

**HUMBER COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY
GENERIC/EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

**WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:
INCORPORATING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
INTO PROGRAM COURSES**

**Compiled by
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HUMBER COLLEGE THE GENERIC/EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS INITIATIVE

Generic/Employability Skills are transferrable Skills that provide the foundation for a student's academic, vocational, and personal success. Humber College's Generic/Employability Skills initiative has evolved over several years and has included the engagement of staff, faculty and administration from across the college.

In 1995, Ontario's College Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC) published a report outlining Generic Skills Learning Outcomes required for two and three year college programs. In 1996, Humber president Dr. Robert Gordon struck a Task Force to further develop generic/Employability Skills for Humber College. This Task Force, with college-wide representation, produced a report that identified six major categories of Generic/Employability Skills and their related subsets. The major categories are **Communications, Personal, Interpersonal, Thinking, Mathematics, and Computer Skills.**

After the Task Force completed its report, the Generic Skills Implementation team was established. The major goal of the team was to work with college programs to help them ensure that Humber's graduates have met the learning outcomes of the six Generic/Employability Skills. The Implementation Team's Project Leaders have compiled resource manuals that identify the learning outcomes and specific instructional objectives for each learning outcome. The manuals also offer examples of techniques for teaching, reinforcing and evaluating the skills and samples of Best Practices. This information is valuable for faculty and administrators in new and established programs who are incorporating Generic Skills into the curriculum.

Judy Clarke
Generic/Employability Skills Coordinator

Generic Skills Resource Manuals

Book 1A:	Communications Skills	Barbara Ford
Book 1B:	Writing Across the Curriculum	Karen Golets Pancer
Book 2:	Personal Skills	Pat Hedley
Book 3:	Interpersonal Skills	Grace Nostbakken
Book 4:	Thinking Skills	Sheila Money
Book 5:	Mathematics Skills	Jim Watson
Book 6:	Computer Skills	Shelly Cunningham

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Introduction

Employers today want to hire people with above-average communication skills. College graduates who are competent writers and can tackle any writing task, from a simple email message to a complex report, proposal, or business plan, have a clear advantage over others in the job market.

Humber's students are introduced to college-level writing skills in their Communications courses. However, if their writing skills are to develop into essential *generic* skills, students need additional writing practice. When students write in their program courses, they begin to transfer the writing skills they learned in their Communications courses to more specific academic and vocational contexts; certainly, their motivation to write is strongest in their program courses because academic and job-related writing tasks there have obvious relevance to their future success.

An added advantage for students who are writing regularly in their program courses is that they enhance their learning of content while improving their generic writing skills. Researchers have known for a long time that writing, thinking, and learning are closely connected. In fact, in a 1999 workshop at Humber entitled "Teaching with the Brain in Mind," guest speaker Bob Aitken of Vancouver Community College suggested that writing is one form of "mindful rehearsal" that can help students remember facts and concepts. In other words, writing can be one means of developing neurological pathways in students' brains, thus ensuring that what is in their short-term memory gets transferred into their long-term memory.

The ultimate objective of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) project in Humber's overall Generic Skills initiative is to promote further writing practice in program courses as a way of achieving three goals:

1. reinforcing the generic writing skills students have learned in their Communications courses,
2. providing opportunities for students to learn about forms of writing they may be required to do on the job *and* to develop their professionalism,
3. enhancing the learning of career-related content.

A summary of the Generic/Employability Skills Learning Outcomes and Instructional Objectives for Writing Skills can be found in Appendix A. (Note: Generic/Employability Skills will be referred to as Generic Skills in most parts of this manual.)

NOTE: Writing Skills are *taught* and *evaluated* in Communications courses. Consequently, the task of WAC professors is to *teach as necessary, reinforce*, and then *evaluate* writing skills students have previously learned and are now applying. Contact your WAC resource person if you'd like a copy of any Communications course outlines.

Humber College’s Generic/Employability Skills: Writing Skills

This manual focuses on generic writing skills and how writing-intensive courses (WICs) help students reinforce what they have previously learned in their Communications courses. For information on the other Communication Skills – Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Communicating through Evolving Media– please see the Communications Skills Manual.

1.1 WRITING SKILLS

Learning Outcome

The student will demonstrate the ability to produce clear, concise, correct, and coherently written texts to suit the intended audience.

Explanation – College-level writing skills are taught and evaluated in Communications courses, but students sometimes compartmentalize what they have learned as being important only to their Communications professor. If writing skills are to be further developed into generic skills that are transferable to new contexts, students need additional writing practice in selected program courses. With guidance from their program professors, students can learn how to “customize” the text of their message, depending on who will be reading it (a client, supplier, bank-loan officer, or prospective employer, for example) and can learn the forms and conventions of job-related writing. Such writing opportunities thus reinforce previously learned principles of writing clear, concise, and grammatically correct English.

Humber’s goal is that every full-time student will have at least one writing-intensive course (WIC) per semester. In each WIC, students should write approximately 2500 words in total across a number of assignments. Experienced WIC professors recommend several short assignments spread throughout the course, rather than one long paper at the end. A series of related assignments yields the best writing, especially if revision opportunities are built into the process.

Instructional Objectives

The student will be able to

- 1.1.1 Organize the message according to the purpose
- 1.1.2 Select content necessary to convey the message
- 1.1.3 Employ style, tone, and vocabulary appropriate to the message, situation, and intended audience
- 1.1.4 Demonstrate conventional use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Explanation – Three variables determine every writing situation: the *purpose* of the message, the *content* of the message, and the *audience* who will read the message.

Example: A department manager has asked one of her customer service representatives to write a report on the kinds of enquiries he handles in a typical week. The rep begins by taking point-form notes after each call. This is the type of writing where the writer's *purpose* is to record complete and accurate information; the *content* consists of the details of each call; and the *audience* is the writer himself. In this case, the writer's goal is to keep good notes; format is important only insofar as it helps him write the report later; and *grammar, spelling, and punctuation* don't matter much because only he will be reading the notes.

When the customer service representative writes the report, however, the writing context changes. As the writer, his *purpose* is to create a report giving his manager the information she needs in an easy-to-read format. He has to group types of calls together under the appropriate headings and decide how to order the headings to present the information in the most logical way. When he is selecting the *content* for the report, he has to make some decisions about what to keep and what to cut from his many pages of notes. He realizes that some information, such as a customer's name, is irrelevant. However, he wants to stress in his report that a disproportionate number of calls were about two problems: the handle of a new product falls off when the customer picks it up, and the instructions in the owner's manual for another product do not explain how to install the battery pack. Finally, his *audience* has asked for a memo report, so the writer knows he has to be brief. However, he also knows that his manager may forward the report to staff in the manufacturing and technical writing departments, so the writing must be clear enough for others to understand. Finally, the report must be free of *grammar, spelling, and punctuation* errors because when the customer service rep sends the report to his manager, he has, in effect, published an important document.

Two possible pathways to achieving Instructional Objectives: There are two possible pathways to achieve instructional objectives for generic writing skills:

Informal assignments such as learning journals or rough drafts are “low-stakes” tools for students to practise writing and learn new material. The intended audience is the student alone. Professors give a cursory evaluation based on accuracy or relevance of content. Such assignments are “low stakes” because they are relatively easy for the student to write and for the professor to grade. Informal assignments reinforce instructional objectives 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. (See “Informal Writing Assignments,” p. 6, for some additional examples.)

