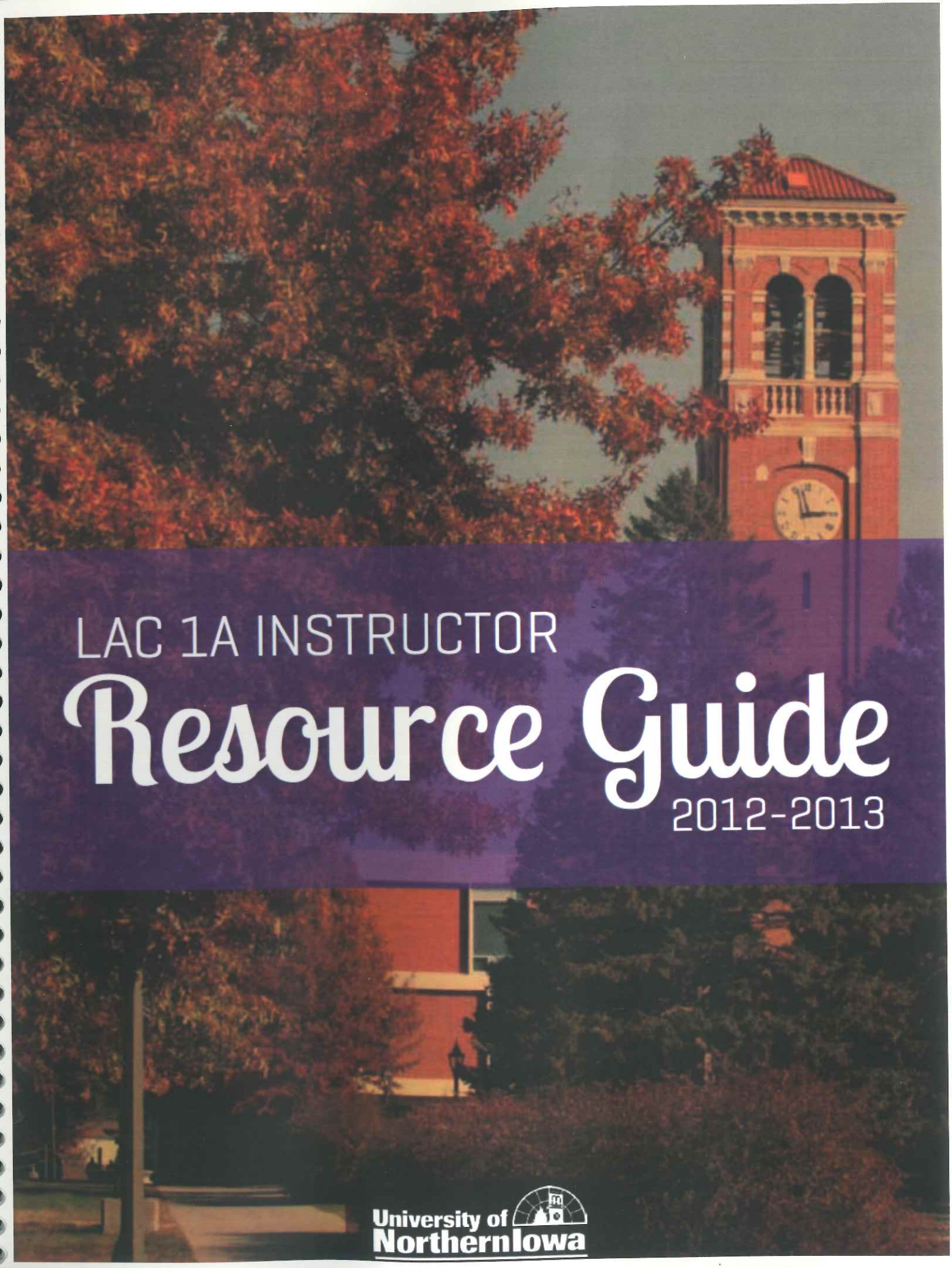

LAC 1A INSTRUCTOR

# Resource Guide

2012-2013

University of Northern Iowa

# List of Important Contacts

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coordinator of Writing Programs | Dr. David M. Grant | David.Grant@uni.edu | 273-2639 | Baker 206 |
| Associate Head/ Advising | Dr. Ken Baughman | Kenneth.Baughman@uni.edu | 273-2854 | Baker 108 |
| Coordinator of Cornerstone | Dr. April Chatham-Carpenter | April.Chatham-Carpenter@uni.edu | 273-5901 | Lang 314 |
| Head, Department of Languages and Literatures | Dr. Julie Husband | Julie.Husband@uni.edu | 273-2855 | Baker 117 |
| Dean, College of Humanities and Sciences | Dr. Joel Haack | Joel.Haack@uni.edu | 273-2725 | CAC 202 |
| Director, UNI Writing Center | Ms. Deanne Gute | Deanne.Gute@uni.edu | 273-6424 | ITTC 007 |
| Director, Iowa Writing Project | Dr. Jim Davis | James.Davis@uni.edu | 273-3842 | Baker 037 |
| Secretary, Department of Languages and Literatures | Ms. Diana Harwood | Diana.Harwood@uni.edu | 273-2821 | Baker 117 |
| Writing@UNI Website | | writing.uni.edu | | -- |
| | | | | |
| Campus Emergency via Campus Phone | | | 273-4000 | |
| Emergency via Non-Campus Phone | | | 911 | |
| Director of Public Safety | TBD | | 273-2712 | Gilchrist 030 |

UNI I am writing.

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# Table of Contents

# UNI I am writing.

## Welcome!

Writing is an important aspect of any college experience. It goes beyond mere examinations of knowledge and is part of the very learning process itself. We are proud to have so much collective experience and so many talents across our campus that can help students in all years tackle a ubiquitous task that is at once complex, daunting, and seemingly self-evident. This guide is meant to supplement, support, and enhance the talents and experience of our staff. We recognize that teaching writing is a collaborative endeavor. You may be teaching writing for the first semester as a Graduate Assistant, as a Cornerstone instructor, or you may already have a wealth of experience teaching writing. You may want to know more about integrating writing instruction into your own courses. Whatever your approach to this guide, we hope you find it helpful to use, to talk about writing, and to assist students in accomplishing successful writing.

## The Writing Program Overview

The general mission of the writing program at UNI is to ensure that students are presented with strategies, skills, and support for success in writing, be that in their major, future career, or personal life. This is different from both creative and professional writing, strands of study and practice offered within the Department of Languages and Literatures. Yet, this is not limited to only writing in an academic context. As stated in the UNI Catalogue,

At UNI, students are expected to write in the Liberal Arts Core (LAC) and in each undergraduate major. The LAC writing experience fosters learning, develops thinking, and introduces students to understanding writing as a process integral to critical inquiry in academic, professional, and personal contexts. UNI is committed to helping students become competent writers in various areas and for various purposes. Each department sets the writing requirements for its majors; because writing needs vary across disciplines, the requirements and conventions vary across departments.

