

**Introductory Composition at Purdue  
2014-2015 Assessment Report**

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## Executive Summary

Out of interest in examining the current state of the Introductory Composition at Purdue program, a research team led by Director Dr. Jennifer L. Bay conducted an academic year-long, IRB approved assessment of the Introductory Composition Program. The assessment utilized several different types of data collection and analysis in order to better understand the program, its instructors, and its students. The purpose of this assessment was to generate data in order to make evidence-based decisions about how the program should evolve. Data collection included the composition and collection of timed essays specifically written for this assessment, the collection of researched essays written as part of ordinary class activities, focus groups consisting of both instructors and teachers, and an ongoing review of syllabi. Data was analyzed using several techniques in an attempt to achieve a holistic assessment. Although our evidence demonstrates that the overall quality of ICaP courses is high, we identified several aspects of pedagogical practices and curricula that could be adjusted to ensure greater consistency across the program. Ultimately, these changes to policies and procedures will strengthen our pedagogy through principles of evidence-based education and high academic standards.

### *Actions*

- Gathered samples of student essays, composed as part of normal class activities, from a variety of ENGL 106 instructors and approaches to the course
- Collected timed writing samples specifically composed for this assessment
- Analyzed scores for inter-rater reliability, normal distribution of scores, and averages
- Developed and held focus groups with students, instructors, and mentors within ICaP to gather primary data about experiences and perceptions of the writing program

### *Findings*

- ICaP students received averages on both timed writing essays and researched essays near the natural mean and are distributed normally along the scoring scale
- This outcome is to be expected from a large, introductory composition program in a university with a wide range of prerequisite writing ability
- Students in focus groups reported that the work in ICaP usually met or exceeded their expectations for a college-level course. However, many students were concerned about what they perceived to be a large variation of requirements within the syllabus approaches and amongst their instructors
- Instructors in focus groups generally approved of ICaP policies, but described conflicting expectations between themselves and their students, suggesting that ICaP classes frequently attempt to perform too many functions and that outcomes could use streamlining.
- Mentors in focus groups identified resistance to change among TAs as a key challenge for ICaP

### *Responses*

- Revision of the ENGL 505 teacher practicum and technology mentoring to better prepare instructors for grading and classroom activities
- Participation in the IMPACT program to revise and assess outcomes
- Initiation of an ENGL 106 syllabi review to assess the impact of new policies and procedures
- Create rubrics and pedagogical materials to provide more consistency across sections

## Overview

This report provides information on the status of the Introductory Composition Program's Assessment Project during the 2014-2015 academic year. The ICaP Assessment Project proposed to collect samples from first year writing courses during the 2014-2015 academic year, hire graduate student raters to assess those samples using 6 point rubrics developed by Assessment Project staff, and hold instructor, mentor, and student focus group sessions, led by Assessment Project staff. As of May 15, 2015, 6 focus groups have been held and over three hundred samples of student writing have been scored by 7 trained instructor raters. More than 100 additional samples have been collected. Due to the lower than expected sample submission, we have added an additional component of syllabi analysis in order to determine the types of assignments that happen in first year writing at Purdue and to assess implemented changes in Fall 2015. Our findings suggest that training instructors to use common rubrics for assignments will provide more consistency in first year writing at Purdue. Additionally, new outcomes and mentoring materials developed from IMPACT will strengthen the kinds of assignments that students complete.

## Background

In March 2014, ICaP proposed to assess English 106 with the support of the Office of Institutional Assessment at Purdue University. English 106 is the one semester, 4 credit, first year writing course that most students take at Purdue. English 106 was implemented in 2004 and replaced a traditional two semester writing sequence in which the first semester focused on expository writing and the second semester focused on research-based writing. English 106 is one of the most innovative courses in first year writing in the nation; it combines traditional classroom instruction in writing and rhetoric with cutting edge technologies and media in small classroom settings. One on one and small group conferencing are held weekly to provide students with opportunities to collaborate, provide feedback, and work individually with their instructors.

We planned our assessment based on a pilot study run by two graduate instructors in 2006, which involved focus groups and collection of writing. We planned to conduct 4-8 focus groups with Introductory Composition students and instructors (at least 2-4 focus groups with instructors and 2-4 focus groups with students). During these focus groups, we planned to cover topics such as general perceptions of English 106 assignments, student work, competencies, grading, digital assignments and pedagogical techniques, conferencing, collaborative projects, and second language concerns. We also planned to conduct both holistic and analytical scoring of writing samples from English 106 during the 2014-2015 academic year. We anticipated collecting random samples from at least 3 sections of each of the 8 syllabus approaches each semester. We wanted to request assignments, rubrics, and samples of a full range of grades in each of these 3 sections.

## Methods

Originally our methodology was designed to extend and develop beyond a small pilot assessment of the writing program in 2006. Three advanced graduate students with experience in assessment assisted in the coordination of the assessment team. We also recruited seven graduate students with interest and experience in assessment to score anonymized writing samples on an hourly basis. After several training sessions in December 2014 and January 2015, the seven scorers examined timed writing assignments and traditional research papers provided by volunteer instructors. Data collection was a multi-tiered process involving several different types of information.

### *Interest and Participation Forms*

At the beginning of the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters, during ICaP's mandatory Convocation staff meetings, members of the research team announced the purpose of this study to ICaP instructors and solicited their participation. Interest forms were distributed to identify potential study participants. These interest forms concisely described the purpose of the current study, informed instructors of the programmatic nature of the study, and reassured them that neither they nor their students would be individually assessed. The interest forms requested that they indicate their interest in four potential aspects of the study:

- Providing student projects or papers for the assessment
- Participating in an instructor focus group
- Rating projects and papers
- Incorporating a timed writing assignment into their courses

The interest forms also included contact information for potential instructor participants.

### *Student Writing Samples*

For our student text evaluation, data was collected by instructors as part of typical classroom practices, then uploaded to our data set. Instructors would assign student projects as part of their usual course procedures. These texts would undergo classroom practices common to English 106. For example, it is likely that most of these texts underwent multiple revisions, receiving feedback from the instructor along the way. Some likely received peer editing or other forms of collaborative development. For these reasons, the purpose of our investigation is not to assess students' individual abilities. Rather, we hoped to explore the quality of student work as produced in a typical 106 classroom. While several different types of texts were collected, we ultimately analyzed and rated research essays specifically, as we received a relatively large number of such essays and research writing is a key aspect of ICaP's Goals, Means, and Outcomes.

We collected random samples from many of our eight syllabus approaches each semester. Participants sharing materials were asked to provide digital samples from each student in the class (up to 20 samples) via File Locker to the Office of Institutional Assessment where assignments were anonymized. Upon the removal of all identifiers, the sample student writings were provided to ICaP. Once ICaP received the anonymous assignments, our team members scored the assignments digitally. While there has been much encouragement of digital grading, there has been little evidence of the effects of grading in a digital environment.

For the timed writing assignments particularly, data collection was standardized. Students were given 50 minutes in which to plan and compose a short essay in response to a prompt. This prompt involved performing a rhetorical analysis of two images, chosen from a set of three advertisements (see Appendix G). Students were tasked with explaining how the arguments in these advertisements effectively persuade viewers, using both visual and rhetorical analyses. Instructors would then submit these essays to the assessment research team. Occasionally, a member of the research team would visit 106 classes in order to deliver the timed writing assignment directly. Anonymity was maintained in these cases.

### *Anonymized Scorings*

After texts were collected from students, they were uploaded to a secure File Locker system. Instructors would submit texts through this system, which would then be collected by Brooke Robertshaw. Dr.

Robertshaw would then anonymize these texts, ensuring that no student or instructor information was visible on text files. Dr. Robertshaw assigned each set of texts Instructor Numbers and each individual text Student Numbers. These anonymized texts were then uploaded to the study Dropbox for analysis and rating. Our collection of assignments began in December 2014 and continued through May 2015. By scoring these writing samples, we were able to examine the best practices in the program with theoretically compatible, researcher-developed rubrics (See Appendix H and Appendix I). We were also able to determine the kinds of assignments instructors provided in the 2014-2015 academic year.

### *Focus Groups*

We conducted six focus groups with Introductory Composition students, instructors, and instructor mentors (two with each population). Focus groups were 1-hour in duration and were audio recorded using a computer and a standing table microphone. A member of the assessment team proctored the session, managed the audio recording, and submitted the audio file to the study Dropbox. These focus groups utilized a semi-structured approach, drawing from an initial list of questions developed by the research team. The conversations then proceeded organically from there, with impromptu questions asked in response to participant statements. Focus group audio files were then transcribed by research team members.