Formal assignments can take two general forms: *academic writing* such as summaries, essays, and research reports; and *professional writing* such as memos, letters, reports, and proposals. Formal assignments are more traditional “high-stakes” tools for students to demonstrate their knowledge about a topic or practise a form of writing required by their job. The intended audience is their professor or possibly an employer. Consequently, students must take more care in producing these assignments, and professors take more time marking them. Formal assignments reinforce instructional objectives 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, and 1.1.4. (See “Formal Writing Assignments,” p. 8, for some additional examples.)

Implementing WAC: Course Outlines

What to Add to the Course Outline

Every course outline should include the following:

- C a statement about the Generic Skills covered in the course
- C a statement of the Writing Skills learning outcomes for the course
- C a statement of how many words the students are expected to write over the semester
- C a statement of how many marks are allotted to writing and related assignments
- C an indication of what standards students are expected to meet.

Here is an example of what could go into a course outline:

Generic Skills Requirements: Generic/Employability skills are essential skills that provide the foundation for success in a student's academic, personal and vocational life. The Generic/Employability skills consist of **communications, personal, interpersonal, thinking, mathematics, and computer applications skills**. Through the successful completion of this course, students will develop the following specific generic skills: [Note to WIC professors: Relevant generic skills learning outcomes for the course would be listed here.]

Writing Skills Learning Outcomes: This is a writing-intensive course under Humber's Writing Across the Curriculum/Generic Skills initiative. The writing assignments in writing-intensive courses give students opportunities to

1. practise and improve their writing skills learned in Communications courses
2. learn job-related forms of writing
3. learn course material.

In their written work for this course, students will demonstrate the ability to produce clear, concise, correct, and coherently written texts to suit the intended audience. Students should be able to

1. organize the message according to their purpose
2. select the content necessary to convey that message
3. use the style, tone, and vocabulary appropriate to the message, situation, and intended audience
4. control conventions of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Word Count: In producing several written assignments of varying lengths, students will be expected to write a minimum of 2500 words in total.

Marks Allotted to Writing and Related Assignments: Writing assignments will account for 30% of each student's final mark for the entire course. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling will account for 30% of the mark on each formal writing assignment.

Standards: The attached criterion sheet explains the standards students are expected to attain in their written work for this course.

[Note to WIC professors: “See Details to Consider,” below, for more information on word counts, allotting marks to writing, and writing standards.]

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of submitting as one’s own, material that is in whole, or in substantial part, someone else’s words. An academic penalty for plagiarism begins with a grade of zero (0) and can be extended up to and including suspension from a program course and expulsion from the College. [Note to WIC professors: This statement is adapted from Humber’s full policy statement on plagiarism and cheating, which can be found on the Humber College Website (<http://registrar.humberc.on.ca>) under General College Information, item 17.]

Details to Consider

Generic skills requirements, learning outcomes, minimum word count per WIC , and standards are meant to be consistent throughout the college.

However, each school, program, or professor may decide what proportion of a student’s grade in a WIC should be devoted to the quality of writing. The general rule is, the higher the proportion devoted to writing, the better; some WICs have weighted writing from 70% to 100% of the final mark. A range of 20-30% is at the lower end of the scale, but perhaps reasonable for some courses. A minimum of 15-20%, and up to 50%, of the grade per assignment can be allotted to correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Assignments which include a revision of the draft should have marks attached to the revision activity as well as to the final piece of writing.

Some professors may want to use the sample marking template on p. 16 to design their own criterion sheet for evaluating writing assignment. Others may want to use a criterion sheet determined by their program or school. Still others may want to adapt Communications Course Criterion Sheets in Appendix B or adapt the sample criterion sheet from a program course in Appendix F. (More information on designing marking templates can be found on pp. 15-17.)

In any case, students need to know from the outset how they will be evaluated on writing assignments. Copies of the criterion sheet should always be attached to the course outline and to each assignment.

A Range of Possible Writing Activities and Assignments*

A writing-intensive course (WIC) is most effective if it combines two types of writing: informal and formal assignments.

Informal Writing Assignments

Informal writing assignments are effective low-stakes tools for students to learn new material. Professors can skim and evaluate content alone, not focusing on or marking for organization, grammar or spelling. Marks can be awarded on the basis that the writing was done or not done, on a 0-5 scale, or the assignment can be ungraded. Here are some examples of informal writing assignments:

1. Journals: *Students* keep a separate notebook in which they record what they are learning: for example, important points that come up in lessons and assigned readings, reactions to or questions arising from class discussion, connections they see between content in this course and others they are taking, applications of what they are learning in class to their work placement, or answers to an assigned “Question of the Day.” This type of journal-writing can help students recall lessons and consolidate what they are learning.

The teacher can collect the journals as a group two or three times per semester or can collect a few from a random group of students each week. Journals need not be read in detail and marked. Instead, the teacher can skim their content for accuracy, answer questions briefly in writing, consider clarifying a point in class, or assign a grade according to the effort the student has put into the journal. Such a grade could range from 0 (not done), 1 (poor), 2 (average), or 3 (outstanding) out of 3 for each journal.

2. Summaries and/or Study Questions: *Students* write brief (100- to 250-word) summaries of a number of assigned readings or answers to study questions from their textbook every 2 to 3 weeks, or before a test, and check for accuracy of the content in their writing.

The teacher skims the writing and may want to review certain areas that students indicate in their writing that they do not yet understand. This work can be ungraded or given a mark on a scale from 0-5.

3. Pre-discussion freewriting: *Students* write for 10 minutes about a provocative question, problem, or issue in the course content. This technique is known as freewriting. Instruct students to write, in sentences, whatever comes to mind about the topic for 10 minutes, without stopping to edit or reconsider what they have written. Grammar, spelling and style do not count. Instead, the key is to keep writing and see what ideas emerge that can be added to the subsequent discussion.

The teacher doesn't have to collect the writing. This kind of writing is one way to kick-start a discussion and is for the students' benefit alone.

4. End-of-class writing: *Students* write for 10 minutes at the end of class about what they have learned that day and how it connects to their learning so far. They can add questions that can be answered in the next class.

The teacher may want to collect the writing after every writing session to read the questions or only on random occasions to check that the class is grasping the content. Again, organization, grammar and spelling do not count.

Other possible informal writing assignments:

- contemplative essay
- diary
- question or speculation
- email conversation
- material or methods plan
- rough draft
- list
- work problem
- outline
- thesis statement
- description of a process

*Sources: Bean, J. *Engaging ideas*. (2001) . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Laurentian University Language Centre . (1995, 1997) . *WAC PACK* . Sudbury, ON.
Walvoord, B. (No date) . *What writing across the curriculum is not*. Unpublished conference handout.
Young, A. & T. Fulwiler. (1986) . *Writing across the disciplines*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Formal Writing Assignments

Like informal assignments, formal writing assignments can be tools to learn new material (as in a research paper, for example). Often, however, students write formal assignments to show they have mastered the content, to evaluate that content, or to apply it to new contexts. Some formal assignments allow students to practise forms of writing pertinent to their careers: for example, a business plan for a business student, a proposal for a media student, an accident report for a Police Foundations Program student, or a case brief for a law-clerk student.