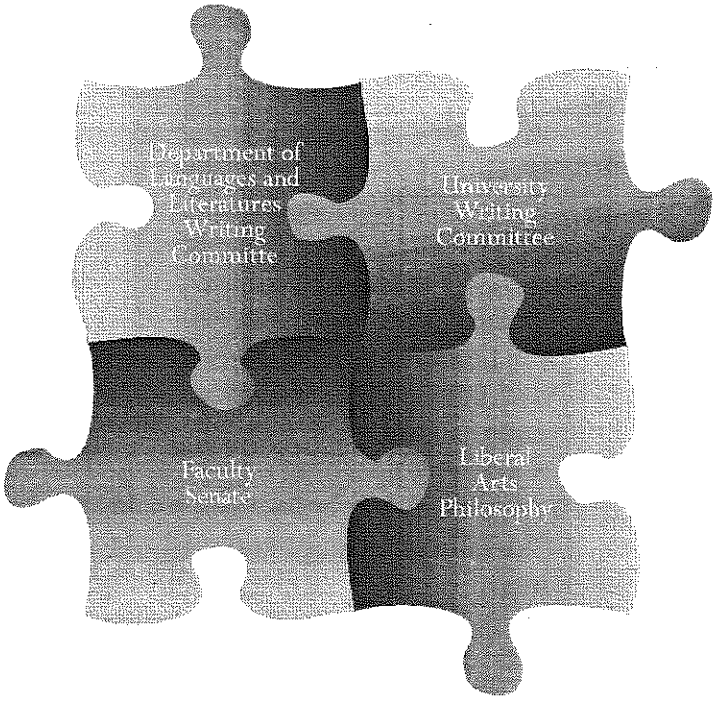
Thus, the Liberal Arts Core writing requirements are meant to provide a foundation for further practice and learning about writing. Liberal Arts Core 1A courses are the university-wide presentation of this commitment. Students having completed the LAC 1A requirement have not achieved mastery and the curriculum is not intended to measure students' abilities to perfect a written genre, such as a research paper. Rather, students are provided with carefully crafted assignments and assignment sequences which provide them with cognitive and experiential tools for managing and completing written performances. Within such performances are attention to the processes of writing – planning, prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading and editing – conducting research, the rhetorical nature of language and academic thinking, rhetorical reading of content and assignments, and more as listed in the outcomes below.

### *Faculty and Committee Governance*

The Writing Program at UNI has several components. LAC 1A focuses on First-Year Composition (FYC). We expect curricular changes to formally define writing courses beyond the first year, either in a revised Liberal Arts Core, in specific disciplines/ departments, and/ or

in a combination of the two. In addition to programmatic components, the Writing Center (007 ITTC), offers invaluable support to student writers from across the university.

Curricular aspects of the Writing Program fall under the purview of faculty. The Liberal Arts Core Committee (LACC) handles the approval, assessment, and development of Liberal Arts Core curriculum, courses, and outcomes. The Department of Languages and Literatures (DLL) Writing Committee coordinates departmental activities relating to LAC 1A and the LACC. The University Writing Committee (UWC) helps coordinate between first-year composition and subsequent writing instruction.




So, in past years, the Department committee has conducted assessments on behalf of the LACC as well as provided the LACC with disciplinary input regarding the teaching of writing. Similarly, the University Writing Committee has gathered data at an institutional level to offer guidance and expertise to the LACC, while the LACC takes these proposals under advisement and brings them before the Faculty Senate.

These committees and their collaboration are necessary to carry the work needed to maintain a university writing program. Information about membership on the LACC can be found at http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/lac/committee.shtml. Current membership of the DLL Writing Committee can be obtained through the Coordinator of Writing Programs or the Head of the Department of Languages and Literatures.

If you have questions about writing courses after LAC 1A, please contact the University Writing Committee. Information and current membership can be found at http://writing.uni.edu.

# UNI I am writing.

Courses currently designated as fulfilling the LAC 1A requirement include

**ENG 1005,** College Writing and Research.
Recommended for students with ACT English and Reading scores of 18-26.

**ENG 2015,** Craft of Academic Writing.
Prerequisite of combined ACT English and Reading scores of 54 or higher.

**ENG 1120,** Introduction to Literature - Writing Enhanced.
Experimental offering of limited sections to students with ACT English scores of 25 and higher. Fulfills requirements for both LAC 1A and 3B (Literature, Philosophy, and Religion).

**ENG 2120,** Critical Writing About Literature.
Recommended for English majors and minors with prerequisite of ACT English and Reading scores of 54 or higher.

**UNIV 1059,** Cornerstone.
A year-long, pilot course combining oral, written, and visual communication with college success strategies and a common read. For first-year students only.

***About This Guide***

We hope this guide can answer many of your questions and support you in teaching writing at UNI. We are sure there will be changes to come as we all learn from each other and as we head into the changing landscape of higher education. However, we hope resources like this will remain.

Please look through this guide carefully and become familiar with its layout and organization so you can use it most effectively when the need arises. If you have suggestions or comments regarding it, you may contact the Coordinator of Writing Programs, David M. Grant (david.grant@uni.edu), 206 Baker Hall, 273-2639.

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# Chapter One:
# Program Goals, Activities, and Design

A common assumption about a first-year writing course is that it should teach students to write. But a key difference arises when one pays attention to the infinitive, "to write." As a verb, the word is an action as opposed to a product, which begs questions of product vs. process, performance vs. mastery, skill vs. art, and a host of other issues. These are common issues composition studies has wrestled with since the first composition program was established at Harvard in 1888. We certainly hope that as reflective teachers you gain insight about and engage with these topics in your teaching.

Even if you are new to composition, you won't have to re-invent the wheel! This booklet, assessments, and other resources are designed to help you succeed. One of the nice things about a field as old as composition is that many common concerns are discussed in the professional research. We invite you to avail yourself of that body of knowledge (See appendix I for a list of professional resources).

***"To Write" and Other Meanings...***

So what does it mean to teach someone to write? If it's a matter of mimicking "good" writers, who counts as a good writer? Good writers don't always follow the rules or conventions. Yet if we teach students to break the rules, they won't be considered good. It seems an impossible conundrum, though it really is not. We must bear in mind that good writing is dependent upon context, audience, and purpose. In other words, writing is **rhetorical**. Even masterpieces, such as Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, languished in relative obscurity for decades because the context for a positive reception lagged behind its publication. More prosaically, one doesn't write a novel to remember things to buy at the grocery store.

But we know students can learn writing. Almost every university in the United States has a composition program or course, as do community colleges and many high schools. What began as a uniquely American phenomenon is also gaining attention worldwide. It is not a matter of remedial or basic skills, but a fully-fledged area of inquiry with over 80 U.S. doctoral programs granting thousands of degrees annually. Research in this area of the academy often looks at the complex interplay between author, culture, technology, audience, thought, and goals. The attention of composition is less on "what good writing is composed of" as it is "how to compose." How do students learn to manage this complex and dynamic task that weaves thinking and concern for another? How do students use this to learn more about their world, as opposed to simply regurgitating what they have already learned? How can we, as conscientious instructors aid students in their overall writing development and awareness and so maximize their educational and civic potential?

These are just some of the philosophical questions involved, both at UNI and across other composition programs. We hope these questions provoke your thoughts about teaching.

# UNI am writing.

***Program Outcomes***

UNI has specific outcomes we must look to foster so that other instructors can at least estimate how they can build upon experiences common to LAC 1A. The specific outcomes are

1. ability to produce written texts that are focused, clear, complete, and effective
   a. ideas expressed and explained in written texts are organized and communicated clearly, with detailed explanation and support for points made
   b. research and source materials are used critically and with understanding of their content and context
   c. ability to use a professional documentation style correctly and consistently
   d. written texts demonstrate understanding of audience needs, critical context, and writing purpose

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.

Thus, we can see there are two major outcomes divided evenly between ability and knowledge. Ability is clearly a performance goal. Performance doesn't mean that students will master all aspects of composition. Nor does it mean that "A" students will always write well in every situation. It simply means that students have been given opportunity and feedback regarding their performance on the tasks listed, and over the span of the course, applied themselves to revising their writing in order to improve their performance and deepen their knowledge of writing.

The other part is related, not separate. Knowledge can be found in textbooks, Online Writing Labs, assignment design, scaffolding of assignments, and even in teacher comments on papers. Students build their knowledge through these kinds of documents and pedagogical strategies. Knowledge may include their own writing process, the ways they translate their thoughts to written expression, the impacts of technology, subtleties of word meanings, etc. Thus, students gain knowledge in #2 – a knowledge that cannot be decontextualized – and their application of that knowledge in #1 results in an improved quality.