During these focus groups, we covered topics such as general perceptions of English 106 assignments, student work, competencies, grading, digital assignments and pedagogical techniques, conferencing, collaborative projects, and second language concerns. These focus groups helped us to understand perceptions of the program from diverse sources. We also used the focus groups to record the stated needs aired by participants. See Appendices D, E, and F for the specific protocols used in these focus groups.

## **Participants**

### *Sample Essay Contributors*

Many instructors volunteered to share student writing samples with the assessment team. A large percentage of those instructors maintained their commitment and shared materials for anonymization and scoring. Every instructor who provided samples held a graduate teaching assistantship in ICaP.

Because this study was voluntary and participation was “opt-in,” our sample was non-random. Sampling designs of this nature are considered *convenience samples* or *voluntary response samples*. We consider our use of non-random sampling appropriate for this project for several reasons. First, convenience sampling is common to educational studies (Introduction to Research in Education 169<sup>1</sup>). Second, the use of inferential statistics in our data analysis is minimal. Third, voluntary participation was seen as essential by study coordinators. In order to ensure instructor “buy-in,” we endeavored to make this study minimally coercive and minimally invasive. This dedication made random sampling impractical. Fourth and most importantly, this assessment is not intended to be generalized to other research contexts. Any information derived from our assessment is intended only to reflect on current ICaP instructors and students.

### *Undergraduate Students*

Seventeen students participated in the two student focus groups held during the academic year. Fifteen students attended our session in October 2014 and two students attended the session in March 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Sorensen, C., & Walker, D. (2013). Introduction to research in education. Cengage Learning

Of these student participants, three of them self-identified as non-native English speakers (only one currently enrolled in ENGL 106i). The remaining participants identified as native English speakers enrolled in ENGL 106. It is also worth noting that one of the student participants self-identified as a sophomore student (by completed credits) although it was the student's first semester at Purdue University. Nearly all of the 12 colleges and schools (excluding The Graduate School) were represented in the focus groups.

### *Instructors*

Our goal for the instructor focus groups was to have each English graduate program represented equally amongst participants. The two sessions included twelve instructors, seven in October 2014, and five in March 2015. We also desired participants who would represent one of the eight syllabus approaches at various stages of their graduate careers. Of the twelve instructors, seven of the participants were active in the Rhetoric and Composition program with the remaining five in Second Language Studies, Literature, and Creative Writing. Most participants were in their first or second year of their graduate studies, and three were in their third year or beyond.

### *Mentors*

Each year ICaP employs five faculty members or advanced graduate students to teach English 505 A/B, a year long course that guides new graduate teaching assistants in how to teach English 106. Two additional advanced graduate students are employed as technology mentors who assist new TAs with incorporating technology into the English 106 classroom. The two mentor focus group sessions included all mentors, seven of whom are affiliated with the Rhetoric and Composition graduate program.

## **Results**

### *Data Analysis*

As mentioned under Methods, both timed essays generated specifically for this assessment and research papers generated in the course of ordinary ICaP activities were submitted by instructors for this assessment. After essays were uploaded and anonymized as described in the Methods section, a researcher distributed them to the seven research assistants employed as raters. Distribution was random and determined by rater availability and equitable workload. Utilizing our rubrics in Appendices H and I, raters assigned ratings of 1-6 to each essay. If raters disagreed by more than one point, a third rater was assigned to resolve this discrepancy. Scores were averaged between raters when exact agreement was not present, leading to final scores in increments of .5. Occasional duplicate, misfiled, off-topic, incomplete, or off-topic texts were investigated and removed from the sample. These rating procedures are standard for these type of research, and are discussed at length in *Validating Holistic Scoring for Writing Assessment: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations* (1993)<sup>2</sup>.

Descriptive statistics for essay ratings are found in Table I below.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Median Score</b>	<b>SD Score</b>	<b>% Exact/Adj</b>
Timed	209	3.46	3.5	1.16	84%
Research	57	3.79	4	1.23	86%

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Essay Rating*

<sup>2</sup> Williamson, M. M., & Huot, B. A. (1993). *Validating holistic scoring for writing assessment: Theoretical and empirical foundations*. Hampton Pr.

Histograms demonstrating the distribution of Timed Writing and Researched Writing scores across the scoring range are presented as Figures 1 and 2 below.