The evaluation of formal assignments is usually more detailed than for informal assignments. One way to ensure a better final product is to build in opportunities for revision before the final evaluation. In grading a formal assignment, the teacher is looking at the combined effectiveness of content, format, and language issues (spelling, grammar, and punctuation).

Sequenced formal assignments are recommended because students are more likely to succeed at writing several short formal assignments than one lengthy paper. The following are some suggested sequenced formal assignments:

1. Two sides to an issue: *Students* write a brief essay exploring one side of an issue/topic, based on a combination of material learned in class and from research. They can exchange drafts to compare and comment on each other's research and quality of writing, or the teacher can respond briefly in writing. Students then write a second brief essay on the other perspective, with peer workshops or teacher comments following this stage as well. The final stage is a report that compares the two perspectives on several different dimensions and concludes with recommendations about which perspective is better.

The teacher can treat each brief essay as an informal assignment and treat the final report as the formal assignment and mark it in greater detail.

2. The sequenced proposal: *Students* choose a selected topic and related problem to be solved and write a memo to their instructor stating the topic and their reasons for choosing it. One week later, students write a progress report in memo format explaining the extent of their research to date, what is yet to be done, problems they have encountered, and how they intend to address those problems. Two weeks later, they submit a research report discussing the research they have found. Four weeks after the report submission date, students submit a proposal outlining the problem and the solution. In this type of assignment, students see how thinking and re-thinking about a problem can lead to more creative solutions.

The teacher can consider the earlier stages as either informal or formal writing assignments. Seeing the progress and quality of research allows for intervention if students appear to be on the wrong track in developing their proposals.

3. The sequenced career package: *Students* first write an informal list, freewrite, or mind-map about their work experience and career goals. (For an explanation of these prewriting techniques, see Appendix C.) From this information, they compile their resume and cover letter.

The teacher guides the process along the way, helping students choose the most pertinent details that employers will be looking for. The final package is graded as rigorously as is necessary to ensure that students understand the necessity of accuracy and correctness if they are to make an outstanding first impression.

4. The semester-long writing project: *Students* work toward a traditional long paper by writing it in sections that are assigned over the course of the semester and that build on previous learning. Informal “think-pieces,” book reviews, abstracts, or class presentations can come first. Prescribed sections of the final paper can be due at two-week intervals. The final paper is due at the end of the course. This type of assignment works well if opportunities for feedback (from peers in peer editing workshops, from peer tutors, or from the teacher) and revision are available after each section comes due.

The teacher reads, comments on, and grades each section of the assignment as it comes due; both the teacher and students benefit from dealing with more manageable subsections, and revisions lead to a better final product.

5. Several short papers: *Students* write a combination of several short (300-500-word) essays, memos, lab reports, book reviews, article summaries, abstracts, or letters to the editor of the college newspaper.

The teacher reads each as a separate formal assignment. The shorter length makes each assignment easier both to write and to mark.

Other possible formal assignments

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| -essay exam question | -analysis of case study | -laboratory or field notebook |
| -case comment | -proposal | -technical or scientific report |
| -literature survey | -annotated bibliography | -instructional manual |
| -brochure, poster, or ad | -letter to the editor | -review of a book, work of art,
or performance |
| -dialogue | -narrative | |
| -newsletter article | -memo | |

Implementing WAC: Designing Formal Writing Assignments

Thanks to Franc Jamieson of the Writing Centre (North Campus) for his article in the Fall 2001 *WAC Letter*, on which this section is based.

One piece of good news for professors of writing-intensive courses (WICs) is that Generic Writing Skills are taught and evaluated in Communications courses. The WIC *reinforces* what students have previously learned and *evaluates* how successfully students are applying their Generic Writing Skills in their writing assignments. Another piece of good news is that taking the time to design an effective assignment and accompanying assignment sheet improves the writing experience for students and the marking experience for their professors.

Some General Tips for Designing Formal Assignments

Several Shorter Assignments: Experienced WIC professors recommend *several shorter assignments* spread throughout the course, rather than one long paper at the end. Students find shorter assignments more manageable. As well, a *series of related assignments* over the semester yields the best writing, especially if opportunities to revise drafts are built into the process. (See pp. 8-9 for some examples of sequenced formal assignments.)

Opportunities for Feedback and Revision before the Final Due Date: Experienced writers have always known what composition research confirms: writing improves with revision. For student writers, *guided* revision opportunities offer important learning opportunities. As students ourselves, many of us may have wished we could have rewritten an assignment so we could have made improvements based on the professor's comments. Certainly, assignments that have undergone revision are far easier to mark. (Some suggestions for incorporating revision opportunities are on p. 13.)

Writing Effective Assignment Sheets

The Importance of Clear and Complete Instructions: Students learn more and perform best when writing assignments are clear and complete. Formal assignments, in particular, need a detailed assignment sheet.

For professors, taking the time to prepare a complete assignment sheet has several important advantages: we avoid the time-consuming task of fielding questions for clarification, we avoid having to go over the assignment for students who have missed class, we avoid receiving assignments that are not done properly, we set a good example for the students' writing task, and we gain the respect and appreciation of our students.

Instructions should be written in plain English and should be as explicit as possible. On the assignment sheet, it is best to leave little room for interpretation. For example, an instruction such as “Describe the conditions under which Napoleon led his armies into Russia” could result in a discussion of military prowess, political climate, medical issues, or even the weather.

An effective writing assignment sheet should also have the following components:

1. Assignment title and number: Choose a title that makes it easy to refer to the assignment. “How’s your comparative analysis of alternative economic models going?” does not roll easily off the tongue. Calling the assignment a Comparison of Economic Models is more effective.

2. Weight, due date, and late policy: The weight of the assignment is the strongest attention-getter and should appear right under the assignment’s title. The due date should be in bold. If you don’t want students to miss your class and appear at the end with the assignment, make it due at the beginning of class. Specify penalties for lateness and adhere to them.

Weighting and late policies are determined by professors and/or programs. Two weeks is enough time for most students to write an assignment up to 1000 words (4 double-spaced typed pages.)

If you are building-in guided revisions, a week should be enough time for students to revise their drafts based on your or their readers’ comments.

3. Instructional objectives, context, purpose, and audience: A good general practice is to tell students the purpose of the assignment and what they’ll learn in the process of completing it.

You may also wish to specify the imagined audience or context the student is writing for (e.g. a client, potential employer, a letters-to-the-editor section of the newspaper, a trade publication.)

In other cases, you may want to refer to the specific generic skills instructional objectives in this section of the assignment sheet so students will have a more precise understanding of the assignment’s context, purpose, and primary audience.

For example, an informal end-of-class summary of the day’s activities requires a focus on the instructional objective 1.1.2 Content Selection. The primary audience is the student, who is writing to reflect on, learn, and remember the material covered. In this case, only a short assignment sheet is necessary.

In contrast, a formal business plan requires the assignment sheet to focus on all four WAC Instructional Objectives (1.1.1. Organization according to Purpose, 1.1.2 Content Selection, 1.1.3 Style, Tone, and Vocabulary for the Audience, and 1.1.4 Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation) because it models the type of writing the students would do if they were trying, for

example, to secure a loan to start a business. The assignment is more complex, so a detailed assignment sheet is necessary.