Your job as an instructor is to help students improve as writers by guiding them through a dauntingly complex process of connecting theoretical knowledge about how to write with actual and relevant writing situations. It is not always an easy task. But it can be richly rewarding!

***Overall Course Design***

Quality writing instruction requires a substantial workload in terms of planning assignments and the time needed for responding and evaluating them. There are also instructors in other departments who teach a "writing-enhanced" version of a regular course. The same outcomes and design features need to apply to any course fulfilling LAC 1A credit no matter where it is offered in the university. UNI has therefore adopted general design features for all LAC 1A courses:

- Enrollment limited to a maximum of 25 students.
- The equivalent of 30 or more pages of informal and formal writing, to include at least 15 pages which are revised and edited papers.
- At least one-half of the course evaluation based on written work.
- Periodic participation in portfolio-based student outcomes assessment for LAC 1A Writing and Reading courses.

If you are teaching a course designated as providing LAC 1A credit, you should check to make sure these design criteria are being met.

***Reading and Writing Activities***

In addition to the outcomes and design, LAC 1A courses are encouraged to introduce students to practice sound pedagogically effective activities for learning to write. This should not be considered an exhaustive list, as we also encourage innovation, collaboration, and continual improvement among all instructors. However, some common practices that can help provide consistency across course include

- Attention to critical (analytical) reading and effective uses of material from sources.
- Guided practice in drafting, revising, and editing with attention, as needed, to sentence design, paragraph development and coherence, transitions, and overall organization.
- Attention to adapting written discourse to purpose and audience as appropriate.
- Peer and instructor response to drafts, and/or opportunities to substantially revise a graded paper, with instructor feedback (writing in progress).
- Opportunity for student writers to reflect on their writing, their successes and their difficulties, and the processes they use in writing.

In essence, LAC 1A instructors need to focus student attention to the available rhetorical moves they can make in writing, not on the perfection of a predetermined form. Of course, grammar and documentation style have far less wiggle room and affect the success of students' rhetorical savvy, but they are not the end-all. We appreciate providing students with opportunities for instructor feedback before grading, translation of assignments into various genres and across different modes, keeping a reading-writing or reflective journal, and a portfolio-based grading system. But, then, we appreciate good teaching however it happens!

***But How Do I Know...?***

Of course, this is just the planning part. You will need to follow up your planning with some data gathering to help keep you in line with everyone else (and keep everyone in line with YOU!). This process of data gathering is called **assessment** and it is to this that we turn in chapter 5.

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# Chapter Two:
# Policies & Procedures

As instructors, it is our job to create a positive learning environment for our students, a respectful environment that encourages each student to explore and refine his or her personal writing process. We will focus on designing outcomes-based learning tools and offering creative and varied writing opportunities to our students. We must work collaboratively to share best practices and advance the study of writing at UNI.

When we are successful in our role, we will see vital, energized classrooms filled with students actively engaged in learning and exploring. We will see instructors who work collaboratively, who draw on and learn from each other's strengths, and who learn from their students, rather than just teaching them. We will see technology used in new and exciting ways to help students reach the outcome goals of the writing program.

Within the writing program, we will have occasional meetings throughout the year designed to allow instructors to discuss important issues and collaborate with each other. It is the responsibility of all instructors in the writing program to attend these very important writing staff meetings.

In the Liberal Arts Core (LAC) program, we are committed to ensuring that all writing classes meet the expected goals and outcomes, are of the highest quality, and serve all students. As such, all instructors will be required to participate in occasional assessments. Assessments of instructors may be in addition to any university-wide faculty assessment completed at the end of each semester. As the Master Agreement states, the university-wide assessments are to be kept in instructor employment files while additional ones are to be used for informational purposes (See Subdivision 3.21-3.28).

***Department of Languages and Literatures requirements & expected participation***

If you are an adjunct instructor in the Department of Languages and Literatures, you may receive email notices about departmental or college meetings and events. As an instructor in the writing program, you are welcome and encouraged to attend any departmental, CHAS, or university faculty functions that fit your schedule, including departmental meetings, feedback sessions, and celebrations. For most adjuncts on the writing staff, attendance at these events is completely voluntary. Adjuncts are an important part of the Department of Languages and Literatures within the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences (CHAS) and your participation allows for a stronger, more coherent program as well as a better workplace.

***Class cancellation policy***

Every effort should be made to hold class during your regularly scheduled time; however, occasionally classes must be canceled due to illness, personal emergencies or professional development. This is acceptable, as long as it is reasonable. In general, (excepting serious emergency situations) an instructor should not have to cancel class more than 1-3 times a semester.

If you must cancel, it is important to create a learning opportunity for your students to make up for the time lost in the classroom. Such activities may include on-line writing or discussion projects, a substitute instructor, a library presentation, group work, conducting specific research, etc. What is important is that the activity relates to the course/ assignment goals and that students can be held accountable for doing the work.

**Advance Absences:** If you know about the absence in advance (a conference presentation, for example) and you can design an alternative activity to advance the goals of the class in your absence, simply notify your students and call Diana Harwood at 273-2821 and leave a message stating the title, instructor, time, and room number of the class to be canceled.

**Emergency Absences:** If you are ill or have a personal or family emergency and time is short (i.e., you only have several hours before your class meets), you should do the following:

1. Contact Diana Harwood (DLL secretary) immediately by both phone (319) 273-2821 and email Diana.harwood@uni.edu, to ask her to inform students about the cancelled class. You will need to giver her your name, class title, class time, and room number.
2. If at all possible, directly contact your students through class email list to notify them of the cancellation.

If campus is closed due to severe weather or other emergency, notifications will be sent to all students, faculty and staff through the UNI Alert System and no action is required on your part.

***Textbook ordering process***

Once you have selected your textbook for the semester, you will need to submit your order for both class and desk copies. To order your textbooks, simply complete the Textbook Request form (page 49) and give it to Diana Harwood in the department office. Forms may be emailed to Diana.harwood@uni.edu so long as they are complete. IBSN numbers and titles are required on all textbook order forms. If you would like a desk copy of your selected texts, please complete the Desk Copy Request form (page 50) and submit it to Diana. When the text comes in, it will be placed in your mailbox in the office.

All textbook orders must go through the Department of Languages and Literatures office in order to be entered in the SIS system. Please do not contact the bookstore directly as it will just make more work for everyone.

Generally, textbook orders for Spring semester classes need to be turned in by October 31 and textbook orders for Fall semester classes need to be turned in by April 1. You will sometimes find that writing class assignments have not been made by these dates, especially for graduate assistants. If you receive your class assignment after the deadline, be sure to submit your book orders as soon as possible.

Cornerstone courses are designed around a common syllabus and texts. Instructors of Cornerstone should contact April Chatham-Carpenter with any questions about textbooks.

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***Common Read***

All LAC 1A courses are encouraged to participate in UNI's initiatives at providing a "common read." Generally, this is a single text inspired by a yearly theme and sponsored by the Reaching for Higher Ground initiative (http://www.uni.edu/highergound/about). For the 2012-2013 academic year, the common read is The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson. Please consider using this text to explore issues about "The American Dream" and what it means to different people and places. This is an excellent book to assign as a "Reader" (see Chapter 5, "Getting Started").


***Office Hours***

Accessibility to faculty is a matter of pride at the University of Northern Iowa, so it is imperative that students have access to their professors outside of the classroom setting. As such, all LAC-1A faculty are required to hold regular office hours. Full-time faculty members are expected to hold at least three office hours per week. Part-time faculty members are expected to hold at least one office hour for each section taught.

