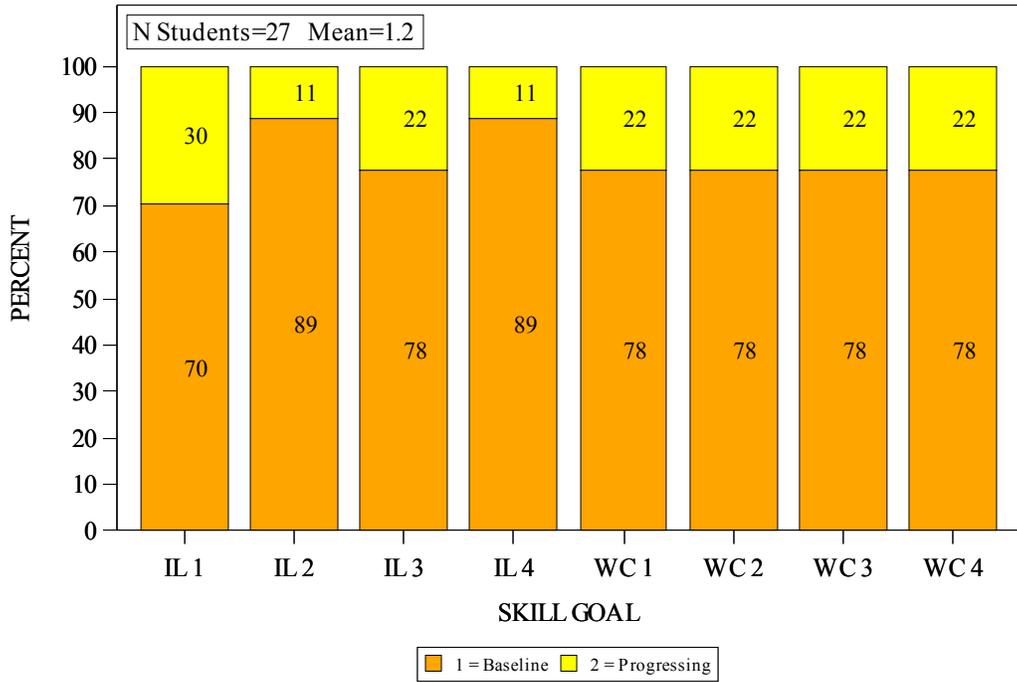


Figure S-1. Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-19 - Fall 2016



Section 23

Figure O-1. All Content and Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-23 - Fall 2016