4. Specific type of document: Many students coming directly from high school have little experience with documents other than essays. If you want students to write a document type that is unfamiliar to them, one explicit purpose should be for the students to learn how to produce that type. Specify whether the document should be a letter, memo, formal report, research essay, personal essay, list of notes, etc.

5. Topic: The topic or topics should be familiar to students who have been attending class regularly. Unless the development of resourcefulness is itself a goal of the assignment, choose familiar topics. Finally, topics worded as problems to be addressed elicit higher-level thinking skills (Bean, 2001).

6. Format specifics: (This section may be included in the Type of Document section). Be sure to include format details to alleviate students' confusion. Specify the number of words (not pages) the documents should have, as well as single- or double-spacing, font size, and information to be included on the cover page. For research assignments, specify the documentation style - American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), or Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) - and whether you prefer parenthetical citations, footnotes, or endnotes. Students in technical programs learn APA in their Technical Writing classes and most others learn MLA. (See p.18 for sources of information on documentation.)

7. Guidelines: Guidelines may specify the steps students need to follow in order to complete the assignment, particular sources you want students to use, or requirements regarding group activities if the assignment is a co-operative learning project.

8. Criterion sheet/ Marking template: Include the criteria you will use to grade the assignment or refer students to a sample Criterion Sheet they may have previously received attached to the course outline. Criterion sheets not only make your job easier and take some of the mystery out of the marking process, but they also give students an impression of objectivity and reduce arguments when students question their grades. (See Appendix B and Appendix F for some sample Criterion Sheets.)

9. Models, samples, and examples: If possible, have sample "A" assignments done in the past on hand for students to look at. Keeping these assignments in a binder reduces students' temptation to borrow these samples.

Incorporating Revision Opportunities

Knowing how to revise is a key to improving writing. Incorporating opportunities for students to get clear and structured feedback on their writing *before* they submit it to their professor for evaluation has two important advantages: students learn how to use such feedback to revise and improve their writing, and your marking task becomes easier because the final draft is of higher quality.

There are several ways to build in revision opportunities for formal assignments:

1. Set up in-class peer editing workshops so students can read and comment on each other's drafts. In the workshops, students use comments sheets to guide their consideration of each other's writing. The comments will give each writer concrete suggestions for revision before the final evaluation. (See Appendix D for a sample Peer Comments Sheet.) In addition to practice in reading and writing skills, peer workshops offer opportunities for practising teamwork, listening skills, and diplomacy.

2. Ask students to visit the Writing Centre (North D225, Lakeshore B203) during the drafting or revision stage. The Writing Centre staff do not proofread students' work, but they can help students learn to revise and proofread their own work. Students should bring their draft and a specific question (for example, *What is a sentence fragment? How do I cite sources from the Internet?*) and staff will help them find the answer.

3. Suggest students seek help from Peer Tutors (North D128, Lakeshore A120). There is a nominal fee for this service: \$10 for eight hours of one-on-one tutoring. Communications tutors are trained to work with people who have difficulties with their writing.

4. During semesters when COMM 303 for Peer Tutors is offered, it may be possible to arrange that students in your class be assigned to work with students currently taking the COMM 303 course. Contact the WAC resource person for details.

5. Encourage students to seek help from you. If time permits, set up a 5-10-minute conference with each student. The student should bring the draft and at least one specific question about the content or structure of that piece of writing.

Students are often reluctant to undertake the "extra" work that revising entails. Assigning a proportion of their final grade on a formal assignment to a revision activity is one way to encourage them to seek feedback early and often.

Responding to and Marking Writing Assignments

Guidelines for Responding to Student Writing*

Every time students write, they get the practice they need to improve, so lengthy responses from the professor are not always necessary, especially for informal writing assignments. Responses can also come from their classmates, or the professor can collect certain assignments (such as journals) only once or twice per semester and give the work a cursory reading.

When you do want to respond in more detail, in formal assignments for example, some guidelines can help:

C Tailor the kind of responses to the stage of the writing process.

Effective writers follow a process in producing their work. The *drafting* stage includes prewriting, when writers are exploring ideas and drafting, when they consider organization and set down a first draft. The *revision* stage includes revision, when writers rethink ideas and reshape organization, and editing, when language errors are cleaned up before the final version is prepared. If you are commenting on work in the earlier stages of drafting, focus on the quality of the topic, thesis, support, or organization. Limit more detailed comments on language issues such as spelling and grammar to the revision stage, unless there is an obvious recurring error that the student should be aware of.

C When responding to “final” papers, avoid extremes.

Students benefit most from selective comments in the margins and a brief summary at the end of the paper that focuses on two or three areas related to content. Avoid the temptation to “correct” every error, or the opposite, to give a grade alone.

Program professors do not need to become grammar experts to mark written work. As you read formal assignments containing errors you recognize but which you can't name, it's best to comment as a confused reader and let the student make the correction or seek the Writing Centre's help to understand the type of error and learn how to correct it. “I don't understand” is a legitimate comment for you to make, and makes error correction the student's responsibility, not yours.

C If you use symbols or abbreviations, be sure to give students a key explaining what the symbols mean.

If you do recognize certain sentence errors, try to indicate them with the symbols and terminology that students have used in their Communications courses. (See Appendix E.)

C Ensure that the tone of your commentary is supportive.

An overly critical or vindictive tone can be discouraging to students who are struggling with writing. Be honest yet diplomatic with your criticism, and urge students to keep trying or seek additional help in the Writing Centre or from a peer tutor. Try to find one positive thing to say about a paper's ideas, organization, or style. If you notice improvements over previous work, let the student know.

Other Ways to Respond to Student Writing

- hold a group discussion
- record that the writing has been done
- praise one positive feature in the writing
- suggest one improvement
- discuss a group of papers in class
- select a random sample for comment
- stop reading and return a poorly written paper for further revision

*Source: Walvoord, B. (No date). *What writing across the curriculum is not*. Unpublished conference handout. Laurentian University Language Centre. (1995, 1997). *WAC PACK*. Sudbury, ON.

Marking Templates and Criterion Sheets

Many professors at Humber feel most comfortable assessing their students' writing when they use a clear marking scheme set out in a criterion sheet. The Criterion Sheets developed for COMM 100, COMM 200, COMM 300, and ESL 200 are examples developed for Communications courses. (See Appendix B.)

The sample marking template on p. 16 lists headings that professors can use to design their own marking scheme/criterion sheet for a major formal assignment. The sample marking template includes the breakdown of areas the professor can comment on in a piece of student writing, depending on whether the assignment is formal or informal, or is written in an academic (e.g. essay) or a professional (e.g. report) format.

Appendix F contains an example of a criterion sheet used in a mechanical engineering course, and Appendix H contains an example of a criterion sheet used in a nursing course.