It is helpful for students if you can provide some variation in times for your office hours, for instance, 9:00 to 10:00 Monday and 2:00 to 3:00 Thursday. If all of your available hours fall during the same class period, you will be certain to exclude at least some portion of your students. As there will always be students with work and class schedules that do not permit them to meet during your office hours, you should be certain to inform students that you are available to meet outside of office hours by appointment.

During office hours, it can sometimes become challenging to balance the confidentiality required of an instructor with common sense safety practices. Unless you are discussing highly sensitive material with your student, we recommend that your office door remain open any time you are meeting with a student. This practice helps you avoid the possibility of intimidation by a student or the accusation of impropriety.

Today's students are connected to technology 24/7 and often expect their instructors to be likewise. Many instructors have found setting on-line office hours to be an effective way to let students know the best time to communicate through email, blogs or other media. Telling students you will be on-line or checking messages during a set period every day allows them to contact you at times when you know you will be able to respond in a timely manner. Be sure you tell your students that emails sent outside of your on-line office hours will be read and responded to at your convenience.

## Harassment and Other Public Safety Policies

The University of Northern Iowa and the Department of Languages and Literatures are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive environment for our students, faculty and staff. Each person has the right to feel safe and has the responsibility to help ensure the safety of others. A complete list of safety policies is detailed in the University Policies and

Procedures (www.uni.edu/policies), however there are a few policies that are of particular concern to new instructors and graduate assistants.

**If you ever need immediate assistance in responding to a threat to your safety, or the safety of others, call UNI Police Emergency at 273-4000 or 9-1-1.**

***Managing Classroom Disruptions***

The Student Conduct Code describes disruption as "Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings or other university activities, including its public service functions on or off campus, or of other authorized non-university activities when the conduct occurs on university premises."

In the classroom, we have the responsibility to create a safe and productive working environment for our students and ourselves. Our students should feel safe to express their opinions without fear of intimidation or threat. We should also feel safe to work with our students without fear of intimidation or threat. There are several steps you can take to create a respectful environment for everyone.

1. Set clear expectations for behavior on the first day of class. State your expectations in your syllabus and review them carefully with your class.
2. Model the respectful behavior you expect from your students. Encourage open discussion from everyone regardless of your opinion of his or her views.
3. If a student behaves in a way that causes you concern, ask the student to remain after class to discuss the behavior or arrange a meeting to discuss the behavior privately. If the behavior causes you serious concern, it is acceptable to tell a student he or she cannot return to class until you have met to discuss the issue.
4. During your meeting, discuss the disruptive behavior, clarify your expectations, ask for cooperation in adhering to class standards, and outline possible consequences if the disruptive behavior continues. Make a record of any meetings or conversations and send written communication to the student summarizing the discussion.
5. You are encouraged to involve the Coordinator of Writing Programs, the Department Head, or the Dean of Students when meeting to discuss seriously disruptive behavior. The involvement of others will only reinforce the importance of your standards.

If you find yourself feeling intimidated by a student, remember:

1. You are the instructor. You have the right to be treated with respect by your students and co-workers just as they have the right to be treated with respect by you.
2. If you are in an isolated location, try to move the conversation to a more public space. Leave your office door open whenever you are speaking with students.
3. Suggest setting a meeting to discuss the issue at a later time. A little time may help to diffuse a difficult situation.

**If at any time, you feel you or one of your students are in immediate danger from a student, contact UNI Police Emergency at 273-4000 or 9-1-1.** If you do not feel in immediate danger but feel the situation has moved beyond your control, contact the

Coordinator of Writing Programs, David Grant, at 273-2639 as soon as possible to instigate a departmental response to the situation.

***Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment is a form of sexual misconduct that includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to or rejection of such conduct or communication is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of education benefits, academic evaluations or access to or participation in other University activities or opportunities

OR

2. The behavior is sufficiently severe or pervasive to unreasonably interfere with the student's education or other University activities or create an intimidating, hostile or objectively offensive environment (University Policy 3.15)

In other words, even sexual relationships that are seen by the parties involved to be consensual would be highly unethical and may have the potential to be classified legally as harassment. Any sexual relationship between two people of unequal power may have the potential to be seen as harassment. Any sexual relationship between two people that may have an adverse impact on the work, grades, promotion, or salary of another may have the potential to be seen as harassment. Any sexual relationship that may have a positive impact on the work, grades, promotion, or salary of one of the people within the relationship may have the potential to be seen as harassment.

***Social Media***

In today's environment, it is not uncommon to receive requests from students wishing to be a part of your social media network. Many instructors have found social media to be an excellent tool for communicating with students while others have chosen to keep their classroom completely separate from their social lives. It is your choice if you wish to include students or not, but there are a few things you may want to think about before you are faced with a request.

- How do you use social media? Do you use it as a professional forum, a way to keep track of family and friends, or both? Then think, am I comfortable having students reading my latest conversation with my mother? What about my conversation with a colleague? Are you fluent enough with the medium to separate these aspects of your life, if necessary?
- Even if you have developed a strong teacher/student relationship, you are still the one with the power. Remember that all the rules of harassment in the classroom apply on-line. You are not turning your social media you're your classroom, but you are linking the two.

## Reporting Requirements

***Faculty Center/SIS System***

You may hear the data management program used by the university referred to as the SIS System or as the Faculty Center of MyUniverse. Don't let this confuse you—they are the same

thing. For the purpose of this document, we will refer to this area as the Faculty Center; since that is what you actually see when you enter MyUniverse.

Through the Faculty Center you will be able to access your schedule, final exam schedule, class roster, and grade roster. All information posted in this area has come directly from the mainframe SIS System, so it should be the location of your most up-to-date information.

***Mid-term and final grades***

Instructions for filing mid-term and final grades through the Faculty Center of MyUniverse will be emailed to you in a timely manner through the Office of the Registrar. As that process can change frequently, we will not go into full detail here. The process to enter grades is not complicated, but the Registrar's Office frequently holds classes for new faculty to help you understand the system. If it fits into your schedule, you may find such a class helpful in answering questions. If you ever have a question regarding the process or timeline for filing grades, contact the Office of the Registrar at 273-2241 or registrar@uni.edu.

Mid-term grade reports are not required for all students, only those receiving grades of D+, D, D-, or F by mid-term. If you wish to file mid-term grades for all your students, you may do so. You will file your mid-term grade report through the Faculty Center Grade Roster, which places it in the SIS System. Official reports will be sent through the Office of the Registrar.

In addition to formal mid-term grade reports through the Registrar, you may be asked to complete mid-term grade updates for at-risk students and student athletes. The forms will be sent to you through the campus mail system. Please complete them in a timely manner and return them by the date requested. This information is very important for the support of these students, so please be thorough and timely in your response.

Final grades are also filed through the Faculty Center of MyUniverse. Again, the Registrar will email instructions and date requirements directly to you. As with mid-term grades, feel free to attend a training session or contact the Registrar with any questions or concerns you may have about filing final grades.

You have the option of using the Grade Center of eLearning to share grade updates with your students. Please be aware that the Grade Center of the eLearning system does not connect to the grade roster of the Faculty Center system. Filing grades in eLearning will share them with your students but is not a substitute for the official grade posted within the Faculty Center. On the flip side, students do not have access to the grades you post in the Faculty Center until the Registrar sends the official grade report.

***Student drops, adds, and incompletes***

If a student wishes to drop or add your class after the start of the semester, they must have you sign a drop/add slip, which must then be brought to the Department of Languages and Literatures office to be signed. Generally, Cornerstone should not have drops or adds, but if something does need attention, please contact April Chatham-Carpenter. After gaining both signatures, the student must then return the form to the Office of the Registrar.

Occasionally, students will ask you to squeeze them into a class that has already reached maximum enrollment. This is highly discouraged for all writing classes and will not be allowed in classes taught by graduate assistants.