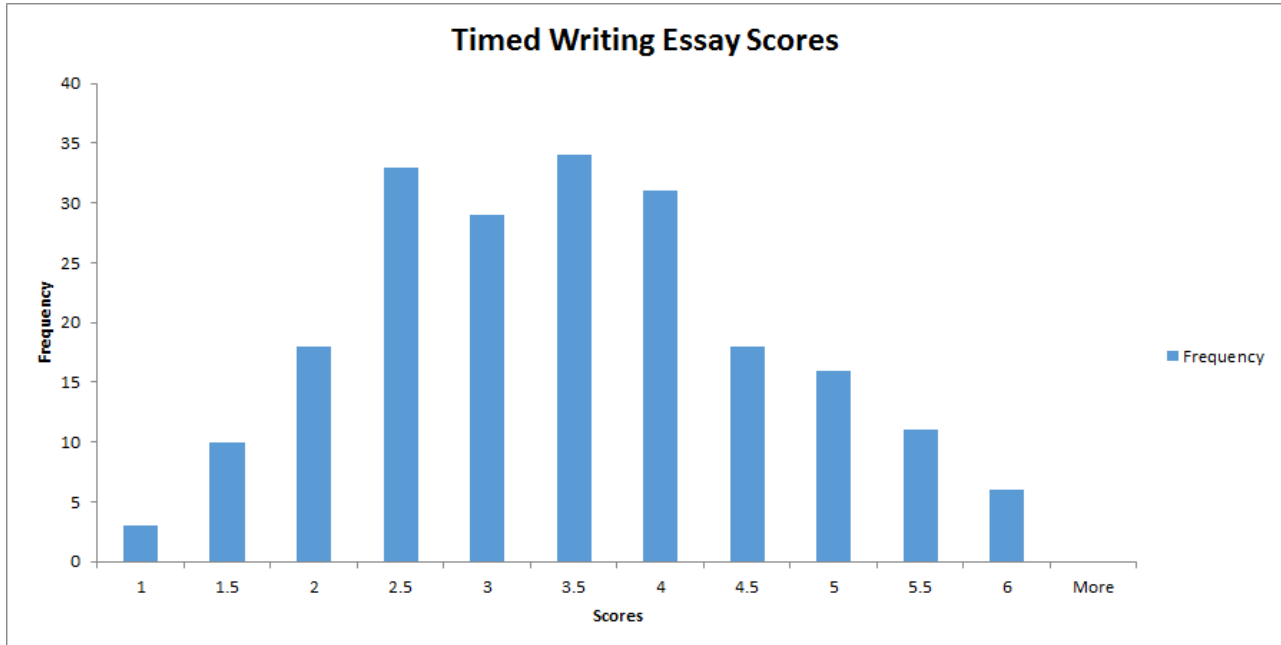


Figure 1: Distribution of Timed Writing essay scores

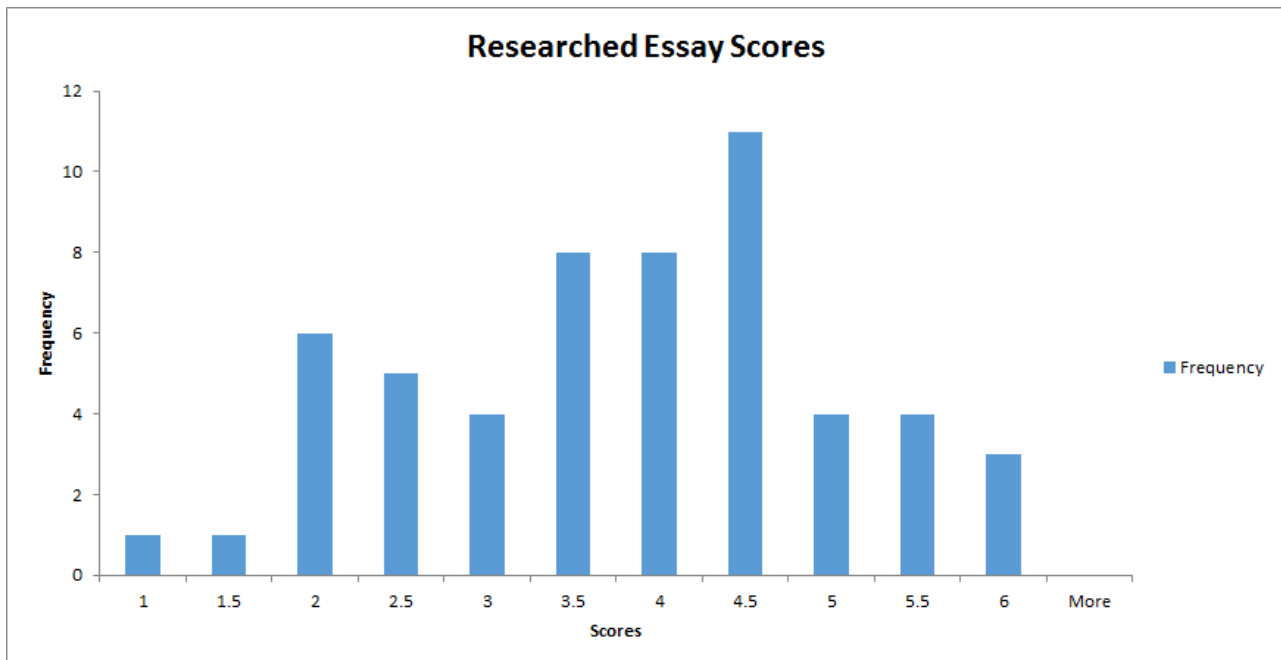


Figure 2: Distribution of Researched essay scores

The results of our essay rating match intuitive expectations. The timed writing prompt is normally distributed, with very little skew, and centered around the natural mean of our scale. This normality and average reflect the large sample size of our data set and the effectiveness of our raters at using the full scoring range. The researched essays are not as perfectly normal. This is likely a function of the much smaller sample size; with fewer observations, the opportunity for scores to normalize is reduced. Still,



given limitations in data collection, the scoring range represents a reasonably normal distribution. The researched essays are somewhat negatively skewed, with the mean and median scores higher than the natural mean of the scale. This is likely due to the fact that writing pedagogy involves developmental activities such as multiple drafts, conferencing with instructors, and peer review that improve the quality of final drafts of such essays.

In order to ensure rating accuracy, inter-rater reliability was calculated for both timed writing essays and researched essays. Inter-rater reliability describes the degree to which trained raters agree in their ratings. A low figure indicates that the raters do not share a consistent understanding of how essays should be scored, which reduces the validity of the ratings as an instrument. A high figure suggests shared understanding of the rating scale, but should not be taken as sufficient evidence of instrumental reliability on its own.

For this analysis, percent exact or adjacent was used. Percent exact or adjacent is calculated by dividing the number of ratings that did not disagree by more than one point by the total number of essays rated. Another way to think of percent exact or adjacent is as the percentage of essays rated that did not require a third rating. For both timed writing essays and researched essays, our figures were quite high, with 84% for timed writing essays and 86% for researched essays. These are higher than typical recommendations and best practices for writing assessment. For example, Berk (1979<sup>3</sup>) argues that “coefficients in the .80s are indicative of a high level of agreement” (467). Percent exact or adjacent was a useful figure as its easy calculation enabled constant monitoring during the rating process. Additionally, this statistic is the official measure of inter-rater reliability for Purdue’s Oral English Proficiency Test, which utilizes a similar system of two raters or three raters, and a similar scoring scale. Given the use of this statistic by a respected and longstanding internal test developed at Purdue, the use of the statistic in this research seemed appropriate.

Our assessment indicates that ICaP students are writing in the timed writing and researched genres at expected levels of competence. As ICaP is an unusually large program, and one whose courses are taken by a significant majority of all early-career Purdue students, a generally normal distribution of scores along the scale is to be expected. Because collected texts were written at various parts of the semester, we cannot say that the observed scores are the product of ICaP instruction. Instead, we can say with confidence that the average ICaP student within our sample performs adequately on timed writing essays and in researched writing, but most have room for improvement.

### *Scoring Sessions*

We noted several responses during the scoring sessions. One of the raters selected who was initially concerned about rating student essays as a non-native English speaker. Although he is a graduate student and introductory composition instructor, his concerns largely centered on possessing a strong enough command of the English language to quickly and accurately score sample student essays. However, when he began rating the essay samples, not only was he able to remain on par with his peers, but he was also able to increase his scoring speed while providing valid ratings. Although this account is for just one of the seven raters selected for the assessment project, his performance exemplifies what each of our raters shared with the assessment team during the project.

The raters were hesitant about holistically rating essays at the beginning of the assessment. Several of them discussed their own approaches to grading papers which included a personal connection to

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<sup>3</sup> Berk, R. A. (1979). Generalizability of behavioral observations: A clarification of interobserver agreement and interobserver reliability. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, 83, 460-472.

students' processes, motivations, previous performances, and prompt developments. These factors created subjective assessment environments. Through encouragement and norming sessions, the raters were able to adjust their approaches to grading with additional assistance from holistic rubrics and guided discussions about assessing student work. One rater reported halfway through the project that he found himself grading his own students' work faster with more objective perception and an internalized understanding of what he was emphasizing during instruction.

Ultimately, the scoring sessions revealed to Professor Bay that the experiences of a few participating raters could develop into the experiences of all ICaP instructors. The writing program discovered the need to create more arenas where instructors could talk about grading student work, practice holistic rating of various assignments, and learn approaches grading from a myriad of peers.

### *Instructor Focus Groups*

Two focus groups were conducted for the purpose of gauging ICaP instructors' experiences and perceptions. Participating instructors were asked about their experiences interacting with students, the ICaP mentoring program, and their use of technology in the classroom. More information regarding the findings can be found in Appendix J.

Instructors consistently identified a tension within student perceptions of ICaP. Instructors reported that although students are eager to comply with instructions, they tend to resist the notion of writing as a form of critical thinking. In practical terms, this means that students are eager to know how ICaP differs from high school English classes, yet they crave a level of structure and predictability associated with high school writing pedagogy. Instructors reported that when students expressed frustration with their ICaP class, the frustration often resulted from the perception of inequitable differences among ICaP sections. Specifically, instructors said students complain that other ICaP sections require different amounts of writing, and that the assignments differ in difficulty.

Instructors themselves corroborated this view, and they framed their comments in terms of the ICaP mentoring program. Instructors said they would like more direct guidance on how the syllabus approaches differ from one another and on how these differences can be made to align with programmatic goals. Instructors also said they would like to know more about how ICaP's goals fit into university-wide goals for general education. On this topic, one instructor said, "Sometimes we put pressure on ourselves to do everything." She elaborated by explaining that it would be helpful to know which university-wide objectives the course does not need to cover.

Regarding the use of technology in pedagogy, instructors reported a wide range of approaches. Some initially described themselves as not using technology in a significant way. However, when other instructors who identified themselves as giving technology a central role in their writing instruction described their pedagogical practices, the first group amended their answers. The ones who initially identified themselves as making low use of technology realized they utilize technology in many of the same ways as those who identified themselves as technology-centered. Participants consistently reported low overall usage of the ICaP website. As an alternative means of finding out information about programmatic guidelines and requirements, instructors reported making use of informal networks, such as office mates or cohort members.

In one instructor focus group, about half the participants were in their first year of university teaching experience. Among these instructors, a strong consensus emerged that the largest challenges they faced

were not a function of ICaP's content or programmatic structure. Rather, they agreed that the main challenges resulted from transitioning into the role of university-level instructor while also transitioning into being a graduate student. They mentioned constraints on time and finances as particularly challenging aspects of this transition.

#### *Student Focus Groups*

In Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, two focus groups were held with undergraduate students enrolled in ENGL 106. Students were questioned about their perceptions and experiences in their class and with their instructor, use of technology in the classroom, assigned projects, and university resources.

Most students declared that the work they were asked to complete in their ENGL 106 class was repetitive of their high school English courses. Several of them revealed that they were asked to read literary books and then produce responses or summaries of what they read. Another student mentioned that she was introduced to core rhetorical terms (ethos, pathos, and logos) during her AP level English class. Other students confirmed that their AP English courses were primarily responsible for not only their preparation in the course but also their expectations. The experience in secondary classes created boredom in ENGL 106 and frustration with their instructors.

When asked about their perceived needs from the course, two First Year Engineering students stated the desire and need to study resume and cover letter writing in the introductory composition course. When the leader of the focus group mentioned 400-level writing courses available to students where employment documents and correspondence are addressed explicitly, one student announced, "But that's too late. How are we supposed to know about those courses?" Her response was met with many affirmations from other students in the focus group. During the focus group, students gained awareness of ICaP's different approaches to the course with varying assignments. For most of the participants, this was unknown prior to attending the session but they felt having this information prior to selecting the class section would have positively influenced their ENGL 106 experience.