A Sample Marking Template: Marking Criteria

1. **Professionalism:** Professionalism includes tone, word choice, overall appearance of the assignment.
2. **Format:** Format includes awareness of correct format for the context of the assignment.
3. **Content:** Content (as required by the assignment) includes clear thesis or focus, adequate development, good use of details and examples, correct use of illustrations.
4. **Organization:** Organization means ideas are presented in logical order in individual sections and in the overall piece of writing.
5. **Style:** Style includes word choice and tone.
6. **Language:**
 - Spelling
 - Grammar
 - overall sentence structure*
 - sentence fragments
 - comma splices and run-on sentences
 - misplaced or dangling modifiers
 - verbs*
 - verb form errors
 - verb tense errors
 - subject/verb agreement
 - shifts in verb tense, voice
 - pronouns*
 - shifts in point of view (person)
 - pronoun/antecedent agreement
 - vague pronoun reference
 - pronoun case errors
 - other errors*
 - misused parts of speech
 - articles
 - prepositions
 - omitted words
 - Punctuation
 - comma errors
 - colon errors
 - semi-colon errors
 - apostrophe errors

Note: Training on evaluation of writing for WIC professors is available through the WAC resource person. For example, see Appendix G for the Grammar Workshop content.

Using the Sample Marking Template (see p. 16)

(Please note: Weightings are suggestions only.)

- For formal professional writing assignments that model types of writing done on the job, use the following criteria:
 1. Professionalism (10%)
 2. Format (10%)
 3. Content (60%)
 6. Language (20%).

- For formal writing-to-learn-content academic assignments, use the following criteria:
 3. Content (60%)
 4. Organization (10%)
 5. Style (5%)
 6. Language (25%).

- For low-stakes informal or writing-to learn academic assignments, use the following criterion:
 3. Content

(You may wish to comment on language issues (criterion 6) but marks need not be deducted for poor grammar or spelling in an informal assignment unless the writing is impossible to understand, in which case a revision could be warranted.)

Resources Available

1. WAC resource person: Karen Golets Pancer
Professor, LAS
North, K201
(416) 675-6622, ext. 4522
karen.golets-pancer@humber.ca
2. The Writing Centre (North Campus): Room D225E (in the Open Learning Centre)
(416) 675-6622, ext. 4582

The Writing Centre (Lakeshore Campus): Room B203
(416) 675-6622, ext. 3313

3. Peer Tutoring (North Campus): Counselling Department, Room D128
(416) 675-6622, ext. 4616

Peer Tutoring (Lakeshore Campus): Counselling Department, Room A120
(416) 675-6622, ext. 3331

4. Reference books for students:

Every student should have a dictionary published in the last ten years and a handbook (sometimes called writer's guide or reference) that discusses grammar, punctuation and usage rules, as well as research techniques and documentation methods. Here are some recommended titles:

- *The Nelson Canadian dictionary*
- *Prentice Hall Canada reference guide to grammar and usage* (Second Canadian Edition) by Muriel Harris and Humber professor Joan Pilz, published by Prentice Hall.
- *A Canadian writer's reference* by Diana Hacker, published by Nelson Canada.
- *A guide for writing research essays at Humber College* by Humber professor Sally Cooper, available in the Writing Centres on both campuses.
- The website <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> has an online version of a handbook.

Some Useful Websites: An Annotated List

1. <http://www.acad.humberc.on.ca/~crompton/>

This website, created by Humber Computer Engineering professor Mike Crompton, contains an excellent handout for students on how to write a technical report. To access the handout from Mike's Home Page, scroll down to *General/Miscellaneous Information* and click on [How to Write a Technical Report](#).

2. <http://www.mala.bc.ca/www/wac/wac.htm>

This website describes the WAC Project at Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo, B.C. Included is a on section writing assignments for different disciplines from a variety of North American post-secondary institutions and a lengthy bibliography about WAC.

3. <http://www.stthomasu.ca/inkshed/cdncomp.htm>

This website contains the full text and bibliography of Tania Smith's article, "Recent Trends in Writing Instruction and Composition Studies in Canadian Universities." One section describes the status of selected WAC projects as of April, 1999.

4. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

This well-known and well-respected website from Purdue University offers handouts for students and teachers on such topics as grammar, spelling, and punctuation, research and documenting sources, English as a Second Language, and professional writing. Also included are power-point and hypertext workshops related to student writing.

Purdue's WAC page includes links to other writing-related resources available on the Internet. It can be accessed at

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/wac/index.html>

5. **<http://www.niu.edu/acad/english/wac/wac.html>**

This comprehensive website is part of the Writing Across the Curriculum program at Northern Illinois University. Included are pages on writing theory, the philosophy behind WAC, suggested online resources for students and faculty, and links to other WAC programs in the U.S. at

<http://www.niu.edu/acad/english/wac/waclinks.html>

6. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign runs a discussion list for faculty and others involved in WAC courses and programs. To subscribe to this list, send the message

subscribe WAC-L "Your Name"

to the following address: **listserv@postoffice.cso.uiuc.edu**

References

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NOTE: All of these resources are available through the WAC resource person.

Appendix A

Summary of Humber's Generic/ Employability Skills: Writing Skills

1.1 WRITING SKILLS

Learning Outcome

The student will demonstrate the ability to produce clear, concise, correct, and coherently written texts to suit the intended audience.

Instructional Objectives

The student will be able to

- 1.1.1 Organize the message according to the purpose
- 1.1.2 Select content necessary to convey the message
- 1.1.3 Employ style, tone, and vocabulary appropriate to the message, situation, and intended audience
- 1.1.4 Demonstrate conventional use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Appendix B

Communications Course Criterion Sheets

1. The **COMM 100 Criterion Sheet** reproduced here indicates the writing topics covered in COMM 100 classes. These criteria apply to formal paragraph writing assignments. Students who have taken or who are taking COMM 100 will be familiar with these concepts and terms related to paragraph and essay writing. The abbreviations under the Grammar section are explained in Appendix E.

Please note that COMM 100 is an introductory writing course. Most WAC courses should base marking criteria on the topics outlined in the COMM 200 and COMM 300 Criterion Sheets. (See pp. 24 and 25.) An ESL 200 Criterion Sheet can be found on p. 26.

CRITERION SHEET COMM 100 ASSIGNMENT (250 – 300 words)				Fail	Fail	Minimum Pass	Pass with Some Distinction	Pass with Excellence
ORGANIZATION 20%								
Topic Sentence(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● states topic ● contains controlling idea 								
Body Sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● stay on topic ● connect ideas logically ● use appropriate transitions 								
Concluding Sentence(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● concludes logically and appropriately 								
DEVELOPMENT 30%								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● provides specific supporting details ● conveys ideas and points of view clearly ● develops, illustrates, convinces, explains ● employs a variety of sentence types 								
GRAMMAR & MECHANICS 50%								
● Major Errors -4 for each	Format	Frag.	R.O./C.S.	Verb Tense	Verb Form	S - V Agr.	Other Errors	Other Errors
● Minor Errors -2 for each	Sp.	Punc.	Pro.	Article	Word Choice	Prep.		
TOTAL				/100=				

2. The **COMM 200 Criterion Sheet** reproduced here indicates the writing topics covered in COMM 200 classes. These criteria apply to formal academic (essay) writing assignments. Students who have taken or who are taking COMM 200 will be familiar with these concepts and terms related to essay writing. The abbreviations under the Grammar section are explained in Appendix E. Rather than using the COMM 200 Criterion Sheet as is, professors may prefer to adapt it somewhat or design their own. (See Appendix H for a sample criterion sheet for a summary assignment in a nursing course.)