If you have a student who is unable to complete the coursework due to extenuating circumstances, you may approve a grade of Incomplete for the semester. This option is limited to students who have completed satisfactory work up until the unforeseen circumstances arose. A grade of Incomplete will give the student additional time to complete course work based on an agreement set by you and the student. If you have a student in need of this option, have them contact the Registrar's Office for details.

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# Chapter Three: Getting Started

***Selecting Textbooks***

Selecting a textbook bears on the kind of pedagogy one develops. As a result, choosing a textbook can be quite challenging and should be considered carefully. To help, we have collected a wide variety of textbooks in the textbook library in Baker 038. The library gives you a chance to take the time to review several books in depth before placing an order. Take advantage of this wonderful resource by requesting a key in the DLL office or ask Linda Adkins (Linda.Adkins@uni.edu) in Baker 219.

You might think of three types of textbooks commonly assigned in composition courses:

1. style/ grammar guides
2. readers/ rhetorics, and
3. textbooks about written communication.

There is some overlap between these categories and quite often a reader/ rhetoric or a textbook about written communication will include some aspects of a style/ grammar guide.

By and large, a **style/grammar** guide is a fairly inexpensive resource or handbook for students to use as they compose. These textbooks detail what writing is composed of, not how to compose. And this is a very big difference. We all hope auto mechanics know much more than the parts of an engine. We even expect that they know more than how these parts fit together, which could be easily accessed with an appropriate Chilton's manual. We expect a reputable auto mechanic to have a working knowledge of car systems. This knowledge involves these things, but it also involves a theoretical knowledge of what these parts DO, how they function together, and ways they commonly go wrong. Thus, a style guide and teaching grammar is simply insufficient for students to learn how writing functions and ways it commonly goes wrong.

A **reader/rhetoric**, by contrast, offers selected readings on a topic or various topics that students are then asked to respond to. These are very good at helping teach critical reading strategies and guiding students to write responses as ways to learn about themselves and critical issues. As a side benefit, these textbooks often rely on a humanistic perspective and have selected sources that span historical and cultural perspectives. Students thus get much more out of the readings than they might if they are simply left to their own research devices. The downside is that unless the teacher is not careful, the teaching may emphasize ways of learning common to English and humanities majors. This may not be suitable for students who want to pursue a STEM or business, or education degree. To return to the car analogy, the theoretical knowledge emphasized in many (not all) of these textbooks may be of a more specialized kind of engine than is necessary for a broad range of future mechanics.

Finally, a **textbook about written communication** provides a fairly wide perspective on a nearly ubiquitous human activity: writing. These often take an explicitly **rhetorical** approach

to human communication and so dovetail well with oral, visual, and digital communication. These textbooks are purposefully expansive in their view on writing and ask students to consider a wide range of potential modes to best deliver their messages, including the different areas of knowledge held by the audience. This also leads to a good basis for further writing instruction, across the curriculum and/or within the disciplines. Some instructors and students bristle at these texts and how they acknowledge the impact of technology on what is considered "writing." Others may find these texts almost too theoretical. And yet, they do prompt us to consider how students will actually need to use writing in their lives, across situations, and in relationship with different ways of understanding our world.

The main point I think most would agree on is **supporting all students** as they are situated within the complex, interrelated demands of producing a written text. The means of support can and may vary widely given the diversity of incoming student knowledge bases, different learning styles, different cultural expectations, different ways to engage different learner interest, different technological knowledge (writing has always been technological, something that has always separated it from oratory in both theory and practice), shifting literacies, and unknown future purposes. How you, as an instructor, meet that challenge is not anything we can prescribe. We will, however, support your creativity, experience, and training just as you do with your students!

Some examples of the kinds of text you might consider are:

**Grammar/ Style Guides**

Bullock, Richard and Weinberg, Francine. *The Little Seagull Handbook.* New York: WW Norton & Co., 2011.

Maimon, Elaine P, Janice H. Peritz, and Kathleen Blake Yancey. *A Writer's Resource*, 2nd Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009.

Lunsford, Andrea. *Easy Writer, 4th Ed.* New York: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2010. (see also http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/easywriter4e/default.asp?uid=0&rau=0).

Palmquist, Mike. *Designing Writing: A Practical Guide.* New York: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2005.

**Readers/ Rhetorics**

Bullock, Richard and Maureen Daly Goggin. *The Norton Field Guide to Writing.* New York: WW Norton, 2010. (available with readings or with readings and handbook).

Gray-Rosendale, Laura. *Pop Perspectives: Readings to Critique Contemporary Culture.* Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Kress, Anne and Suellyn Winkle. *Next Text: Making Connections Across Disciplines and Beyond.* New York: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2008.

**Written Communication**
Seyler, Dorothy R. *Read, Reason, Write: An Argument Text and Reader.* Boston: McGraw Hill, 2010. (includes supplemental readings in the back).

Lunsford, Andrea, John Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything's An Argument, 5th Ed.* New York, Bedford-St. Martin's, 2010. (available with or without readings).

Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst. *They Say/ I Say.* New York: WW Norton, 2009.

Ede. Lisa. *The Academic Writer: A Brief Guide.* New York: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2008. (have but I am teaching it).

***Creating a Syllabus***
The syllabus is a vital source of communication in the classroom as it is usually the first place a student looks when he or she has a question. While there are multitudes of ways to create a syllabus, there is some information that should be standard throughout the writing program.

First, the university requires that all syllabi list the semester, year, course title, course number and section, instructor's name, instructor's office hours, and the instructor's office/phone/e-mail (see sample annotated syllabus in chapter 10). Beyond this basic information, LAC 1A course syllabi should also include course objectives, attendance policy, and grading criteria. Finally, it is a good idea to include a plagiarism statement, an accommodation statement, and an electronic devices policy. You do not need to copy the full university policy on any of these issues, but you should have a sentence or two stating your classroom policy and directing students to the full policy if they wish to review it. This protects you and offers students an explicit statement regarding the behaviors you expect to see from them. To see several examples of how different instructors word these policies, take a look at the additional sample syllabi on the Writing @ UNI website (www.writing.uni.edu).

Remember that the syllabus is one of the first impressions your students will have of you, so highlight the most important points and create an aesthetically appealing format. You will need to submit a copy of your syllabus to Diana Harwood, Department of Languages and Literatures Secretary, by the second week of class.

***Attendance Policy for Students***
Regular attendance is a necessary part of all LAC 1A courses because students need to participate in individual projects, small-group work, large group discussions, and all other aspects of the class. As such, it is important to keep a systematic record of daily attendance. Please do not give points for good attendance; rather, lower grades for excessive absences. Usually, instructors begin to deduct points when students have missed four or five classes on a MWF section or three or four classes on a TR class. Remind students that if they waste their absences, they won't have them when an emergency arises.

Students who have excessive absences because they are ill or have family emergencies are expected to provide evidence of these emergencies. If you can arrange alternate learning opportunities that you feel satisfy the classroom activities missed, you are free to do so. If the student has simply missed too much work, he or she may have to drop the class. If the absences are due to a medical situation, the student may apply for a Medical Incomplete through the Registrar's Office. Otherwise, excessive absences are not an acceptable reason to grant an Incomplete.

Students involved in UNI athletics and other university-sanctioned activities may miss class occasionally. It is the student's responsibility to provide you with an activity sheet stating all expected absences early in the semester. It is your responsibility to work with the student to find alternate learning activities that can be completed outside of the classroom but will advance the student toward the classroom goals. In this way, the student can be engaged in learning objectives even is he or she is not in the classroom.

***Expected Workload & Activities***

While all classroom exercises and assignments must tie directly to the LAC 1A outcomes at the beginning of the guide, how you design your exercises and assignments is up to you. In general, the equivalent of thirty (30) or more pages of informal and formal writing is expected. Of that, at least fifteen (15) pages should be revised and edited papers. At least one-half of the course evaluation should be based on written work.