The most contentious answers from students during the session occurred during discussions about technology use and resources in ENGL 106. Largely, students expressed confusion about the general structure of the course. One student declared that she spend the first week of classes going to the wrong room because her one English class met in three different spaces. Furthermore, she did not understand having a dedicated computer lab space. Her argument was that most students had their own computers and brought them to class. Other attendees confirmed that they brought their computers to class every day because they needed the technology in other courses during the day. This conversation led to a spontaneous discussion about a required ENGL 106 text, *Composing Yourself*. Generally, students found the book unhelpful in their writing development as it was scarcely used.

Overall, students in the focus groups asked to have more information about their courses so as to better address their individual needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Without this attention to their needs, students uniformly wanted the course to have strict paths to success and, in the words of one participant, "not be a waste of time." See Appendix K for additional information regarding the findings.

#### *Mentor Focus Groups*

Two focus groups were held with mentors and tech mentors, led by Brooke Robertshaw, in Spring 2015 (See Appendix L). The question focused on technology and its incorporation into pedagogy. The

overwhelming results indicated that ICaP teaching assistants were resistant to change and to programmatic guidelines for instructors. Mentors consistently encountered TAs who had very ingrained ideas about teaching writing and what they wanted to do in the classroom, as well as expectations about the outcomes of the course. TAs regularly view their teaching responsibilities, including participating in the teaching practicum, as not requiring effort or preparation. In short, TAs are giving the program less effort than what the program is expecting them to provide. The program sees this discrepancy acutely in TAs who cancel class often or whose assignments do not fit with the program's goals, means, and outcomes.

### **Discussion of Project Evolutions**

The project adapted to address the diversity of assignments instructors submitted for analysis. Several instructors submitted assignments designed around assessment criteria differing significantly from those expressed in the rubrics this study utilized. In cases where the differences in assessment criteria were irreconcilable, the student writing was excluded from the study. However, the discovery of the wide range of grading criteria being employed by instructors throughout ICaP was in itself an important discovery. It prompted the creation of the Assessment Map, an instrument which helps ICaP instructors and administrators alike discuss connections between assignment guidelines and programmatic GMO's.

The project ended up placing greater emphasis on the category of research-based writing due to the high percentage of instructors who submitted work within this category and because of the variety of student writing submitted within this category. In addition to being numerous and varied, these writings tended to be among the longest. Consequently, the project had to adapt to the difficulty these works presented to the rating team. Extra training sessions and calibration meetings effectively addressed this issue, as evidenced by robust inter-reliability in subsequent rating sessions. The project also ended up making less use than originally planned of student examples of digital projects. Submission rates and totals for these projects were lower than expected. Furthermore, in many cases it would have been impossible to anonymize these projects because of their collaborative authorship or because of the nature of the information the project included.

Due to feedback from student and instructor focus groups, a new component of the study was created to facilitate the systematic assessment of all ENGL 106 syllabi. Students and instructors alike indicated that the ICaP website—a key source for disseminating information about ICaP goals, means, and outcomes (GMOs)—was being used infrequently. It was concluded that the study should systematically assess the syllabi in all ENGL 106 sections to see the extent to which they reflect the GMOs described on the ICaP website. A checklist was created which drew upon ICaP GMOs and which could quickly yet effectively gauge their expression in syllabi.

### **Future and Continuing Plans**

One conclusion we reached is that assessment in a large program like ICaP should be a continuing process and not just happen intermittently. Growing out of our weekly assessment meeting discussions were several other complementary initiatives of the program including participating in IMPACT, revising the outcomes for English 106, revising the TA training program, creating intercultural knowledge approaches, revamping the program website to provide more support for instructors, and eliminating the current required textbook.

*IMPACT Program*

As we started implementing the assessment project in Fall of 2015, it became clear that there were program revisions that could best be developed in conjunction with IMPACT. In fact, Professor Bay viewed the IMPACT program as a way to continue support for program development, as well as to network with other faculty and support staff across campus to make sure our writing program met the needs of other constituents.

IMPACT provided Professor Bay with weekly meetings to support how we could make changes in response to the assessment data and results. Two important moments in IMPACT stand out: the reevaluation of the goals, means, and outcomes and the realization that the GMOs were not measurable.

Our program's goals, means, and outcomes were based on the Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes statement, the nationally-recognized standards document in which most writing programs are grounded. Professor Bay assumed that these were strong and well-established outcomes for the course, but what became clear through our assessment is that the outcomes were not measurable. That is, it wasn't until IMPACT forced us to look at our outcomes that we realized that they could not show us the development of skills or learning. When we created our rubrics for the project, we struggled to translate the criteria from the GMOs to a six point scale rubric, and in fact, we now realize that we were using that the program called goals to develop that criteria. Over the past year, Professor Bay has noticed that most instructors are relying on the goals section of the GMO document and not the outcomes. We also believe that this is why so many students seem dissatisfied with the course as they cannot see the specific skills they are supposed to learn.

Another moment that provided clarity for the assessment team is in an IMPACT session that provided a scenario of a professor who was a great lecturer, and the student got high grades, but whose evaluations were poor because the students did not feel challenged. Professor Bay had a Eureka moment when she encountered this scenario as she identified this as one of the major issues with English 106: instructors are by and large really great but students don't feel challenged. The issue is that the outcomes are operating from the lowest cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy rather than the more challenging levels.

As a result, Professor Bay asked for volunteers from the Introductory Writing Program to serve on a subcommittee that would revise the current GMOs into outcomes and use the recently released 2014 WPA Outcomes Statement as a guide. We also used feedback during the focus groups and the norming for our instructor raters as guides, especially since we often encountered inconsistency in expectations from instructors and inconsistency in achieving outcomes among students.

The result is a new set of outcomes that are measurable and have learning objectives that are rhetorically grounded. For instance, one outcome lists the amount of writing students should be producing over the semester, which will ensure that all instructors are assigning enough writing.

*Revised Mentor and Tech Mentor Practicum*

Related to our IMPACT work was a host of factors that directed our attention to the year long mentoring practicum for all new teaching assistants in the ICaP Program. We noticed that not only were instructors inconsistent in their pedagogical approaches and requirements for students, but the mentors were inconsistent in the ways they presented materials. For instance, some TAs remembered going over the

goals, means, and outcomes during their orientation, but most had forgotten there was a word count requirement for students and admitted to consistently not meeting that requirement. Similarly, one of the complaints on mentor evaluations has been the technology mentoring, which is not as integrated as it could be.

In Summer of 2015, Professor Bay will develop a set of curriculum guidelines that all mentors must follow, including that all new TAs must use the same syllabus as their mentor for the first year of teaching, a common pedagogical textbook all TAs will use in their mentor groups, technology mentoring strategies, content to be covered in mentor group, norming of assignments, and checking grades/assessment of assignments from new TAs teaching English 106. Connected to this is a revamping of the ICaP website, which we will be able to use more effectively as a resource for pedagogical materials for instructors.

The result of these changes will produce more consistency across the TA practicum and instill in new instructors the standards that we expect them to meet as instructors in our program.

#### *Syllabi Review*

Because of our low rate of interest in sharing samples of student projects, we have started the beginning stages of a syllabus review system in which we will review the syllabi of all TAs for the kinds of assignments required, whether instructors meet the outcomes of the course, and other programmatic requirements. We believe that the strategies we are implementing will correct any deficiencies, but we would like a baseline from Spring 2015 to see the difference in syllabi constructed after implementing several policy changes in the Fall. This is a continuing project to be completed at the end of 2015.

#### *Other Policy Changes*

The assessment project has brought to light other issues that we have attempted to address in our program. These are summarized below, along with our programmatic responses.

##### Participation

One of the first instances that Professor Bay encountered that indicated we might need an assessment is data demonstrating that 90% of all students in English 106 earn an A or a B. One factor we believe contributes to this is that many instructors evaluate participation as up to 20% of the final course grade. We have just instituted a policy stating that no more than 10% of the final course grade in English 106 can account for student participation and it must be measurable and documented. We believe this change will help instructors reflect on their assessment practices and start a conversation about what we are teaching and assessing in ENGL 106.

##### *Composing Yourself*

One of the biggest grievances we encountered in our focus groups was about the required textbook, *Composing Yourself*, which instructors and students unilaterally disliked. The textbook was also rarely used in the classroom. Since the contract expired in 2015, Professor Bay discussed the possibility of renewing the textbook at a lower cost and providing a digital version instead. The publisher, though, was unable to continue the contact and thus the textbook has been eliminated. We will be spending the next year looking at the possibility of developing a rhetorically and digitally rich textbook for students as a replacement.