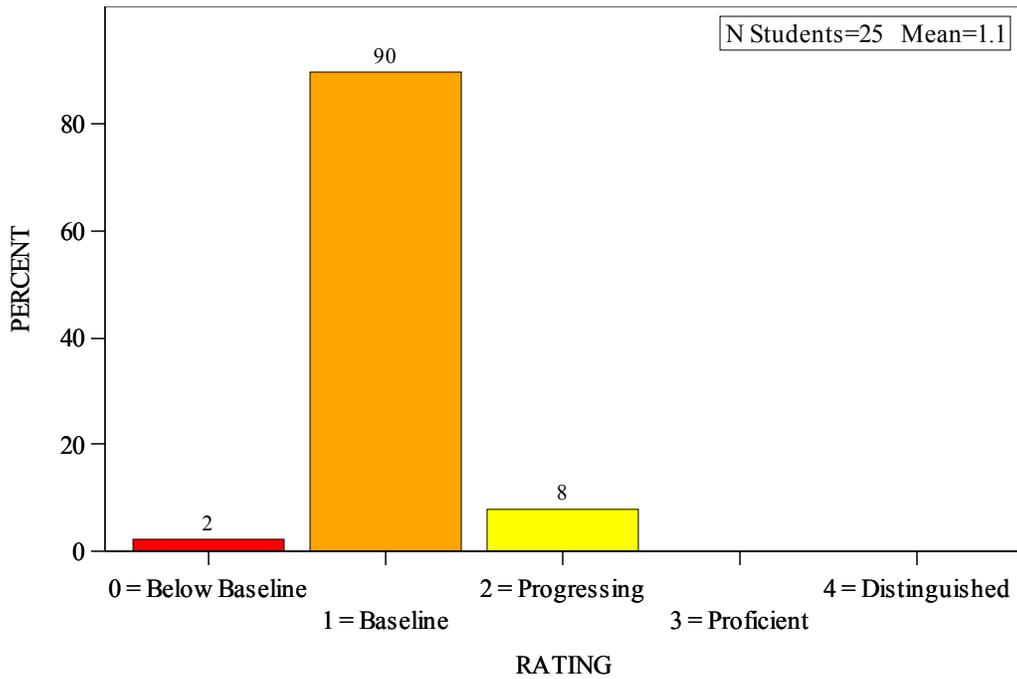


Figure C-1. Content Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-23 - Fall 2016