CRITERION SHEET COMM 200 ESSAY	Fail (Below 40%)		Fail (40% - 59%)	Pass Minimum			Pass with Some Distinction		Pass with Excellence	
STRUCTURE 30%										
Beginning Paragraph • sets tone & captures readers' interest • contains focused thesis statement introducing the central idea and organizational pattern										
Middle Paragraphs • have clear topic sentences • stay on topic • contain appropriate transitions between and within paragraphs • have concluding sentences										
End Paragraph • concludes effectively										
SUPPORT 30%										
• ideas and viewpoints clearly related to thesis • specific, concrete details and examples • interesting, convincing, thoughtful, coherent content										
STYLE 10%										
• diction, idiom and tone appropriate to audience • precise, clear language • sentence variety • no slang, wordiness, clichés, or jargon										
GRAMMAR 30%	Frag		Run On	VT	VF	SVA	POV	CS	Other	
Major Errors -4%										
Minor Errors -2%	SP	Punc	Dang/Mispl Mod	Pro Ref	Pro Case	Pro Agr	Art	Prep	//ism	Other
TOTAL / 100 =										

3. The **COMM 300 Criterion Sheet** reproduced here indicates the letter- and memo-writing topics covered in COMM 300 classes. Students who have taken or who are taking COMM 300 will be familiar with these concepts and terms related to the writing of letters and memos. The abbreviations under the Grammar section are explained in Appendix E.

This criterion sheet may be used as is or may be adapted to suit formal business letter- and memo-writing contexts. It can also be adapted to suit report- and proposal-writing contexts. (See Appendix F for a sample criterion sheet for technical writing from a mechanical engineering course.)

CRITERION SHEET FOR COMM 300 MEMOS AND LETTERS	Fail	Pass	Pass with Excellence	GRAMMAR CHECKLIST
<p style="text-align: center;">FORMAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses full/modified block format • follows conventions of letter/memo • organizes ideas clearly into an effective opening, body paragraph(s), and closing • selects length and approach appropriate to message and audience (direct/indirect) 				<p><u>MAJOR (-5% each)</u> Comma splice/ROS Fragment Misused Parts of Speech Point of View Pronoun Agreement, Case and Reference Spelling Subject/Verb Agreement Verb Form Verb Tense Other</p> <p><u>MINOR (-3% each)</u> Articles Dangling/Misplaced Modifiers Omitted Words Parallelism Prepositions Punctuation Other</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STRUCTURE/CONTENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses concrete examples • selects length and approach appropriate to message and audience (direct/indirect) • demonstrates effective audience analysis • is accurate, complete and logical • is unified and coherent • demonstrates clearly connected ideas—uses transitions effectively • demonstrates a clear purpose • demonstrates a clear persuasive focus • uses significant and sufficient supporting data • uses concrete examples • designates specific actions • suggests implementation methods 				
<p style="text-align: center;">STYLE/TONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is consistent and courteous • avoids slang, wordiness, repetition, redundancy, clichés, jargon • uses level of language appropriate to audience • uses "you" attitude • uses precise/concise language • uses active/passive voice appropriately • uses appropriate idiom 				
<p>COMMENTS <i>Employers insist on correct writing. Therefore, you must control all conventions of business writing (structure, content, style, and tone.)</i></p>				

4. The **ESL 200 Criterion Sheet** reproduced here indicates the writing topics covered in ESL 200 classes. These criteria apply to formal academic (essay) writing assignments. Students who have taken or who are taking ESL 200 will be familiar with these concepts and terms related to essay writing. The abbreviations under the Grammar section are explained in Appendix E. (For copies of the ESL 100, 150, and 300 Criterion Sheets, please contact your WAC Resource Person.)

CRITERION SHEET ESL 200 ESSAY 350 – 400 words, double-spaced	Fail	Fail	Pass Minimum	Pass with Some Distinction	Pass with Excellence
ORGANIZATION 20%					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● standard essay format ● beginning paragraph in which introductory sentences capture readers' interest and thesis statement introduces topic and controlling idea ● body paragraphs which have topic sentences, stay on topic, connect ideas logically, use appropriate transitions ● concluding paragraph which concludes logically and appropriately 					
DEVELOPMENT 20%					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● body paragraphs which develop, convince, explain ● supporting details which provide reasons, examples, facts, personal experiences, etc. 					
STYLE 10%					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sentence variety ● idiomatic expression/fluency ● word choice 					
GRAMMAR & MECHANICS 50%					
<p>Major errors – 2 marks per error</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● verb tenses ● verb forms ● singular/plural ● sentence structure ● unclear sentences ● word form <p>Minor errors – 1 mark per error</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● spelling/caps ● articles ● prepositions ● punctuation ● pronouns <p style="text-align: right;">(Maximum deduction of 15 marks)</p>					
TOTAL / 100 =					

Appendix C

Some Prewriting Techniques

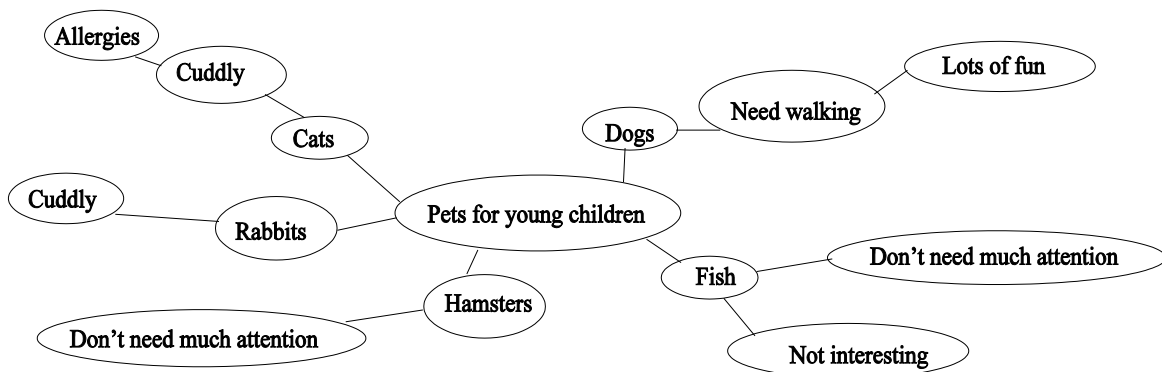
The term *prewriting* describes the stage of writing that comes before the actual construction of a draft. During the prewriting stage, a writer discovers what to write about, explores different angles on a given topic, and/or reconsiders and refines earlier vague ideas. Reading and notetaking for a research paper is one prewriting technique familiar to professors. However, class discussions prior to an essay-writing assignment or some of the suggested techniques below are equally useful as warm-up exercises prior to the drafting stage.

Freewriting – During *freewriting*, students write on a topic in full sentences, without stopping, and without censoring themselves or evaluating their ideas, for a set period of time (10-15 minutes). If they are stuck, they can simply repeat the topic until a new idea presents itself. The purpose of freewriting is to begin generating ideas and to overcome blocks to getting started writing on a topic. For this reason, freewriting is an excellent solution for procrastinators.

Listing – *Listing* is a type of brainstorming. The object is to create an uncensored inventory of thoughts, ideas, or facts about a topic. Working individually or in small groups, students generate as many words or phrases related to the topic within a set period of time (10-15 minutes.) Once the time is up, they go back to the list, consider the merits of each item, and cross off items that do not fit within the parameters of the topic or assignment.