### PIC and Syllabus Approaches

Realizing the positive influences scoring student samples had upon our graduate student raters (as described above), Professor Bay began conversations about grading practices with the Pedagogical Initiatives Committee (PIC). The committee, simultaneously dissatisfied with observation requirements, welcomed the opportunity to build essay rating into the committee's goals. To this end, PIC has developed a new workshop series dedicated to allowing each syllabus approach to incorporate the assessment project findings as an educational tool. Instructors will learn about assignments, grade norming, and other significant information relevant to each approach. These workshops will be piloted in the Fall and the Spring, after which they will be evaluated.

### Collection of Digital Versions of Syllabi

Our assessment required us to collect samples digitally via Filelocker, and as we contemplated the syllabi analysis, we realized that as a program we have not been collecting syllabi digitally. We collect syllabi the Friday before classes start for each semester in print form. Starting in Fall 2015, we will collect all syllabi digitally via Filelocker two weeks before classes start. This will allow us to share and access syllabi more easily, check syllabi for policy issues well before classes start, and maintain a digital archive of materials for the course. It will also enable analysis of syllabi and assignments over time.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

This assessment project has reinforced for us the need to continue to support instructors in their teaching assignments and to stress to them the importance of first year writing for their students and for the larger university. Overall, our instructors are doing a good job in teaching the core skills of writing and rhetoric to students, but they need more support in several key areas, including assessing writing, how to articulate the value of the course to students, how to make sure that there is more consistency across sections, and seeing the teaching of writing as a valuable professional skill that will aid them in future endeavors.

We plan to use the syllabus analysis to test whether our new policies and procedures are working, along with an analysis of grades across sections to see whether integrating more norming with new TAs will help them be more comfortable with grading.

Since one issue we have is that our instructor population does not consist of graduate students who see the teaching of writing as their area of scholarly inquiry, a future study might address the issue of academic self-perception and teaching ability. That is, we might want to examine how we can help these early teachers to better value the teaching of writing and show them how teaching writing fits with their scholarly identities.

We thank you for your generous funding of this project. We are sure it has made the program stronger, more efficient, and better able to meet the needs of our undergraduates.

## Appendix A

### Introductory Composition at Purdue University

#### Assessment Proposal

March 28, 2014

#### Proposal

I write to seek funds that support the assessment of the Introductory Composition Program at Purdue in 2014-2015. The \$30,000 I seek will be used to conduct an assessment of the program in light of key changes to the curriculum, digital technologies, and student populations.

#### History of ICaP and its Assessment

In 2004, the Introductory Composition Program at Purdue (ICaP) introduced a new curriculum, English 106, to replace English 101 and 102. This new, 4 credit course integrated digital writing and small conferences into the traditional composition course to provide students with cutting-edge rhetorical training for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Instructors teach from a rhetorical perspective using one of eight syllabus approaches, and they use a variety of assignments that encompass both traditional essays and research papers to digital productions and online writing. However, all sections rely on the same goals, means, and outcomes statement, on which the course is standardized. Additionally, all first year instructors go through a rigorous yearlong mentoring program in which they develop their pedagogical skills.

A number of factors require periodic assessment of the program. Given the diversity of approaches and assignments in English 106, it is important that we periodically assess that both instructors and students are meeting our stated goals, means, and outcomes. Additionally, the rise in the international student population and the increasing digital sophistication of our students are both factors that may affect how instructors translate those goals, means, and outcomes into their classrooms.

In 2006, two volunteer graduate students ran a small pilot assessment of English 106, but the results of that assessment are not available. Also since that time the international student population has vastly increased, along with the digital sophistication of our students. In short, ICaP has not been assessed in almost 10 years, and we need to assess the program to make sure that our stated goals, means, and outcomes are effective.

#### Methodology

Our methodology extends and develops the small pilot assessment from 2006. We plan to conduct 4-8 focus groups with Introductory Composition students and instructors (at least 2-4 focus groups with instructors and 2-4 focus groups with students). During these focus groups, we will cover topics such as general perceptions of English 106 assignments, student work, competencies, grading, digital assignments and pedagogical techniques, conferencing, collaborative projects, and second language concerns. These focus groups will help us in developing new instructor and student materials that answer needs aired in the focus groups.

Additionally, we will conduct both holistic and analytical scoring of writing samples from English 106. We will begin collecting writing samples—both traditional and digital—from instructors in Spring 2014. This collection will allow us to merge best practices in the program with theoretically compatible and published rubrics in order to develop rubrics and to determine the kinds of assignments we want to collect in the 2014-2015 academic year.



Two advanced graduate students with experience in assessment will coordinate the assessment team. We plan to recruit 5 graduate students with interest and experience in assessment on an hourly basis to score our writing samples.

Working with the Office of Assessment, we will develop a sampling method for the roughly 220 sections of first year writing offered in 2014-2015. We anticipate collecting random samples from at least 3 sections of each of the 8 syllabus approaches each semester. We will be requesting assignments, rubrics, and samples of a full range of grades in each of these 3 sections.

Because we will specifically be collecting both traditional and digital compositions, we will need two external hard drives and a laptop for data collection and storage.

One innovative component of this assessment will be that we will collect all samples digitally and have our team members score digitally, as well. While there has been much encouragement of digital grading, there has been little evidence of the effects of grading in a digital environment.

### **Budget**

2 graduate assistantships to coordinate assessment (one .25 appointment each semester is \$6,964 salary + \$1,915.28 in fees = \$8,879.28)	\$17,758.56
5 hourly graduate students to score assignments (\$11/hr for 10 hours per week=\$1,960 per semester)	\$9,600.00
Incentives for 40 focus group participants (\$15 Starbucks gift cards)	\$600.00
2 external hard drives for data storage	\$200.00
1 Apple MacBook Pro laptop for data collection	\$1,600.00
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$29,758.56</b>

### **Outcomes**

As a result of our work, by Fall 2015 we will have developed a range of pedagogical materials (including sample student work, rubrics, assignments, and teaching strategies) to assist instructors in assessing English 106 writing, especially digital writing and writing by second language learners. These materials will be posted on the ICaP website, available to all instructors and to others outside of Purdue. We anticipate IRB-approved research emerging from this assessment, demonstrating how Purdue can serve as a national model for assessing writing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Timeline**

- April and May 2014—Start collect samples from instructors in program
- Summer 2014—Work with Assessment Office at Purdue to develop comprehensive methods
- Fall 2014—Employ .25 TA to develop and implement assessment; employ 2.5 hourly TAs to score samples; conduct at least 2-4 focus groups
- Spring 2015—Employ .25 TA to continue assessment and develop pedagogical materials for instructors; employ 2.5 hourly TAs to score samples; conduct at least 2-4 focus groups

## Appendix B Current Goals, Means, and Outcomes

### Goals

#### *Rhetorical Knowledge*

- To help students understand the inherent rhetorical situation of writing, including purpose, audience, and context.
- To prepare students for writing in later university courses across the curriculum by helping them learn to articulate, develop, and support a point through both primary and secondary research.
- To help students understand that they can and should use writing for multiple academic, civic, professional, and personal purposes.

#### *Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing*

- To provide students with opportunities to write as a means of discovery and learning about themselves; as an integral part of inquiry about the material, social, and cultural contexts they share with others; and as a means of exploring, understanding, and evaluating ideas in academic disciplines.
- To help students develop their abilities to create, interpret, and evaluate a variety of types of texts integrating verbal and visual components.

#### *Writing Process*

- To help students develop effective and efficient processes for writing by providing practice with planning, drafting, revising, and editing their writing in multiple genres using a variety of media.

#### *Knowledge of Conventions*

- To introduce students to the conventions of form, style, and citation and documentation of sources that are appropriate to their purposes for composing in a variety of media for a variety of rhetorical contexts.
- To demonstrate that coherent structure, effective style, and grammatical and mechanical correctness contribute to a writer's credibility and authority.

#### *Technology*

- To provide students with experience using multiple composing technologies to produce a variety of genres of texts.

### Means

- Regular classroom instruction using a variety of modes for learning, including attending lectures, participating in class discussions, contributing to collaborative learning in small groups, and providing critiques of peers' writing.
- Integration of an online course site that includes your course syllabus and may involve regular online discussions or blog posts.
- Completion of textual interpretation and production assignments in a variety of genres and a variety of media, including print, computer-mediated, and mass media.
- Frequent, periodic review of and commentary on successive drafts of writing projects by peers and instructor.
- Production of 7,500-11,500 words of polished writing (or 15,000-22,000 words, including drafts) or the equivalent.