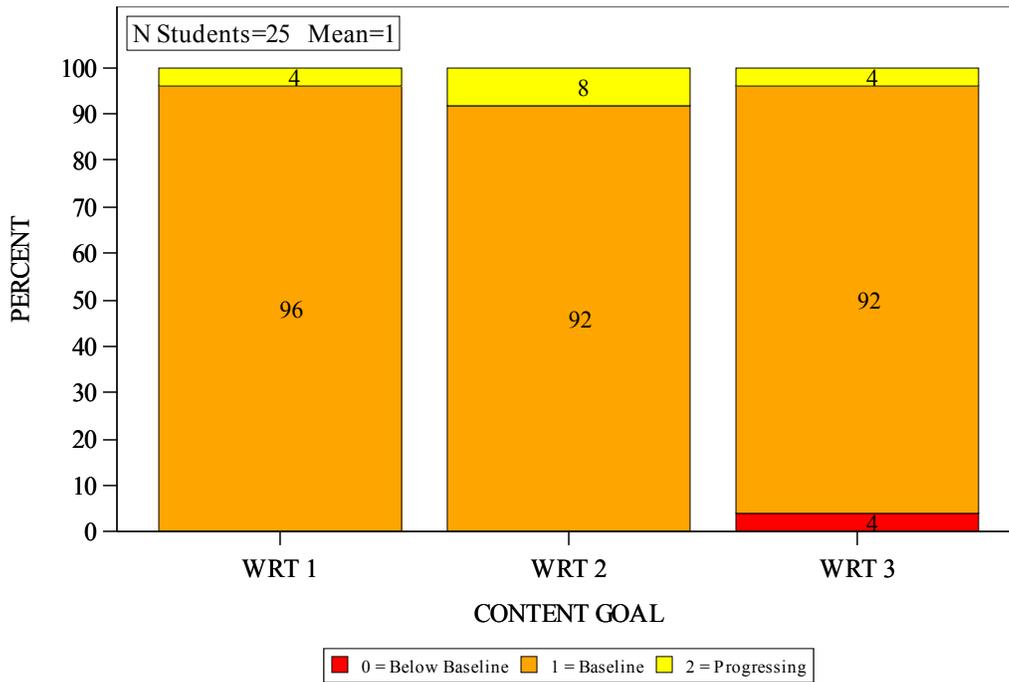
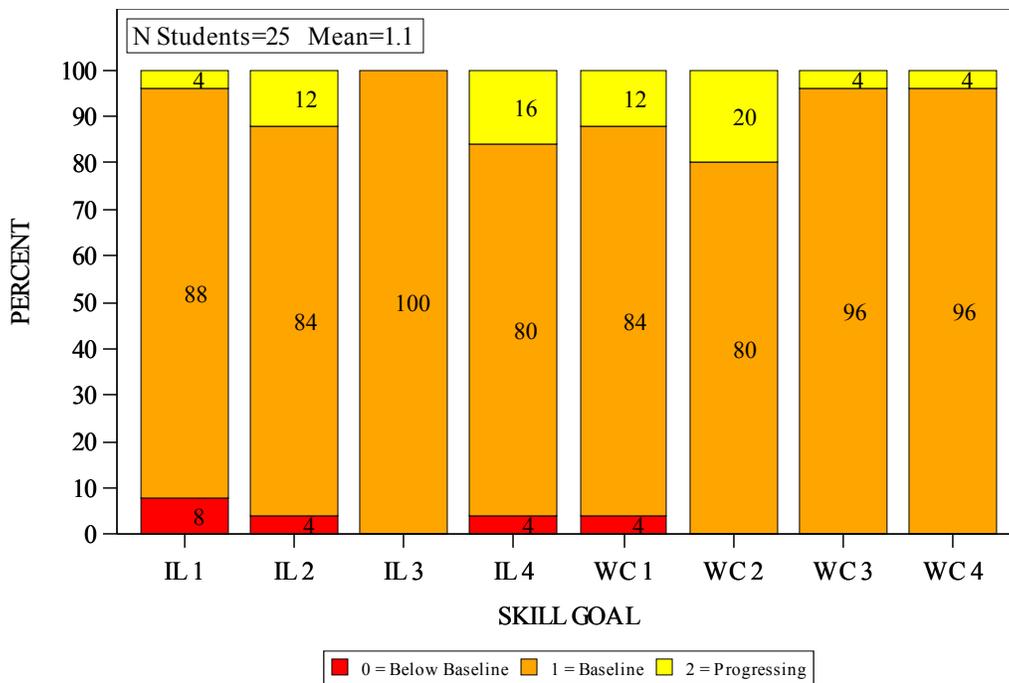
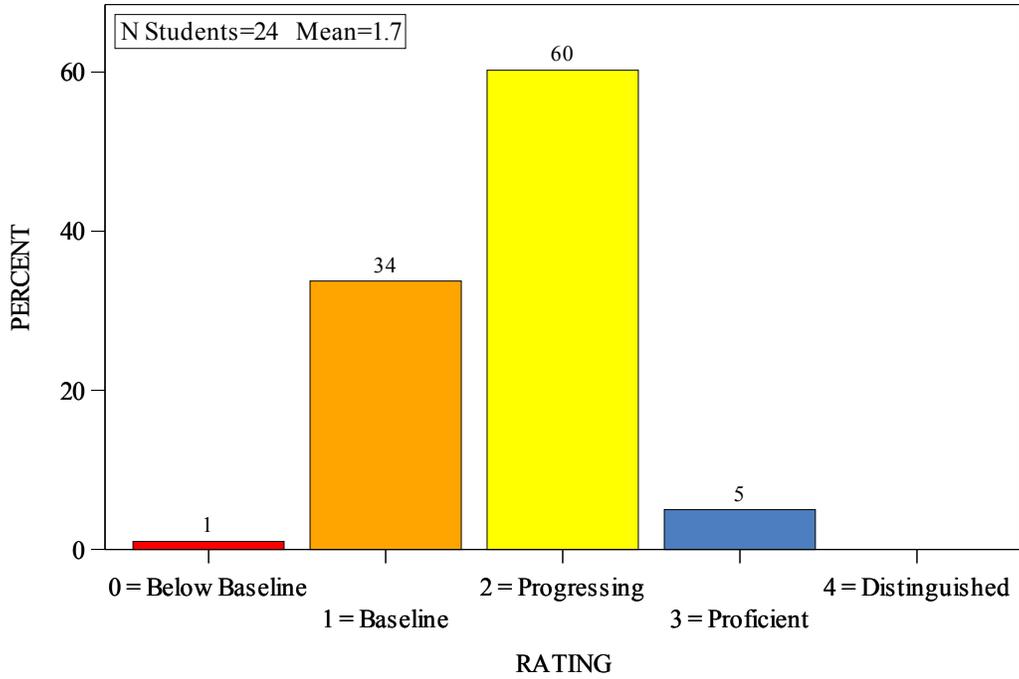