A variation of listing is called *looping*. Students choose the most promising item on the first list and repeat the listing process using that item as the starting point to generate a new list.

Mind-mapping – *Mind-mapping* (also called *clustering*) encourages students to generate and organize ideas at the same time. Students write the topic under discussion in the centre of the page, circle it, and draw lines outward from the central topic toward subtopics. Similarly, subtopics can be further subdivided with new lines radiating from their circles. In the following example, the student's mind map indicates a piece of writing that outlines the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of pets.



Appendix D

A Sample Peer Comments Sheet for Peer Workshops

(Contributor: Sally Wylie, Early Childhood Education)

This peer comments sheet guides students' responses to each other's drafts. Writers make revisions based on their peers' feedback before submitting their assignments to their professor for marking.

PEER COMMENTS SHEET ON SUMMARY ASSIGNMENT TEACHING THE YOUNG CHILD

Name of Writer: _____

Name of Reader: _____

Read the entire draft summary quickly to get an idea of what it's all about. Underline any parts you don't understand. Put an asterisk * next to sentences/sections you think are good.

Then read the draft more closely a second time and fill in the answers to the questions below.

1. Introduction: Does the introduction attract the reader's attention and give an adequate idea of what the article is about? Suggest one possible improvement.
2. Does each paragraph in the summary contain a clear topic sentence? Does the writer indicate what idea the paragraph will develop?
3. Do the examples given illustrate the main topic in each paragraph?
4. Do the paragraphs relate to the introduction and the main purpose of the article? Which paragraphs should be revised?
5. Are there appropriate transitions between paragraphs? Can you suggest some words or phrases that would link each section with the next?
6. Does the writer use a reader-friendly style? Are quotations used appropriately? Does the essay stay within the recommended length?
7. Mark grammar/spelling/punctuation errors only if you are sure they are errors. Check to make sure the quotations are cited correctly.

Appendix E

Some Common Marking Symbols

Do not feel obligated to mark or correct every error on a student's assignment. Focus your comments on the content and at least one strength. Look for patterns of errors or sections that are hard to understand; students can be overwhelmed if every single grammatical error is marked.

frag / sf	sentence fragment
ss	sentence structure problem
cs	comma splice
ro	run-on sentence
VT	verb tense error
VF	verb form error
SVA	subject-verb agreement error
mm /dm	misplaced or dangling modifier
POV	shift in point of view
pro. agr.	pronoun/antecedent agreement
pro. ref.	vague pronoun reference
pro. case	pronoun case error
art	article error
prep	preposition error
comma	comma error
colon	colon error
semi-colon	semi-colon error
ap	apostrophe error
sp	spelling
wm	word missing /omitted word
ww	wrong word
bw	better word
awk	awkward wording
red	redundant
rep	repetitive
unc	unclear meaning

Appendix F

A Sample Criterion Sheet from a Program Course

(Contributors: Jim Montgomery and Prakash Vyas, Mechanical Engineering)

This criterion sheet is one example of how the generic marking template presented on p. 16 can be designed to meet the specifications of an assignment. The assignment requires students to write a research report; the criterion sheet focuses on Professionalism, Format, Content and Language. (For marking criteria to use for formal professional writing assignments, see pp. 16 and 17.)

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Title: _____ **Course:** _____

IMPRESSIONS: (APPEARANCE, NEATNESS, TYPED, COVER)

POOR	FAIR	GOOD
------	------	------

FORMAT: (REPORT CONTENTS COMPLETE AS ASSIGNED AND IN ORDER)

0	1
---	---

CONTENT: TECHNICAL LEVEL
(ADEQUATE DEPTH OF STUDY)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not Technical Enough							Technical		

CALCULATIONS

POOR 0	FAIR 1	GOOD 2
-----------	-----------	-----------

ILLUSTRATIONS (NEAT, TYPED)

NONE 0	PAGES 1	CUTOUT 2	GOOD 3
-----------	------------	-------------	-----------

CONCLUSIONS

NONE 0	FAIR 1	MOD 2	GOOD 3
-----------	-----------	----------	-----------

RECOMMENDATIONS

NONE 0	1	2	3	4
-----------	---	---	---	---

COST DATA

NONE 0	PRICE* 1	SAVING-* 2	PAYBK* 3
-----------	-------------	---------------	-------------

ENGLISH:

SPELLING

POOR 0	FAIR 1	GOOD 2
-----------	-----------	-----------

GRAMMAR

POOR 0	FAIR 1	GOOD 2
-----------	-----------	-----------

CLARITY

UNCLEAR 0	1	SMOOTH 2
--------------	---	-------------

CORRECTED TYPOS

HAND 0	TYPE 1
-----------	-----------

Reviewed by: _____

* Price means Has the student considered what the recommended changes will cost?

* Saving means Has the student calculated what the savings to the company will be if the recommended changes are implemented?

* Payback means Has the student calculated how long it will take for the estimated savings to pay back the costs of the recommended changes?

Appendix G

The following is the list of topics covered in a half-day grammar workshop offered by the WAC resource person and available to interested faculty. The workshop includes both instruction and practice time.

GRAMMAR WORKSHOP

Grammar Terminology and Sentence Structure

Common Errors

- Verb Form Errors
- Shifts in Verb Tense and Voice
- Subject-Verb Agreement
- Sentence Fragments
- Run-on Sentences and Comma Splices
- Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers
- Mixed Sentences
- Pronoun Errors
 - shifts in person and number
 - vague and unclear pronouns
 - case errors
- Faulty Parallelism
- Punctuation
 - comma errors
 - colon errors
 - semi-colon errors
 - apostrophe errors

Sample Exercises

Appendix H

Sample Writing Assignments

This section contains sample writing assignments submitted by Humber faculty.

Sample Assignment

Thank you to Sue Schulte (Nursing) for submitting this assignment and the accompanying peer comments sheet / marking scheme from NURS 207 and 216 – Evaluation Methods.

NURS 207 and 216 – Evaluation Methods Article Summary Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to broaden your awareness of medication related information available to both the nursing community and the non-nursing community, evaluate its relevance to nursing practice, and share this information with your peers.

Instructions:

1. Choose an article which discusses some aspect of medication or medication administration. Articles may be obtained from either nursing or non-nursing publications, such as journals, magazines, newspapers, or an online source, published within the last year. **Do not** use a nursing, medical, or pharmacy textbook, and **do not** use a drug monograph.
2. Write a brief summary (**maximum** 1 page, double spaced) describing the main point of the article and its relevance to nursing and the administration of medication in an institution or in the community. Be sure to include your name and the complete reference for the article in your summary, as well as a photocopy of the actual article.
3. Have the other members of your group critique your summary using the following marking scheme, and make any changes to your summary based on their feedback. Photocopy the marking scheme and give one copy of it plus a copy of your assignment to each group member. Be sure to leave enough time for all group members to give you feedback and for you to make any necessary changes.
4. *Submit a final copy of your summary together with the other summaries from the rest of your group. Groups may hand in any combination of article summaries and/or community resource summaries.
5. The summaries will be marked individually and as a group project. The grade assigned will be the average of the two marks.