**Outcomes**

By the end of an ICaP course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with concepts used to describe writing processes (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading) and effectively use variation of these processes in their writing.
- Use appropriate and effective planning and organizing strategies.
- Evaluate others' commentary on early drafts and incorporate useful suggestions into subsequent drafts.
- Edit and proofread their papers to maximize their credibility and authority.
- Identify and state the purpose of a writing task they have completed.
- Adapt their writing in ways appropriate for different audiences.
- Explain why a piece of writing is or is not effective and suggest strategies for improvement.
- Effectively evaluate others' writing and provide useful commentary and suggestions for revision where appropriate.
- Distinguish among conventions for citing and documenting sources in various genres and various media for various audiences.
- Make stylistic changes to improve the effectiveness of their writing.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of visual rhetoric.
- Know how to use commonplace software to create visuals that effectively make or support arguments.
- Distinguish between information that is best communicated in visual format and information best communicated in text and make transitions and connections between visual and textual elements.
- Be able to critique visual designs and formats.

**Appendix C**  
**Revised ICaP Outcomes**  
**May 2015**

English 106 is the standard 4-credit hour composition course for students at Purdue. The course provides students with the opportunity to interpret and compose in both digital and print media across a variety of forms. Students engage in active learning, which includes class discussion, learning in small groups, problem solving, peer review, and digital interaction. English 106 is grounded in the idea that writing provides an outlet for sharing and developing ideas; facilitates understanding across different conventions, genres, groups, societies, and cultures; and allows for expression in multiple academic, civic, and non-academic situations. In short, writing is a way of learning that spans all fields and disciplines.

*By the end of the course, students will:*

**Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts**

- Employ purposeful shifts in voice, tone, design, medium, and/or structure to respond to rhetorical situations
- Identify and implement key rhetorical concepts (e.g. purpose, audience, constraints, contexts/settings, logos, ethos, pathos, kairos)
- Understand the concept of rhetorical situation and how shifting contexts affect expression and persuasion
- Understand how cultural factors affect both production and reception of ideas
- Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and digital) to varying rhetorical situations

**Compose a variety of texts in a range of forms, equaling at least 7,500-11,500 words of polished writing (or 15,000-22,000 words, including drafts)**

- Adapt composing processes for a variety of tasks, times, media, and purposes.
- Understand how conventions shape and are shaped by composing practices and purposes
- Use invention strategies to discover, develop, and design ideas for writing
- Apply methods of organization, arrangement, and structure to meet audience expectations and facilitate understanding
- Apply coherent structures, effective styles, and grammatical and mechanical correctness to establish credibility and authority

**Critically think about writing and rhetoric through reading, analysis, and reflection**

- Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations
- Analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts
- Reflect on one's composing processes and rhetorical choices

**Provide constructive feedback to others and incorporate feedback into their writing**

- Effectively evaluate others' writing and provide useful commentary and suggestions for revision where appropriate
- Use comments as a heuristic for revision
- Produce multiple drafts or versions of a composition to increase rhetorical effectiveness
- Learn and apply collaborative skills in classroom and conference settings

**Perform research and evaluate sources to support claims**

- Enact rhetorical strategies (such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign) to compose in ways that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources
- Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias and so on) secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and Internet sources
- Practice primary research methods (such as interviews, observations, surveys, focus groups, et cetera) and demonstrate awareness of ethical concerns in conducting research
- Successfully and consistently apply citation conventions for primary and secondary sources
- Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions

**Engage multiple digital technologies to compose for different purposes**

- Understand writing as a technology that restructures thought
- Use commonplace software to create media that effectively make or support arguments
- Compose effective arguments that integrate words, visuals, and digital media
- Evaluate format and design features of different kinds of texts
- Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of how technologies shape composing processes and outcomes
- Remediate writing from one form into another with a different rhetorical context
- Navigate the dynamics of delivery and publishing in digital spaces

## Appendix D

### Instructor Mentor Group Protocol

This is a semi-structured focus group. The questions will be used as a guide only. As the participants respond, other questions may be asked to explore important points brought up by these responses.

#### General Interviewee description

These questions are to be asked of instructors in ENGL 106.

#### Introduction

*READ: Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in our focus group about your experiences in ICaP. These gatherings will take approximately one hour, during which you will be asked to answer honestly. Each focus group session will be conducted with 8-10 other English 10600 instructors. During the focus group session, you will be asked to discuss what you are teaching your students, the kinds of assignments you give, what you want your students to learn from the assignments, thoughts about technology use in the classroom, and the kinds of challenges you believe English 10600 instructors may face (if any) teaching first year composition. Please feel free at any time to help yourself to the refreshments provided.*

*First, we'll start with a few questions about you and your interest in the assessment.*

#### Topic domain one: General demographic information

1. Please introduce yourself by sharing your program and year of study.
2. How many years have you taught?
  - 2.1. How many of those years have been first year composition courses?
  - 2.2. How many of those years teaching composition have been at Purdue?
  - 2.3. How many students have you taught approximately?

#### Topic domain two: Teacher pedagogical development and mentoring

1. Please briefly describe your initial ICaP mentoring experience.
2. Thinking beyond the personal experience and considering the content of ENGL 505, do you recall any readings that were insightful?
  - 2.1. What activities did you enjoy in your mentoring experience that you would continue?
  - 2.2. Was there a mentoring component that you would have liked to receive but did not?
3. What kinds of pedagogical support have you received since the mentoring ended?
  - 3.1. If you have received support, did you seek it out or was it offered by someone?
4. What types of pedagogical support would you like to receive as you continue to teach for ICaP?

#### Topic domain three: Student ability perceptions and instructor actions

1. Thinking about your experience in the classroom, what do you perceive are student strengths in the composition classroom?
2. What are their weaknesses? Where you see these weaknesses?
3. What types of activities do you do in the classroom to address these weaknesses and support student learning?

**Topic domain four: ICaP support and material use**

1. What forms of ICaP personnel support do you seek to help you in the classroom? Consider emails and/or discussions with the writing program administrator (Jenny Bay), the two program assistants (Linda Haynes and Stacy Nall), mentors, tech mentors, syllabus approach leaders, administrative assistants, or others.
2. How often do you reference the ICaP website ([icap.rhetorike.org](http://icap.rhetorike.org)) for information or materials?

**Topic domain five: Assignment success and deviations**

1. What types of assignments (timed, traditional research driven, digital, portfolio) do your students do well? What evidence can you provide to support this determination?
2. Think of an assignment that you found (or find) difficult to instruct and for students to complete.
  - 2.1. Why do you believe you/they struggled?
  - 2.2. If you deviated from the original project during or after the semester, what did you change and why? Did you discuss these changes with anyone?
  - 2.3. Did the project instruction and student success improve? How do you know?
3. In what ways do you discuss research methodology in your classroom?
  - 3.1. Do you use materials from Purdue Libraries (including the website) to instruct students on the resources available?
  - 3.2. Are there resources you use that are currently unavailable from ICaP or Purdue at this time? If yes, please describe the materials and where you find them.

*A few more questions for you before we close the focus group session.*

**Topic domain six: Technological pedagogical understanding**

1. What teaching techniques do you use when you are teaching ENGL 106 using digital technologies?
2. When you are teaching the content of ENGL 106 using digital technologies what successes do you have? Why do you consider this a success? To what degree would you contribute the success to the technology?

Would anyone like to contribute anything we have not discussed today?

*Thank you for your participation.*

## Appendix E

### Student Focus Group Protocol

This is a semi-structured focus group. The questions will be used as a guide only, as the participant responds, other questions may be asked to explore important points brought by these responses.

#### General Interviewee description

These questions are to be asked of students enrolled in ENGL 106.

#### Introduction

*READ: Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in our focus group about our experiences in ICaP. These gatherings will take approximately one hour, during which you will be asked to answer honestly. Each focus group session will be conducted with 8-10 other English 10600 students. During the focus group session, you will be asked to discuss your comfort and interest in writing, your academic need for writing at Purdue, how well ICAP is meeting those needs, and thoughts about technology use in the classroom. Please feel free at any time to help yourself to the refreshments provided.*

*First, we'll start with a few questions about you and your interest in ENGL 106.*

#### Topic domain one: General demographic information

1. Please introduce yourself by sharing your major and year of study.
2. How is your semester going in ENGL 106?

#### Topic domain two: Student academic needs

1. Describe your English 106 course at Purdue.
2. What role do you think ENGL 106 plays in your college career?
3. What skills, abilities, or knowledge do you feel that you need in order to develop as a writer?
4. Have you ever visited Purdue's Writing Lab? If yes, what was your impression of the experience?