Figure S-1. Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-23 - Fall 2016



Section 57

**Figure O-1. All Content and Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-57 - Fall 2016**



**Figure C-1. Content Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-57 - Fall 2016**

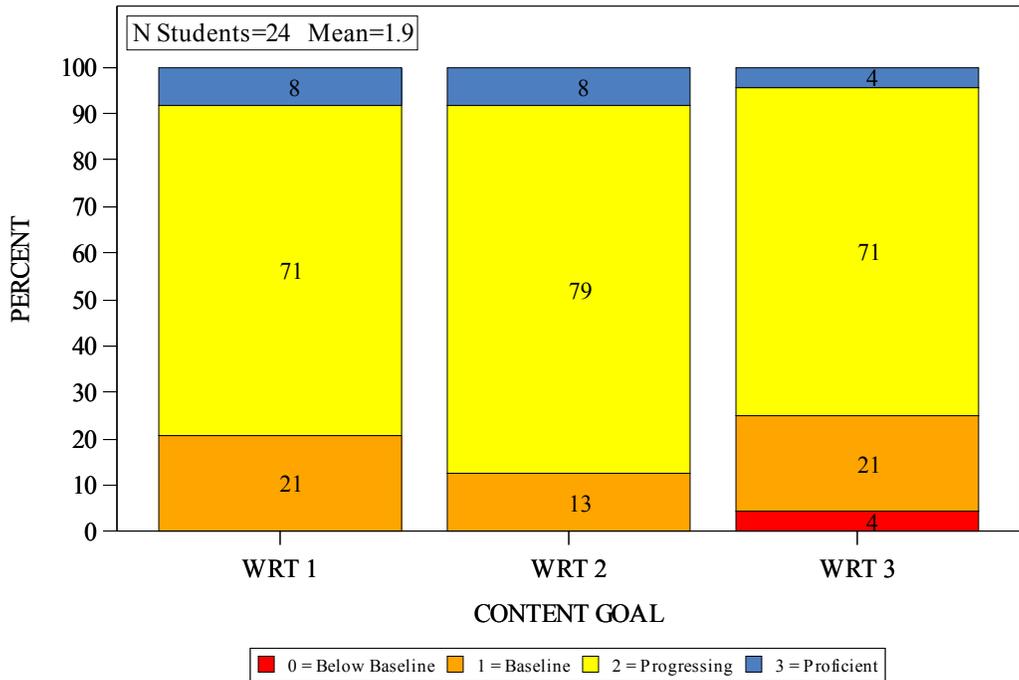
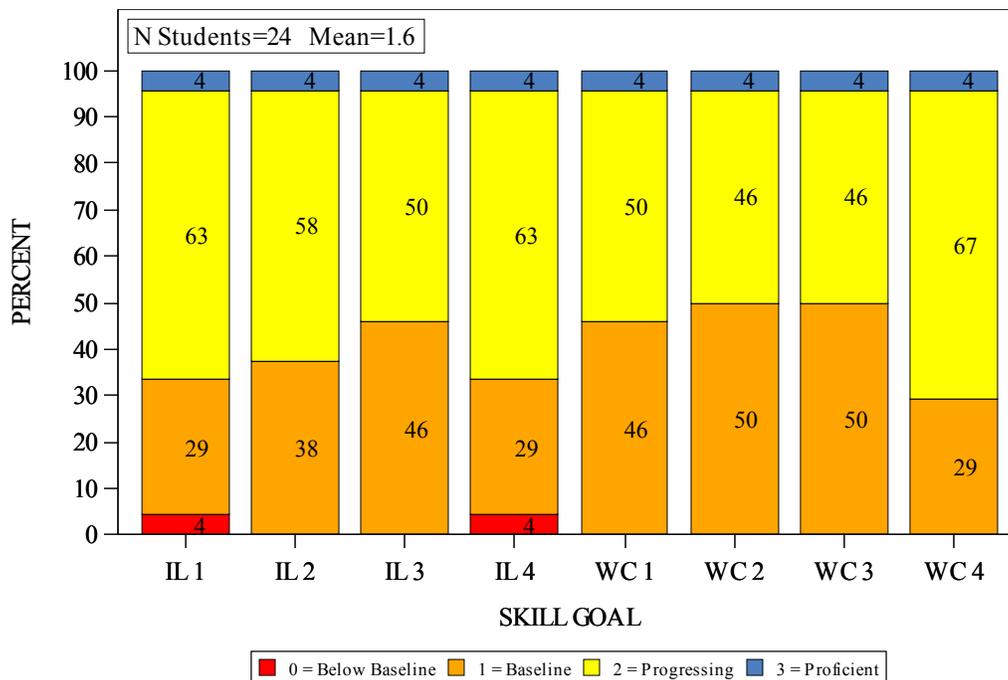