***Note re: submitting of assignments:**

1. All submitted assignments must be word processed and on 8.5" X 11" paper. Hand written assignments will not be accepted.
2. The font should be plain and no larger than 12 point.
3. Margins should be one inch on all sides.
4. Group assignments should be stapled together or submitted in one folder, and should contain a cover page including the teacher's name, course and section number, the names of all group members, and the group name.

Article Assignment Feedback Sheet

Name: _____ Group Name: _____

Group Member's Name: _____ Class Section: NURS 2__-0__

I would appreciate it if you would check my assignment to make sure it has all of the following components. Since part of our grade is based on the quality of the entire group's assignments, any comments to help me improve my assignment would also be appreciated.

Marking Scheme for Article Summary Assignment		
Content	Points	Total Marks
Appropriateness of article - within the last year - from a non-medical publication - pertaining to med administration	111	3
Summary of key points - summarizes main idea - provides key supporting details	11	2
Relevance to nursing practice - validity of source - impact on nursing/non-nursing community - how the information can be used in nursing practice	111	3
Spelling and grammar - correct spelling - correct grammar	11	2
TOTAL = 5% of final grade		10

Comments:

Group Member's Signature: _____

Note: One completed form from each group member is to be handed in with the assignment.

Sample Assignment

Thank you to Liang Chen (Business) for submitting this group report assignment from BACC 420 – Business Finance.

BACC 420 – Business Finance Group Assignment Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide an opportunity for students to

- apply all analytical tools learned in the course
- utilize skills learned from other courses e.g. computer skills (spreadsheet, graphics, PowerPoint presentation)
- employ generic skills, especially Communications, Mathematics, Personal, and Interpersonal skills.

Guidelines

- Form a group of 4 students.
- The group assignment is to analyze and compare the financial statements of one Canadian public company. The company will be assigned by the professor.
- All the information needed should be available from the two most recent **annual reports** (Do not use quarterly reports.)
- The data needed for the company is the following:
 - Most recent year-end balance sheet
 - Detailed Income and Cash Flow (or Statement of Changes in Financial Position) Statements for the past 2 years
 - Summary income and cash flow data for at least 3 and not more than 5 years.
- Your report, which should not exceed **6** double-spaced typed pages, excluding appendices, should address the following:
 - Using the ratios and other analytical tools studied (e.g. Vertical, Horizontal, and Trend Analyses) **assess** and **compare** the financial health and the performance of the company over the selected time period . Provide a **Ratios Summary Sheet** which lists all ratios for the past 3 years.
 - Address the company's financial performance and what the trend is over the period of 3-5 years. It is highly recommended that you use Excel and graphic tools to support your analyses.
 - Consider the qualitative information, comments, and future objectives contained in the non-financial portions of the annual reports. Comment on whether the company's financial position will enable it to achieve its stated objectives.
 - Your appendices should include **financial statements**, including **notes** (but **not the entire annual report**) and your **ratio calculations**.
- The Group Assignment represents 20% of the course evaluation; 15% will be allocated to your report and 5% will be allocated to your Presentation and Participation.

Report Format

The group report must include the following sections:

1. **Introduction** (maximum 1 page): This is a description of the company: who they are, what they do, and an introduction of what their financial outlook is like.

2. **Analysis** (maximum 4 pages): In this section, use all the analytical tools you learn in class to analyze and compare the financial statements. You need to discuss the company's financial situation and refer to the supporting documentation (e.g. financial statements, notes in the annual report, appendices, etc.) in your comments.

** At the beginning of this section, please include the **Ratios Summary Sheet** (1 page) for the past 3 years.

3. **Conclusion/Recommendation** (maximum 1 page): In this section, summarize your findings and provide recommendations as if you were in charge or a potential investor.

4. **Appendices/Attachments**: Attach financial statements, tables, data, charts, etc. that you want to use to support your arguments. These appear **after** the body of the report.

Other business report requirements:

Provide a cover page with your report title, the date, and your names.

Include a **Table of Contents** with all key headings and page numbers.

Presentation Format

Participation:

- All group members should participate in the presentation, which should be about 15-20 minutes long, followed by a Q&A session for 5-10 minutes.
- Presentation flow will be along the lines of the report format, including the concise history of the company and events.
- Develop necessary overheads to assist your presentation; they should be visible from the back of the class.
- The presentation should be in the form of a discussion; presenters are discouraged from only reading their parts.

Sample Assignment

Thank you to Loris Bennett (Developmental Services Worker Program) for submitting this assignment from DSW 105 -- Person Centred Planning..

DSW 105 – Person Centred Planning Assignment 1: Annotated Bibliography

Assignment Description

An annotated bibliography is an organized list of sources (references cited) such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, web pages etc., each of which is followed by an annotation or description. Its purpose is to provide others interested in the topic with an up-to-date summary and analysis of research on this topic. Compiling an annotated bibliography on a selected topic will help you to become more familiar with current research and also give you a broader understanding of the relevant concepts and principles of *Person Centered Planning*. As well, this assignment will help you prepare for your team project (Interview Assignment).

Purpose of the assignment

- To review current literature on Person Centered Planning
- To search for additional information on the subject
- To explore the topic further for additional assignments (Interview Assignment)
- To refine analytical skills
- To develop and define research skills
- To support self-directed learning
- To write a brief descriptive and evaluative summary
- To integrate technology into the subject area

Format, Process, and Other Details

- For this assignment, select a topic pertaining to Person Centered Planning.
- Review current literature on your topic using multiple sources such as books, websites, articles in scholarly journals, interviews, and newspaper and magazine articles. (Please vary your sources.)
- You may select a maximum of 6 annotations from your readings, 3 of which *must* address the following:
 - XIV. Wills and Estate Planning,*
 - XV. Individualized Budget/ Individualized Support and*
 - XVI. Leadership in Person-Centered Organizations*
- Write a clear summary for each annotation. (See the model bibliographies given out in class and use the APA style guide. The Writing Centre, B203, can help you with format.)
- Each annotation should be approximately 200 words long.
- Please type your assignment.

Content of Each Annotation

- State the problem, issue, or question that the article addresses.
- Discuss its usefulness to your topic.
- What audience does the article seem aimed for? (Families, researchers, students, paraprofessionals, users of service, etc.)
- What are the benefits of the article?
- What are the limitations of the article?
- Present the author's conclusion.

Resources Available

(You are not limited to these resources)

- Web sources
- OADD website (Ontario Association for Developmental Disabilities)
- Model annotated bibliography- (please see class hand out)
- Humber College Writing Centre, B203
- Allan. E. Roeher Centre - Kinsmen Building – York University
- Metro Reference Library- Disabilities Section (main floor)

Journals

- *Developmental Psychology*
- *Developmental Review*
- *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*
- *Learning and Individual Differences*
- *Journal of Developmental Education*
- *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*
- *Teaching Exceptional Children*
- *Disability and Society*
- *Developmental Disabilities Bulletin*

If you have questions or problems

It is highly recommended that you ask any questions regarding the assignment well in advance of the due date and that you ask them in person or via phone to avoid delay.

This assignment is worth 15% of your final grade.

Due Date: _____

Students who are unable to attend class on the due date should make arrangements with someone else to deliver their assignments, as being absent from class is not an excuse for the assignment being late.