In all LAC 1A courses there should be attention paid to critical and analytical reading and the effective use of material from sources. There should be guided practice in drafting, revising, and editing with attention to sentence design, paragraph development and coherence, transitions, and overall organization. Students should have experience adapting written discourse to specific purposes and audiences as appropriate. Students should have the opportunities for peer and instructor response to drafts and/or opportunities to substantially revise a graded paper with instructor feedback. Courses should provide the opportunity for student writers to reflect on their writing, their successes and their difficulties, and the process they use in writing.

***Assignment and Course Design***

As frequently happens in the world of teaching, there is debate surrounding the practice of assignment or course scaffolding. Some instructors find scaffolds to be valuable and necessary tools to provide structure to their planning and ensure progression toward the final course goals. Others find scaffolds confining and prefer a more organic process in course design. At UNI, we want you to chose the process that works best for you. We have chosen a couple of techniques that have been successfully used by instructors to chart a path for their courses. As you review these examples, think about how you prepare for your course. Are you a more linear thinker who likes to be able to see exactly how one assignment builds on another? Are you more free-flowing in your planning? In your preparation process, we encourage you to use whichever process works best for you, or to combine or adapt to create a process all your own. Regardless of how you chose to prepare, it is important that all instructors find a process that

allows them to think about how each assignment they create fits into the course as a whole and how each assignment moves students toward reaching the final course learning goals.

### *Scaffolding*

In course design, a scaffold provides a structured method for looking at assignments or courses in terms of meeting specific goals. An instructor can create a scaffold for a single assignment or for an entire class. When scaffolding an assignment, the instructor specifies the learning goals and objectives for the assignment, details the supporting assignments leading up to the major assignment and identifies how the assignment meets the over all course goals. An example of an assignment scaffold can be found in figure 2. The advantage of an assignment scaffold is that it allows the instructor to clearly see how the supporting exercises feed into the larger graded assignment ensuring that all aspects of the information, practice, feedback and measure cycle are included in each major assignment.

**Assignment Scaffolding Map**

| | **Assignment : Inquiry Essay** | **Percentage of Grade? 20%** | **Multimodal? No** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Description** | This essay starts with a research question and an explanation of why that question was interesting. The student then tracks his or her inquiry process by summarizing and responding to three of the most influential pieces of research he or she encountered. At least one of the three texts should reflect the student's original views on the subject and at least one should demonstrate an opposing view. The student then analyses and critiques all side of the argument, explains his or her current stand on the question and explains how the research did or did not alter that stance. | | |
| **Learning goals and outcomes** | 1.To help students view research and writing as a way to thoughtfully explore important issues. 2. To help students see how information can change their views and ideas on a topic. 3. To allow students to practice critical analytical skills. 4. To allow students to find their place within a controversial issue and to communicate both where they stand and how they reached that place. | | |
| **Exercises that support this assignment** | 1. Visual argument debate - Dick Chaney & Iwo Jima 2. Doubting and believing game 3. Critical article discussions 4. Voice exercises (car accident) 5. Topic generation exercises 6. Citation 7. Academic integrity | | |
| **Notes** | This is a challenging assignment for students. Make certain they have lots of opportunities to practice critical reading skills and positional writing skills. | | |

| | Organization and clarity | | | | Explanation & support of ideas | | | | Critical use of research | | | | Professional documentation | | | | Audience needs | | | | Critical context | | | | Writing purpose | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M |
| Ability to produce written texts that are focused, clear, complete, and effective | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | x | x | x | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | x | x | x |

| | Invention | | | | Drafting | | | | Revising | | | | Editing | | | | Own improvement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M |
| Knowledge of and ability to practice the process of effective writing | | x | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |

Scaffolding Marks: ✓= Applies, x = Partially applies, I = Introduce, P = Practice, F = Feedback, M = Measure

Looking at the scaffold, you can learn a lot about the hypothetical course this scaffold supports. First off, you can see that the Inquiry Essay is a major, graded assignment. The learning goals are clearly set out for the assignment and several supporting exercises are planned to help students be successful. You can tell this is not the first writing assignment in this course because all of the steps in the writing process have already been introduced. They are practiced, provided feedback, and measured, but not introduced. You can also tell that this is the first assignment to require outside resources, since critical use of research and professional documentation are being introduced in this unit. You can even see the areas of

challenge for previous students. With this single sheet of paper, you have learned a great deal about both the assignment and the course as a whole.

Once the individual assignments are scaffolded, many instructors chose to create a scaffold for the entire course. An example of a course scaffold can be found in figure 3. A course scaffold allows you to clearly see how the major assignments build on each other and to ensure that all course goals have been met. By their very definition, scaffolds provide a great deal of structure, but that does not mean they are inflexible. They are tools to help you plan, not contracts you are required to fulfill. If circumstances change during the semester, by all means make alterations. The scaffold simply allows you to clearly see your plans for the semester in a holistic way and helps you to see any gaps or overlaps that you may not see by looking at the course in individual pieces.

**Course Scaffolding Map**

| | Assignment 1 | | | | Assignment 2 | | | | Assignment 3 | | | | Assignment 4 | | | | Assignment 5 | | | | Assignment 6 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Description** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Learning Goals and Outcomes** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Notes** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Multimodal** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M | I | P | F | M |
| Ability to produce written texts that are focused, clear, complete, and effective | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Knowledge of and ability to practice the process of effective writing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Scaffolding Marks: ✓= Applies, - = Partially applies, I = Introduce, P = Practice, F = Feedback, M = Measure

***Reflective Planning***

For some instructors, scaffolds are simply too confining. They prefer a more organic process of reflection and adaptation to the more structured format of checking boxes. In the example below, we have created an example of a more reflective planning process using the same Inquiry Essay assignment. As you can see, the more reflective process still helps the instructor plan out both the assignment and the course and to ensure all goals are met. This process just does so in a less structured and more flexible manner.

**Sample Reflective Planning Exercise**

Assignment: Inquiry Essay Percentage of Grade: 20% Multimodal: No

What are the learning goals of this assignment?

1. To help students view research and writing as a way to thoughtfully explore important issues.
2. To help students see how information can change their views and ideas on a topic.
3. To allow students to practice critical analytical skills.
4. To allow students to find their place within a controversial issue and to communicate both where they stand and how they reached that place.

What writing skills do I want to introduce?
Analyzing research, understanding context, communicating position and professional documentation

What skills do I want to practice?
Stating the position of others with clarity and in-depth understanding, explaining and supporting my own position and relating that position to the position of others. Explaining movement within a position clearly and with respect. Understanding the needs of an audience and communicating in a way that will appeal to that audience. All aspects of the writing process.

How can students best practice these skills?
Exercises that give students the chance to analyze difficult essays, to explore their own opinions, and to respectfully place their opinions in relation to the opinions of others. One possible exercise is the visual augment debate with the Newsweek photo of Dick Chaney.

How do I want to provide feedback?
This is a really challenging assignment which requires lots of opportunities for feedback. Small group discussion of essays will provide peer feedback in analytical skills. Short written assignments in all practice areas will provide opportunities for instructor feedback. Peer review of drafts and instructor conferences will provide feedback on the final assignment.

UNI I am writing.

# Chapter Four: Resources

We want to make sure that all instructors in the writing program have the resources necessary to be successful in fulfilling their teaching outcomes and goals. Here is an overview of some of the resources available at UNI that you and your students may use frequently.

## Faculty Resources

### *Rod Library*

The Rod Library is a vital resource for any instructor teaching research. The librarians are able and willing to provide your students with tours of the library, seminars on research techniques, and countless other services. They can help you to place materials on hold or answer questions about fair use of materials. They can also assist you in your own professional research. In other words, make friends with as many of the librarians as you can.