Figure S-1. Skills Goals
Student Performance in WRT 150-57 - Fall 2016



E. FINDINGS

11. Based on the Tables and Figures, what conclusions do you draw?

Most notably, we recalibrated our assessment based on the new three-item rubric, so beginning with the first chart—a summary of the results of all the content and skills goals—and running through all the others, we see many more students at the “baseline” level this year than we did three years ago. In fact, in the 2014 assessment, only 10% of the students were rated as “baseline,” whereas this year it was 64%. In 2014, the majority of students (56%) were rated as “proficient.” This, it seems to us, is an unreasonable percentage of first-year students to have reached the level where we’d like to see our graduating seniors. It’s much more reasonable to say that only about 10% of our first-year students are writing at a senior level. That’s pretty good! And it’s reasonable to say that nearly two-thirds of the first-year students are where “most freshmen will be.” In other words, we conclude from all of the charts that this year we have more accurately captured the true standing of our first-year writers in relation to the university as a whole.

Another noticeable result is that, generally speaking, we find our students to have achieved more in the more general “content” areas (about 40% “progressing”) than in the more specific “skills” areas (about 35% “progressing”). This makes sense to us, given that terms like “awareness,” “understanding,” and “familiarity with” are a bit easier to achieve than actual mastery.

12. Is there anything else that may have affected these results? (For example: student class standing, faculty experience teaching the course, course format [hybrid/flipped, online], class size, diversity of majors, etc.)

No, these were five typical sections with five solid, experienced teachers, so we have a lot of confidence in the results. Our collaborative grading system helps to ensure a high degree of reliability on our assessments. Naturally, our grading is a bit more forgiving than your rubrics, so many of our students who we reported as “baseline” were able to earn C’s or even B’s in the course. In other words, a “baseline” student within the whole university might well be a strong student in a first-year writing class.

F. FUTURE ACTIONS

13. Based on the results, describe any changes you anticipate making in teaching the course.

Figure S-1 indicates that Information Literacy Objective #3 (“Evaluate the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information”) is our most problematic or difficult objective for first-year students. Fully 70% of our students were rated as “baseline” for this objective. Given this and the recent cultural divisions and uncertainties about “fake news” and “alternative facts,” we feel that it’s important that we focus our teaching energies on helping students understand the purpose and value of credible sources of ideas and information. Indeed, we already devoted our Winter 2017 start-of-term workshop to this issue, and we are conducting a departmental assessment this semester that will look at how our students are currently using sources in their papers—are they citing facts? Are they borrowing from the authority of their sources? Are they bouncing off ideas? Key to all of this is understanding why the academy values certain sources, and certain kinds of sources, over others—and this in turn should help students as they try to evaluate the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information they find when they conduct searches. So that will be a major focus of ours for the next couple of years.

14. Based on the results, describe any changes you anticipate making in assessing the course.

We are pleased with this assessment, and we support the new three-item rubric GE is using. The effect is to place more of our students in the “baseline” category, which in a way serves to make our results less dramatic and significant—but our assessment and our results make sense to us, so we don’t anticipate any major changes.

15. What else can the GE Program do to help you meaningfully assess student learning?

We don’t have any suggestions or requests at this time.

G. INVOLVING THE STAKEHOLDERS

16. To what extent did the department/unit as a whole (or a subgroup) engage in this assessment process?

The department as a whole was aware of our assessment work; we outlined our plans at the August 2016 “start-up” meeting. And we plan to report the results of the assessment to another open meeting of the faculty in the next month or two. This is all part of the initiative mentioned above that will see us focusing more on Information Literacy Objective #3.

SUBMIT YOUR REPORT



Please send the completed CAR to gened@gvsu.edu and to your Unit Head by Feb. 1 for data collected in the Fall and by May 15 for data collected in the Winter.