#### Topic domain three: Student perceptions of 106

1. Thinking about your experience in the classroom, what are some of the things you have learned in your ENGL 106 class?
  - 1.1. What are some things you would like to learn but have not?
2. What have you learned about research and research methods in your 106 class?
  - 2.1. What research resources, such as the Purdue libraries website, have you learned to use?
3. What was one 106 assignment that stood out for you? Why?
4. What other kinds of assignments have you encountered in your English 106 class?
  - 4.1. What kinds of challenges have you faced with these assignments?
5. What is your impression of conferencing?
  - 5.1. Describe some of the ways in which conferencing has improved your writing.

*I have a couple more questions for you before we close the focus group.*



**Topic domain four: Technology in the classroom**

1. Describe some ways in which technology has been incorporated into your 106 classroom.
  - 1.1. What kinds of technologies have you been required to use and how have these been introduced?
2. What challenges do you face when using technology for your assignments and classes in English 106?
3. What are some ways in which technology could be incorporated into the classroom that would be beneficial to you as a student?
4. Would anyone like to contribute anything we have not discussed today?

*Thank you for your participation.*

## Appendix F

### Mentor Focus Group Technology Use Protocol

This is a semi-structured focus group. The questions will be used as a guide only, as the participant responds, other questions may be asked to explore important points brought by these responses.

#### General Interviewee description

These questions are to be asked of students enrolled in ENGL 106.

#### Introduction

*READ: Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in our focus group about our experiences in ICaP. These gatherings will take approximately one hour, during which you will be asked to answer honestly. Each focus group session will be conducted with 8-10 other English 10600 students. During the focus group session, you will be asked to discuss your comfort and interest in writing, your academic need for writing at Purdue, how well ICAP is meeting those needs, and thoughts about technology use in the classroom. Please feel free at any time to help yourself to the refreshments provided.*

*First, we'll start with a few questions about you and your uses of technology.*

#### Topic domain one: Mentor technological pedagogical content knowledge

1. What is your philosophy of technology use?
  - 1.1. Do you see it as an integral part of teaching and learning or do you see it as an add-on to the classroom?
2. Describe your own development in your technology use in your classroom.
  - 2.1. Have you always used it in your classroom?
  - 2.2. How have your uses of technology changed throughout your career as an instructor?
3. How has mentoring changed your own use of technology in the classroom?
4. Describe some poor uses of technology in the classroom.
  - 4.1. Describe some excellent uses of technology in the classroom. What do you think motivates each of these?
5. How do you use technology in your own teaching and learning?

#### Topic domain two: Development of technological pedagogical content skills

1. How do you talk to mentees about technology?
  - 1.1. Do you talk to them differently in the first semester as opposed to the second semester? How and why?
2. What approaches to technology do you see new TAs responding to better than others?
3. How do you help your TAs to see the advantages of using technology in the classroom?
4. What do you see as the biggest challenges with technology mentoring?

*Thank you for your participation.*

## Appendix G

### English 106 Timed Writing Prompt for Assessment Project

#### Directions

This question requires you to construct a coherent, well-written essay that analyzes rhetorical and visual elements in advertising. You have approximately 50 minutes to complete this assignment.

#### Introduction

Advertising plays a huge role in society is readily apparent to anyone who watches television, surfs the web, uses social media, or simply looks at billboards and posters around town. Advertising relies on diverse rhetorical and visual elements to reach different types of audiences. Moreover, advertising is not the exclusive province of business and industry. Non-profit and community organizations rely on advertising to make claims, raise visibility, and educate the public.

#### Assignment

Looking at the following visuals, write an essay in which you discuss the ways in which two of the following advertisements use visual and rhetorical elements to persuade readers. What do the ads seek to accomplish, and how do they rely on particular rhetorical and visual approaches to achieve these ends?

Links to the three visuals:

[http://flavorwire.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/slide\\_292825\\_2354668\\_free.jpg](http://flavorwire.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/slide_292825_2354668_free.jpg)

<http://cdn.theatlantic.com/static/mt/assets/international/unicefad.jpg>

<http://static2.businessinsider.com/image/517555b6ecad04742f000001-990-743/enhanced-buzz-wide-1465-1366493880-20.jpg>



## Appendix H

### ICAP Timed Writing Scoring Rubric

*Time essay responses should be scored **holistically**. No individual aspect of writing mechanics, writing style, or rhetorical analysis should determine the score an essay receives. Rather, these elements should be considered together to develop an **overall impression** of student ability. Remember that students produced these essays in **50 minutes**. For this reason, these prompts need not be error-free nor demonstrate polished, perfect composition.*

<b>6</b>	Essays earning a score of 6 demonstrate <b>excellent</b> writing ability. They respond <b>very effectively</b> to the prompt, showing <b>deep understanding</b> of the task. Such essays effectively integrate <b>content</b> and <b>rhetoric</b> . They use <b>specific evidence</b> from their subject material to make claims about content and demonstrate rhetorical techniques. These essays are largely error-free and demonstrate a <b>strong and consistent control of writing mechanics</b> .
<b>5</b>	Essays earning a score of 5 demonstrate <b>good</b> writing ability. They respond <b>effectively</b> to the prompt, showing a <b>general understanding</b> of the task. Such essays integrate <b>content</b> and <b>rhetoric</b> . They use <b>evidence</b> from their subject material to make claims about content and demonstrate rhetorical techniques. Though they may contain a small number of errors, these essays demonstrate <b>generally consistent control of writing mechanics</b> .
<b>4</b>	Essays earning a score of 4 demonstrate <b>adequate</b> writing ability. They respond <b>sufficiently</b> to the prompt, showing <b>some understanding</b> of the task. Such essays control both <b>content</b> and <b>rhetoric</b> , although they may be somewhat uneven in their focus. They use <b>some evidence</b> from their subject matter to make claims about content and demonstrate rhetorical techniques, although this evidence may occasionally be <b>general or vague</b> . Though they may contain errors, these essays demonstrate <b>adequate control of writing mechanics</b> .
<b>3</b>	Essays earning a score of 3 demonstrate <b>inconsistent</b> writing ability. They respond <b>unevenly</b> to the prompt, showing <b>partial understanding</b> of the task. Such essays address some <b>content or rhetoric</b> , but may fail to adequately address both. They use <b>limited evidence</b> from their subject material to make claims about either content or demonstrate rhetorical techniques, although this evidence is usually <b>incomplete or inadequate</b> . These essays demonstrate <b>inconsistent control of writing mechanics</b> .
<b>2</b>	Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate <b>a need for improvement</b> in writing ability. These essays <b>fail to respond appropriately</b> to the prompt, showing limited understanding of the task. Such essays may contain <b>either limited content matter or rhetoric</b> , but do not adequately address both and may fail to address either. They use <b>limited evidence</b> from the visuals to either make claims about content or rhetoric. These essays demonstrate <b>inadequate control of writing mechanics</b> , with repeated and serious errors.
<b>1</b>	Essays earning a score of 1 demonstrate <b>a need for significant improvement</b> in writing ability. These essays <b>do not respond</b> to the prompt, showing <b>little or no</b> understanding of the task. Such essays may contain <b>little or no content matter or rhetoric</b> , failing to address either in a satisfactory way. They use <b>little or no evidence</b> to make claims. These essays demonstrate <b>global inability to control writing mechanics</b> , with consistent and serious errors.

## Appendix I

### ICaP Research Writing Rubric

*Research essay responses should be scored **holistically**. No individual aspect of writing mechanics, writing style, or rhetorical analysis should determine the score an essay receives. Rather, these elements should be considered together to develop an **overall impression** of writing ability and research skills using a rhetorical perspective. For this reason, these essays may have some errors but should be as polished as perfect as possible.*