To fully acquaint yourself with the resources available at the Rod Library, look through the "Information For Faculty" section of the library web site. It may also be worth your time to set up an appointment to speak with one of the librarians to discuss specific needs or questions you may have.

### *Student Athletics and Activities*

Student athletes face unique challenges in completing their education, and having one in your class may require a bit more reporting and flexibility on your part. About mid-term, you will receive a request for information for any student athletes in your class. The report will ask you to state a projected mid-term grade and any concerns you may have about the student's classroom performance. Please complete and return the form in a timely manner.

Depending on the season, student athletes may need to miss a number of classes. It is your responsibility to work with the student to find alternate learning activities that can be completed outside of the classroom but will advance the student toward the classroom goals. In this way, the student can be engaged in learning objectives even is he or she is not in the classroom. Due to the number of missed classes, many student athletes are assigned tutors. If an athlete in your class has a tutor, please be accessible to the tutor to ensure he or she has the information necessary to best help your student.

Athletics are not the only UNI-sanctioned activities that may take students from the classroom on a regular basis. If a student wishes to be excused for a UNI activity, he or she must provide you with an activity form that states all anticipated absences. This form must be completed in advance of the first absence. As with student athletes, it is your responsibility to work with the student to provide an alternate learning activity that will advance the student toward the learning objectives.

***Students With Special Needs***

UNI is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for all students. Occasionally, that requires an instructor making reasonable accommodations for a student with special needs. As "reasonable accommodations" is defined differently for each student, the best resource for an instructor will be the staff in Student Disability Services (SDS). If you have a student requesting any type of accommodation, send them to SDS to discuss their specific needs. After meeting with the student, SDS will contact you to determine a plan for that particular student in that particular classroom setting.

As all accommodation must go through SDS, do not provide any accommodation for a student unless directed by SDS. If you do not think the accommodation request is reasonable, or if you have questions about what you are expected to do, contact SDS immediately. Never discuss accommodations in front of other students. More information on the services available for students with special needs can be found at http://www.uni.edu/resources/disability.

***Technical Support***

If you are having difficulty with your office computer, feel free to contact CHAS Informational Technology Support. The number should be listed on your computer.

If you would like assistance with technology in your classroom, turn to Educational Technology Services. They offer a variety of workshops and tutorials on software, hardware, and the eLearning system. Members of the Instructional Design and Development team are also available to meet one-on-one to discuss ways technology may be used to reach your class outcomes. Finally, ETS can provide a variety of media services including audio and video production, document imaging and disk duplication. You can see all of the resources offered at www.uni.edu/its/.

***Textbook Library***

There is a library of writing textbooks maintained by the Department of Languages and Literatures in room 038 of Baker Hall. Simply ask for the key at the department office and you will be able to review the hundreds of books available in the library. This is a great way to familiarize yourself with quality texts whenever you select a new text for your classroom.

## Student Resources

There are a number of resources on campus that can help struggling students. If you are familiar with these resources you will be better able to suggest them to students in need.

***Academic Learning Center***

The Academic Learning Center offers students a variety of services in one location. From study skill seminars to tutors, advising to test services, the Academic Learning Center should definitely be familiar to all students. If you have a student who needs help in any area of their academics, this is the first place you should suggest they visit. For more information about the Academic Learning Center visit http://www.uni.edu/unialc/index.html.

***Computer Labs***
Right now, there are fifteen computer labs scattered around campus. Students and faculty have full access to the labs and are allowed to print up to 40 pages per day for free. In addition, there are six scanners available for student and faculty use.

***Counseling Center***
The Counseling Center provides professional, confidential counseling for all students. They also provide screening for a number of mental health issues, either in person or through a 24-hour on-line screening tool. A variety of workshops are also offered through the center on topics like stress and time management, healthy relationships, and eating disorders. To find more information about the services available through the Counseling Center go to http://www.uni.edu/counseling/.

***Rod Library***
Rod Library offers a multitude of resources to students beyond the books and journals it houses. The web site features an assignment calculator, subject guides, and tutorials on a wide variety of topics. The librarians are a wealth of knowledge on the research process and are available to assist students in person, through email or text, and by instant message. Anything you can do to help your students become more familiar and comfortable with the library and its many resources will be time well spent.

***Writing Center***
A component of the Academic Learning Center, the Writing Center is a wonderful resource for all students in the writing program. Writing coaches are available to work one-on-one with students at any point in the writing process. The writing coaches are not proofreaders; they are coaches who help students strengthen their writing. All of the Writing Center's services are by appointment, so students must plan in advance to take advantage of their services. The Writing Center is located in room 008 ITTC and can be reached at 273-2361. More information about the Writing Center is available at http://www.uni.edu/unialc/writingcenter.html.

# Chapter Five: Assessment

What do you think of when you hear or read the word "Assessment"? Do images of a red pen and counting errors come to mind? Or is it a room full of students taking a test? How about a room full of over-caffeinated adjuncts pouring over piles of portfolios? Well, these may be parts of assessment, but they are not the entirety of it. The word assessment comes from the Latin *ad sedere*, meaning "to sit down beside." It can be thought of as distinct from **evaluation**, a term borrowed from mathematics. When we evaluate, we rank order or assign a value to something. When we assess, however, we simply seek more information about something by "sitting down beside" it. That may be a person, an essay, a program, a teacher, or an entire curriculum. The terms are related, as you will see below, but they serve different purposes.

Any information gathering process, then, is part of assessment. What the Latin etymology points out is the necessity of getting down to the level of that which is being assessed. It is important to attempt to see teaching and learning from the perspectives of those involved rather than simply holding them to a standardized rubric or norm, for that would be evaluation, not assessment.

While all teachers (and their students) are always engaged in some informal process of assessment, the complexity lies in the fact that educational programs are, by their very nature, collaborative endeavors. This collaboration requires ongoing, collective data gathering and interpretation. Appeals to "as a seasoned teacher I can just tell my students are learning" generally do not go over particularly well! So, not only must there be data gathering, but perhaps more importantly, there needs to be **sustained, on-going discussion** about what we know about and what we value in both writing and learning.

So, our collaboration relies on assessment, or the gathering and sharing of information to form a better picture of what is happening in terms of learning. This can happen in many different ways, but what is important for writing is that the assessment is

1. Appropriate
2. Valid, and
3. Fair

***Appropriate Assessment***

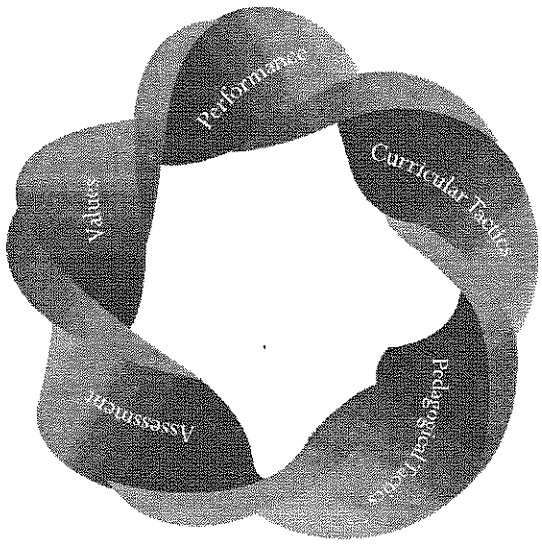
Talking about making writing assessment appropriate generally refers to the ways it fits the contexts in which it is used. For students, appropriateness refers to the ways in which the assessment fits into their lives as real considerations, not as abstract, school bound tasks. Consider how Jon Mueller (2008) defines what is known as "authentic assessment." He does so in ways different from the narrow, decontextualized measure of skills and knowledge found in traditional assessment. According to Mueller,

*authentic assessment (AA) springs from the following reasoning and practice:*

1. *A school's mission is to develop productive citizens.*
2. *To be a productive citizen, an individual must be capable of performing meaningful tasks in the real world.*
3. *Therefore, schools must help students become proficient at performing the tasks they will encounter when they graduate.*
4. *To determine if it is successful, the school must then ask students to perform meaningful tasks that replicate real world challenges to see if students are capable of doing so.*

Thus, in AA, assessment drives the curriculum. While UNI's writing program does not ascribe to authentic assessment as it is practiced in some areas, there are some principles and theories in common between AA and our writing assessment. That is, teachers determine the tasks students will perform to demonstrate outcomes, and then a curriculum is developed that will enable students to perform those tasks well, which would include the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills. This has been referred to as *planning backwards.*

However – again because teaching in a program is collaborative – individual teachers cannot inaugurate this process. Rather, as proponents of Dynamic Criteria Mapping (DCM) would argue, instructors need to first sit down with some representative texts and ascertain what they value in writing. After all, most of the students will fixate on your evaluation of them at the end of the paper or the semester. So how does this "valuation" play a role in assessment? No matter how much you try to get around or diminish its importance, the institution and its students will require you to make some form of evaluation. If you value what a student wrote but your program assessment differs, isn't that a problem?




So, deciding what a group values is an important first step. After that, discussion can move on to the kinds of performances asked of students, ways to make tasks meaningful, curricular aims and goals, pedagogical implementation, and – lastly – assessment tools and procedures. As assessment professionals will be sure to point out, the results from assessment must be "plugged back into" the teaching and learning process. After all, why gather data and interpret it but not allow it to affect your teaching? So, this may be better thought of as a loop.

Participating in this loop makes you a better teacher and better teachers make for better writers. It's that simple.

***Validity in Writing Assessment***

When we say that assessment must be valid, we are actually going against a great deal of assessment practice, but we do so for sound reasons. Because writing is, in some respects

"contentless" and its effectiveness can only be understood the highly contextualized application of a student actually writing, questions of reliability become subsumed by questions of validity. Simply put, reliability is the degree to which the assessment tools and procedures produce consistent results. In the case of writing assessment, this often means inter-rater reliability, or the degree to which multiple readers rate a piece of writing in a consistent manner.

*Validity* is a different issue. This refers to the degree to which an assessment measures what it purports to. At this point, go back to page 5 and look at the outcomes for LAC 1A courses. These are the things LAC 1A assessments purport to measure. However, if an assessment focuses purely on the quality of the finished product, then, at best, we can only assess 1a-d because there is only validity for the finished product. We can assess nothing about "the knowledge and ability of practicing effective processes" since they are not directly measurable through a finished essay. Any argument or interpretation based on this evidence would not be valid, no matter how reliable it may be.

This is why we often use a **portfolio assessment**. Such portfolios can provide valid data regarding students' ability to practice their writing processes. Even in a portfolio situation, you can see how validity and reliability are linked. To achieve a high degree of inter-rater reliability over how well a portfolio demonstrates effective use of processes or recognition of areas for improvement, raters need to articulate theories of composition (as the act of composing) and ascertain what happened within that act based upon the evidence before them.

*The hours spent preparing for assessment: many. Hours spent talking over minute details: several. Cups of coffee: dozens. Insights into teaching and learning about writing:* ***priceless!***

***Fairness in Writing Assessment***

Few, if any, assessments can provide a one-shot, accurate overview of individual students, program effectiveness, teacher development, and how best to offer writing instruction at an institution. Every assessment tool, like every piece of research, has limitations. Fairness refers to the ways in which an assessment is used in terms of placement, criteria used, and meaningful participation by stakeholders. For example, if an assessment tool expected students write science papers at a professional or even a graduate level, this would not be a fair assessment. Stakeholders should also be apprised of the assessment criteria and procedures.

# Chapter Six:
# Classroom Management

Students have a lot of things vying for their attention these days. Most students have at least one job to help with college expenses, many have family responsibilities that take up their time, and all have access to a host of technological gadgets that provide wonderful distractions. Few have nothing to focus on but their college classes. Somewhere in this cacophony of distraction sits your class. How do you keep students focused on learning during the time you spend with them in the classroom? Here are some practical suggestions from writing instructors who have developed successful class management techniques.

***Starting off on the right foot:***
Be transparent about your teaching. State your goals and teaching methods up front, not only on the first day, but throughout the course.

- Consider starting your semester off being a little more strict with your class management than you anticipate maintaining. It is always possible to lighten up in the classroom, but it is almost impossible to shift a class back toward more strict control.
- Balance strictness with equanimity. No one responds well to a tyrant. Commit to creating an environment of respect and mutual education. You have a lot to teach your students, but they may have a lot to teach you as well. Students respond well to instructors who really listen and accept that students have a vital role to play in education.
- Stress the importance of always being prepared for class. If your style is to stay pretty close to your syllabus, make certain it lists everything your students will need each day. If your style is a little more relaxed, make certain your students know from the beginning that all materials are fair game each class period. If they know what to expect they are more likely to come prepared.
- Take the time to review your classroom technology policy. Make it simple and clear so students understand exactly where the boundaries are.

To ensure clear communication right from the start, instructor Kim Groninga introduces a Conversation Contract on the first day of class. After the initial review, Groninga refers back to the document throughout the semester whenever she needs to reinforce the guidelines agreed to by the students. As all students are required to sign the document, all student share accountability for maintaining a respectful classroom. A copy of the contract follows:

# UNI am writing.

## Conversation Contract

1. I will listen respectfully and carefully to others. This is the best way to begin to understand other's points of view and to discover common ground.
2. I will speak honestly about my thoughts and feelings. My willingness to speak honestly demonstrates trust and respect for others.
3. I will speak for myself, rather than as a member of a group. I do not know what others in the group are thinking or feeling and cannot speak for them. I will use "I-statements" rather than "we-statements."
4. I realize that each participant holds part of the truth I am seeking to discern and that I won't hear that truth if I judge too quickly what is being said.
5. I realize that true conversation needs give and take. I will give others plenty of opportunity to speak and respond. I will help keep the discussion focused by sticking to the subject at hand.
6. I will maintain confidentiality about matters people share with the group when it is asked or obviously appropriate.
7. I will keep an open mind. I will try to understand others as much as possible from their point of view as they express it. Even those who disagree with me are not necessarily my enemies.
8. I will exercise care for group members who become upset over what is said during our conversations.
9. I understand that listening is an active, demanding activity. I will listen not only for what is said but for tone of voice, kind and level of feeling expressed, and body language. I will also be attentive for what is not said.
10. I understand the outcome, quality, and safety of the conversation is everyone's responsibility.

***Keeping students engaged:***

- Try not to tie yourself to the front of the room or to a podium. Walk, skip, tiptoe, whatever—just move around the classroom as much as you can.
- It is not normal behavior for students to look at their laps for extended periods of time. Students may think they are subtly using their technological device of choice, but really, you will know what they are up to. This is a good time to go stand next to them and continue the lesson or break into a small group. If a student repeatedly focuses on his or her phone/tablet/laptop for reasons unrelated to class discussion, have a conversation. This is not acceptable behavior and should not be tolerated.
- Do not hesitate to speak to a student after class if you begin to see a pattern of distracting behavior. Accepted behaviors will only grow with time.
- Writing should be fun, not a chore. This is not brain surgery; no one will die if a comma is out of place. Laugh, enjoy your topic and your students, and allow them to enjoy writing.

***Ways to help yourself:***

- Let your students take the lead. Perhaps you ask them to present five-minute grammar rule moments at the beginning of class. Perhaps you have them take turns providing the overview of the topic for the day. Perhaps you have them lead the writing workshop. Be a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage." Challenge your students to teach the class in some way and watch them rise to the occasion. There is an adage in medical school: watch one, do one, teach one. Nothing cements a concept better than having to