<b>6</b>	Essays earning a score of 6 demonstrate <b>excellent</b> researched writing ability using a rhetorical approach. They <b>define a specific</b> research area and focus on that area exclusively. They <b>effectively combine</b> information from various sources to form a <b>cohesive</b> research paper. These essays use <b>specific</b> references to evidence from those sources. Such essays utilize a <b>wide variety of quoted sources</b> . These essays demonstrate <b>consistent control of writing</b> .
<b>5</b>	Essays earning a score of 5 demonstrate <b>good</b> researched writing ability using a rhetorical approach. They <b>define a specific</b> research area and <b>focus</b> on that area with very few exceptions. They <b>effectively combine</b> information from various sources and the author's position to form a <b>mostly cohesive</b> research paper. These essays generally use <b>specific</b> references to evidence from those sources. Such essays utilize a <b>variety of quoted sources</b> . These essays demonstrate <b>generally consistent control of writing</b> .
<b>4</b>	Essays earning a score of 4 demonstrate <b>adequate</b> researched writing ability using a rhetorical approach. They <b>define</b> a research area, although this area may be somewhat vague or general, and generally <b>focus</b> on that area with some exceptions. They <b>combine</b> information from sources to form a <b>somewhat cohesive</b> research paper. These essays use <b>some general</b> and <b>some vague</b> references to evidence. Such essays utilize a <b>multiple quoted sources</b> , though these sources may lack variety. These essays demonstrate <b>adequate control of writing</b> .
<b>3</b>	Essays earning a score of 3 demonstrate <b>inadequate</b> researched writing ability and fails to take a rhetorical approach. They <b>define a vague or general</b> research area, but may <b>fail frequently</b> to focus on that area. They <b>attempt to combine</b> information from various sources, but may only succeed in developing a <b>minimally cohesive</b> research paper. These essays use <b>mostly vague</b> references to evidence. Such essays utilize a <b>small number of quoted sources</b> . These essays demonstrate <b>inconsistent control of writing</b> .
<b>2</b>	Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate a <b>need for improvement</b> in researched writing ability without a rhetorical approach. They <b>define a vague, general, or unclear</b> research area, and <b>consistently fail</b> to focus on that area. They <b>make little effort to combine</b> information from various sources, resulting in a <b>general lack of cohesion</b> as a research paper. These essays use <b>consistently vague</b> references to evidence. Such essays utilize a <b>very small number of quoted sources</b> . These essays demonstrate <b>inadequate control of writing</b> .
<b>1</b>	Essays earning a score of 1 demonstrate a <b>need for significant improvement</b> in researched writing ability with no rhetorical approach. They <b>fail to define a research area</b> and are <b>scattered and unfocused</b> . They <b>do not combine</b> information from various sources, resulting in a <b>lack of cohesion</b> as a research paper. These essays use <b>entirely vague</b> references to evidence. Such essays utilize <b>only one or two sources or none at all</b> . These essays demonstrate <b>global inability to control writing</b> .

## Appendix J

### Instructor Focus Groups Findings

Two research assistants conducted two focus groups with TAs who served as ENGL 106 instructors. Some topics that were covered included:

- Experiences in the ENGL 505 instructor mentoring program
- Assignments taught and successes and instructor syllabi deviations
- Integration of technology into ENGL 106
- Perceptions of pedagogical support and development from ICaP and student opinion

### Findings

#### *Experiences in the ENGL 505 instructor mentoring program*

Instructors perceive that their experiences in ENGL 505, a teaching practicum for instructors in their first year, varied widely based on the mentor instruction provided. Their concerns about mentoring instruction and its purpose include:

- Need direct guidance on syllabus approaches and their function in ICaP
- Require more instruction on the goals, means, and outcomes of ICaP and how they can measure them in their classes
- Understand how ICaP goals align with broader institutional goals and measurements

#### *Perceptions of pedagogical support and development from ICaP and student opinion*

Instructors felt their pedagogical needs were met or not in the following ways:

- Information to help define themselves as scholar-teachers is unavailable. Many instructors identified a struggle to transition into the roles of a university-level instructor and graduate student.
- The ICaP website was a rarely used resource. Instructors are more likely to have informal discussions with peers and seek other networks, such as their advisers, for pedagogical support and development.
- Students feel that ENGL 106 struggle disassociating writing in ICaP from secondary writing pedagogy or perceived understandings of writing within disciplines outside of the Department of English

#### *Assignments taught and successes and instructor syllabi deviations*

Overall, instructors taught a wide variety of assignments to varying success. They felt students were more successful with familiar assignments. Consistencies from instructors include:

- Some TAs deviate from the syllabus approach and do not always cover all the content that is indicated on their syllabus. This decision may be a response to student successes and challenges on various assignment components.
- Each writing assignment asks students to compose their writing in digital spaces (e.g. a word processor or blog site). Larger assignments may ask for a big online component.

#### *Technology integration in ENGL 106*

When asked about technology integration in ENGL 106 the instructors had difficulty identifying how they used technology in the classroom and how they developed technology based projects. When it comes to using technology and teaching with it, the TAs feel that:

- Many instructors use it as a foundation of their writing instruction.
- Having a “technology-centered” identity influenced the incorporation of technology into the classroom. Instructors in the Literature or Theory and Cultural Studies graduate programs were less likely to hold this identity.

## Appendix K

### Student Focus Groups Discoveries

Three research assistants conducted two focus groups with students actively enrolled in ENGL 106. Some topics that were covered included:

- Perceptions of academic needs met by ENGL 106
- Uses of university-based writing resources (e.g. writing lab, office hours, libraries)
- Integration of technology into ENGL 106
- Perceptions of ENGL 106 challenges, purposes, and instructors

### Findings

#### *Perceptions of ENGL 106 challenges, purposes, and instructors*

Students perceive that ENGL 106 has the following issues:

- Much of the content is repetitive of their experiences in secondary level English classes or Advanced Placement/college preparation courses from high school. This was especially true for instruction on introductory rhetorical tools (e.g. ethos, pathos, and logos) and essay organization.
- Reading literature and creative works in ENGL 106 is an experience from high school that they also expected in their college-level course.
- Expectations of content, course rigor, participation and attendance are mostly formed in high school experiences and other courses outside of the department of English.
- Textbooks and other required readings, especially the *Composing Yourself* text, should be incorporated more into the classes and projects required in ENGL 106.

#### *Perceptions of academic needs met by ENGL 106*

Students generally felt that ENGL 106 either failed to meet their academic needs or accurately met their needs in the following ways:

- There should be a difference between college writing and what kind of writing students did in high school but ENGL 106 should directly connect to the writing that students will be doing in their discipline/major.
- Resume and cover letter writing should be emphasized in each course
- Students should be able to show competency in ENGL 106 and other writing courses through testing or transferring courses from other institutions.
- Lacking awareness of syllabus approaches to ENGL 106, most students felt that having access to this information and other logistical information about the course (structures, objectives, expectations, locations) would help prepare them for the course

#### *Technology integration in ENGL 106*

When asked about technology integration in ENGL 106 the students discussed access to technology on campus and the technology based projects. When it comes to digital project and computer lab spaces the students feel that:

- A computer lab was unnecessary since most students have their own laptops which they bring to class each meeting
- Digital/online based projects were unnecessary because Purdue offers classes that could teach them the software or design if they desired to learn it

#### *Uses of university-based writing resources (e.g. Writing Lab, office hours, libraries)*

Most students use Purdue based resources often (e.g. set appointments at the Purdue Writing Lab, access the Purdue OWL, study in the libraries).

## Appendix L

### Mentor Focus Groups Findings

M. Brooke Robertshaw, of the Office of Institutional Assessment, conducted 2 focus groups with the mentors of the ENGL 106 teaching assistants. Some topics that were covered included:

- Struggles 106 teaching assistants have
- Integration of technology into ENGL 106
- Perceptions of ENGL 106 by those within the Department of English, students in ENGL 106, and those outside of the department

### Findings

#### *Struggles of ENGL 106 teaching assistants*

Mentors perceive that first year ENGL 106 teaching assistants struggle with the following things:

- Changing identities from student to instructor while developing a position of authority for classroom management
- Understanding why teaching and incorporating technology skills are important for contemporary writing practice and writing instruction
- Conforming to the type of teaching at Purdue -- content knowledge, content load in ENGL 106, teaching good citizenship, using at current issues

#### *Perceptions of others within the Department of English and other departments who are not involved with ENGL 106*

Mentors of the teaching assistants for ENGL 106 find the following struggles because of how they believe ENGL 106 is perceived by those outside of ICaP:

- Defining themselves as scholar-teachers—Teaching assistants are being told by some of other professors they do not need to hold conferences, and that they are scholars first and teachers second. Understanding that teaching is most likely to be a part of a future job and that teaching ENGL 106 is important to their development as teacher-scholars
- Having different epistemological approaches across the discipline of English is difficult when teaching a course like ENGL 106, especially considering the long-term historical culture of the place of composition within the field of English.
- Other departments don't understand the difference between college writing and what kind of writing students did in high school or how ENGL 106 connects to the writing that students will be doing in their discipline. Other departments also do not understand the development of students as writers and how ENGL 106 fits into that development cycle.
- Believing that TAs deviate from the syllabus approach and do not always cover all the content that is supposed to be covered, even if their syllabi indicate otherwise.

#### *Technology integration in ENGL 106*

When asked about technology integration in ENGL 106 the mentors talked about both the training for the teaching assistants receive the teaching assistants and the technology based projects. When it comes to training the mentors feel that:

- Much of the technology mentoring is done using a direct instruction approach. The training spends too much time on the technology skills – using the software – rather than pedagogical uses of the software.
- The training emphasizes too much having teaching assistants be experts in the technology rather than helping them to become comfortable in learning the software along with their students.